



# TORREYANA

Published for Members of the  
Torrey Pines Docent Society  
and the Torrey Pines Association

No. 124

October 1985

## *Next Docent Society Meeting*

### WILDERNESS DAY: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 9 A.M. AT THE LODGE

As we mark the anniversary of our first Wilderness Weekend, which took place exactly one year ago, we're designating October 19 as Wilderness Day. Prepare yourself for a morning of fun and adventure.

After a brief business meeting at 9 a.m., activities will include a botanical treasure hunt, sensory games, acorn grinding, and whatever else our secret committee can scheme up between now and then.

This is a chance to rekindle the spirit of camaraderie that blossomed in the wilderness one year ago. I'm counting on seeing every one of you there.

Judy Carlstrom

### CORRECTION

Last month's Torreyana incorrectly reported vital statistics for the new little member of the Wohl household. Bob and Robin's daughter Shayna (not Shana) arrived on Saturday, September 24, at 3:27 p.m. Your editor regrets the errors and apologizes to the readers and particularly to the proud and happy parents.



## Notes from the Naturalist by Hank Nicol

### SQUIRRELS ARE NUTS

When I was a kid one of my favorite pastimes was to take the .22 out to the desert. I went to an abandoned, half-acre hole and popped away at the squirrels and chipmunks. In my defense, I doubt that I did much damage to the rodent population. Some years later somebody turned the whole area into a farm. That took care of the squirrels and chipmunks (and jackrabbits and cottontails and coyotes and kit foxes...). The squirrels had been the same species we have here at Torrey Pines. The "chipmunks" were the very common, striped, golden-mantled ground squirrels. Looking back, I'm not sure I've ever seen a real chipmunk in my life. I have seen squirrels here and there. I particularly remember a dozen or so black squirrels running up and down a monstrous strangler fig behind my house in Thailand. They played for hours one evening. I never saw them again.

Ground squirrels get the name because they make their homes underground, but they can, and will, climb. I've seen them walking around (very carefully) in the tops of spiky boxthorn bushes. I saw, and photographed, one clambering over the spikes of a Mojave yucca. When I was up at Benicia State Recreation Area we had some old pear trees. They were scraggly, but they produced fruit. Don Laver was our Park Attendant. Unlike the maintenance people today, he wore a badge, and I, the ranger, helped pick up garbage and fix the plumbing. Things were different then. Anyway, Don had an eye on those pears. He had figured the exact day they would reach their peak of succulent ripeness. He went out with his buckets and boxes. The pears were gone. At first he thought that one of the regular visitors had beat him to the fruit. Eventually he figured out that the ground squirrels had cleaned off the trees. They can climb.



Skillful they may be, but squirrels can still get into plenty of trouble. Up at Huntington Lake in the Sierras I once found a tree squirrel swimming feebly in a toilet bowl. If I hadn't looked, it would have been in even more trouble. When I first came to Torrey Pines I thought I saw a guinea pig somebody had dumped. It was a ground squirrel. How it lost its tail I haven't a guess. It hung around the lodge for a couple of years. Then it moved up near the restroom for a season. Then it disappeared altogether.

Speaking of disappearing.... This last spring several adult squirrels brought their younguns out in the lodge garden every morning. The babies grew into squirrely adolescence. The adults disappeared..., vanished! What happened? Did they swarm like bees?

We toss some birdseed out in the path in front of the lodge every day. We're not trying to support the birds. We just want to subsidize them a bit so they'll hang around where people can see them. A couple of brush rabbits and three or four ground squirrels come after the birdseed too. The rabbits have to eat up on the spot. The squirrels can vacuum it up and take it home for later. They suck up seed

until their cheek pouches look like double chins. One young squirrel was working the seed. I walked up the path. The squirrel panicked. It took off full tilt for cover. It kept watching me as it ran. It did not watch where it was going. It came up short when it smacked its little nose into a four by four post. I wonder if squirrels can get backlash.

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## ***News and Notes***

TO JEANNE AND GLENN  
CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES  
ON YOUR WEDDING DAY  
OCTOBER 5, 1985



### PRESIDENT'S NOTES by Glenn Dunham

The volunteer patches that Bob Amann presented at the August meeting are now on order. I want to thank Bob for the work he has done to get the patches for the group.

I've been working on the membership list, and a few copies of the new list were passed out after the Museum of Man tour. My plan is to have the list available at each meeting for updating, and to publish the list at least twice a year. A separate addendum is planned for each year's training class. Judy Carlstrom will have copies of the new list at the October meeting.

Please note that Jeanne and I have a new address and phone number:  
3873 Pringle Street  
San Diego, CA 92103  
298-9128

### MUSEUM AND LODGE IMPROVEMENTS

Ranger Bob Wohl reports that in addition to the previously mentioned \$75,000 funded by the State for Museum renovation, DAR funds in the amount of \$35,000 have been allocated for roof renovation (hopefully before the rains). Also scheduled is upgrading of slide presentations through purchase of a lat-dissolve unit for the slide room. Two new projectors and new lenses will be acquired.

