

Edgewood

EXPLORER

FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD • SPRING 2024

Nature Tales Delight Young Children

by Nancy Enzminger

In February, the Education Center was excited to introduce our newest program, Nature Tales. It is a story time designed for children ages 0 to 5 years old. This enchanting storytelling experience brings the wonders of nature to life through nature books.

On Saturday, Feb. 3, eight families gathered at the Education Center. Our first storyteller, Kathleen Beasley, captivated both children and adults with her acorn-themed story time. The children really liked the acorn story book and stickers; the stuffed animals in the Ed Center were also a big hit. After reading the story, Kathleen took everyone on a tour of the exhibits in the Ed Center and talked about her favorite trails. She encouraged families to walk around the native garden and encouraged parents to sign up for the family-friendly hikes this spring.

Many of the families attending the program in February were visiting the preserve for the first time. We hope that Nature Tales will attract new visitors to enjoy the beauty and wonder of Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve.

Starting in June, Nature Tales will meet in the Ed Center on the first Saturday of the month at 10:30 a.m. The program lasts about 30 minutes. Our volunteer storytellers are eager to share stories of animals, plants, and the interconnected web of the natural world. Invite the families with young children in your life to join us!

Contact edcentercoordinator@friendsofedgewood.org for more information. 🦋



It's
Story
Time

Tell Me the One Where We Saved Edgewood

by Barrie Moore

Friends of Edgewood has many stories about ways our volunteers have worked to protect the preserve over the past 30 years, but I'd say the most inspiring story is the one shared with us by Carolyn Curtis, founding president of Friends of Edgewood and the organizer and spokesperson for the Save Edgewood Park Coalition.

Starting in the 1980's, there were factions that thought Edgewood's unprotected land would make a lovely golf course. Carolyn Curtis and other volunteer activists, many of whom were also California Native Plant Society members, recognized the significance of the biodiversity found at Edgewood and knew it must not be turned into a putting green. It was due to the foresight and fortitude of those dedicated folks that the fight to ensure Edgewood would be protected forever began.

Carolyn allowed us to videotape her story of how the coalition organized, educated, and influenced the public and the powers that be at that time. With tremendous effort, they ultimately succeeded in getting Edgewood designated a natural preserve. I think everyone who cares about Edgewood today will enjoy hearing Carolyn's talk and seeing some of the photos and artifacts she saved from those early days.

Watch the video on YouTube at bit.ly/SavingEdgewood and feel free to leave a comment thanking Carolyn for all she has done for Edgewood! 🦋





Edgewood volunteers and activists out doing good in the preserve. *Photo by Sandy Bernhard*

Volunteers Make It Happen!

by Sue Lindner

Friends of Edgewood exists to protect Edgewood’s extraordinary biodiversity and to foster lasting connections with Edgewood and the larger natural world. These goals are realized by FoE volunteers who contribute their knowledge and time in diverse ways – and have fun while they do so!

One measure of volunteer contribution is the total number of hours spent on Friends of Edgewood programs. In 2023, this total came to 13,570 hours – within 100 hours of the record set in 2022 (13,662 hours). And the volunteers who contributed those hours were among the 350 members of Friends of Edgewood – an all-time high membership count for this organization!

About 37% (~5017 hrs) of the total volunteer time was devoted to land and wildlife stewardship activities, such as monitoring, surveying, protecting, or restoring Edgewood’s native ecosystems:

Land and Wildlife Stewardship Activities	Volunteer Hours
Adopt-a-Highway (Road Warriors)	173.33
Bluebird Box Monitoring	373.75
Butterfly Restoration	72.5
Camera Trapping	63.5
Edgewood Farms (Seed Collection & Propagation)	242.5
Green Grass Initiative (Grassland Restoration)	532.84
Project 467 Habitat Restoration	109.71
Showcase Sites	149.47
Social Trail Mitigation	117.56
SOD Blitz	30.62
TERTELS (Mapping & Conservation)	433.4
Thornmint Restoration	54.75
Weed Reduction (Weed Warriors)	1487.19
Weekly Wildflower Surveys	1175.87

About 42% (~5719 hrs) of the total was devoted to nature education and interpretation programs that help folks learn about Edgewood’s diverse plant and animal communities:


