

# Edgewood

# EXPLORER

FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD • WINTER 2023

## Friends Adopt Land Acknowledgment Statement

by Junko Bryant

After months of research, discussion, and many drafts, the Friends of Edgewood's land acknowledgment statement was shared at the general meeting Oct. 8. The statement will be posted at the Education Center and incorporated into some of our programming.

A committee formed earlier this year gave careful consideration to developing a statement that feels authentic to the Friends of Edgewood. As an organization focused on land stewardship and education, we feel that it is important to say something about the original stewards of this land.

We recognize that the land acknowledgment itself does not really change much for the Ramaytush Ohlone people. But every time we share it, we are reminded that others came before us and that there is a long history of land stewardship here. It also reminds us to keep pushing to be good partners with our Indigenous friends and neighbors because we all share a deep connection to this land and the native plants and animals that inhabit Edgewood.

We may be starting with a small step, but with the adoption of our land acknowledgment statement, the Friends of Edgewood makes a commitment to a continued path forward.

For more information about the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, please visit their very informative website at [www.ramaytush.org/](http://www.ramaytush.org/). ❖



Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve lies on ancestral lands taken from the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples.

For thousands of years to the present day, the practices and values of the Ramaytush Ohlone have proved their enduring commitment to the health of the land.

Friends of Edgewood honors their stewardship as we strive to preserve Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity and promote strong connections with this land so that Edgewood is appreciated and protected forever.



Greg Castro, Culture Director of the Association of the Ramaytush Ohlone, accepts a donation from Friends of Edgewood President Peter Ingram at the annual meeting, Oct. 8.

More than 50 friends gathered Oct. 8 for FoE's annual general meeting and 30th anniversary celebration.



## My Vision for Edgewood's Next 30 Years

by Michele Beasley

Thirty years ago, I came to Edgewood when it first opened. Things could have turned out very differently for Edgewood if it were not for a determined, passionate group of volunteers. Edgewood could have become a golf course. Thanks to people like you, it did not.

I can't say what the world will be like 30 years from now. There is a lot to be concerned about with climate change. We must do our best to understand how climate change will alter plant communities and animal behavior, and adapt how we practice restoration. All of us must be open to new ideas and be willing to do away with old practices that no longer serve us. And we have to remember that when we direct our energy where we can make a difference, like the weed warriors directing their energy at teasel and yellow star-thistle, we can begin to rewrite the narrative. It is important to be aware, grounded, and realistic while also being positive.

Being positive and hopeful is what leads to the positive change I want to co-create with others in the world. Mother Nature is resilient and so is the human spirit and together we can be great partners when we work in harmony like the Friends of Edgewood do on a daily basis. I recently finished reading *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake – a book about fungi. We know so little about fungi compared to other plants and animals and yet what we do know shows that fungi can remove heavy metals from brownfields, break down plastics, and clean up oil spills. In fact, in 2017, Sonoma County used oyster mushrooms to remove toxic debris after their wildfires.

Change is happening at a faster and faster rate, and when you have a positive outlook, you can see a lot of wins that point to a better future. For so long, in the West, we have worked against Mother Nature – seeing her as something to conquer and control, but people have been working against that narrative for years, as we see with Edgewood, and now things will start to pick up speed. What I see at Edgewood in the coming years is a volunteer base that continues to diversify, and new partnerships, especially with local tribes, that lead to innovative restoration practices. Edgewood's grasslands are rich in biodiversity. San Mateo County is also diverse and that is a strength to celebrate and uplift. I see the San Mateo County Parks Department becoming more comfortable with new approaches to grassland management and removing regulatory hurdles where necessary. The key to success is to be open to new ideas and be flexible and nimble in our approach to stewardship. We all need to be partners in this.

Because passionate plant lovers documented all the diversity of plant life at Edgewood, a new future was written for these 467 acres several decades ago. This leads me to one of my favorite quotes of all time by Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." I cannot think of a better quote to describe the Friends of Edgewood. The Friends of Edgewood redirected the course for Edgewood's future once before, and they will continue to do so.

