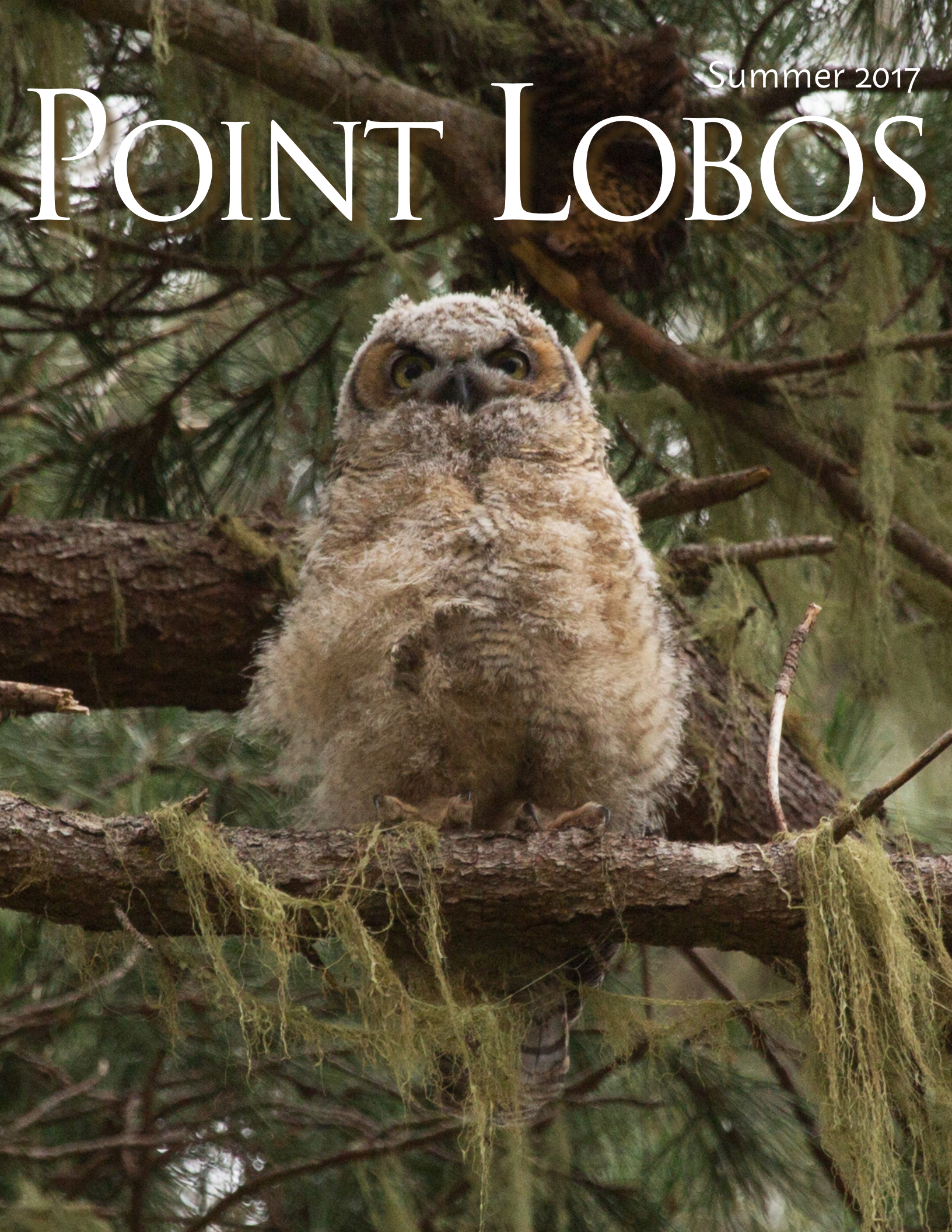


Summer 2017

POINT LOBOS





State Parks Trail Crew works with California Conservation Corps to restore the Sand Hill Trail to Sea Lion Point. The Point Lobos Foundation funded \$107,000 of this project and the trail reopened in May.

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Front Cover

A Great Horned Owl fledgling looks out from its roost on Whalers Knoll on June 6. Photo: John Drum

Photo Spread, pages 10-11

A pull-out guide for the most common wildflowers in Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. Special thanks to Art Muto for making this possible.

*Our mission is to protect and nurture Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, to educate and inspire visitors to preserve its unique natural and cultural resources, and to strengthen the network of Carmel Area State Parks. **pointlobos.org***
 PO Box 221789 | Carmel, CA | 93922 | 866.338.7227



President's message

by Cynthia Vernon

The first half of 2017 has been extraordinarily busy and productive. Chock full of important projects, events and a lot of old-fashioned elbow grease from our board, staff, partners at California State Parks and among the Point Lobos Docents.

The Sand Hill Trail to Sea Lion Point has been restored to ADA standards and reopened to the public. Thanks to grants from the Yellow Brick Road, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the 2016 MC Gives Campaign, the PLF was able to provide \$107,000 to cover the costs of materials to complete this project.

We participated in Vamos Afuera! - an outreach event in Salinas to connect people to the outdoors, hosted a wildflower walk at beautiful San Jose Creek Canyon for members at the Gray Whale level and above, held the 4th annual Underwater Parks Day event at Whalers Cove and welcomed volunteers from our community who came out to help rebuild stairs on the North Shore Trail.



The foundation is now offering grants to cover the cost of entry for Monterey County organizations who participate in the Easy Access Adventures Program. This is a wonderful way for people with limited mobility to experience Point Lobos along accessible trails, with special interpretive equipment and wonderful guides - all at their own pace.