Nature Education and Interpretation Activities	Volunteer Hours
Bloomin’ Board Display	55.0
Docent Training Program	1388.9
Edgewood Field Guides	114.75
Edgewood Native Garden	185.43
Edgewood Plant Lists and Flora	62.25
Education Center	1609.95
Explorer Newsletter	203.49
Junior Explorers	58.4
Nature Hikes led by Wildflower Docents	1410.87
PlantId.net	400.25
Trail Ambassadors	174.32
Trail Tales	13.5
Volunteer Enrichment	41.75

About 21% (~2834 hrs) of the total was behind-the-scenes work that kept the organization running smoothly:

FoE Organizational Support Activities	Volunteer Hours
Administrative (Organize, Prep, Research)	1360.24
Board of Directors	182.1
Marketing & Social Media	207.5
Membership	199.2
Volunteer Management	593.04
Volunteer Time Tracking	143.71
Website and IT Management	145.42
Other	2.9

13,570 hours is a lot of time, and Friends of Edgewood volunteers have much to show for it – which can be measured in the count of Ed Center guests assisted, hike visitors delighted, yellow-star thistles removed, field guide pages written, plant species mapped, litter picked up, bluebird eggs counted, and so on.

But there’s always more to do! Come spend some hours volunteering for Edgewood. You will join a generous group of knowledgeable people who will appreciate what you have to offer, and you will help make our corner of the world a better place. And that is beyond measure!

If you would like to find out more about our volunteer opportunities, visit friendsofedgeswood.org/. 



President's Message

by Peter Ingram

For many years we have invited visitors to Edgewood to join trained docents for the annual wildflower hikes. It has become a welcome harbinger of spring to receive that flyer announcing another opportunity to experience the magic of the serpentine grasslands and the splendor of the woodlands in bloom.

Spring is also the time when our board reviews and refines strategic priorities and finalizes its operating budget for the year. For me, these important activities prompt reflection on where we've been and where we are going as an organization, and what we are learning about Edgewood that foreshadows its ecological future. Such contemplations are inextricably tied to the owner and operator of the preserve, the San Mateo County Parks Department.

Some thoughts on how I view the state of our partnership with Parks, and the things I will be especially focused on in 2024:

Three years ago we set out to improve communication and collaboration with Parks staff in the midst of the launch of the county's wildfire fuel management program. We felt a strong need to reassert the primacy of Edgewood Natural Preserve's unique status and to ensure that preservation was made a top priority in the management of the land. We also pressed Parks to find more collaborative ways to protect and restore sensitive habitat and endangered, threatened, or rare species while balancing public access.

Our expressed observations at that time were 1) Edgewood's status as a natural preserve appeared to be losing priority in park system management decisions; and 2) robust communication between the Friends of Edgewood (FoE) and Parks staff was lacking.

The ensuing activities in Edgewood sometimes created issues and conflicts, while our ongoing discussions with Parks were often difficult and sometimes positive. If not for the steadfast commitment of Parks Director Nicholas Calderon to stay engaged and be receptive to criticisms and ideas, we would not be in the candid, can-do circumstances we find ourselves in today. To wit: Two years ago we established regular monthly "Edgewood Partnership Work Sessions." FoE board VP Barrie Moore and I sit down with Nicholas and the Parks Dept. Assistant Director Hannah Ormsshaw to work together on key aspects of the partnership.

Here are the priorities we expect to spend time on in 2024:

- **Shared Values.** We will identify Edgewood projects that are in line with Parks and FoE top priorities, such as ecology mapping, restoration experiments, and interpretive experiences.
- **Visitor experience and safety.** Our mutual focus will be on trail conditions, hazards, and the safety of access points.
- **Team communication.** As in any healthy partnership, there will be learning moments and opportunities to improve trust while building stronger relationships.
- **Trail brushing standards.** Of all the maintenance functions that the Parks rangers perform in Edgewood, there is a long history of FoE trepidation about this difficult and hazardous work. Nicholas has acknowledged our pleas for a different approach by redirecting department resources and shifting his own priorities to create a new set of standards for trail brushing based on the shared questions, "What is the experience we want our visitors to have?" and "How can the work be done to better protect special plants and provide a more attractive interpretive lens from the trails into the preserve's natural habitats?"

