

Friends of Tecolote Canyon



Family Day at the Nature Center

By Joan Brosnan

Friends of Tecolote Canyon were thrilled by the smiling faces on the parents and children who came to Family Day at the Tecolote Nature Center. Our goal is to increase community awareness of the unique habitat of the Coastal Sage Scrub and its inhabitants by providing engaging activities and events as well as family friendly opportunities for nature education, cultural education and physical exercise.

Family day encompassed hands-on educational and fun nature activities and experiences for all ages.



There were many lively questions from visitors about local venomous and non venomous snakes and answers from Friends of Tecolote Canyon volunteers. Interested adults and children had an opportunity to touch a non venomous snake.



The owl pellet dissection table provided an amazing experience for the adults and children and stimulated interest and inquiry into the beneficial environmental impact of the Barn Owl, one of the inhabitants of Tecolote Canyon.

Participants at the animal track station had the opportunity to discover more about the nocturnal inhabitants of the canyon by “writing their own animal track story” through the use of animal print rubber stamps.

The hands on crafts provided were environmentally friendly and repurposed natural items such as pinecones, sticks and tree branch slices that stimulated creativity for the children and adults! Further art activities for kids included creating clay pottery designs with natural materials and sand painting.



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Friends of Tecolote Canyon is a non-profit community organization committed to sponsoring nature education and restoration activities in Tecolote Canyon Natural Park. Our education program, supported by SDGE's "Environmental Champions Initiative", is dedicated to bringing children into Tecolote Canyon and fostering connection through enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful experiences in our unique and precious local habitat.

"An early-morning walk is a blessing for the whole day." ~ Henry David Thoreau



Families left some great comments in our guest book:

“Tecolote Family Day was awesome.”

“Thank you for letting us learn more about snakes and snake safety. I had a blast.”

“Thank you for the activities and learning about water and animals.”

Going to Tecolote Canyon is my best place to be. I love it because of all the living things that are around us.”

“ Keep the nature safe!”



Our next free community event, Baskets and Botany, celebrates the Kumeyaay culture and the traditions of the Southern California Native Americans.

Mark your calendars and join us on Saturday, October 8 from 10-4:00!

Meet James.....

If you have been to the nature center, you have probably already met one of our most active volunteers, James Esquivel. You will usually find him at the front desk, ready to greet visitors and answer questions about the center and the canyon. He also steps in wherever he is needed, from setting up events to introducing students to our resident snakes.

James grew up next to Tecolote Canyon and his fondest memories are of being able to play in the canyon without fear. “It was great! A lot of neighborhood kids were down there having fun.” Though he moved away, his parents remained in the area and he continued to visit them. As a result, he also regularly visited Tecolote and over the years watched the park and nature center being built.



James was a pharmacy technician for 38 years. When he retired, 3 years ago, it was an easy decision to spend some of his available time in the canyon he was so connected to, enjoying it and giving back to it through volunteering. “Some time” for James is an average of 300 hours per year. When asked about his other hobbies he simply said “family and friends, Mission Bay and Tecolote.” He enjoys walks around the bay, and still checks in on his parents regularly.



What he would like most for others to know about Tecolote is “how beautiful it is in spring.” After our first rains each year the canyon greens up and blooms very quickly. When you come to the nature center, or pass by on a hike, be sure to stop in and say hi! And, if you have any questions, James will most likely be there to answer them. :)

To the left is a picture of James next to a sycamore tree he planted two years ago. He planted it in the memory of a childhood friend who tragically lost her life in the canyon in 1975. For those of us old enough to remember, her name was Mary Ellen Martinez. James waters and tends to the tree on a regular basis. You can find it on the south side of the creek crossing near Gardena Ave.

Hawks of Tecolote Canyon

By Trent Robertson

Raptors, or birds of prey, are divided into several categories including *buteos*, *accipiters* and *falcons*. There are birds in each of these categories that are commonly referred to as “hawks”. The largest “hawks” in Tecolote Canyon are the Red-tailed Hawk and the Red-shouldered Hawk which are both in the *buteo* group.