And if that's not enough, we've welcomed a new restoration ecologist to the PLF team. Julia Fields worked as an intern at Point Lobos while completing her masters degree. Her research (see her piece on page 7) has positioned state parks to make a critical impact on the Reserve through vegetation restoration and invasive plant management. Healthy habitat needs healthy vegetation, and we are thrilled to have a staff member dedicated to this work.

It's been busy, and satisfying, and wonderful. We owe it all to you - your love of Point Lobos and your ongoing support. Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia L. Vernon".

Above: Volunteers take a break at a trail restoration day. Photo: John Sanders. Left: Jeff Frey, State Parks Monterey District Environmental Scientist, works with Julia Fields, new Point Lobos Foundation restoration ecologist, on transects at Big Mound Meadow.





*Black-crowned Night-heron,
Photo: Dave Evans*

Changing landscape, changing ‘birdscape’

What happens on the ground affects the
denizens of the sky

by Stan Dryden

People have been fascinated by birds for millennia and even avid birdwatchers have difficulty explaining why. Perhaps it is the fact that most birds can fly. What child has not dreamed of being able to take to the sky with the birds? Their wide variety of vivid colors adds to their allure.

If you are a devoted bird nut or just enjoy seeing them, Point Lobos is an excellent place to be. Most visitors who come to the Reserve for the first time may assume it is a pristine example of nature unchanged for centuries. But that is not so.

Humans have left their imprint on Point Lobos since they arrived and continue to do so today. And as the landscape of Point Lobos has changed, so has the “birdscape.” This is the story of the birds of Point Lobos, past and present.

Visitors are often surprised to hear that the pine forest they drive through to get to Sea Lion Point is totally different from what it was less than 100 years ago. When the property was purchased in 1933, a large portion of what is now a pine forest was grassland — the domain of Greater Roadrunners and other

birds that are now found in prairie lands in other parts of the country.

The geological history of Point Lobos, spanning millions of years, is written in stone at Point Lobos, if one is a geologist and knows how to read it. We know far less about the history of humans and other animals (including birds), measured in mere hundreds of years

We are fortunate that the State of California was serious about preserving the land. It engaged the services of two scientists from the University of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology to catalog the state of vertebrate animals at the time of the land purchase. The scientists, Joseph Grinnell and Jean Linsdale, worked for a solid year, starting in the middle of 1934, to observe and record the birds and other vertebrate animals they saw.

This scholarly work catalogs the Latin and common names of the birds. It also fully describes the landscape of the Reserve, and in so doing, helps us understand the reasons for the changes in bird populations between then and now. Their study is chronicled in the book, *Vertebrate Animals of Point Lobos Reserve, 1934-35*, hereinafter shortened to the name of the principal author, Grinnell.

A few of the apparent changes in bird populations are not real, but instead are artifacts of changes in common bird names. Common names for birds are controlled by the American Ornithologists’ Union and the changes the AOU makes are generally adopted quickly by birders. For example, when I started birding about 20 years ago there was a

bird called the Rufous-sided Towhee. When the AOU changed it to Spotted Towhee, I was disappointed in the change to the more pedestrian name but complied.

Grinnell names many birds seen at the time of the survey, using common names of the time. One that stops many readers is the Linnet. It would be easy to assume that it was a European bird that has since moved on, but that bird is now very common and called the House Finch. Other examples of common Point Lobos sightings today include, with the former name: Osprey (Fish Hawk), Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk), Wilson's Warbler (Pleolated Warbler) and Great Egret (American Egret).

But bird populations have also undergone a number of changes due to the changing landscape. Habitats that once supported certain species no longer exist or have changed. Aerial views over time chronicle significant changes. (Those can be seen on page 7)

The pine forest that now crowds both sides of the main entrance road was virtually absent on the side toward Whalers Cove. The brushy plants now prevalent near Sea Lion Point were once not there. The coastal scrub now provides cover for many ground feeders and nesters.

Grinnell gives insight into the landscape of Point Lobos in 1934 vs. today. While we knew that there was grassland where forests and shrubs now stand, it is not obvious that the mature grassland we see today is quite different. Grasslands prior to 1935 were mostly harvested or grazed, whereas the grassland one sees now is allowed to grow without active management. Photos in Grinnell show stubby grasses, whereas we now see mostly taller grasses.

The shorter grasses provided some birds, like Greater Roadrunners and Northern Flickers with excellent places to forage for their prey. Now roadrunners are never seen, and flickers are usually found in pine trees rather than on the ground. Grinnell said this bird was "more numerous than any other kind of woodpecker" and could "be noticed practically every day."

Today flickers blend in very well on their pine perches and can be difficult to find even when one has heard their conspicuous sharp calls. When they drop to earth they are usually concealed in the brush that has replaced grasslands near the trees.

The record of human-caused changes before 1934 is not as clear. The cultural history of Point Lobos is described in the pointlobos.org website, but most of the

activities do not appear to have had much effect on bird populations, with the exception of livestock grazing. We do know that the Rumsien Ohlone people did harvest from the land and sea, but with the exception of their management of the grasslands, including the use of fire, there is little to indicate that birds were affected.

The control of wildfires by humans has had a huge effect on bird habitat. Hundreds of years ago, wildfires like the 2016 Soberanes fire were free to spread unhampered and could wipe out huge stands of pines. The encroachment of private land now requires vigorous attempts to extinguish them, and the tools available to do that have improved exponentially. Without the modern tools, the Soberanes fire probably would have changed the nature of Point Lobos flora – and the bird populations there.



