

Edgewood



Explorer

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FRIENDS GIVE TO INTERPRETIVE CENTER



Julia Bott accepts check from Peter Alley

Friends of Edgewood Treasurer, Peter Alley, recently presented a check for \$8,614 to Julia Bott, Executive Director of the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, in support of the Edgewood Interpretive Center (IC).

Contributions in memory of Bob Hess, Rich Batha, and Kathy Allen totaled \$5,774, and donations earmarked for the IC contributed another \$840. An additional \$2,000 came from the Friends of Edgewood's IC endowment fund for 2007 and 2008. Counting prior donations, the total from the Friends of Edgewood for the IC now stands at \$21,894. 🎁



WILDFLOWER WALKS SET TO BEGIN

By Kate Finnigan

Docent walks begin this year on Saturday, March 15, 2008 and run every weekend through Sunday, June 8, 2008.

Once again, the Clarkia trailhead on Cañada Road will serve as the starting point for four additional walks on Saturdays in April. The Clarkia Trail allows visitors to see more of the serpentine chaparral, and to reach the grasslands more easily than from the Day Camp.

The enclosed flyer is also available on the Friends website at www.friendsofedgeswood.org. We encourage you to download the PDF and distribute it to your friends and colleagues. You'll also find our trail map there.

As in the past, we are happy to offer special wildflower tours to groups of 10 or more. To make arrangements, please contact me at docent-coordinator@friendsofedgeswood.org or call the toll-free line at 1-866-GO-EDGEWOOD (1-866-463-3439).

See you at the Preserve! 🌸

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WESTERN BLUEBIRD

By Lee Franks

Appearance

Western Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) are small thrushes that live and breed in Edgewood County Park. Males are easily identified by the brilliant blue plumage of their heads, wings, and tails, and by their rust-colored breasts. Females are duller and have more brown and gray in their feathers. The superficially similar Lazuli Bunting also has blue upperparts and chestnut on the breast. The smaller Lazuli Buntings, however, have conical bills and prominent white wing bars.



Deanna Schiel took this photo at Edgewood on 11/29/2007

Diet

Western Bluebirds are predominately insectivores (92% animal, and 8% vegetable). The typical insects they consume include grasshoppers, beetles, ants, flies, and caterpillars. Vegetable items they like include small fruits like currants, grapes, elderberries, mistletoe, and poison oak berries.

Breeding

These birds are socially monogamous. Both partners usually care for their young, but they also seek matings outside the pair bond, with the result that offspring are not always related to

their attendant male. Western Bluebirds are also **cooperative breeders**, which is only true of about 3%, or approximately 300 species, of bird species worldwide.

Cooperative breeders, as the name implies, help other breeders (usually parents or stepparents) to raise their young while waiting for an opportunity to breed themselves. These helpers are young from the breeding pair's previous broods, and their helping tasks include defending territories and bringing food to nestlings. Scientific studies show that breeding pairs with helpers fledge more young than those without helpers, primarily because they suffer less stress, and hence survive longer and are more likely to re-nest.

How do helpers finally achieve breeding status? Waiting for an opening is the first step. Females monitor nearby groups and move quickly to replace females that disappear. Males, on the other hand, inherit breeding positions on their natal territories in relation to their age and status. The dominant (usually oldest) son replaces his (deceased) father, stepfather, or brother. Helpers may also take over a separate portion of the family territory for their own breeding purposes.

Although the helpers may appear to act altruistically (i.e. one bird seems to put itself at risk to help another, like a bird in a flock that spots a predator and gives an alarm call, alerting the rest of the group), they actually act in their own best interest. Achieving status on an exclusive territory is difficult when occupied territories saturate the habitat. By helping to raise another's brood, the helpers enhance their own chances for breeding through inheritance of a territory or through other forms of territory acquisition.

Why has evolution produced cooperative breeding? Current thinking amongst members of the scientific community is that cooperative breeding arises when environmental constraints severely limit the opportunities for younger birds to breed independently. These limitations may

(Continued on page 3)

(*Western Bluebird, continued from page 2*)

include a shortage of territory openings because higher quality habitats are saturated with established breeders, or an unpredictable availability of resources that could make it too risky for individual pairs to commit themselves to reproduce in any given year.

Western Bluebirds reside in stable environments that have specialized habitats (low-growing grasslands sprinkled with oak trees), so there is little marginal or secondary habitat for young individuals to occupy. Consequently dispersal of young is limited and cooperative breeding becomes a way, perhaps the only way, for individuals and the species to survive.

We know, for example, that development along California's Central Coast—from Santa Barbara County to Monterey County—is leading to the clear-cutting of oaks, upon which Western Bluebirds depend, changing the oak



April 2001 © Peter LaTourrette

woodlands into treeless acreage for agricultural use, particularly vineyards. Hopefully, because they are cooperative breeders, the Western Bluebirds will successfully survive this challenge as they have so many others.