This group of hawks is characterized by rounded wings and a fan-shaped tail. The rounded wings allow them to soar and glide on thermal updrafts. This minimizes their expenditure of energy when hunting for prey. The

Buteos feed on small mammals, reptiles, insects and sometimes small birds.

The Red-shouldered Hawk has a wingspan of up to 40 inches and the Red-tailed Hawk is even larger, with a wingspan of up to 50 inches.

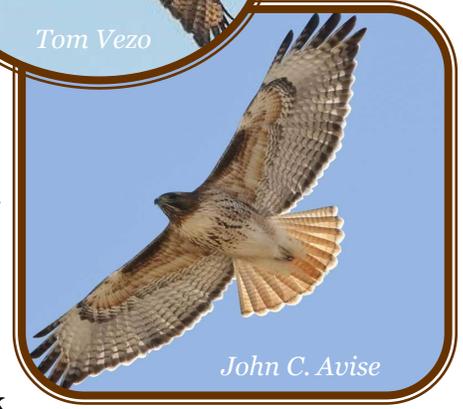
The Red-tailed Hawk has extremely variable plumage and the immature birds lack the distinctive “red” tail. The Red-shouldered Hawk has a heavily banded tail. The immature birds have vertical streaking on the breast and the mature birds have horizontal streaking. The Red-tailed Hawk will spend extensive periods of time soaring whereas the Red-shouldered Hawk will perch when not hunting. Both birds have a vocalization that sounds like “*Kee-yer*” but the Red-tailed version is more slurred and the Red-shouldered is harsher and is repeated multiple times.

The Red-tailed Hawk has one of the widest distributions of any raptor in North America from Canada to Mexico and across the U.S. because it can subsist in almost every kind of habitat. By Comparison the Red-shouldered Hawk is found on the west coast and in the Midwest and East but is absent from the Rocky Mountain States.



Red-Tailed Hawk

Tom Vezo



John C. Avise



Red-Shouldered Hawks ~ Photos from allaboutbirds.org

Excerpts from *Eloise Battle* ~ Other raptors you may see in the canyon



Johann Schumacher

Great Horned Owls are the only ones that say “whooo-whooo.” They can sometimes be heard and spotted perching on power lines or in trees at dusk.

Barn Owls have been reported by several residents around the canyon.



Public Domain



Mary Strode

The hawk with the long banded tail, that silently slips into the cover of a tree is probably a **Cooper's Hawk**.

The hawk that is flying in a lumbering manner close to the ground with a conspicuous white patch on its rump is a **Harrier Hawk** looking for lunch.



Steve Berardi

Join us on the Trail *Story and photos by Leona Heraty*



Steve and Leona

Our daily hikes

I've been hiking the trails at Tecolote Canyon Natural Park for five years. My husband, Steve, has been hiking them for fifteen. We try our best to hike the canyon every day, and really miss hiking on the days when we have other stuff going on or it's rainy. Our 3.5 mile roundtrip hike begins at the Nature Center and veer off to the right on to the scenic Battle Trail. As we return to the main utility road, we head toward the golf course go up the first hill, and turn around, retracing our steps back to the Nature Center. We really look forward to our daily hikes. We need the exercise, but also, being in nature, among the fascinating wildlife and beautiful plants, lifts our spirits and it's good for our souls. Trudging up the hill makes us feel like we've accomplished something challenging every day!

When I make it to the top of the hill, the view of the canyon and beyond is breathtaking and totally worth the effort!

Tecolote Canyon has an interesting variety of wildlife. We regularly see lizards, hummingbirds, hawks, rabbits, black beetles, blue jays and yellow-breasted birds. Occasionally, we see coyotes and several months ago, we saw a baby coyote on the utility road. He stared at us for a few seconds and ran into the bushes. Sometimes, when we hike at dusk or at night, we see owls flying overhead and hear their wise hoots. Occasionally, we see gopher snakes and rattlesnakes.

We keep our eyes and ears open.