Great Blue Heron chicks. Photo: John Drum

Changes in habitats nearby Point Lobos may have made it more (or less) likely that certain birds would be seen inside the Reserve. For example, stands of pine trees near Point Lobos can form a “bridge” of familiar habitat for birds to find their way into Point Lobos. Conversely, loss of such familiar habitats via the intrusion of humans into the area can lead to the absence of certain birds.

Large-scale bird migration can lead to the introduction of certain species. Rock Pigeons are not mentioned in Grinnell and are considered by many to be invasive species. They were introduced into North America in the 1600s as domesticated birds, but have become feral. They are thought by some to be dependent upon humans, but that is not obvious when seen foraging off Pelican Point. The related Eurasian Collared-Dove was a rarity in the area less than 20 years ago but now is quite common and is thought to be out-competing the Mourning Dove that has been around for decades.

We like to think of Point Lobos as being exempt from human changes, but the insights in Grinnell help us understand just how much the imprint of humans has affected a property that has been placed in the care of California State Parks. But let’s dispel the notion that Point Lobos was in a more natural state than it is today. We honor Alexander Allan for preserving the land for future generations, but we must recognize that when he owned the land he utilized its commercial value. It’s fair to say that the state’s job was not just to preserve the land but first to restore it.

*Stan Dryden, a winner of the 2017 Jud Vandermere award, has been a docent since 1999 and served on the board of the Point Lobos Association, now the Point Lobos Foundation, including two years as its president. He also served as Docent Administrator. In 2009, he published *Birding Lite, a Humorous How-to Guide for All who Enjoy Watching Birds*, which he describes as a significantly less scholarly work than Grinnell.*



Greater Roadrunner, Photo: National Parks Service



Northern Flicker, Photo: Chuck Bancroft

Then and now

How plant communities have changed

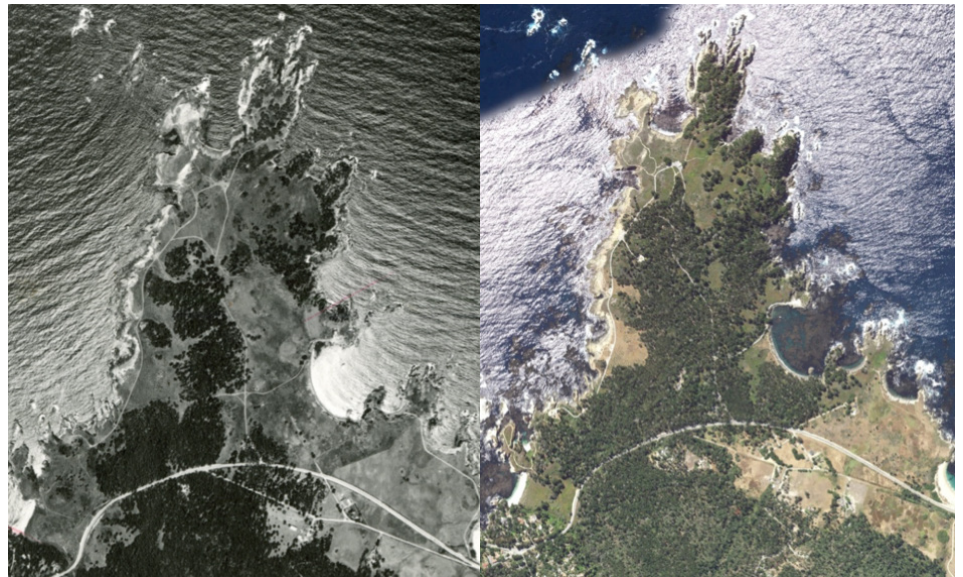
by Julia Fields

Point Lobos State Natural Reserve is home to very special plant communities including one of the two remaining naturally occurring stands of Monterey Cypress and some of the most diverse native coastal prairies in California.

As part of my graduate degree, I worked with California State Parks and the Point Lobos Foundation to map plant communities, understory vegetation, and invasive species throughout the Reserve in 2016. You may have seen me wandering off trail with a bright orange vest and yellow GPS unit, tracing the extent of coastal scrub, prairies, and pines. I was continually amazed by the diversity of species.

Monterey pines cover nearly 60 percent of the Reserve's area. Under their dense canopy live shrubs such as California lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.), monkeyflower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), coffeeberry (*Frangula californica*), and pervasive poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*).

Shade-loving grasses and herbs such as California canary grass (*Phalaris californica*), blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*), Monterey sedge (*Carex harfordii*), common rush (*Juncus patens*), stinging phacelia (*Phacelia malvifolia*), blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and hedgenettle (*Stachys bullata*) also thrive in forested areas throughout the reserve.



Point Lobos State Natural Reserve in 1939 (left) and 2016 (right). Photos: USDA & NRCS

Coastal scrub, the second most dominant plant community in Point Lobos, is characterized by coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), lizard tail (*Eriophyllum stachaeifolium*), and mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides*).

Coastal prairies in the Reserve are characterized by grasses such as purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*), California hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), and salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*) and wildflowers like checkerbloom (*Sidalcea malviflora*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).

Monterey cypress (*Hesperocyparis macrocarpa*) may not cover many acres in the Reserve, but their presence is striking: twisted trunks covered in the rust-orange algae (*Trentepohlia aurea* v. *polycarpa*) have captured the hearts of visitors for a century. Finally, coastal bluff species such as dune buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*), seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), and sea lettuce (*Dudleya ceaspitosa*) cling to the rocky shoreline.

Now that we know the current extent of plant communities in Point Lobos, we can compare that with historical maps from 1936 to determine how

much vegetation has changed. From 1936 to 2016, the extent of Monterey pine forest grew from 24.9 percent to 57.7 percent.

