

# Friends of Tecolote Canyon

Photo by Mark Hannibal

## Weed Warriors !

Welcome spring! And, thanks to a wonderful rainy season, Tecolote canyon is green and full of flowering plants. Unfortunately, not all of the plants are beneficial. In fact many of those beautiful new blooms are harmful to the balance of the canyon's ecosystem.

This is where the weed warriors step in! This eclectic group of volunteers, Led by Ranger Janice Lavellee, come together, once a month, to clear invasive plants, replant and water natives, clear dead brush, and remove trash from the canyon. They also help with general clean-up in the Native Garden and around the nature center.

When asked, the volunteers gave a variety of reasons for being there. Honor students from Kalle Palmer's science class at High Tech High receive school credit and enjoy the friendships they develop working together. Jerry Harris came out to get to know the canyon and to set an example for his 5 year old daughter. He is planning to bring her back for hikes and activities at the Nature Center. Kyla Zapisek, grew up next to Tecolote, she loves to work outdoors, and wants to contribute to the preservation of the canyon. Parents often accompany their teenagers who are earning community service credit for school by volunteering.



Jerry Harris trimming dead brush for removal.

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Kris Watkin, team lead and 2 year volunteer, watering newly established plants with Isabell Muriel from High Tech



Kyla Zapisek

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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.



The battle against invasive plants, including continued efforts to clean-up trash and pollutants, is a battle for the future of Tecolote Canyon. The Rangers of the Tri-Canyons ~Rose, Marion Bear, and Tecolote ~ need and appreciate the help of volunteers who desire to see the canyons continue to flourish. Please consider joining us in the on-going work of keeping Tecolote “*an island of nature in a sea of development.*”

The warriors meet every 3rd Saturday from 9-11. There is also a Wednesday Senior’s Day that meets from 9-12. Contact Ranger Janice for more information on either of these opportunities at 858-581-9959.



Keep close to  
nature’s heart.

*John Muir*





## Meet Margot ...

I was born in Switzerland and came to the U.S. at 20 years old. I've lived in New York and New Jersey. When I arrived in San Diego, in January of 1955, it really felt like Paradise, the Palm trees, sunshine, and warm climate. I met my husband two months after I arrived in S.D. It was love at first sight, we got married the same year and are still married. We moved into our Western Hills home in 1961, our boys loved to play in Tecolote Canyon. I was a volunteer at Longfellow school. I helped start the Library there, and ended up working for the City Schools as a librarian for 20 yrs. My favorite hobby is climbing mountains and traveling. I have hiked all over the world. I love nature, gardening, and cooking.

I first got involved at Tecolote by volunteering with Ranger Janice who over sees the canyon clean-up, invasive plant removal, and revegetation. I quickly became familiar with the Tri-Canyon system which includes Tecolote, Marion Bear, and Rose Canyon. Eventually, I began working with the school classrooms that came to the canyon, teaching them how to plant natives and the importance of them. I love to volunteer, have been doing it for almost 20 years, enjoy working with kids . I've been known as the Bug lady. I collect them in my back-yard or on the trail, I love all kinds of insects, and the kids are fascinated by them. I love the dedication and the camaraderie of the volunteers, at Tecolote. The Park Rangers and Marla are wonderful and encouraging. I'm always happy to see them.



## Meet Cheryl ...

I have been retired for over 15 years and during that time have had many volunteer "jobs" that have been a joy and or a challenge. When raising our family we all volunteered with the idea that it is important to support that which you enjoy, and the community in which you live. Volunteering continues to be an important part of my life, and the volunteer positions have almost always involved young children or animals. In thinking back over the past 15+ years, I find that 4 positions jump to the top of the lists. I volunteered for Wildlife Images in Grants Pass, Oregon helping to care for and return to nature, injured wildlife. I loved helping with Early Childhood Services, as I worked with young children and was the "go to lap" for individual story readings. Another position was with Fish and Wildlife Services. We lived for a month at a time on the Malhuer National Wildlife Refuge outside of Burns, Oregon. We helped with the historical stations, information centers, the gifts shops, and collected data. It was a wonderful and informative experience. Perhaps the most challenging volunteer work was with the American Red Cross----I went on emergency disaster calls to various states, (usually during hurricane seasons) as well as helping with local disaster calls. The work was long, hard and exhausting. And also rewarding. A tough, tough job.

