

Friends of Tecolote Canyon



The Rangers of the Tri-Canyon Park

Ranger Matt

By Joan Brosnan



Since I was a girl in the 50's, I have been fascinated with Park Rangers; perhaps it's the iconic hat, but thinking back to my experiences with rangers in national parks, they were just cool.

The foremost goal of all rangers is to protect and preserve park resources for future generations and to protect park visitors. However, the duties of today's rangers are significantly more

varied than in the past. Duties include: leading walks, staffing visitor centers, enforcing regulations and protecting and managing park resources. The job description doesn't give justice to the fact that they are incredible civil servants.

Senior Ranger Matt, Ranger Steve, and Ranger Janice, who protect and preserve the Tri Canyon system of Tecolote Canyon Park & Nature Center, Marian Bear Memorial Park and Rose Canyon Open Space Park, are an awesome team.

Ranger Steve grew up in Northern California where the hills of Del Norte and Humboldt County opened up the world of backpacking to him. As an adult, he spent two years in Fiji as a Peace Corps volunteer, doing various environmental and eco-tourism projects. Ranger Steve has been with the City of San Diego for over 2 years. His duties include regular patrols of the Tri Canyon System via foot or truck, working with volunteers, bridge construction, trail maintenance, trash removal, educational talks to park visitors, enforcing park regulations, management of the native plant nursery and native garden improvements. Steve has also contributed many awesome photos and videos to Friends of Tecolote Canyon Facebook page.



Ranger Steve

He has become attached to our wonderful urban canyons and tends the native plants in the nature center's plant nursery that he built with volunteers. His vision for propagation of native plant seeds ties in with the ongoing revegetation of the canyons. He feels very fortunate to have a career that encourages restoration of native habitats.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meet the Rangers . . .	1
Vitamin N	3
Southern Alligator	
And Western Lizard. . .	5
Nature Center Fun . . .	6
Events	7
Acknowledgements . .	8



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.

"It's not enough to understand the natural world, the point is to defend and preserve it." -Edward Abbey



Ranger Janice

Ranger Janice has been working within SD Open Space Parks for almost 16 years. She battles unrelentingly within the Tri Canyon system removing invasive species that threaten the native plant habitats. Recently she and other volunteers removed over 100 pounds of Castor Bean seeds from Tecolote Canyon, 30 Mexican Fan Palms rooted in Tecolote Creek, 30 Tree Tobacco shrubs from Rose Canyon and Onion weed from Marion Bear Memorial Park. Ranger Janice organizes, directs,

and supervises the Tecolote Canyon Weed Warriors. She also oversees groups of volunteer college students, adults from corporations, and Boy Scouts, who dig, haul, and eliminate invasive plants and trash from the Tri Canyon system. Our canyons and native plants are rescued from the plant invaders by Ranger Janice and her volunteers. If you see them in the canyon, stop and thank them for their incredible service.

Senior Ranger Matt, developed his interest in a career as a ranger by visiting and camping in many local, state, and national parks as a child. After high school graduation, he spent one summer working in the Yosemite Lodge. While housekeeping wasn't the most glamorous job, it gave him the opportunity to interact with many Park Rangers. By the end of that summer, Matt knew he wanted to pursue a career as a Park Ranger. He enrolled at SD State University and graduated in 2002 with a degree in Outdoor Recreation Administration. That was the springboard to his career.

He started as a seasonal backcountry ranger in Yosemite, worked at Torrey Pines State Reserve as a park-aide, and was one of two full-time Rangers at the Lake Poway Recreation Area and Blue Sky Ecological Reserve. Matt was hired as a San Diego Park Ranger in 2007. He has worked at Black Mountain, Los Penasquitos and Otay Valley Regional Park. He was Senior Ranger at Mission Trails Regional Park before working in the Tri Canyon system.

Matt's responsibilities as Senior Ranger include: planning the daily operations within the parks, training and evaluating park personnel and volunteers, designing and installing interpretive signs, enforcing park regulations, monitoring special events, and preparing reports.

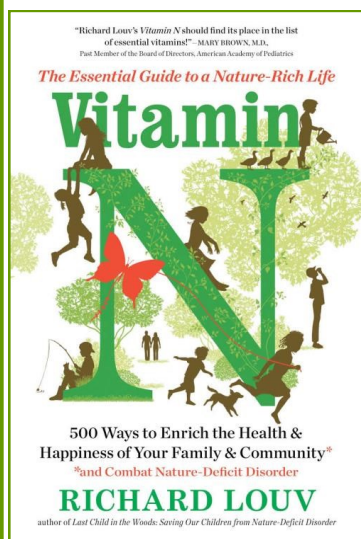
Ranger Matt



Ranger Janice

He also serves as liaison to the Tecolote Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee, Friends groups, various the public with regards to park services and improvements. He is out in the canyons, along with Ranger Steve and Ranger Janice, administering park maintenance, supervising habitat restoration, revegetation enhancement, non native plant removal and unfortunately, removing truckloads of abandoned trash and animal waste.

