



Friends of Tecolote Canyon

February 2020
Volume 5, Issue 2

Marian Bear Park, Photo credit: Joan Brosnan

Inside This Issue

Bear Update, Art Fun, Appreciation.....2
Highschoolers in Canyon & Events.....3



ESCAPE in Tecolote



A team of prospective and returning Naturalists descended upon Tecolote Canyon as part of Friends of Tecolote Canyon's ESCAPE workshop on the morning of Sunday, January 26.

Naturalists joined Ranger Erika and Coordinator Dani to enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of January nature in the canyon. The Environmental Stewards Canyon Program [ESCAPE] Naturalists collaborated, connected, and geared up for an exciting field trip season ahead. The ESCAPE program offers free outdoor field trip experiences with community school teachers in grades K-5.

Quiz: Can you predict which canyon creature our coordinator Dani most self-identified with?

Answer on page 3.

Taking a Hike

Fitness Walk
By Marla Gilmore, Center Director



On Sunday, January 12, we offered our first fitness hike in Tecolote Canyon. Thanks to Cali4Fitness owners Jillian and Tato for leading the group in a faster-paced walk complete with warm up exercises and a cardio blast at the end.

"43 people on the hike"

We took the Battle Trail and went up what I like to call Cardiac Hill, or Military Hill as some folks call it, since members of the military are often seen hiking here. We had a total of 43 people on the hike, many of whom had never been to Tecolote Canyon, even though it is right in their own backyard. The hike was such a success that we plan to do more in the future. We hope to see you on the trail!

Trails Tell Tales
By Joan Brosnan

Usually when walking through Tecolote Canyon, my head swivels as I scan the area and I am listening intently for any nature encounters. After the rain, I have another option. I look downward in the mud along the undisturbed edges of the trail for animal tracks.



On December 24, I renewed my sense of wonder as the mud revealed an intriguing variety of tracks by small rodents, lizards, birds and earthworms. Even with the help of an excellent field guide, there is much to learn about identifying specific species tracks. Every time I walk in Tecolote Canyon, it provides new opportunities for me to learn and delight in the natural world.

Wherever the wild four foot goes, it leaves behind it a detailed record of its visit; the ancient script of the woods, the script of the footmark trail, the story of a portion of its life.
--Ernest T. Seton

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Giggles, Art, and Activities



Special Thanks to Dave and Cyndee Batzler



Dave's father, William, was a passionate birder. Growing up in Bay Park, Dave would flip through the pages of his dad's bird books. Dave wanted others to continue to benefit from his father's books and has donated them to Tecolote Nature Center.

Your donations are always appreciated
and make our programs possible.

You can donate to Friends of Tecolote
Canyon at Tecolote Nature Center, or at
our website:

www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org/donate

Bear Update

By Marla Gilmore



As many of you know, Park Ranger Erika found a Bearded Dragon in Marian Bear Park last Summer. Many community members rallied around and donated supplies to help care for "Bear" including an aquarium, lighting, food and even a Dubia Roach colony. Bear loves his Dubia Roaches! Initially, Bear could hardly lift his own body weight and wasn't in the best health. After some loving care from the staff at the Tecolote Nature Center, Bear's health started to improve.

In November, we noticed that his beard was swelling, and he was acting lethargic. We were afraid his days were numbered. Following a trip to the vet and regular antibiotic injections, the infection in his beard went away. He is better than ever now! Bear is full of life and energy, eating healthy and bringing joy to visitors of all ages.

Volunteer Bud Phillips with Bear

Thanks to the Tecolote staff, the Friends of Tecolote Canyon, and our wonderful volunteer, Bud Phillips, for contributing funds to help pay for Bear's veterinary bills. We are so lucky to have such a caring community of friends! Feel free to stop by the nature center any time to see how Bear is doing.



Bear, before antibiotics



Bear, after: healthy again!

Oh What Crafty Fun at January Kids Arts and Activities



February Events

Tecolote Nature Center/Tri Canyon Parks

5180 Tecolote Road San Diego, CA 92110
858-581-9944

Park Ranger Office 858-581-9961

Monday – Closed, Tuesday –Saturday 9:00-4:00,
Sunday 9:00-2:00

Saturday, February 15

9:00-11:00 a.m. Weed Warriors

Help is needed in the restoration and revegetation areas. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes. No flip flops please. Bring sun protection and a refillable water bottle. * Arrive early to get a good parking spot.

Wednesday, February 19

1:30-3:00 Art & Activities for Kids- Free!

All about birds! Learn about our feathered friends and meet an animal ambassador from Project Wildlife. Get crafty and creative!

Beginning February 22

Intermediate Bird Identification Course

For information on the course and to enroll go to www.sandiegoriver.org or call Phil Pryde 619-465-9492 *Registration required.

Saturday, February 22

8:00 a.m. Audubon Society Birding Walk

All skill levels welcome! Audubon volunteers on hand to guide you.

Canyon Compadres Volunteer Group

9:00– 11:00 a.m. Two Wednesdays per month

Make new friends and help keep our canyons clean. Call Ranger Cameron for dates and locations. 858-581-9961

* Inclement weather may cancel activities

Many volunteer opportunities available!

Sign up at www.sandiego.gov/volunteer-program

Like us on Facebook/Friends of Tecolote Canyon
www.friendsoftecolotecanyon.org

About Friends of Tecolote Canyon

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.

ESCAPE in Tecolote continued from p. 1:

Quiz Answer: Coyote

High Schoolers in the Canyon

by Tri-Canyon Park Ranger Erika Weikel



Recently **local high school students** had the opportunity to participate in a community project. Their teacher, Mario Patino, presented them with some community partners that they could work with and one of these was Tecolote Canyon. Only a few of the 65 high schoolers had ever been to Tecolote Canyon and when given the choices on their area of interest to help, less than a handful were interested in getting involved with Tecolote Canyon. Then I, Tecolote Canyon Ranger Erika, went and spoke to Mr. Mario's students about the canyon, community and stewardship. After I left the students were asked again if they would be interested in getting involved with Tecolote Canyon . . . this time **98%** wanted to help!

Mr. Mario and I organized a field trip to Tecolote Canyon where the students could start to build a relationship with the canyon that spreads through their community. During that field trip students were encouraged to explore through journaling, photography and a scavenger hunt which led them to discover interrelationship in nature. The Tecolote Nature Center currently has some of the photos and observations from the students on display.

After an engaging afternoon in the Tecolote Canyon students and I spoke about ideas for how they can contribute to improving the park. Students worked on a variety of projects. Some made kiosk displays that discuss topics from invasive plants to dog etiquette in the park. Some put together native seed packets to give to local schools to plant in their school gardens in hopes that they too will take an interest in Tecolote Canyon. Another group drew backdrops for our reptile cages. Other students analyzed data on animal sightings by visitors.

These community high schoolers took an interest in becoming Stewards for Tecolote Canyon after just one visit. I am inspired by them as well as another group of students from Francis Parker. Several Francis Parker students have been volunteering in our restoration site with Weed Warriors every third Saturday of the month. Another Francis Parker group has volunteered and helped with maintaining trails and rebuilding the outdoor shade structure at the Tecolote Nature Center.

I have hope that these young individuals of our local communities will continue to grow in their appreciation for our natural canyons and take up the torch to protect these urban treasures from us dwindling naturalists.



I want to continue to expand working with middle school and high school students please feel free to contact me at: eweikel@sandiego.gov or Friday-Monday 858-581-9961.