Moving to San Diego in Oct. 2015 (to be closer to family and grandchildren), I knew I had to find a place to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city. To my delight I found Mission Trails Regional Park and volunteered there for over a year. Although I greatly enjoyed hiking the trails and taking the "five peaks challenge" I found it to be a very busy location with little staff/volunteer interaction. The discovery of Tecolote, a little "nature gem in the city", was thru baseball, grand kids and luck. I am not certain how long I have been a volunteer---but it has been a time of pure delight. It is definitely my "happy place". The staff, the volunteers, the programs---I think are remarkable. I am constantly amazed at the knowledge and dedication of all the individuals involved and I am honored to be included in their numbers. How serendipitous!



# Earth Day Clean-up Opportunities ~ April 22nd 2017

Tecolote Creek empties into Mission Bay on the north side of the entrance to Fiesta Island. This location will be one of the many sites that “I Love a Clean San Diego” will seek to clean up during the annual Creek to Bay Clean-up that will be held (this year) on Earth Day - Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Members of the Tecolote Canyon Interpretive Group will be captaining this event.

The mouth of Tecolote Creek is an important habitat for shorebirds and migratory ducks. Scaups, redheads, widgeons and pintails can all be seen foraging in this area, as well as herons and egrets. Trash and detritus from the entire Tecolote Creek watershed washes into Mission Bay at this location. It is one of the areas of the bay that is least affected by tidal flows and that's another reason that trash accumulates there.

This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year that “I Love a Clean San Diego” has organized this event. Last year 6,400 volunteers pitched in to remove 150,000 pounds of litter from 110 sites across San Diego County. Registration for this event opens April 1<sup>st</sup>. Please contact Janelle Hickey at 619-704-2778 or go to CleanSD.org for more information.

***Please help members of the Tecolote Canyon Interpretive Group help to restore this area of important waterfowl habitat to a more pristine condition on Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9 am until 12pm. This creek mouth is part of a mudflat and the work will be messy.***

***Waders or grungy clothing are recommended.***



***Another opportunity to help our environment on Earth Day is to participate in San Diego Mesa College’s annual Canyon Day cleanup. Tecolote Canyon Natural Park Ranger Janice Lavallee leads this event that has involved the local community since 2008.***

For more information, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1194309017352314/>

**Saturday,  
April 22, 2017**

9:00 AM–1:00 PM Clean-up  
12:00-1:00 PM Refreshments & Certificates

Location: Tecolote Canyon Trailhead at Marlesta & Genesee

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE Visit [www.sdmesa.edu/canyonday](http://www.sdmesa.edu/canyonday) for more details \* Closed-toe shoes required.

# **Volunteering Can Add Life to Your Years!**

## **Volunteering boosts mental and physical health!**

Studies have shown that seniors who volunteer have fewer physical limitations, lower rates of depression, better cognitive function and longer lives than non volunteers.

## **Volunteering makes you happy!**

Human beings are hardwired to give to others, the more we give the happier we feel.

## **Volunteering helps you make new friends!**

Volunteering is a fun meaningful way to expand your social circles. In my opinion, the volunteers at Tecolote Nature Center are a wonderful group of caring, friendly and happy people.

## **Find your opportunities!**

Begin by thinking about your skills, interests and priorities. What causes and community needs matter most to you? Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team? Are you better behind the scenes or in a more visible role? There are many volunteer opportunities available within Tecolote Canyon and the Nature Center; your initiative could be the start of something new and fulfilling in your life.



# **Bothersome (But Beneficial) Backyard Bandits!**

## **Raccoons, Opossums, Skunks ... and one wears a mask!**

These are nocturnal animals we often see, hear and SMELL in our own yards! Learn why they are human helpers.

Sing 3 new songs about them. Enjoy a garden walk after the presentation.



**Thursday, April 20, 10-11:30 am at the Nature Center**

**Linda Hawley's Nature Adventures ~ FREE ~ At Tecolote Nature Center!**  
**Using songs, puppets, a related craft, and her animated enthusiasm,**  
**Ms. Hawley engages children of all ages in learning fascinating**  
**facts about wildlife.**

# **Things with Wings! Birds, Bats, Butterflies, Beetles, & Bugs**

They all have wings, but all are very different.  
Do they all lay eggs? Which one is the only flying mammal in the world? What have we learned from birds? Do insects ever help us? Lots of songs to sing, and lots of specimens to see, as well!