All Friends of Tecolote recognize and honor Senior Ranger Matt, Ranger Janice and Ranger Steve for their incredible ongoing work that defends, protects, preserves and restores our Open Space Parks.



Vitamin N: The Essential Guide to a Nature-Rich Life by Richard Louv

Book Review By Niki Ahrens

Nature respites are a family favorite for us. One of our favorite ways to spend a weekend is to slip on some shoes and just head outdoors. Rarely do we have a structure to what we do, and I'd looked forward to reading *Vitamin N* so I could refresh our cup with new ideas and experiences.

Vitamin N: The Essential Guide to a Nature-Rich Life is nature researcher Richard Louv's latest book. Louv's goal in writing it was to "show how barriers can be overcome, beginning with simple actions at home". Vitamin N offers 500 ways to get involved in nature—with nature experiences or with the nature

movement. I found it to be a practical guide to follow *Last Child in the Woods*—Louv's children and nature book that theorized "Nature-Deficit Disorder".

Vitamin N has been a book I can pick up for a minute, collect a new idea from, and return to when I'm ready for another. The book's plethora of ways to engage in nature has something for everyone, whatever your nature comfort level.

Eight chapters of the book focus on these eight topics: nature habits, perceptions, creativity, networking, spaces near and far, personal benefits, involvement, and ways to engage in community nature efforts. I thought chapter two (part two) was especially worth the price of admission; that part is a helpful overview of perspectives, activities, and purposeful play. There, Louv points to studies connecting the outdoors positively with creativity, and describes nature games from around the world. He also discussed the value of time in nature in order to "re-presence" oneself, children and adults alike.

At the top of my list of *Vitamin N* ideas to try is simple nature photography with my kids. I also took away inspiration to take advantage of more nature journaling opportunities and to try to tune into a nature orchestra (page 58). Ideas that my children are particularly excited about trying are making a bee watering bowl, a slug playground, and a butterfly rest stop. Thematically, the book encourages and permits parents to give our kids space to invent their own nature games and to maintain a separation between independent play and adult expertise. For me, it's an affirmation to let the (somewhat rare) non-structure and the gift of wonder lead the time.



Continued on next page



For those not wanting to go far from their tech devices, Louv suggested “bookending” as a strategy to incorporate mobile technology at only the very beginning and then after a nature excursion or experience. Alongside some experiences that might require a travel, time and resource commitment (like white water rafting), the book affirms the gifts of simply digging in the dirt and mixing it into mud. My own kids are fully immersed in nature when they are digging while collecting rocks and sticks. Woven throughout the book’s 500 ideas is a theme of being present with our senses and selves. Reflecting on our ways of being while in nature is something we can all benefit from.



*In every walk in nature
one receives more than he seeks ~ John Muir*



Toyon

By Niki Ahrens



“What is that with the bright red berries?” my dad asked while visiting from the Midwest in November. We'd been out exploring Tecolote Canyon, and didn't make it far before Toyon stole the show during our walk. It's hard to get far in TC right now without this red beauty capturing your sights. Toyon's scientific name is *Heteromeles arbutifolia* and it's also called California Christmasberry, Christmasberry, and California holly. You'll mainly notice it at eye level, but it can also grow to 15-20 feet tall.

Toyon has hearty green leaves and clusters of brilliant red berries that attract birds in the fall and winter seasons. It is the only plant native to California that is still known by its Native American name. The Oholone tribe called the shrub "Toyon." Like Tecolote Canyon is still, the chaparral of the Hollywood hills was abundant with Toyon and it is said to have inspired Hollywood's name. Like apples, Toyon is part of the rose family, but not edible raw. Toyon was used for medicinal purposes by the Kumeyaay and once boiled or fermented, to remove tannins, (toxic properties), as an edible food source.

Toyon shrubs are filled with white flower blossoms in the summer, and are a vibrant backdrop for nature photography right now. If you're looking to add greenery that will attract birds as well as beautify your yard, Toyon just might be the native plant for your space. Or, come enjoy the bird orchestra around the Toyon shrubs surrounding Tecolote Nature Center.