In contrast, native and exotic grasslands are now just a fraction of their 1936 extent (43.7 percent in 1936 to 8.3 percent in 2016). Vegetation in the Reserve shifted over the last century from predominantly native coastal prairie and annual grassland to coastal scrub and Monterey pine forest due to changes in land use and ownership.

The changes observed in Point Lobos vegetation demonstrate what we would expect in conditions of natural succession without disturbance. Coastal prairies persist in a landscape due to disturbances such as fire or grazing that remove woody vegetation and maintain an open canopy.

Julia Fields recently completed her master's degree in Applied Marine and Watershed Science from CSUMB and joined the staff of the Point Lobos Foundation.



The flowering of an engineer

He wrote the book on wildflowers but first it was a binder

by Art Muto

How did a Silicon Valley engineer become a wildflower lover and the author of a guide book on the flora of Point Lobos?

The seed of my transformation can be traced to Point Lobos. It was an escape for my wife and me from the everyday pressures of work. We would regularly drive down from Silicon Valley to the Monterey area to decompress for a few days.

We'd hike or jog the trails of Point Lobos on every visit. Like many visitors, we noticed wildflowers just as little splashes of color as we quickly journeyed through the Reserve.

Once retired, our visits became less frequent, so we invented a new reason to visit Point Lobos. We decided to become docents, totally unaware that I was beginning on a new path, one that would eventually lead to my publishing the book on wildflowers that is sold today at the Information Center.

So, how did I suddenly blossom into a wildflower enthusiast? The training my wife and I received to



Art shares his passion for wildflowers with a guest on a PLF walk for members.

become Point Lobos Docents in 2004 was the essential ingredient that enabled the seed to sprout beginning my love of wildflowers.

The training literally opened our eyes, allowing us to truly see and appreciate details of nature that we had previously overlooked. As trainees, we were encouraged to photograph everything that we saw on the trails as a way to learn, in a deeper sense, the Point Lobos that we would interpret for visitors.

With my first digital point-and-shoot camera in hand, my transformation began. Among the hundreds of photos captured, many included the wonderful wildflowers of Point Lobos. Since the only wildflower that I could identify prior to training was the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), more experienced docents (a special thanks to Shirley Sparling for patiently sharing her knowledge) helped me identify the wildflowers that I had photographed within Point Lobos during our training walks.

But the real pivotal, “ah-ha” moment arose when I viewed wildflower photos larger than life on the computer monitor. Suddenly, I could discern details that were not apparent in a casual glance at the wildflower in situ.

I discovered Mother Nature had delicately painted or sculpted each beautiful bloom.

How could one view beauties such as the white globe lily (*Calochortus albus*), soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), Johnny nip (*Castilleja ambigua* ssp. *insalutata*) and large-flowered star tulip (*Calochortus uniflorus*), and not be forever hooked? My transformation was complete.

Naturally, I continued to photograph wildflowers in the Reserve as a docent and soon discovered that I could look at a plant and know that I had identified this plant, but was unable to access the plant's name from aging brain cells. As an aid to learning, I created a binder full of wildflower photos and information about each plant identified. The binder grew as more plants were "discovered."

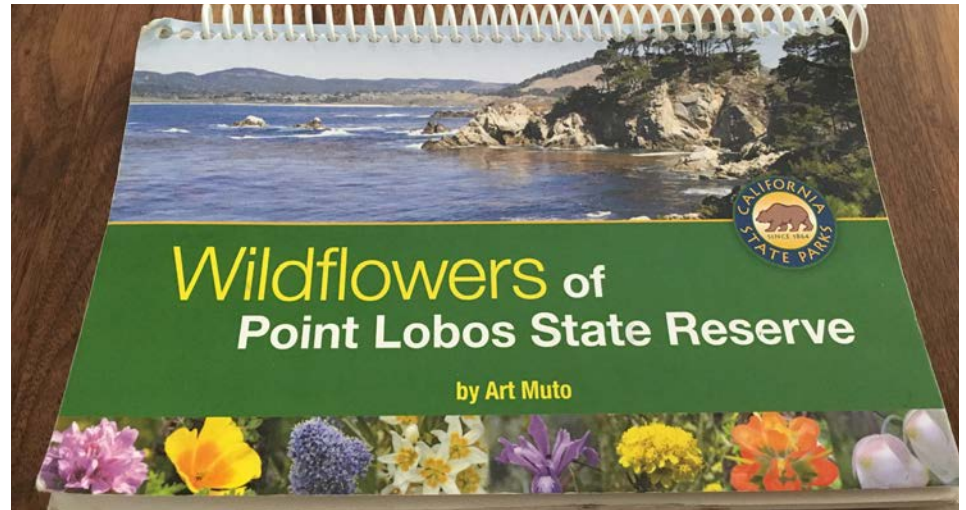
By 2005, the binder included 175 plants. When other docents saw me using the binder to identify plants in Point Lobos, they asked for copies. After over a hundred copies were being utilized by my fellow docents, the board of the Point Lobos Association (later renamed the Point Lobos Foundation) asked if I would be interested in creating a book based upon the binder.

I agreed without realizing the challenging time commitment required. My goal was to create a book that my wife and I wished we had when we were neophytes, training to become docents.

With the help of volunteers Rodney Warren, Tamiko Rast, Peggy Grier and a host of others, the field guide, *Wildflowers of Point Lobos State Reserve*, was published in 2008. I donated the book rights so that sales solely benefit the Point Lobos Foundation as a "thank you"

for transforming this engineer into a wildflower enthusiast. (The book is sold at the Information Station for \$27 but docents and PLF members receive a 20 percent discount).