*Michele Beasley, Executive Director of San Mateo County Parks Foundation, delivered this speech to FoE members attending the Friends of Edgewood annual meeting and 30th anniversary celebration Oct. 8.*

# Friends Acknowledge Past, Envision Future of Edgewood



by Peter Ingram

The October heat wave let up just in time for the Friends of Edgewood annual meeting and 30th anniversary celebration on Oct. 8, 2023. To mark the occasion, our theme this year is “A Generation of Dedication.” It was a beautiful afternoon with good friends and delicious food.

We were honored to be joined by Gregg Castro, Culture Director of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, as we unveiled the Friends’ new land acknowledgment statement. Gregg’s remarks underscored the importance of connecting to nature in today’s modern society, and he had kind words to say about the importance of FoE’s work fostering a love of the land in our local community.

Michele Beasley, Executive Director of the San Mateo County Parks Foundation, and Nicolas Calderon, Director

of the San Mateo County Parks Department, also spoke to the theme of inspiring the community and especially youth to appreciate and protect Edgewood Natural Preserve and its extraordinary biodiversity. We appreciate both close partners joining us to commemorate our 30th anniversary!

Rounding out the meeting, we celebrated 2023 Best Friend Deanna Schiel for her many years of dedicated, self-effacing service. (See page 4.) We voted in new board member Elisa Chavez, who we were introduced to by our friends at the San Mateo County Parks Foundation. Elisa has recently completed a leadership program for young professionals who want to become nonprofit board members. Upon affirming her interest in being a candidate for the FoE Board, she said “I’m excited to bring my expertise in engaging with the Redwood City/North Fair Oaks community and explore ways to connect individuals with Edgewood programs.”

Thank you to all of you who have been part of our 30-year journey. We are looking forward to the next 30 years!❖



Top left: Paul Heiple (left) and Gregg Castro. Top right: Suzanne Lantz (left), Matt Tobin, and Sandy Bernhard at check-in. Bottom right: Elisa Chavez (right) with Adriana Fernandez Arriaga. Bottom left, center: Wonderful array of foods organized by Rebecca Reynolds and unique cupcakes by Nancy Enzminger. Thank you!



## Congratulations and Thank You to 2023 Best Friend of Edgewood Deanna Schiel ...

☘ For her many years of dedicated, self-effacing service.

- ☘ For being our Magnet Board Maven: Deanna has been creating the magnets and managing the Bloomin' Board for over 10 years. The Bloomin' Board is a key engagement tool for Education Center hosts to introduce visitors to which flowers are blooming and what animals to look for. It's a gateway for understanding what's special about Edgewood.
- ☘ For being a key Wildflower Survey team member: It's Deanna who records the flowers and completes the spreadsheet each week.
- ☘ For being a key member of our Field Guide team: Deanna does the research and first draft for each plant page. She also contributes her photographs and creates photo and illustration composites.
- ☘ For acting as the Assistant Docent Training Coordinator: For years, when evening training classes and enrichment events were held in the Education Center, Deanna came early and stayed late to help with set up and take down. She also acted as sweep on many training hikes.
- ☘ For being an editor and primary typist for the major Docent Manual revision in 2016, as well as our printed plant lists.
- ☘ For being a Wildflower Docent, Class of 2009, for her many years as a Weed Warrior, and for her deep, fierce loyalty to Edgewood Preserve.
- ☘ For her love and extensive knowledge of the natural world, which she generously shares with others. Deanna teaches by example, and her delight and curiosity inspire us.

Deanna has done countless hours of volunteering out of the limelight. She is the epitome of a modest person – always at the back doing the helpful needed thing.

Anyone who works with her appreciates Deanna's wit, her loyalty to the preserve and FoE, her energy, and her kindness. She is truly a team player, and Friends of Edgewood has been and is so lucky to have her on our team! ❖

### FoE Gear For Sale!

Volunteer jackets for \$10, all t-shirts on sale for \$10, plus other gifts perfect for your holiday shopping list. Sale prices available for purchases at the Ed Center only. Open Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; weekends, 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.