### MEMORIAL DONATION

The Docent Society sends thanks to supporting members Bill and Jo McClintock, who recently sent a donation in memory of Richard Dittman, a dear college friend.

## MUSEUM OF MAN TOUR

The Museum of Man tour (in lieu of our regular meeting) on September 21 gave us added insight into the lives of the Indians who once inhabited the Torrey Pines area. A good turnout enjoyed the comprehensive tour led by Ms. Corrie Ort, Education Assistant at the Museum.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 IN OLD TOWN

Torrey Pines docents are urged to attend a conference of the League of California State Parks Non-Profit Organizations to be held this Saturday in Old Town. Hosted by the Old Town docents, Las Amapolas, the attendees will come from all over the state, and we'd like to have a good showing of our members. From 8 to 9 a.m. coffee will be served and people can get acquainted. Some interesting talks and workshop sessions will be held throughout the day. Preregistration isn't essential, so be at the theater in Old Town Saturday morning for a pleasant and profitable experience. Be sure to wear your badge!

### *Getting to Know You* by Marion Dixon

As residents of La Jolla since 1961, our family has come to Torrey Pines State Reserve for many "back-yard" outings. Before the crowds and recent restrictions, we used to breakfast among the pines--which reminded me of my native Northern Ontario--and follow that up with a walk down Fat Man's Misery. The Reserve has also been my favorite local spot for identifying wildflowers and birds, the latter particularly in the lagoon.

When I knew there was a docent society here, I decided that would be one of my activities following retirement from my job as coordinator of volunteer tutors in English for foreign scholars at UCSD. I retired this June and have thoroughly enjoyed expanding my limited knowledge of botany, zoology, and geology, which I passed up for English Lit and Journalism in school. It's a pleasure to join a group of people with a similar interest in nature and our local environs.

## RULES FOR A RESERVE

"Small groups of hikers are permitted to follow carefully designed pathways, but always in the company of a ranger. If anyone presumes to litter, stray off the path or--worse yet--raise his voice, he is instantly reprimanded. All traces of humankind, and most especially noise, are kept to a minimum. If a park official needs to carry anything into the preserve, he does so with a rubber-tired horse cart; if a fallen tree needs to be trimmed or removed, it is cut up with a handsaw, then brought out by human and equine muscle power. Souvenir taking, even the least mushroom, is forbidden."

Rudolph Chelminski

Smithsonian, May 1978

Where is this enlightened reserve?

In Eastern Poland.



## TPA Topics

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### PREScribed BURNING AT TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE

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By Linda Allen, Assistant Resource Ecologist, State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Southern Region Headquarters, 1333 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 200, San Diego, California 92108  
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Two sets of experimental prescription burns have been conducted at Torrey Pines State Reserve by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. These burns were undertaken in an effort to determine if intermittent prescription burning could be used as a management tool to stimulate reproduction of the Torrey Pine and regeneration of the coastal sage scrub-chaparral understory. Currently, Torrey Pine recruitment is poor throughout the reserve, except in an area that sustained a wildfire 13 years ago. It was the intent of these burns to determine under what fire conditions germination of Torrey Pine could be maximized, the extent of heat tolerance of the seeds and of the trees, and the nature of the regeneration of the sage scrub-chaparral elements under these conditions. Researchers from San Diego State University were contracted to perform the studies and evaluate the results.

#### Methods

Although the treatment plots were located adjacent to each other, environmental conditions during each set of burns were dissimilar owing to the difference in time of year. One set was conducted in May 1984 and one set in January 1985. The January prescribed burn was cooler and moister than the previous May burn.

The January burn was both preceded and followed by rainstorms that maintained

higher soil moisture levels than were present during the May burn. The May burn was conducted after an abnormally abbreviated winter precipitation season in which no rain was recorded after December.

Both sets of prescription burns had an east and a west-facing aspect which contributed to notable differences between live fuel moisture, relative humidity and species composition.

#### Observations and Results

Fire Behavior: Close observations of the Torrey Pine trees during the burns were made. Although none of the mature trees were permitted to sustain flames that approached their crowns, they suffered varying amounts of damage. The flammability of the bark was remarkable. As the sap ignited, the trunk became encased in flames. Were the flames not extinguished it is likely some trees would have sustained crown fire. Indications seem to be that these trees are not highly resistant to fire.

The depth of accumulated pine needle litter and understory composition around trees affected the heat intensity in the vicinity of each tree. It appears that fires burn more intensely where pine litter has accumulated, especially if there is also present one of the more flammable shrub species (flat-top buckwheat, chamise, and lemonade berry). Scorch damage was well within the Departmental acceptable limits, less than 10 feet over 90 percent of the plot. Scorch and subsequent needle browning was less apparent in the January burn than the May burn.