Art Muto has been a Point Lobos Docent for 13 years. He enjoys sharing his passion for wildflowers with visitors and with docents-in-training. Nature hikes and photography are his favorite past times. He and his wife lead walks in Point Lobos twice a month. The walks are free and open to the public.



Art Muto's indispensable guide to Point Lobos flora.



Johnny nip, Photo: Art Muto

Wildflowers of Point Lobos | A pop-out guide



Dune Buckwheat
Eriogonum parvifolium



Poison Oak
Toxicodendron diversilobum



Wild Cucumber, Man-root
Marah fabacea



White Globe Lily
Calochortus albus



Nuttall's Locoweed
Astragalus nuttallii



Coyote Brush
Baccharis pilularis ssp.
consanguinea



Coyote Brush
Baccharis pilularis ssp.
consanguinea



Coastal Bush Lupine
Lupinus arboreus



Sun Cup
Taraxia ovata



Coastal Gum Plant
Grindelia stricta var.
platyphylla



Golden Yarrow
Eriophyllum confertiflorum



Lizard-tail
Eriophyllum staechadifolium



Deerweed
Acemison glaber



Sticky Monkey Flower
Mimulus aurantiacus var.
aurantiacus



California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica



Seaside Painted Cup
Castilleja latifolia



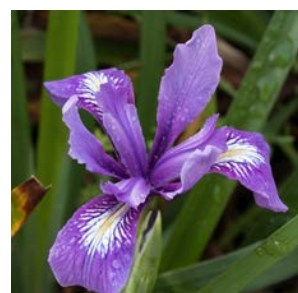
Wood Mint
Stachys bullata



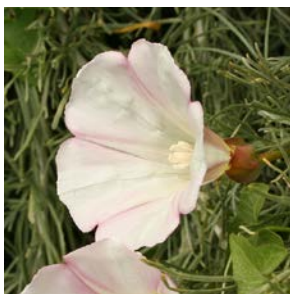
Seaside Daisy
Erigeron glaucus



Coastal Bush Lupine
Lupinus arboreus



Douglas Iris
Iris douglasiana



Coast Morning-glory
Calystegia macrostegia



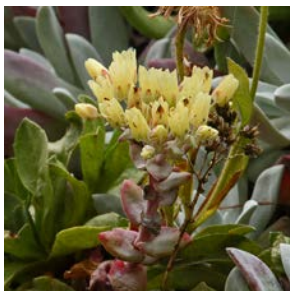
Douglas' Nightshade
Solanum douglasii



California Blackberry
Rubus ursinus



Fremont's Star Lily
Toxicoscordion fremontii



Bluff Lettuce
Dudleya farinosa



Dune Buckwheat
Eriogonum parvifolium



California Cudweed
Pseudognaphalium californicum



Seaside Painted Cup
Castilleja latifolia



Coast Tarweed
Deinandra corymbosa



California Buttercup
Ranunculus californicus



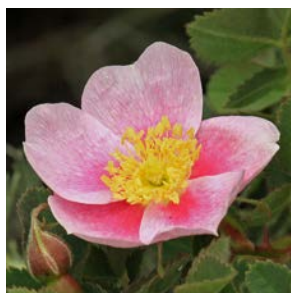
Pretty Face, Golden Brodiaea
Triteleia ixioides



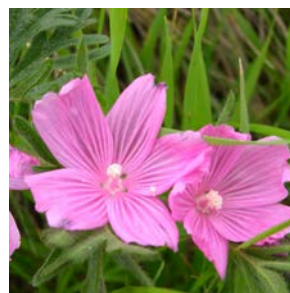
California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica



Dune Buckwheat
Eriogonum parvifolium



California Wild Rose
Rosa californica



Checker Bloom
Sidalcea malviflora ssp.
malviflora



Sea Pink, Thrift
Armeria maritima ssp.
californica



Blue-eyed Grass
Sisyrinchium bellum



Blue Dicks
Dichelostemma capitatum



Sky Lupine
Lupinus nanus



Blue Blossom, Wild Lilac
Ceanothus thyrsiflorus

A silken weaver among the blue blossoms

Ceanothus provides a magnificent moth a place to propagate

by Chuck Bancroft

Ceanothus is a member of the Buckthorn family *Rhamnaceae*. There are about 50-60 species of ceanothus, all in the form of shrubs to small trees and, for the most part, confined to the western United States. About 15 are found in Monterey County. One is *Ceanothus thrysiflorus*.

Point Lobos State Natural Reserve has some of the most beautiful examples of this native California shrub, commonly known as blue blossom or wild lilac. Occurring along the Bird Island Trail and north along the South Shore road to the Cypress Grove Trail, the bush has a fragrance during the blooming season that is intoxicating.

This shrub can grow taller than 6 feet and usually is



wider than taller. Blue blossom is evergreen, with leaves ranging from bright green to dark green. It has small flowers that are produced in a dense, puff-shaped cluster. They bloom in the winter or spring, and then mature into a dry, three-lobed seed capsule.

Its flowers are important for bees and butterflies, and its seedpods are an important food source for birds and small mammals. Blue blossom grows in full sun or part shade. In the hotter, inland part of its range, it does better with more shade, on northern slopes, and if closer to an irrigated or a naturally moister area. In the cooler coastal part of its range, it prefers more sun and can tolerate drier locations.

For years I have enjoyed the blooms and marveled at the long-lasting show of flowers. On many occasions I have seen the truly magnificent silk moth *Hyalophora euryalus* flying around the Reserve and other locations where the blue blossom occurs.