### Blowing in the Wind

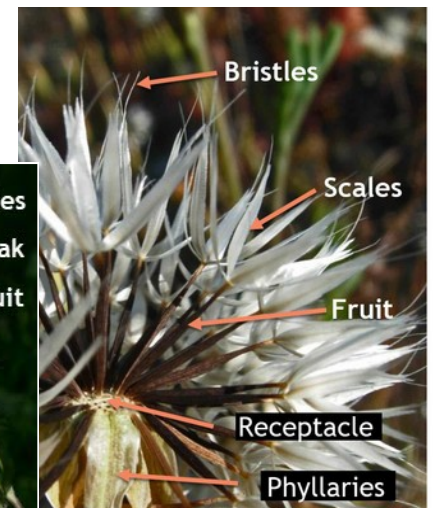
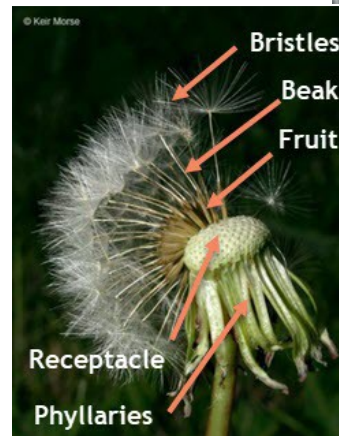
## Dandelion Pappus in Edgewood

by Bruce Homer-Smith

I love looking at the mandala-like structure of dandelions in seed. Each tiny fruit is attached to a beautiful pappus designed to carry it away on the wind when it's mature.

In Edgewood, each of our 21 members of the dandelion tribe (aka chicory tribe) in the Sunflower family has a distinctive pappus organization. Here are two examples:

Fruit, narrow beak and bristles (left);  
Elongated fruit, scales and bristles (right)



^ Silverpuffs. © Neil Kramer  
< Common Dandelion. Keir Morse

After pollination, the common dandelion fruits (brown) grow a very narrow neck (pale tan) called a beak. The beak is about twice as long as the fruit. At the tip of the beak grow dozens of stiff, hair-like bristles. The beak is part of the fruit. The bristle appendages are pappus.

Silverpuffs does it differently. After pollination, the fruit grows longer and tapers, but doesn't have the extra-long beak. Five bristle-tipped scales grow from each fruit, creating a very different looking pappus.

*continued on page 5*

## Pappus from page 4

### How it happens

Dandelions' flowers are organized in a tight flower head with each floret's ovary connected to a receptacle at its base. When an ovary is pollinated, a genetically new life begins. Cells throughout the ovary start a complex dance of division and differentiation, triggered by the interaction of proteins generated from instructions in the plant's DNA. The ovary becomes a living, growing fruit.

Based on genetic information common to its species, certain cells in the fruit divide more rapidly or elongate differently than other cells. In some species, a beak is grown. Pappus grows, emerging from rudimentary bristles and/or scales in the original floret.

Over time, each dandelion species has developed a distinctive method of making its pappus. This is great for plant lovers because the beautiful pappus structures become signposts, defining the species we're looking at.

### Overall appearance

Beautiful pappus is a hallmark of dandelions. What fun it is to study them! Four pappus arrangements you can look for are shown on this page.

See how pappus responds to humidity and adjusts to cling to animals at [mgnv.org/plants/glossary/glossary-pappus/](http://mgnv.org/plants/glossary/glossary-pappus/).

To see Edgewood's 21 members of the dandelion tribe, use "Looks Like Dandelion" on the [PlantID.net](http://PlantID.net) Edgewood Preserve list.



Common Dandelion. Keir Morse. [CC BY NC SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)

**Fluffy Sphere** Tan-colored fruits grow narrow beaks often longer than the seed. Dozens of bristles attach to the tip of the beak, forming an effective parachute where lots of wind can get under the fluff. Annual agoseris, salsify, bristly ox-tongue, California dandelion, and common dandelion have this form.



Common Sow Thistle. © Neil Kramer. All rights reserved. NK

**Dense Sphere** Many tan-colored fruits (generally over 100 per flower head) grow no beak, but attach directly to bristles, creating a dense sphere filled with pappus. Common and prickly sow thistle have this form.



White Hawkweed. Keir Morse. [CC BY NC SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)

**Brush Shape** A handful of tan-colored fruits (5-30 per flower head) grow no beak but there is still room between each pappus. White hawkweed, hawksbeard, prickly lettuce, willow lettuce, rod wirelettuce, both cat's ears and Crete weed have this form.



Silverpuffs. © Frank Rose Desert Museum. All rights reserved.