Once, I almost stepped on a rattlesnake because I wasn't paying attention to the trail in front of me! Luckily, I heard the snake's rattle and stopped in time! Many people we've talked to about hiking in the canyon have expressed their fear of rattlesnakes, and rightly so. We always tell them that rattlesnakes don't seek out and attack people, like sharks do! They move really slowly, and they make a rattling noise for a reason – to warn you to stay away! The rattlesnake doesn't want to encounter you any more than you want to encounter it. I've learned from experience to always keep my eyes on the trail in front of me, scan the horizon, (like I do when I'm driving) and keep my ears open for the sound of the rattle.



We Meet Interesting People and Enjoy the Changing Seasons

We always enjoy visiting with the interesting people we meet on the trail, such as Linda, a regular fellow hiker, and cyclists, Ralph and Skip. We've met a man who we call the "rock elf guy." He likes to pile rocks, near the beginning of the Battle Trail, into cool-looking pillars! We love the colorful variety of wildflowers that bloom in the spring and early summer, the squash that grows in the fall and how the leaves on the trees change to breathtaking colors of red, yellow and orange. Also, it's a real treat to see the festive bright red berries that grow on the toyon in the winter.

We Enjoy the Fringe Benefits

We regularly check out the Nature Center's bulletin board, updated by Marla Gilmore, the upbeat and friendly manager. She posts all the current happenings at the Center and also information about which birds you can see in the canyon, depending on the time of year. We also enjoy visiting the exhibits at the Nature Center and occasionally seeing up close the snakes that live there. James, a friendly volunteer who handles the snakes, always has interesting facts to share about the snakes that live at the Center and the Canyon.

I hope you enjoyed reading about our experiences while hiking at Tecolote Canyon and we hope to see you on the trail soon!





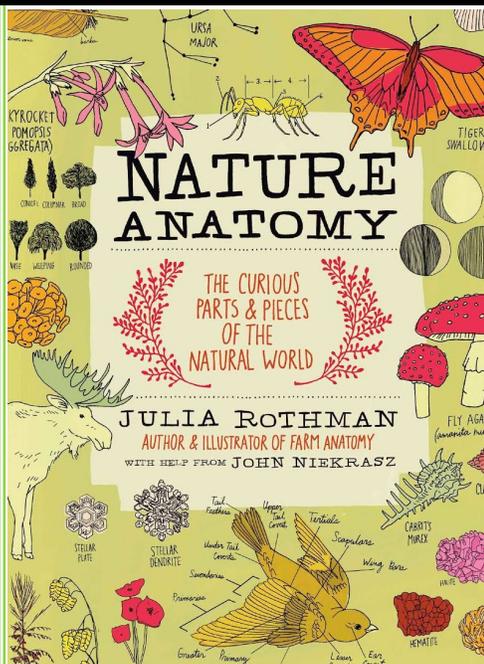
Sighted In Tecolote

Ranger Matt and the nature center director, Mara , recently came across this southern pacific rattlesnake and it's prey, a cottontail rabbit. If you would like to see an amazing video of the snake dragging the rabbit, visit our "Friends of Tecolote" facebook page.

Pacific rattlers run between 3' and 4' in length and though they consume 40% of their body weight over the course of a year, some have been known to consume 23% of their weight in one meal. Maybe this one is going for the record. ☺

Though we have had many rattlesnake sightings in the canyon, we have had no reported bites. However it is always wise to only hike in areas where you can see the path in front of you. And, don't put your hands and feet in areas where you cannot see,

"One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, 'What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?'" — Rachel Carson

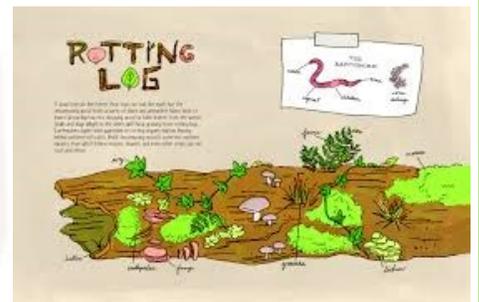


Book Review—by Linda Stafford

Whenever I am researching a new subject, I first check out the children's section of the library or web-sites for kids because those resources tend to give the most important information in the simplest terms. That is the reason I fell in love with this book. It's a resource book, it's simple, it's stunning, and it's for all ages.