As fate would have it, I had never found the caterpillar or cocoon during my many years at the Reserve. Thank goodness for the ever-watchful and observant docents. Nelson Balcar discovered several caterpillars on a ceanothus bush along the South Shore road just south of the Weston Beach parking lots. His posting on the docent website encouraged many of us to seek out the critters to take pictures. As of this date, I am still watching two cocoons waiting for the moths to emerge. Luckily, I was previously able to capture this beautiful moth in all its glory.

Our silk moth belongs to the wild silk moth family *Saturniidae*. This family includes some of the largest and most spectacular moths in the world, particularly the tropical rain forest. The ceanothus silk moth is the western version of the cecropia. It has 4 1/2 inch wingspan, and its reddish-brown upper sides are marked with white,



Facing page, left: Ceanothus in bloom. Facing page, right: Chrysalis. This page, left: Ceanothus silkmoth caterpillar. This page, right: Ceanothus moth. Photos: Chuck Bancroft

crescent-shaped slashes and a small eyespot in the corner of the upper wing

Their silken armor is very tough, and they have been used for millennia by Pomoan and other California Indian groups as ceremonial rattles. The cocoons would be gathered, their occupants evicted, and gravel inserted for sound. They would be sewn onto ceremonial dress or glued onto a handle to make a rattle.

As an adult, the moth's primary purpose is to find a member of the opposite sex and hopefully copulate. Females emit a chemical scent (pheromone) that attracts a male suitor. Adult moths have atrophied mouth parts and do not feed. They soon die after completing their sole function, which is to mate, thus passing on their DNA and perpetuating the species. The couple remains together in a daylong process.

The female will scatter eggs on many bushes with as many as 400 being deposited. The larvae feed on the leaves and at maturity in the fall they grow to a length of up to 4 inches and resemble fat, light green sausages with stubby legs.

After feeding all summer, the larva spins a flask-shaped, silken cocoon that hangs from the host shrub. The cocoons

have numerous predators. Woodpeckers and jays can punch through the tough silk, and deer mice, other rodents, ichneumon flies with long ovipositors, ants, and humans also take a toll. The adults emerge in the spring but only survive for a week or two.

So, when you are out exploring Point Lobos be sure to take a close look at every blue blossom you pass by. You never know what you might find hiding among the leaves and securely attached to the branches.

Be sure to have your camera or cell phone with you to capture this miracle of nature.

Chuck Bancroft spent 31 of his 35-year career as a State Parks Ranger at Point Lobos. In retirement, he still does programs and nature walks for members of the Point Lobos Foundation. His sources for this article include Wayne's Word, an online textbook of natural history, and montereywildflowers.com.



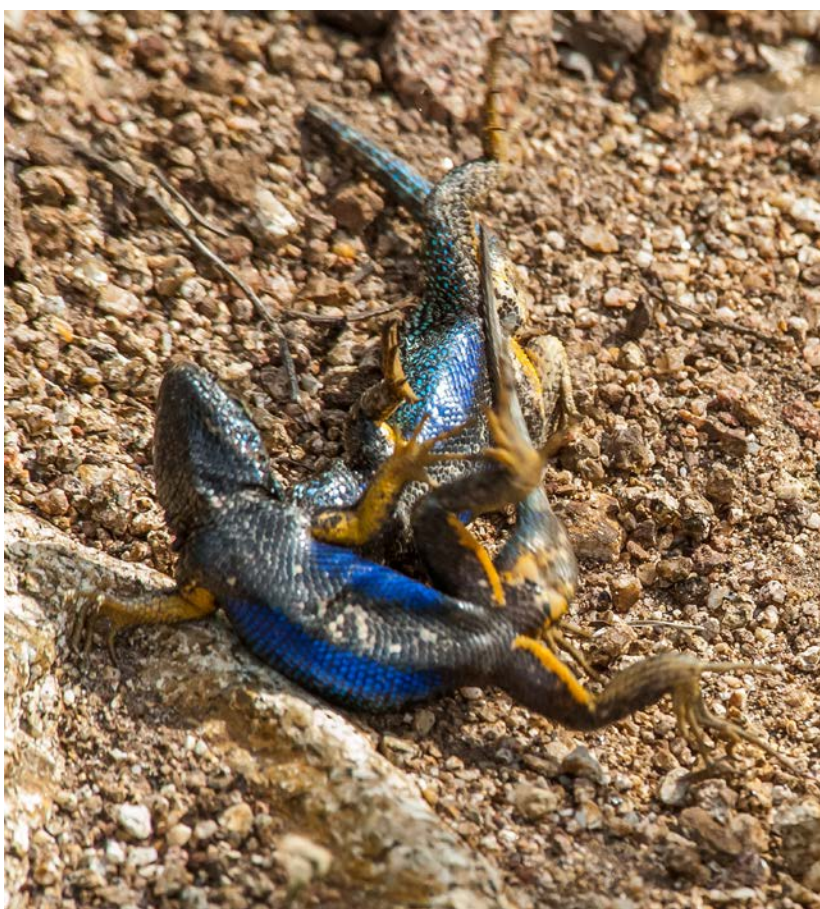


Notes from the docent log

Compiled by Ruthann Donahue

On Earth Day 2017, in addition to Pigeon Guillemots at Guillemot Island (who knew?), a newborn harbor seal hitching a ride on a “driftwood” pallet, otter rafts and all the other usual suspects, we had two blue bellies (aka fence lizards) put on a quite a show. One had found a nice sunny spot and was being all paparazzi friendly just past Bird Island bridge. And then things got really interesting, at least for the sun bather. A newbie arrived and thought, “My, this seems nice. Think I’ll grab a piece of this.” And proceeded to do so. After a few moments of flying blue bellies, the newbie took over the sun spot, at least for a few minutes. Must have had gotten bored, or disliked all the cameras in its face, as it took off a few minutes later.