For me, an important indicator of an organization's evolution is leadership's energy, message, and accessibility, coupled with the quality of the professionals that are being hired, promoted, and retained – plus the values and integrity they bring to their work. In the four years since Nicholas became director, we have seen tangible progress and anticipate more positive change will bloom in 2024.

I am excited for what lies ahead, knowing the hard work is not done. With the continued support of our volunteers, members, supporters, and partnership organizations, we will continue to refine and deliver our land and wildlife stewardship, nature education, and interpretive programs that support Edgewood Natural Preserve. 🦋

Signs of spring: Giant trillium (*Trillium chloropetalum*)
Botta's pocket gopher gathers early greens.
Photos (L) by Sue Lindner and (R) by Caroline Bowker





FoE Remembers Ken Seydel

Ken Seydel, the founder of the Friends of Edgewood Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) activities, passed away in October 2023 after two years of treatment for pancreatic cancer.

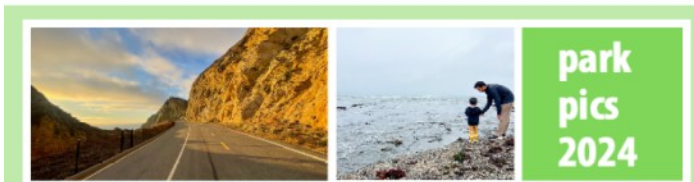


Ken joined AAH in 1989, when the program was first introduced in California. Working alone, he cleaned nearly the same area of I-280 as we do currently, but he cleaned both sides of the freeway. The litter load in those days was apparently much lower than it is today, as was Caltrans requested frequency for cleaning.

With the effort to do a thorough job increasing over the years, Ken joined forces with Friends of Edgewood to create the Adopt-A-Highway volunteer program we have today. The first session of the Friends of Edgewood Adopt-A-Highway group (now called Road Warriors) with Ken as the Caltrans permit holder and coordinator was conducted in February 1999.

In 2000, Ken and the Friends of Edgewood were recognized by CalTrans as “Volunteer of the Year” and also recognized with a San Mateo County resolution. A total of 67 volunteers have participated in the program since then.

Ken was also involved with camera trapping and enjoyed running on Edgewood trails. He maintained a high activity level and a positive outlook through the rigors of cancer treatment. With a much appreciated friendly and inviting manner, Ken was always ready and capable to help with all AAH matters and much more. 🦋



Explore your favorite San Mateo County parks with your camera and enter the San Mateo County Parks Foundation third Park Pics photo contest. The contest began Feb. 8 and runs through March 25, 2024.

The parks foundation is looking for photos of the winter season in San Mateo County parks. Photos must have been taken between Dec. 21, 2023, and March 25, 2024, to be accepted.

You could win a \$125 REI gift card in one of three categories: Landscapes and Waterscapes, Up Close with Nature, and People in Parks. Each entrant can submit one photo per category.

All finalist photos will be featured on the parks foundation website for public voting to select the “People’s Choice” award winner, who will receive a \$175 REI gift card.

Find submission information, complete contest rules, FAQs, and see winning photos from last year at supportparks.org/news/photo-contest/.

Questions? Please contact leslie@supportparks.org.



Mickey Salgo

Longtime Friends of Edgewood member and volunteer, Mickey (Miklos) Salgo, passed away in November 2023. He was 77.

Mickey graduated from Friends of Edgewood’s docent class in 2013 and quickly became involved in many FoE programs. He served on the board of directors, was a volunteer coordinator for the Trail Patrol, led wildflower walks and Junior Explorer hikes as a docent, was an engaging Ed Center host, helped Road Warriors with highway clean-up, and spearheaded the campaign to produce the Edgewood brochure in multiple languages.



He was the founding coordinator of the camera trapping program in Edgewood, which reveals the natural behaviors of wildlife and provides important information about habits, abundance, health, and range of animals in Edgewood Natural Preserve. Mickey’s thoughtful words appear on almost all our camera trapping program descriptions:

Just as microscopes revealed a new world of microorganisms, telescopes a new world of celestial bodies, camera traps are now revealing a new world of wildlife activity when we are not present.