It is not a go to book for a research report, but rather each page is a beautiful jumping off point for further study on anything from mysterious mosses to the making of mountains, from the shape of snow flakes to the anatomy of a jelly fish. It also serves as an inspiration for anyone taking up nature journaling. It makes you want to grab a notebook, some colored pencils, and head outside.

Regardless of age or interest, I believe anyone looking through the pages of this book will have a hard time putting it down. ""



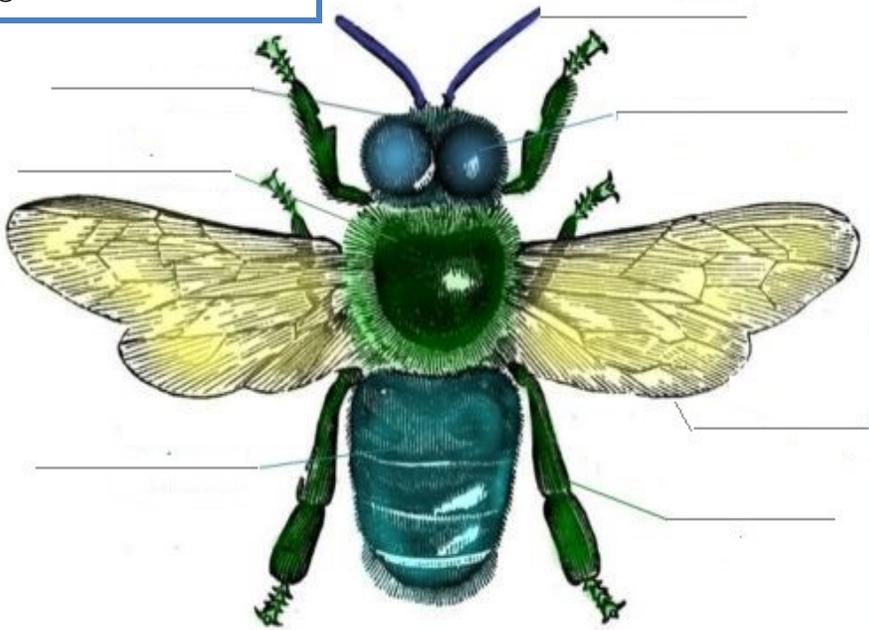
Kids Corner



One of these things is not like the other....☺

Can you name the parts of the fly using these words ?

- Antenna
- Compound eye
- Wing
- Leg
- Abdomen
- Head
- Thorax



Every Insect

Every insect (ant, fly, bee)
Is divided into three:
One head, one chest, one stomach part.
Some have brains.
All have a heart.

Insects have no bones, No noses.
But with feelers they can smell
Dinner half a mile away.
Can your nose do half as well?

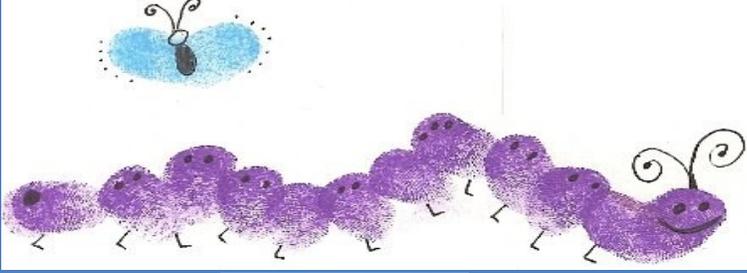
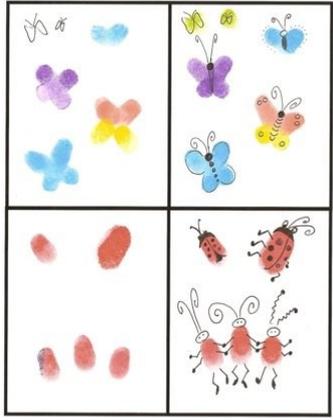
Also you'd be in a fix
With all those legs to manage:
Six.