Dave Evans, 4/23/2017



Fence lizards, Photo: Dave Evans

I really want to share with you my experiences on my first day as a “real” docent! Our Class of 39 got our jackets last Sunday, and yesterday I was just itching to get back to the Reserve and do something. So I put my new vest on, got a scope and one of the new pelt rings from the Docent Center, and headed out to Sea Lion Point.

I found a place to set up the scope where I could switch between the sea lions on the rocks offshore and — would you believe this — a raft of 11 sea otters in Headland Cove. Eleven! Unbelievable, just like they had assembled there to welcome me. Visitors coming through were just amazed and the gasps and giggles and excitement when looking through the scope often needed no translation from their native language.

I had two particularly memorable encounters. One guy who came through with a small family group took some time to sincerely thank me, saying he thought volunteer docents were the “top of the pyramid” and “completely makes our visit so much better,” and that we were people that he most admired in life. Quite a morale lift!

The second was a couple from England, and after going through the scope routine I asked them what part of England they were from. Based on their answer, I asked them if they knew a small town in the middle of England called Market Harborough, and they said “Yes, that’s about 20 minutes away from us.” That very small town is where I was born! What an amazing feeling of such a small world we live in, and a wonderful connection for both of us to meet so far away.

An amazing day - fun from start to finish - and a great beginning to my docent career.
Peter Fletcher, 5/17/2017



The friendly faces of Docent Class 39 celebrate their graduation. From left, Peter Fletcher, Karen Wagner, Susie Pair, Jan Cambier, Peter Iacullo, Claudia Vierendeis, Kathleen Ryan, Peter Nodzinski, Pamela Krone, Rafael Sanchez, Flo Sales, Leni Hazlet, Jack Arnold, Chris Wagner, Linda Bell. Not pictured: Beth Kurzana. Photo: Paul Reps

At an early morning harbor seal pup watch at China Cove, there were three juvenile harbor seals, one very pregnant female and a blood spot with a bit of placenta still left on the beach from an earlier birth. Only one mom and pup were swimming in the cove. All of a sudden all the harbor seals started scrambling for the water. A coyote came charging out of the scrub at the left side of the beach, running right for the juveniles! Fortunately, they all made it into the water safely. As the coyote turned back up the beach toward the slope, a mother and pup came out of the small cave at the far right side of the beach where they had been hiding. The coyote missed them and climbed up the slope near where the old stairs used to be, crossed the trail and disappeared into the forest at the top of the ridge between the cove and the Bird Island picnic area.

Susie Pair, 4/20/17

I was at Point Lobos with friends yesterday, on the North Shore and Cypress Grove trails. One of them very correctly observed that it was like “walking through postcards”.

Rick Pettit, 3/2/2017

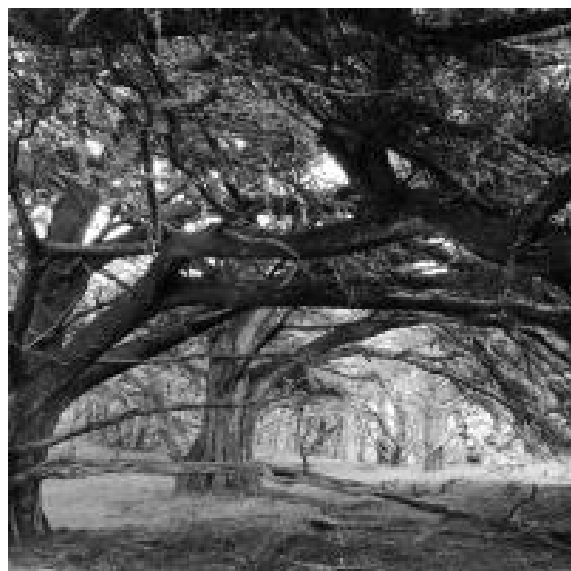


Photo: Rick Pettit



Old Veteran, circa 2010, in all its glory. Photo: Lyle Brumfield

There must be hundreds of thousands of photographs and paintings of the Old Veteran Cypress, tucked away in albums, displayed as computer screen savers, hanging on walls and art galleries around the world. Its brave countenance has stood proudly in all its glory, as we gazed in wonder, from a respectable distance across Cypress Cove, and marveled at the tenacity and beauty of its bold stand, defying nature's inevitable call for centuries.

It has now lost most its footings, and strong twisted limbs no longer hold the boughs with cones that scattered its prodigy throughout Point Lobos — though I shall forever remember this Cypress in its former glory. I have asked State Parks if they would find a way to gather seeds and nurture a seedling in a more hospitable area of the Reserve as a dedication to this inspiring icon. And although Joyce Kilmer once wrote, "I think that I shall never see, A poem lovely as a tree," my tribute to The Old Veteran follows on the next page.

Fred Brown, 6/12/2017



Old Veteran, June 2017, after it lost a major limb. Photo: Gail Griffin

*The Old Veteran
A veteran of not some forgotten war,
those proud scars laid bare on
twisted branches
are spoils from many epic battles
fought and won
with nature's forces.
Wounded and splintered dearly now,
gnarled roots still married to every crevice
of the rocky cliff once embraced forever,
grain on grain must now surrender
to their twisted fate.*

© Fred Brown

Spare me the trash talk

by Reg Henry

A little remarked aspect of the American national character is the irresistible urge to hold meetings. In this great sprawling democracy of ours, people feel the need to have their say. This is good.

Meetings are the means by which the deep-seated desire for discussion is sated. So far so good. The trouble is that the meetings become ritualistic. By the time the minutes and the agenda and all the formalities are brought to bear, tedium has a good possibility of developing. This is not so good.