References:

The Birders Handbook; Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, Darryl Wheye

Ornithology; Frank R. Gill 


PARKS FOR THE FUTURE

By Julia Bott

It's official! The Parks for the Future measure is on the June 3, 2008 ballot (its letter designation will not be assigned until March 15). Parks for the Future is a one-eighth cent sales tax to provide a dedicated source of funding for city and county parks, the Ladera and Highlands Recreation Districts, and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

San Mateo County Parks, the only county or regional park agency in the Bay Area without a source of dedicated funds, will essentially have its budget doubled by the measure. Additionally, the measure requires the county to maintain its existing general fund revenues to the Parks Department's budget, with adjustments for inflation, so that gains in its budget are guaranteed. This new money will provide additional ranger positions and a resource management position, will facilitate the opening of regional trail connections, and will help the Parks Department to manage existing lands and potential future acquisitions.

On the November 2006 ballot, this measure, known as Measure A, received a robust majority 55% approval, but fell short of the necessary two-thirds super majority. Several factors worked against the measure: lower voter turnout than predicted, aggressive anti-tax campaigns against state-wide cigarette and oil taxes, and placement at the end of an extraordinarily long four-page ballot filled with expensive state measures.

Today we know two things: our local parks and open spaces still desperately need dedicated funding, and the successful passage of the measure this June depends upon a well-funded effort with strong community involvement. Parks for the Future needs you to get involved in the grassroots campaign. In between visits to Edgewood this spring, spend some time "sowing the seeds" for future funding by calling the campaign or going to www.parksforthefuture.org. 

ARTHROPODS AT EDGEWOOD ON NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

By Paul Heiple

This is the fifth in a series of articles on Edgewood's arthropods by Paul Heiple. All photos were taken at Edgewood by Alf Fengler.—ed.

Last year on September 27, 2008, San Mateo Department of Parks participated for the first time in National Public Lands Day. At Edgewood County Park, this participation somehow translated into another day of weeding, targeting—what else—Yellow Star Thistle (or as we long-time weeders call it, YST) that had regrown after being mowed during the summer.

So what, you ask, does this have to do with Arthropods—the insects, spiders, and crustaceans? Well, when first-time weeders join the weeding group, those of us who have been around for a while like to introduce the new people to the wonderful discoveries that can be made while weeding. This helps make the weeding less tedious and, at the same time, enhances everyone's appreciation for the



diversity of Edgewood's flora and fauna. And while weeding on this particular day, we discovered many wonderful things having to do with Arthropods.

The first two items we found were sac-like structures that

were the egg cases of two large garden spiders commonly found at Edgewood, *Argiope aurantia* and *Argiope trifasciata*. The egg case of *A. aurantia*, the black-and-yellow garden spider, is about one inch long, shaped like a tear drop, and brown in color; it can be found hidden in thick grasses and forbs, usually some distance from its spider's

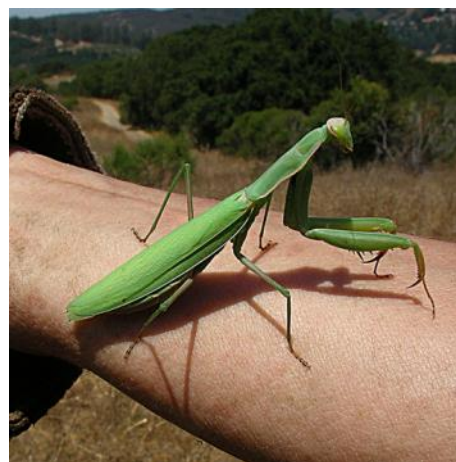
web. The egg sac of *A. trifasciata*, the banded garden spider, is a bit smaller, being approximately three-quarters of an inch in size, with a flat-topped shape and a whitish color,



Argiope trifasciata

and it, too, can be found hidden in the weeds some distance from the web of its spider. The young spiders of both species hatch inside these structures during the winter and emerge from them in the spring. Hundreds of these young spiders are then dispersed through the air before settling down to the business of starting the next generation.

Our third discovery looked like a piece of one-inch-long brown styrofoam. A closer look showed that it had some structure, like a seam. It was the egg mass of the Chinese mantid or *Tenodera aridifolia*, more commonly known as praying mantid. The styrofoam-like material provides insulation for the eggs that are embedded in it, thus keeping the eggs dry and the temperature around them stabilized until they hatch. These insects have become established in



Edgewood, thriving on the grasshoppers and other insects that are plentiful there.