**Papery Starburst** Fruits elongate and append five paper-like scales. Each scale is tipped with a bristle. Silverpuffs has the biggest scales but grassland silverpuffs, Douglas' microseris, and short scaled microseris also grow bristle-tipped scales as pappus. ❖

2023 Nest Box Monitoring Report

# Bluebird Yields High Despite Fewer Nests and Eggs

by Frances Morse

I am continually amazed at the ability of western bluebirds to somehow survive and procreate under the worst circumstances. Last year the birds coped with drought conditions, controlled burns, and a wildfire inside the park. This year they experienced very cold temperatures, torrential atmospheric rivers through May, and soggy soil that must have impacted the supply of ground insects, which are their primary food source.

Team Bluebird – nest box monitors John Morse, Perry McCarty, Diane Campbell, Marie Stosz, Caroline Bowker, Marsha Mekisich, and I – checked our 27 boxes weekly. Whitney Mortimer (now living in Sebastopol) again did our data analysis and consulted with us about some of our unusual findings. We totaled 363.75 volunteer hours during this season. Great work, Team Bluebird!



Diane Campbell (L), Frances Morse

It was a *long* season for us monitors. Clad in our new, bright yellow FoE volunteer reflective vests, we began checking on March 1 but did not find a nest until late April (very unusual). We did lots of slogging through cold wet weather and very

muddy trails, and continued to check well into July. Here are our results.

## 2023 Nest Box Summary (27 Boxes)

| Species | Nests | Eggs | Hatched  | Fledged/Yield |
|---------|-------|------|----------|---------------|
| WEBL    | 10    | 50   | 43 (86%) | 43 (86%)      |
| TRES    | 2     | 9    | 9 (100%) | 7 (78%)       |
| ATFL    | 2     | 6    | 4 (67%)  | 4 (67%)       |
| Total   | 14    | 65   | 56 (93%) | 54 (83%)      |

Overall, we had 14 nests and 65 eggs from three species of cavity-nesting birds. There were 10 nests built by western bluebirds (WEBL), two nests built by tree swallows (TRES), and two nests by ash-throated flycatchers (ATFL). Thanks to their efforts, 54 new fledglings are now flying around Edgewood.

Although our number of nests and eggs was considerably lower than most years, our yields (percentage of eggs that fledged) were actually high. The 54 newbies gave us an overall 83% yield (i.e., more than 8 of every 10 eggs made it to the fledgling stage). Results were even a bit higher for our bluebirds. These beautiful feathered friends had an 86% yield.

We were concerned about the low numbers of bluebird nests and eggs this year, but were surprised when we examined our averages. Over the last 10 years, we have averaged 14 nests and 64 eggs per season. Although this season's total nests and eggs were lower than average, our bluebird yields (86%) were higher than our 10-year average (71%), and 100% of the bluebird hatchlings this year fledged. Our bluebirds seem to know how to make the best of every season, regardless of conditions.

As I usually do, I reported our findings to the California Bluebird Recovery Program ([www.cbrp.org/](http://www.cbrp.org/)) which analyzes results from across California.



There are now 43 new western bluebirds in our park. I like to fantasize that some of us are actually seeing them here. On Wednesday, Nov. 7, Carol Mathews captured this photo of western bluebirds congregating on a short stretch of fence posts along the Serpentine trail. Carol was with the

*more on page 7*

## Bluebirds from page 6

Wildflower Survey volunteers, who watched the birds fly off to grab an insect and then return to their posts to bask in the sun. Sandy Bernhard included Carol's photo in the weekly email report for FoE volunteers and members.

The photo generated lots of excitement and discussion, including this comment from FoE member, Ronnie Eaton, who monitors bluebird nest box trails for the Sequoia Audubon Society in other parts of San Mateo County:

"Oh, that photo of the WEBL's is beyond fantastic!!! For those of us who do nest box monitoring, it is so gratifying to see healthy birds occupying local wildland. Not only is it critical to maintain healthy habitat, but it's also critical to provide cavities for nesting. Edgewood volunteers do all that and so much more!! Thank you from a FoE!!"

