



# Sycamore Sage

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Preserve may be closed during and after heavy rains. For your safety, please observe all closure notices.

Park hours are: April - Sept  
(8 a.m. - 7 p.m.);  
Oct- March (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)  
For more information, call  
the Visitor Center at  
858-513-4737.

The Friends of Goodan  
Ranch/Sycamore Canyon  
are on the web:  
**GoodanRanch.Org**

### **Board members of Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Open Space**

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Another year is about to end - a year of the worst fires in California history. Most of us in the San Diego region remember how devastating the fires of 2003 and again in 2007 were for our area. Even with scant rainfall our Reserve has rebounded.

We have seen a lot of staffing change at Goodan Ranch - our new Supervising Ranger, Louis, together with Ben our maintenance guru and Patrick our newest member of the team along with the live-ins, Joe and Laura, have planted many new trees, closed off rogue trails and added my longed for rest spot along the road out to Poway.



Are you planning a small wedding or renewal of vows? The amphitheater under the oaks is a perfect spot.

I want to thank all of our supporting friends and give a gentle reminder that dues are once again due the beginning of January. This year, invite a friend to join along with you.

May the holidays bring you joy and time to enjoy our many trails.

*Carol*

## Here are some weird facts about raccoons that you may not have heard before.

Whether your home is surrounded by trees or skyscrapers (which they've been known to climb), raccoons are likely part of your local wildlife population. They are some of the most adaptable creatures in the Americas, occupying both rural and urban areas in diverse climates. Here are some things you might not know about the little masked bandits.



**THEIR MASKS AREN'T JUST FOR SHOW.** Thanks to the black markings that fall across their eyes, raccoons have been typecast as the conniving thief or trickster figure in stories for centuries. But their famous black masks do more than make them look like adorable outlaws—they also help them see clearly. The black fur works just like the black stickers athletes wear under their eyes: The dark color absorbs incoming light, reducing glare that would otherwise bounce into their eyes and obstruct their vision. At night, when raccoons are most active, less peripheral light makes it easier for them to perceive contrast in the objects of their focus, which is essential for seeing in the dark.

**ONE LIVED IN THE WHITE HOUSE.** It's unusual for White House pets to start as Thanksgiving dinner, but that was the case with Rebecca, the raccoon that lived with Calvin Coolidge for part of his presidency. At the time, raccoon meat was fairly common on dinner tables in America. But once he met the live critter, Coolidge decided he was more interested in adopting her than having her for supper. Rebecca soon became part of the family, receiving an engraved collar for Christmas, taking part in the annual Easter Egg roll, and frequently accompanying the president on walks around the White House grounds. Having a wild animal in the White House may sound absurd by today's standards, but considering Coolidge's pets at the time also included a bobcat, a goose, a donkey, two lion cubs, an antelope, and a wallaby, Rebecca fit right in.



As cute and cuddly as raccoons look, the truth is they don't make good pets. While young, raccoons seem happy to be in human company. However, as they mature, especially during mating season, they can become increasingly destructive and aggressive. Raccoons are notorious biters. Raccoons act out when they're unhappy and hormonal. Their natural instinct is to bite when they're angry, frustrated, or stressed.



(Continued from page 2)

**THEY "SEE" WITH THEIR HANDS.** While most animals use either sight, sound, or smell to hunt, raccoons rely on their sense of touch to locate goodies. Their front paws are incredibly dexterous and contain roughly four times more sensory receptors than their back paws—about the same ratio of human hands to feet. This allows them to differentiate between objects without seeing them, which is crucial when feeding at night. Raccoons can heighten their sense of touch through something called dousing. To humans, this can look like the animals are washing their food, but what they're really doing is wetting their paws to stimulate the nerve endings. Like light to a human's eyes, water on a raccoon's hands gives it more sensory information to work with, allowing it to feel more than it would otherwise.



**RACCON PAWS ARE LIKE HUMAN HANDS.** Raccoons are one of the few animals that are able to use all five fingers like humans do. As a result, they can successfully complete many unusual functions like opening the latch of a cage, untying knots, and even picking human pockets. In fact, they are so dexterous that they can pick up coins as thin as dimes. In addition, raccoons are excellent swimmers and climbers.

**RACCOONS ARE VERY VOCAL.** One of the lesser-known facts about raccoons is their ability to make more than 200 different sounds. They purr, chatter, whistle, growl, hiss, snarl, scream, whimper, and even whinny similar to a horse's whinny. Each sound is used to communicate something different. But, they're not easy to distinguish from other wild animals as many of their vocalizations resemble those of other animals. Fighting raccoons sound similar to fighting cats. Raccoon screams sound like the screech of an owl.