Interestingly, Edgewood's praying mantids are not as large

Tenodera aridifolia

as they are in wetter climates (they are about three-quarters the size of the ones I saw in Pennsylvania).

(Continued on page 5)

(Arthropods, continued from page 4)

Our fourth and final discovery was composed of several spiny items on a central piece more than one inch long—as one end had the foot of an insect, it was clear this was part of an insect's leg. Judging from the size of this leg, the insect it came from must have been large; and as the color was white, the only insect I could imagine it to have been was the potato bug, also known as the Jerusalem cricket or *Stenopelmatus fuscus*.



Stenopelmatus fuscus

This is a heavy-bodied insect that can grow up to two inches in length and is often found in the cool, dark places of people's homes. Indeed, this big fellow probably came by his common name because he showed up with the potatoes stored in the root cellar, a common feature of older homes.

But "in the wild," the potato bug is not so easily found, being nocturnal and preferring to live underground. However, Edgewood weeders have been known to dig one up from time to time. The poor fellow that was originally attached to the leg we found most likely met a rodent during the night and became a meal.

So the next time you're out weeding, at Edgewood or at home, take a little extra time to look around. You just might discover an Arthropod. ❄️

BAY CHECKERSPOT UPDATE

By Stuart Weiss, Ph.D.

There are Bay checkerspots at Edgewood this year. But not very many.

Our larval surveys in February turned up a single postdiapause larva. Doing a back-of-the-envelope calculation, there are likely less than 100 larvae across the habitat. We will look for adult butterflies fairly intensively this spring.

Many factors contributed to this admittedly disappointing result. Obviously the 2007 drought may be to blame. Relatively rapid drying of *Plantago* and low densities of owl's clover cause high mortality of prediapause larvae. Other factors to consider are pupal mortality, parasitoid loads, and perhaps most importantly for population establishment, the tendency of adult butterflies to wander off the 35 acres of Edgewood habitat because they do not recognize edges.

Butterflies on thousands of acres of continuous habitat on Coyote Ridge rarely encounter the edges of the habitat.

Butterfly reintroductions can fail; it's the nature of the game. Successes may require many years, even decades to "take."

A deeper consideration of Edgewood's results will be presented after the Coyote Ridge data are in. We will carefully consider our options, and likely will ask for a permit amendment to repeat the reintroduction several times over the next 5 years. ❄️

OFFICERS FOR 2008

Officers of the Friends of Edgewood are elected from the Board for a 1-year term.

For 2008, the officers are:

- Bill Korbholz, President
- Herb Fischgrund, Vice President
- Mary Wilson, Secretary
- Peter Alley, Treasurer ❄️

EDGEWOODIANA—SYLVAN WEEDS

By Carolyn Strange

Question

We know the Weed Warriors are busy in Edgewood, but there are big areas of non-native plants like periwinkle and Bermuda buttercup on the Sylvan trail, down near the Day Camp. Why don't they tear those out?

Answer

Edgewood would look quite different if not for our Weed Warriors, no question. Their goal is to foster native plants and habitats by removing invasive non-natives. But despite the thousands of hours they invest every year, it's still a triage situation. Similar to an overwhelmed emergency room, they must decide where to focus limited resources to achieve the best outcomes.

"We're trying to protect the best, most valuable habitat first," says Paul Heiple, who is Friday head weeder and one of the committee of stewards who guide Edgewood's weed management efforts. Their decisions balance numerous complicated criteria, particularly the locations of the healthiest populations of natives, especially rare plants.

Long before Edgewood was preserved, people used to live along the lower parts of what's now the Sylvan trail, and they cultivated various ornamental plants and fruit trees. The houses are gone, but ecological disturbance remains. "We do work the edges of the area to keep it from spreading," Paul says. But in terms of healthy habitat, that area is pretty far gone. Restoring it will be a big project, probably requiring more resources from the County. (See Parks for the Future article on page 3.)

Meanwhile our weeders continue their sweeps across higher priority areas. "We're always happy to have more hands and ideas," Paul says. The Schedule of Habitat Restoration Outings is posted at <http://edgewood.thinkersrus.net/schedule.html>. Joining these knowledgeable folks is a great way to learn more about plants and Edgewood. (See insert.)

Next Edgewoodiana Article

Has Sudden Oak Death reached Edgewood?

What do *you* want to know about Edgewood?

Send your questions to:

Edgewoodiana@friendsofedgewood.org. ⓘ

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Peter Alley

For the calendar year 2007, approximately 90% of the income for Friends of Edgewood came from membership dues, donations, and gifts. The remainder resulted from merchandise sales and training fees.

The Butterfly Restoration Program accounted for the greatest expense, and was funded by a 2006 REI grant. Other major expenses went to support membership premiums, postage, newsletter publication, and the docent programs.