Thank you, Ronnie, and all our FoE monitors. May we all experience the beauty, serenity, and perseverance of our beautiful bluebirds, including the 43 new ones this season. ❖

## UPCOMING NATURE HIKES

### Dec. 16, 9 a.m. Sights and Sounds of the Season

We will enjoy a quieter side of Edgewood as we head into winter, but that doesn't mean there isn't a lot to see – the last few nuts and berries, graceful seed heads, winter birds, signs of animals getting ready for the colder months, mosses, mushrooms – who knows what gifts we'll find? Sign-ups are open now on Eventbrite.\*

### Jan. 20, 9 a.m. Mosses for Beginners

Winter rains wake up beautiful mosses! Learn about these tiny and fascinating plants on this free hike with FoE Docent Rebecca Reynolds. We will spend some time looking closely at 10-20 of the easily accessible examples and learning a few fascinating details about mosses in general. Sign-ups will open on Eventbrite\* Dec. 20.

### Feb. 10, 9 a.m. Better Birding with the Merlin App

Want to get better at identifying birds? The week before our hike, Ornithologist Gina Barton will offer a Zoom training on how to use Merlin to identify winter birds. On Saturday morning we'll meet at Edgewood to practice what we learned. Sign-ups will open on Eventbrite\* Jan. 20.

\*Mark your calendars. Space is limited for all free nature hikes. Sign up at [www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-edgewood-natural-preserve-3011937000](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-edgewood-natural-preserve-3011937000).

## Become a Friend of Edgewood!

JOIN or RENEW your membership ONLINE or by MAIL:

**ONLINE:** [foew.org/donate](http://foew.org/donate)

**BY MAIL:** Send this completed form with your donation amount circled to Friends of Edgewood, 3 Old Stage Coach Rd., Redwood City, CA 94062-3801.

\$25 \$50 \$100\* \$150\* 250\* \$500\* \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make me a Sustaining Member and charge my credit card \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month. (\$5 minimum)

EXPLORER newsletter preference:  email  mail

\*Check if you wish to receive eligible thank you gifts:

6 Edgewood greeting cards for donations of \$100+

Plus 1 year of *Bay Nature* magazine for donations of \$150+

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Thank you for supporting the Friends of Edgewood.

Friends of Edgewood is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

## Switch to a Sustaining Membership Easier for you. Better for Edgewood.

Friends! A sustaining membership lets you make a monthly donation via your credit card and have a huge impact on programs like Project 467, free nature hikes, and more. Can you spare just \$5 or more per month to support Friends of Edgewood and the park we love?

Go to [foew.org/donate](http://foew.org/donate), and follow directions to become a sustaining member, or email us at [mem@friendsofedgeswood.org](mailto:mem@friendsofedgeswood.org), and we will help you get set up.



Est. 1993

# Friends of Edgewood

**PRESERVE • EDUCATE • RESTORE**

Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve  
3 Old Stage Coach Road  
Redwood City, CA 94062-3801

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Bill and Jean Lane Education Center at Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve

Open Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and  
Saturdays and Sundays, 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

To learn more about Friends of Edgewood, visit our website at [foew.org](http://foew.org), call us at 650-367-7576, or email us at [info@friendsofedgeswood.org](mailto:info@friendsofedgeswood.org).



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## Edgewood EXPLORER

WINTER 2023 • VOLUME 30 NUMBER 4

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- When visiting Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, please review trail maps, obey signs, and stay on approved trails.
- See [friendsofedgewood.org](http://friendsofedgewood.org) to learn about our mission, find membership information, and discover volunteer opportunities.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Nature Hikes

- Dec. 16, 9 a.m.  
Sights and Sounds of the Season
  - Jan. 20, 9 a.m.  
Mosses for Beginners
  - Feb. 10, 9 a.m.  
Better Birding with the Merlin App
- Space is limited. Sign up at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

The Edgewood EXPLORER is published quarterly by Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring Edgewood and educating the public about its treasures. Friends of Edgewood Board of Directors: Laurie Alexander, Sandy Bernhard, Caroline Bowker, Junko Bryant, Michele W. Conway, Nancy Enzminger, Peter Ingram (president), Bill Korbholz, Kathy Korbholz, Linda Leong, Angela Mallett, Perry McCarty, Barrie Moore, Rebecca Reynolds, Matthew Tobin. The newsletter is edited by Michele W. Conway and supported by many friends.