Dorothy Aldis

Craft Idea

Fingerprint bugs are fun and easy to make, even for adults! Using inkpads, or water-based paint and markers create your own bug world, full of colorful insects!

<http://kids4crafts.blogspot.com/>



Events in the Park

NOTICE: The Tecolote Nature Center will be subject to intermittent closures through September while the roof is being replaced. All events will go ahead as planned, however, please check our fb and meet-up pages for any location changes to the recreation center during the renovation.

Saturday, Aug. 4th 9:00-4:00 Clairemont Family Day

At the South Clairemont Rec. ~ Look for the Tecolote Booth

Sunday Aug 14th 8:00-11:00 Nature Walk – Mount Carol Etna

With our interpretive guide and insect expert Jerry Jacobs—see our meet-up page for directions

Wednesday, Aug 17th & Sept 21st 1:30-3:00 Art & Activities for Kids

The theme for Aug is “THE BEACH” and Septembers theme will be “FALL”

Aug 20th & Sept 17th 9:00 -11:00 Weed Warriors (3rd Saturdays)

Clean up the canyon with Park Ranger Janice. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants.

gloves and tools provided

Aug 21st and Sept 18th: 9:00– 12:00 Sunday in the Garden (3rd Sundays)

Volunteer with Park Ranger Steven in our native plant garden.

Get dirty, have fun, help out your community! *gloves and tools provided*

Aug: 27th and Sept 24th 8:00am Beginning Birder Walk (4th Saturdays)

People come from all over the world to see and hear the birds in our canyon. No experience?

No problem! Plenty of helpful birders on this walk. TNC Trent Robertson—Host/Guide

Sunday Sept 4th 9:00-12:00 Nature Walk – Chateau Dr. entrance

With our interpretive guide and insect expert Jerry Jacobs—see our meet-up page for directions

TNC = Tecolote Nature Center entrance

Updated activities are posted at:

<http://www.meetup.com/Friends-of-Tecolote-Canyon-Natural-Park-and-Nature-Center/>

&

<http://www.meetup.com/The-San-Diego-Beginning-Birders/>

&

www.facebook.com/friendsoftecolotecanyon

For more information call 858-581-9959 ~

Tecolote Nature Center ~ 5180 Tecolote Road San Diego, CA 92110

For information call 858-581-9959

Front Desk (585) 581-9944

Park Rangers (858)581-9961

Senior Park Ranger (858)581-9952

Friends of Tecolote (858)292-5548

Tecolote Advisory Committee (858)581-9959

Center Director (858)581-9959

Hours of operation: Tues.-Saturday; 9-4:00, Sunday: 9-2:00, Closed Monday



Like us on Facebook – Friends of Tecolote Canyon
Activities are free of charge.

Donations to the “Friends of Tecolote Canyon
are always appreciated!”

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities at Tecolote:

Nature Center Docent

Tecolote Canyon Interpretive Guides (TCIG),

Native Plant Garden

Weed Warriors

Elementary Outreach Assistants

Park Patrol

Art and Craft Events

Tecolote Canyon Advisory Committee (TCCAC).

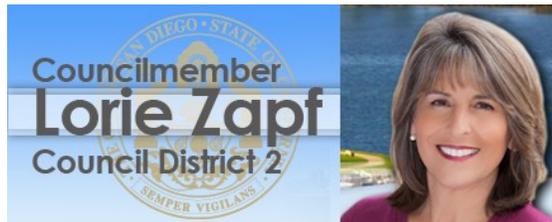
Environmental Stewards Canyon Program (ESCAPE)



Friends of Tecolote Canyon and the ESCAPE team
gratefully acknowledge a generous grant from SDGE
supporting another year of our Escape program

We are presently seeking additional corporate and
private donations for the 2015/16 school year, to continue our mission to
“Inspire students to connect with nature and respond by becoming stewards of Tecolote Canyon.”

Thank you to all of our Family Day Sponsors!!



SD City Council Community Project and Services