Thanks to the generosity of friends and donors, our treasury is able to support these ongoing programs, as well as to provide funding for additional habitat restoration and the future Interpretive Center.

For more information, contact me through the Friends of Edgewood any time. ⓘ

REMEMBERING KATHRYN ALLEN

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Kathy Allen, dear wife of one of Edgewood's most dedicated and long-time volunteers, John Allen.

Kathy was a great friend and provided tremendous moral support to both the Friends of Edgewood and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS).

Kathy was an elementary school teacher. She was an avid reader and enjoyed cooking. In fact, she often helped in the preparation of meals on CNPS field trips.

We will miss Kathy's warmth and laughter, and we extend our best wishes to John and his family and friends. ♻️

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

Our dedicated freeway warriors came through again this quarter to keep our stretch of I-280 along Edgewood free of litter.

For our January, February, and March outings, we had 11 volunteers: Pam Berryessa, Carolyn Dorsch, Dave Hershey, Kathy and Bill Korbholz, Margaret Marshall, Susan Russell, Ken Seydel, Jan Smith, Lisa Tough, and Michael Yantos.

During this 3-month period, we removed 37 bags of trash from the east side of I-280 north and south of the Edgewood Road offramp.

If you have an interest in joining our great group, contact Ken Seydel. We typically go out the first weekend of the month and spend about 2 1/2 hours. We will see that you are safety trained and equipped with your very own Picker, hard hat, goggles, gloves, and bright orange vest. 🚚

MEET ANNE KOLETZKE

By Bill Korbholz



I am delighted to introduce Anne Koletzke as the new editor of the *Edgewood Explorer*. Anne is a long-time Friend, a frequent visitor to the Preserve, and a trained docent for Edgewood and the Midpeninsula

Regional Open Space District, where she was also employed for the past 8 years.

With her love of literature and writing, and a passion for nature and open space preservation, I am sure that Anne will bring creative energy to the newsletter. 🐎

MEMBERSHIP DUES

New or renewing members may clip and complete this section to pay **tax-deductible** annual membership dues. Please send your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve** to the return address on the back of this panel. Renewing members can determine their membership expiration date by checking the six-digit code to the right of their name on their mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2006, membership runs through June 2006. Questions, call (866) GO-EDGEWOOD or contact membership-coordinator@friendsofedgewood.org.

Name

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- \$10 Student/Retired** (includes quarterly newsletter)
- \$25 Friend** (newsletter)
- \$50 Advocate** (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards)
- \$75 Supporter** (newsletter plus choose one):
 - Set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards and 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
 - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood
- \$100 Steward** or **\$250 Guardian** (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards, plus choose one):
 - 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
 - Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood
- Please do not send any premiums.**
- I am enclosing a gift of _____.**

Please send ___ copies of *Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood* (\$2.50), ___ copies of the *Edgewood Vascular Plant List* (\$3.00), ___ copies of the Apr-Jun 2004 BAY NATURE magazine (\$6.00), ___ copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25.00). Includes tax, S&H. All items subject to availability.

I would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
- GIS/GPS mapping
- Newsletter/web
- Public relations
- Weed management
- Schools outreach
- Habitat restoration
- Adopt-A-Highway



UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❑ **March 15, DOCENT WALKS BEGIN.** Walks this year run through June 8. They start from the Day Camp every Saturday and Sunday, and from the Clarkia trailhead every Saturday during April. See enclosed flyer for details.
- ❑ **Monthly, BIRD WALKS.** Marilyn Travis leads monthly bird walks starting at 8 a.m. at the Day Camp kiosk. Upcoming walks are on 3/30, 4/27, and 5/18. For more information contact Marilyn at birdwalks@friendsofedgewood.org.
- ❑ **Monthly, ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY.** The next sessions are scheduled for 4/5, 5/4, and 6/7. Contact Ken Seydel to volunteer or for more information. See article on page 7. ☑

ORIGINAL ARTWORK TO BENEFIT FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD

Trevlyn Williams, an Edgewood docent and long-time supporter, will be having another exhibit of local landscape paintings at Gallery House, 320 California Ave, Palo Alto. The showing will run from March 4 through March 30, 2008.

Trevlyn will again generously donate 10% of the sales proceeds to the Friends of Edgewood, as she has done in her last three exhibits.

The opening reception is Saturday March 8, from 6 to 8 p.m., and all paintings purchased at the reception will be discounted 20%.

The paintings will feature Edgewood landscapes and natural features.

The Edgewood Explorer is published quarterly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Edgewood for the human, plant, and animal generations to come. The newsletter is produced by Anne Koletzke with contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at www.friendsofedgewood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD (866-463-3439), or email info@friendsofedgewood.org.

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