— Miklos Salgo, Camera Trapper

Friends of Edgewood will miss Mickey’s thoughtfulness and dedication, particularly in the camera trapping program about which he was so enthusiastic and where he provided so much support. 🦋

Skeleton Weed: Invasive and Odd Member of the “Dandelion Tribe”

by Bruce Homer-Smith

Skeleton weed, *Chondrilla juncea*, is a member of the Dandelion Tribe and is one of Edgewood’s strangest and potentially disruptive plants. It has two claims to fame:

First, it’s a problematic weed. Skeleton weed invades dry rangelands in the western US, outcompeting other plants for water and reducing soil nutrients. It’s relatively uncommon in California, but it has California’s Invasive Plant Council’s (Cal-IPC) attention because of its “innate reproductive potential.” (More on that later.) In Australia, skeleton weed has spread uncontrollably and interferes with wheat harvest machinery, costing millions of dollars in lost productivity every year.

San Mateo County wants to eradicate skeleton weed, but it is not an easy job. At Edgewood, seeds blow in from the I-280 corridor and germinate on thin soil over non-serpentine rock. Plants’ green wire-like stems blend into the background of other plants. Their roots go very deep and send up new stems from a depth of 16 inches, so mechanical removal is not easy. Although the county uses herbicides, a single application is often not enough. FoE Weed Warrior Paul Heiple has found plants returning to the same locations several years after herbicide was used.

Below L: Skeleton weed’s stems and taproot are extremely tough and wiry. *Photo by Mary Barkworth* [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0](#)

Below R: Skeleton weed has nasty down-pointing prickles at the base of its stem. *Photo © by Neal Kramer*



Second, skeleton weed is an obligate apomict. It always clones itself through its seeds. This is very odd. Like most flowering plants, it has bisexual flowers, including petals, male stamen columns, and emerging female stigmas. However, instead of exchanging pollen with other individuals, it has developed an internal way to form a living embryo without requiring pollen from other plants. Offspring are clones — genetically identical to the parent.

With all its sexual equipment, it seems certain that skeleton weed has evolved from sexual ancestors but has lost that strategy for now. Perhaps 10% of species in the Aster Family (Asteraceae) make clonal seeds in addition to sexual ones, but skeleton weed has taken it further, giving up on sex entirely.



Skeleton weed flower. *Photo by Kenneth Rangel, iNaturalist* [CC BY-NC-SA](#)

Why might that be a successful strategy, given the resulting lack of diversity in its gene pool?

- Across a large population, some adaptation will happen through mutations.
- Also, epigenetic processes turn genes on and off in response to environmental factors, such as soil chemicals and stress, causing variations in the genetic blueprint each individual uses to build new cells.
- Also, cloning allows new populations to scale up quickly to fill an ecological niche even when pollinators are scarce or external conditions are tough. This may have helped the species rapidly spread through 50,000 square miles of Australian wheat fields.
- Finally, as climate change becomes more rapid, complex plant/pollinator relationships may fail, leaving more opportunities for less complex clonal systems.

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**FRIENDS OF
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& KID-FRIENDLY
HIKES
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FREE DOCENT HIKES START MARCH 1ST

AT EDGEWOOD PARK & NATURAL PRESERVE

MORE INFO AND SIGN UP AT

FRIENDSOFEDGEWOOD.EVENTBRITE.COM



Treasurer's Report for 2023

30th Year Was Great for Revenue, Outreach, and Celebration

by Angela Mallett

Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization with the mission to protect Edgewood's extraordinary biodiversity and foster lasting connections with Edgewood and the larger natural world. Our volunteers participate in 27 programs, which we group into three broad categories: land and wildlife stewardship, nature education, and interpretive programs. Additionally, there are ongoing activities related to governance and organizational infrastructure. See the list of activities in these categories on page 2.