**Thursday, May 18th 10:00—11:30 am at the Nature Center**

# A Tale of Two Sunflowers (Asteraceae family)



California Sunflower (*Encelia californica*)

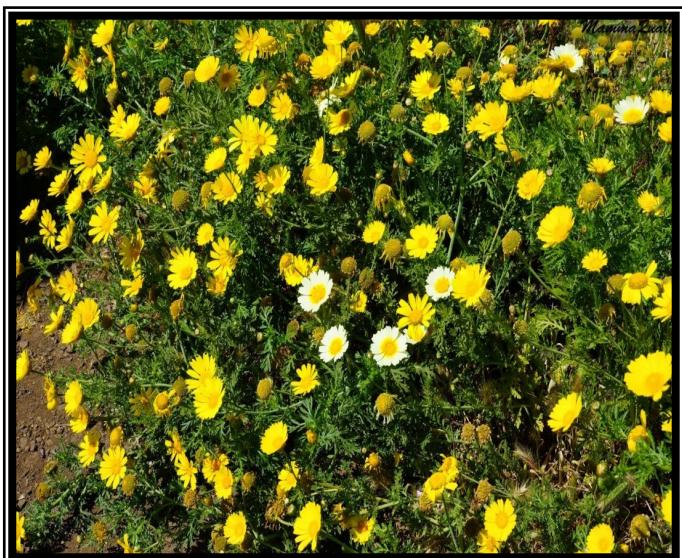
## Crown Daisy—Invasive

While covering acres of canyon with beautiful blooms, The crown daisy an invasive plant in Tecolote. The seeds sprout very quickly after a rain. The plant forms dense stands that are up to five feet tall. These quick-growing stands crowd out the native vegetation, completely taking over large areas. The crown daisy is an annual, this is also problematic, as it dies in early summer, it leaves very little habitat behind. The dead mass then prevents native plants from recolonizing and becomes a fire hazard.

## California Sunflower—Native

The California sunflower is a native perennial that provides habitat throughout the year. With the right amount of water, it blooms through spring, summer, and fall, attracting native bees, butterflies, and even birds. Under drought conditions the plant will drop its leaves. It is a member of the coastal sage scrub community. The beauty of native plants is that they grow in “community” providing a variety of food and shelter for a variety of native animals. This plant is considered “of special value” by pollination ecologists.

Crown Daisy (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*)



California Sagebrush is another member of the sunflower family that, due to its fragrance, is often mistaken for a true sage. You will recognize it in abundance, in the canyon, right now, as long stalks of feathery-soft leaves. These leaves will wilt and be replaced with small tough ones in the summer. By fall they all may look like they are dying, only to spring quickly back to life when the rains come again. It is nick-named “Kumeyaay cologne” because the Kumeyaay would rub it on their bodies, when hunting, to disguise their human scent. This plant is an important member of the native habitat that supports native species—especially the endangered California gnatcatcher.



Bill Lynch



# EVENTS IN THE PARK

**Tecolote Nature Center**

**5180 Tecolote Road San Diego, CA 92110**

**858-581-9959**

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

**Saturday, April 15 & May 20th**

9:00-11:00 AM – Weed Warriors

Canyon clean up with Ranger Janice

**Sunday, April 16 & May 21st**

9:00 AM Sunday in the Garden

Volunteer with Park Ranger Steven

Get dirty, have fun, help out your community

**Wednesday, April 19**

1:30 – 3:00 PM Art & Activities for Kids

This month's theme is Earth day. Meet a critter from Project Wildlife and create nature related crafts.

**Thursday, April 20**

10:00-11:30 Nature Adventures!

Bothersome (But Beneficial) Backyard Bandits! Raccoons, Opossums, Skunks ... and one wears a mask!

**May 18th**

10:00-11:30 Nature Adventures!

Bats, Birds, Butterflies, Beetles, and Bugs

**Saturday, April 22**

8:00 AM Audubon Society Bird Walk

All skill levels welcome

***Updated activities are posted at:***

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

**Like us on  
[www.facebook.com/friendsoftecolotecanyon](https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftecolotecanyon)**

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

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

**For information call 858-581-9959**



**Like us on Facebook – Friends of Tecolote Canyon**

***Activities are free of charge.***

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

## **Volunteer Opportunities ~ Something for Everyone!**

***Docents \* Interpretive Guides \* Art and Crafts***

***Tecolote Canyon Advisory Committee \* Native Plant Garden***

***Weed Warriors \* Park Patrol \* Jr Volunteers (community service)***

***Environmental Stewards Canyon Program (ESCAPE)***

**If you are interested, come in and speak with any staff member.**



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



*We want to thank Scott Chambers and Filmetrics for their donation, providing 5 years of wifi to the nature center*

*We are also greatly appreciative of our on-going partnerships with :*

*The San Diego City Council, Mission Bay Hilton Resort and the Clairemont Times.*



**SD City Council Community Project and Services**