**RACCOONS CAN LIVE A VERY LONG TIME** The life of a raccoon is arduous from the very beginning. Only half of newborn raccoons survive their first year of life. But if a raccoon can make it through his first year, his odds of dying drop significantly. There have even been reports of raccoons that lived up to 20 years, but that is definitely the exception. A raccoon living in the wild has to fight every day to find a suitable meal, escape predators and avoid other dangers. The most common reason for their loss of life is the human. Even though they can run at speeds up to 15 miles per hour, they are more likely to be killed by an automobile than by any other predator. The combination of these factors limits the average raccoon lifespan in the wild to 2–3 years.

**RACCOONS DON'T LIKE TOMATOES.** As omnivorous opportunistic feeders, raccoons will eat whatever is easiest to find and readily available. In spring they eat primarily animals such as amphibians, reptiles, a few small mammals and rodents, birds, and eggs. In the summer and fall they eat large amounts of grains, acorns, other nuts, and fruits. They love fish, and when living next to saltwater, they feed on oysters and other saltwater foods, and may fish for crabs by dropping their tail in the water and jumping forward when the crab catches hold. . In the winter, they live off their fat store as well as carrion, (even road kill), an occasional small mammal or rodent and sometimes even bark. They love fish, and when living next to saltwater, they feed on oysters and other saltwater foods, and may fish for crabs by dropping their tail in the water and jumping forward when the crab catches hold. Additionally, raccoons are well known for raiding garbage cans, agricultural crops, chicken coops, and pet food left outdoors. However, they steer clear of tomatoes for some reason.



**A GROUP OF RACCOONS IS CALLED A NURSERY.**

A mother usually separates from other raccoons to raise her young alone. The male does not participate in the raising of the kits. After she gives birth to between the tiny, blind, hairless kits she will spend all her time attending to them. The female, or sow, has the duty of raising her young all on her own. The mother raccoon is quite aggressive in protecting its young. They will fight to protect their kits from any and all invaders. She won't even let the father near them. For the first few weeks she will leave the nest only to feed and return frequently to nurse them. She will often patrol the area around her den looking for possible predators. It takes



about one year for the young raccoons to perfect their food gathering and survival skills. At this time their mother will start to let them wander off on their own, still keeping a watchful eye. By the time they are fourteen months of age, she will have left them alone completely.

**RACCOONS ARE SMART....REALLY SMART!!!** Raccoons are smart animals with a great memory and a high IQ. Raccoons rank above cats and just below monkeys on the mammal IQ scale. Monkeys are generally considered to score just below humans and great apes on IQ scales, which means that raccoon intelligence is not as far behind us as we might like to think. They are excellent learners. Research has shown that not only are they able to solve problems but that they can also remember the solution and use it again years later.

Raccoons were once considered alongside rats, mice, and monkeys as the ideal animal for lab testing due to their notable intelligence. Unlike rats, they were hard to breed and maintain in large numbers. They were also determined to be too strong-willed and even too smart for lab testing purposes. They would often outsmart the lab techs and escape to hide in air vents, and turned out to be very defensive when they felt threatened. They also had the pesky tendencies to chew through their cages, and pickpocket researchers.

# **FRIENDS OF GOODAN RANCH & SYCAMORE CANYON OPEN SPACE, INC - BOARD MEETING November 19, 2018**

**Meeting Location: Poway Historical Society**

**Meeting start time: 7:17 pm**

**Meeting Location: Poway Historical Society,**

**Attending: Carol Crafts, Phoenix Von Hendy, Terry Callan**

**Guests: Louis Chertkow, Patrick Wiener, Matt Sanford**

**Not in attendance: Maureen Abare-Laudy, Robert Laudy, Shawnie Williams, Mike Overy, Cathy Overy, Barbara Lerma, Ann Tipps**

**Secretary's report** - Minutes from Aug 13 meeting published in September Sage. Minutes were approved as published

**Treasurer's report** - Checking - \$4781; Savings - \$10,911; Total - \$15,691; Expenses for the year - \$3654, of which \$3296 was Goodan Ranch spending, the balance was administrative costs

## **Ranger's report**

Louis introduced Ranger Pat Wiener, who started at Goodan about 3 months ago and has been a big help. 40 new oak trees have been planted, which are currently on automated drip system. Plants have also been added to the native plant gardens. Upgrading of the 67 staging area is in progress, signage and kiosks have been updated. A foot race and bike race are coming up soon, starting from the 67 staging area. Community outreach is continuing.

Pat introduced himself. He had been working in the desert, at Joshua Tree, and is enjoying the learning experience at Sycamore Canyon. He also spent time at Yosemite. He is originally from Chicago and received his degree in Wildlife Biology there.