Our largest expenditure in 2023 was land and wildlife stewardship (managed as "Project 467"), including the Green Grass initiative, Edgewood Farms (seed propagation), and San Mateo thornmint and Pentachaeta

restorations. We held several meetings for members, including our 30th anniversary celebration combined with the annual general meeting, where members exchanged valuable knowledge, ideas, and native seeds from their private gardens. For the convenience of preserve visitors, including those on our docent-led hikes, we rented a portable toilet, which was located near the Sunset Gate during the busiest months. Educational posters were created for the 30th anniversary celebration and were used as part of special outreach activities at the San Carlos Hometown Days, the Redwood City July 4th festival, and the San Mateo County Parks SummerFest.

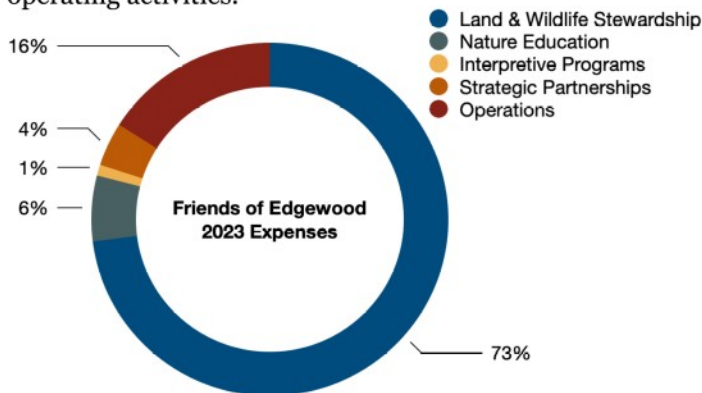
2023 was another great year for revenue, allowing us to pay land and wildlife stewardship expenses without

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Treasurer's Report *from page 6*

running a deficit. Membership dues and other gifts amounted to 92% of (non-investment) revenue. We also received generous grants to support our programs. Donations increasingly include donations from Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) and Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs).

In 2023, the majority (73%) of our expense budget was for land and wildlife stewardship. Our nature education programs, including the Bill and Jean Lane Education Center, and printing and mailing the quarterly newsletter, accounted for 6%. Another 2% went to our interpretive programs, which included free docent-led walks. We also granted 4% to our strategic nonprofit partners. The remaining expenses were related to administration of incoming donations, insurance, and other general operating activities.



As a mature, all-volunteer-run nonprofit, the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve endeavors to use our financial resources wisely, to spend our yearly funding within our means, and to invest for the longer term to support the continuation and growth of our programs. Our 2023 Annual Report can be found on our website at friendsofedgeswood.org/annual-report.

Thank you again to our volunteers, members, donors, and friends for your generous support. We appreciate your contributions of money and time to ensure that Edgewood be a resilient place of extraordinary biodiversity that is appreciated and protected forever. 🦋

Skeleton Weed *from page 5*

Skeleton weed is one of 23 members of the Dandelion Tribe at Edgewood. You can find them in [PlantID.net](https://plantid.net) by using "Looks Like" Dandelion search on the Edgewood Preserve plant list. Later this spring, I'll publish a Field Key to the Dandelion Tribe. With it, you can start a treasure hunt to find all 23!

Thanks to Paul Heiple for his help on this article. 🦋

Become a Friend of Edgewood!

JOIN or RENEW your membership ONLINE or by MAIL:

ONLINE: 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+

Name _____

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City/State/Zip _____

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Type of credit card: MasterCard Visa Discover

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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, and follow directions to become a sustaining member, or email us at 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, call us at 650-367-7576, or email us at info@friendsofedgeswood.org.



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Edgewood EXPLORER

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When visiting Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, please review trail maps, obey signs, and stay on approved trails.

See friendsofedgeswood.org to learn about our mission, find membership information, and discover volunteer opportunities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Spring Wildflower Hikes led by Friends of Edgewood docents begin in March and continue through May.
- Kid-Friendly Hikes (family hikes designed with kids in mind) are offered throughout the year.
- The next Nature Tales story time for ages 0-5 is Saturday, June 1.

Sign up at FriendsofEdgewood.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, Elisa Chavez, Michele W. Conway, Nancy Enzminger, Peter Ingram (president), Bill Korbholz, Kathy Korbholz, Angela Mallett, Perry McCarty, Barrie Moore, Rebecca Reynolds, Matthew Tobin. The newsletter is edited by Michele W. Conway and supported by many friends.