The Southern Alligator Lizard *By Trent Robertson*

The Southern Alligator Lizard might be mistaken for a small snake, at first glance, because it has a very serpentine way of moving when it's attempting to flee. Although the body of the lizard ranges between 3 and 7 inches long, the tail can easily be twice that length, further adding to its snake-like appearance. This is compounded by the fact that the Alligator Lizard's legs are relatively short. The ground color can vary from brown to yellow, to grey or reddish and is highlighted by black and white jagged bands. The head is very triangular with yellowish eyes.



Suburban yards often attract the Alligator Lizard with a variety of prey and places to hide. In the wild, this lizard can be found in a variety of moist habitats including grasslands, chaparral, oak wood-lands and pine forests. They feed on slugs, insects, spiders, smaller lizards and mammals, and occasionally bird eggs.

There are three subspecies of the Southern Alligator Lizard found along the west coast. The Oregon Alligator Lizard is found in the northwest, the California Alligator Lizard is found in northern and central

California and the San Diego Alligator Lizard is found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and southern California. The San Diego Alligator Lizard is the largest of the three subspecies.

During the warmer months Alligator Lizards are active at night. The tail is somewhat prehensile and is used as an aid in climbing into small trees and shrubs in search of prey. Alligator Lizards have been known to enter water to escape an enemy.

Lizards and snakes usually seek cover when people approach them but there's always a chance we could find an Alligator Lizard on one of our interpretive walks. Please check the Friends of Tecolote Canyon Meet-up site for times and locations or contact Marla Gilmore, the Center Director, at 858-581-9959 for more information.



The Western Fence Lizard *By Eloise Battle*

The Western Fence Lizard is the lizard seen most often scurrying under a bush or into some other hiding place. This individual was doing his morning warmup in a brow ditch. They adapt to a wide variety of habitats except for the desert. Beside brushy areas they are found on stonewalls, fence posts, lumber piles, and even old buildings. They have adapted well to living around human habitation. There are blue patches on the sides of or across the whole belly and the adult male has a blue patch on his throat. These markings have earned the common name blue belly lizards. The male is often seen displaying by bobbing its head and flattening his sides to show off the blue patches. This is supposed to attract females and drive off male intruders. They are diurnal and frequently encountered. Its food consists of insects, spiders, scorpions, centipedes and sometimes smaller lizards.





Help us every time
you shop Amazon.

Through Amazon smile, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase price to

Friends of Tecolote Canyon!

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same prices and selection as Amazon.com.

Visit smile.amazon.com, select Friends of Tecolote Canyon as your charity, and every eligible purchase will result in a donation to Friends of Tecolote Canyon at no additional cost to you.

You may use your existing Amazon account to participate in the Amazon smile program. All your settings remain the same. Go to "about amazon smile" for more information. Thank you for supporting our education programs!

Thank you for your support for our Nature Education programs as we influence another generation of canyon stewards!



Art, ~ Activities ~ Education & Fun ~ at the Nature Center!





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

Sunday, December 11

Guided Nature Walk – Mount Carol Entrance

Volunteer trail guides will be on hand to identify native birds, plants, reptiles, and insects

Saturday, December 17, Jan 21

9:00-11:00 AM – Weed Warriors

Canyon clean up with Ranger Janice

Get dirty, have fun, help out your community

Sunday, December 18, Jan 22

9:00 AM Sunday in the Garden

Volunteer with Park Ranger Steven

Pull some weeds, plants some seeds

Wednesday, December 21, Jan 18

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

Nature crafts and fun activities with a winter theme

Saturday, December 24, Jan 28

8:00 AM Audubon Society Birding Walk

New Activities are posted at

[www.meetup.com/Friends of Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Nature Center](http://www.meetup.com/Friends%20of%20Tecolote%20Canyon%20Natural%20Park%20and%20Nature%20Center)

Like us on Facebook – Friends of Tecolote Canyon

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 * Jr Volunteers (community service) *
Tecolote Canyon Advisory Committee * Native Plant Garden * Weed Warriors *
Park Patrol * Environmental Stewards Canyon Program (ESCAPE)**

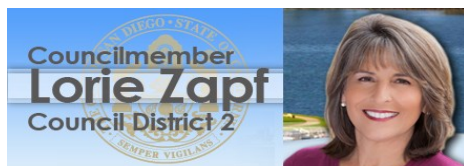
☺ If you are interested, come in and speak with any staff member. ☺



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



*We also greatly appreciate **Scott Chambers and Filmetrics** for their donation, providing 5 years of wifi to the nature center, as well as council member **Lorie Zapf** for her continuing support and encouragement of our education and conservation efforts*



Thank you to all of our Baskets and Botany Sponsors !



Doggies Divine Inc.



The Clairemont Times
Serving Clairemont, Bay Park, Linda Vista & Kearny Mesa
News of the Neighborhoods