## **Tracking Report**

The Sycamore Canyon survey was conducted on Friday, October 26th with seven volunteers. Deer tracks were abundant in every section of the transect except Section 7, which covers the staging area only. We found scat from both striped and spotted skunk, and several new woodrat nests. There was less scat than what we normally find on this transect, but much of it may have been washed away by the hard rain a week before the survey. Still, we did find evidence of raccoon, coyote, bobcat, gray fox, kangaroo rat, roadrunner, and black-tailed jackrabbit, in addition to the deer, woodrats, and the two species of skunk.

## **PAP**

A lot of comments have been received from a large number of groups, so things have been very busy. Revision of the PAP is in progress and the hope is to have the revised document ready for review by the first part of next year. Melanie Tylke would like to meet with us again, probably at our February meeting.

**New Business:** Carol heard from a member of the Goodan family, who requested 15 more books.

**Next Newsletter will be out on December 1, 2018  
Next Board Meeting is Monday, February 11, 2019  
Membership dues are due the first of 2019**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm**





John Allen

Improving the County's 350+ mile trail system is a priority for the San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation, and efforts to expand trail access are balanced by efforts to preserve sensitive habitats and culturally significant areas.

Over the years, a number of unauthorized trails have appeared in Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch County Preserve. These trails negatively affect these areas and can cause harm to plants, animals and other resources. You may notice signs and other

barricades blocking access to these unauthorized trails.

**Please stay on trail and only in authorized areas as we work to protect this urban oasis.**

## **West Sycamore Volunteer Crew**

**January 6, 2019 @ 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Get your exercise for the day AND help improve your park at the same time, by lending a hand on our West Sycamore Volunteer Crew! Crews meet at 8:00 a.m. (Weather permitting) at the West Sycamore Staging Area (located at the Far East end of Stonebridge Parkway), and work until 12 noon at the latest. Please bring work gloves and wear long pants and sturdy, closed-toe shoes. A hat, sunglasses and sunscreen are also recommended on sunny days. Water, Gatorade and snacks are provided! For more information, contact Ranger Andrew Miller at [amiller@mtrp.org](mailto:amiller@mtrp.org)



### **Goodan Ranch Staging Area**

16281 Sycamore Canyon Road, Poway, CA 92064

**Hours:** 8 a.m. – 7 p.m., April – Sept.

8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Oct. – March

Pedestrian access is available from sunrise to sunset, daily.

The Goodan Ranch staging area is accessed from Poway Rd. east on Garden Rd, then south on Sycamore Canyon Rd. Sycamore Canyon Rd. ends at parking lot.

### **Highway 67 Staging Area**

13920 Highway 67, Lakeside, CA 92040

**Hours:** 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., daily

Pedestrian access is available from sunrise to sunset, daily

The Highway 67 staging area is accessed through SOUTHBOUND Highway 67 only, half a mile south of Scripps Poway Parkway.

(Please see county web site for more information)

**Every Sat/ Sun 10 am-** Come on out. Our Park Rangers will provide a nature walk, enjoying coastal sage scrub and chaparral-covered hills and the

**Stars at Sycamore Canyon (TM)**

#### **Event Coordinator: Kin Searcy**

The SDAA holds a monthly Star Party on the third Friday of every other month at sunset at the [Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch Open Space Preserve](#). To access this venue, use the park entrance on Hwy 67, 1/2 mile south of Scripps Poway Parkway. Continue through the gate and up the dirt road about 1½ miles to the parking area, this is where we setup. Coordinates from Google Earth for the viewing area are: 32°55'47.76"N, 116°58'10.89"W The street address for the park entrance gate is approximately: 13880 highway 67 Lakeside, CA.

Starting September 2018 the star party will move to the fourth Friday of each month. Please check the [SDAA calendar](#) for current information and directions to this star party.

history of Gooden Ranch.

**ALLOW ½ HOUR TO PARK AND WALK TO THE VISITOR'S CENTER.**

**Please check descriptions closely.**

No vehicular traffic is permitted in the Preserve.

Transportation for those with disabilities can be arranged, by calling the **Ranger** at

**(858) 513-4737.**

The Park's website is [www.sdparcs.org](http://www.sdparcs.org).





**Friends of Goodan Ranch  
&  
Sycamore Canyon Open Space**  
Webpage—GoodanRanch.org  
Facebook—Goodan Ranch  
Email—FriendsofGoodanRanch@gmail.com

**Please enroll me as a member of Friends of Goodan  
Ranch & Sycamore Canyon Open Space.**

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**Please select your membership level**

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**Fill out the requested information & mail it with your check to:**

**Friends of Goodan Ranch & Sycamore Canyon  
Memberships  
13030 Birch Lane  
Poway, CA 92064**

**WE ARE ON THE WEB AT  
GOODANRANCH.ORG**

The Sycamore Sage  
103030 Birch Lane  
Poway, CA 92064