The danger is universal in American society. A visitor from outer space who came down to observe U.S. corporate life would marvel that any actual work was ever done. Corporate staffers are always at meetings.

Even our sports are not meeting-free zones. Baseball, the supposed national pastime, has its meetings. They are held on the pitcher's mound while the crowd is left to chew its crackerjack. As for football, what are huddles other than meetings of very large people not familiar with Robert's Rules of Order?

Meetings, meetings everywhere and not a drop of sense, to paraphrase a famous poet. Which brings me to a public meeting/workshop convened by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on March 24, at Rancho Canada. Members of the commission were in the area

that Friday to tour state properties, including Point Lobos.

I went to the meeting, not only because I am a glutton for punishment, but because I wanted to learn something. I learned something alright. What I learned made me angry and sad. It was enough that I wished for a bit of old-fashioned meeting tedium.

The meeting started conventionally enough. The commission members made individual statements that affirmed they had been much impressed by their tour of Point Lobos that morning.

The Point Lobos Foundation's vice president, Kit Armstrong, ably described the foundation's position on the general plan process. A local elected official said that despite differences, the commissioners would find that everybody loved Point Lobos.

Then the discussion was thrown open to the public and the idea of universal love was confounded. Several local residents who live near the reserve made it quite clear they can't stand the place. They decried the traffic and the cars parked on Highway 1. They lamented the crowds of visitors. They said they never visit the reserve anymore but take-out-of-town guests elsewhere.

By my count, the reserve was described as "trashed" at least four times. This was definitely not good. Indeed, it was profoundly shocking to someone like myself who volunteers as a docent in order to be in a place that I believe is one of the most beautiful on Earth.

Yet, as offended as I was, I am not about to dismiss the sincerely held concerns of these critics. In general, they have a point about the crowds and traffic. If I lived nearby, I may very well feel the same as they do, although I hope I could keep my

hyperbole in check.

The truth is that crowds coming to Point Lobos have grown larger and larger every year. But they come because it is beautiful, not because the jewel no longer shines. This whole magazine is full of photographs attesting to that beauty.

Yes, Point Lobos is in danger of being loved to death. The point that others need to take away is that the prospective general plan is a crucial document in the effort to preserve the reserve for future generations while balancing the interests of local residents and visitors alike. In the meantime, trails are being rehabilitated and invasive plants are being uprooted, efforts supported by the Point Lobos Foundation.

So I am here to belatedly say, as the notion was not rebutted at the time, "Point of order, Ms. Chairwoman, Point Lobos is not trashed; it is stressed, frayed around the edges, but it is still an extraordinary place. Those of us who love it dearly know the problem and are devoting our every effort to make it better. Anybody is welcome to join us. Actions speak louder than words at meetings."

Reg Henry is editor of the Point Lobos Magazine and the opinions expressed here are his own. His e-mail address is regwriter43@gmail.com.





Acknowledgements

Memorials, tributes and grants January 1 - June 21, 2017

MEMORIALS

In memory of Maxine and James Bachman
Steve Bachman

In memory of Patricia Bowler
Karen Bowler

In memory of Harold H. Brown
Marlene L. Brown

In memory of Herman Bruski
Sandy Wagner

In memory of Shirley Doe
Jay and Tricia Cedarleaf

In memory of Mitzi Francis
Dean Francis

In memory of Tom Keyani
Barbara Keyani

In memory of Harry Kuroiwa
Harriet Kuroiwa

In memory of Brenda Murphy
Madeleine Murphy

In memory of Jerold Perry
Alvin Milder
David and Phyllis Rothman
Jody Sherman

In memory of Ronald Rico
Lisa Susanne Larson

In memory of Richard M. Jacobs on
Father's Day
Linda R. Jacobs

In memory of Stan Summers
Dick and Eileen Landis

In memory of Jean Tolley
Raymond Tolley

GRANTS

Richard Grand Foundation
*for trail work, restroom improvements
and invasive plant removal*

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TRIBUTES

In celebration of the Easy Access
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Alexanne Mills

In honor of Wayne Kelley
Bill and Barbara Deasy

In honor of the Garibaldi-Davis Family
Karin Herold Leonard

In celebration of Raimie Kriste
Tim J. Dietz

In honor of Ben Patrick
Paula Hansen

In celebration of Jay Sinclair on Father's
Day
Mike Sinclair

For the birthday of Louise Stuart
Phillip Butler and Barbara Baldock

SISTER ANNA VOSS FUND

Donations made to the Sister Anna
Voss Memorial Fund, and the income
generated by it, is restricted to the
education and direct support of the Point
Lobos Docent
Program and the school education
outreach programs.

Jean Artz
Nancy Bryson
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Kathy and Patrick Ryan
Kenneth and Sally Ann Sikes
Butch and Lori Voss

Docent Class 39
*in honor of their training team and the
many other docents who contributed to
their docent education*

Left, Trail Work at Sea Lion Point



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Word Search

By Donna Jennings

Words can appear horizontally, vertically, diagonally or backwards. Some letters are used more than once.

Avian	Night Heron
Birding	Northern
Birds	Owl
Black	Oyster
Blue	Pelagic
Brandts	Pigeon
Brown Pelican	Pygmy
California Thrasher	Quail
Canada Goose	Raven
Cormorants	Rocky
Crow	Scrub Jay
Crowned	Shape
Dark Eyed Junco	Shores
Eggs	Size
flicker	Snowy Egret
Flight	Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Spring
gull	Towhee
Hairy Woodpecker	tree
Hawks	Turkey Vulture
Heermanns	West
Heron	Western
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Nesting	



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