Litter depth under trees contributed to sustained smoldering, generating high temperatures near shallow tree roots for several hours after the burn. This impact of heat stress was lessened during the January burn by using small strip "head firing", rather than backing fire. This caused less litter to burn, leaving, in several areas, a thin layer

of protective duff between the fire and shallow tree roots.

### Torrey Pine Tree Mortality

The May 1984 burn showed direct impacts on several Torrey pine trees. The following November, 7 of 31 mature trees (15.9 cm - 71.3 cm dbh) had dropped all needles and appeared dead. Ten of 20 saplings were killed. In addition, several trees later became infested with bark beetles, possibly due to increased moisture stress from an extended drought plus canopy scorch.

The January burn resulted in minimal direct impacts to the trees. None were killed as of March 1985; however, monitoring will continue for at least 12 months. Monitoring will also be focused on beetle infestation.

### Torrey Pine Seedling Recruitment

The heat from the fire did stimulate seed drop from cones of mature Torrey pines on the burn sites. By January 1985 seedlings were beginning to emerge in the May 1984 plot. Over 150 seedlings were mapped in that plot. By March 1985 seedlings were emerging in the plot burned in January 1985, with over 75 seedlings recorded. It cannot be disputed that the prescribed fire sites have significantly greater numbers of seedlings compared to unburned (undisturbed) areas of the park.

Mapping locations of all seedlings was done to monitor seedling mortality, both from herbivore predation and environmental influences. Obviously, there was far greater seedling recruitment than there are resources to support these seedlings to maturity. Losses through this first dry summer season are expected to be high.

### Discussion and Conclusions

The vegetation that surrounds the Torrey pine groves in the State Reserve is clearly a fire-adapted one. The shrubs

are quite flammable, can burn with great intensity, and survive to resprout or regenerate from seedlings. Even if a fire burns when the ground is quite dry and 6 months elapse before measurable rainfall occurs, the shrubby vegetation regenerates readily.

Torrey pine trees and exposed seeds seem to be highly sensitive to fire. Even when trees were protected from crowning and were hosed down when fire scars began to climb the bole, some of the trees were badly damaged or killed. The seeds on the surface of the soil tolerated only moderate amounts of heat before germination was severely inhibited. It appears that fires of the intensity observed in portions of the May 1984 burn are sufficient to damage adult trees and to kill seeds previously dispersed and remaining on the surface.

Prescribed burning was successfully used to reduce litter accumulation, and coastal sage scrub-chaparral plants (chamise, California sagebrush, bush rue, scrub oak and fuchsia-flowering gooseberry) show vigorous new growth. The herbaceous component of the vegetation was revitalized. The goal of stimulating Torrey pine recruitment by using prescribed burning methods appears to be attainable. There are, however, certain impacts that will have to be taken into consideration when developing a management plan for the natural resources of Torrey Pines State Reserve. Issues include increased erosion potential in such rugged terrain with highly erodible soil caused mainly by clearing of fire lines, the effects of burning upon Torrey pine resistance to bark beetle infestation, and acceptable amounts of mature tree losses as a trade-off for seedling recruitment.





**Los Penasquitos Lagoon Foundation**  
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LOS PENASQUITOS LAGOON FOUNDATION REPORT by Jessie LaGrange

The regular monthly meeting was held on September 18, 1985.

The Los Penasquitos Lagoon enhancement plan has been approved for a period of ten years by the Army Corps of Engineers. The final Coastal Commission permit is expected soon.

Bill Fait of the State Department of Parks and Recreation has provided an update of information regarding acquisition of San Diego Gas and Electric properties within the wetlands and lagoon of Los Penasquitos. A State appraiser has been in the area to determine land values. Approximately 240 acres are involved with varying offers having been made by the Utility to sell from 150 to 200 acres. State funding for the purchase has been included in the 1985-86 State budget.

In November, the State will conduct a public hearing of the SDG&E acquisition in a new procedural step that has been added to the purchase process. A position statement from any group or individual favoring the purchase of the wetlands and lagoon would serve as reinforcement and further support for this important addition to Torrey Pines State Reserve. The date, time, and place of the hearing will be announced soon.

Don Coppock of the Coastal Conservancy arranged for Directors of the Trust for Public Lands to provide a Training Workshop on September 20 and 21 for Lagoon Foundation Board members and others who indicated interest in land acquisition and management issues.

Sally and Fred Speiss of Torrey Pines Association and Scripps Institution of Oceanography contributed greatly to the success of the workshop by arranging for the meeting place and refreshments, as well as actively participating in the sessions.

The opening meeting on Friday was led by Bruce Johnstone, Field Representative for the Trust for Public Land, who described a land trust organization as a non-governmental, community-based group controlled by local citizens. An objective of the program was to provide technical advice and instruct in methods to work with government to achieve protection of open space easements. Saturday sessions continued with Jennie Gerard, Vice-President of the Public Land Trust, who explained ways and means to manage property by absentee ownership, and how to guarantee protection of open space land in perpetuity. Issues of insurance, liabilities for use of land, and ways to cut bureaucratic red tape were examined.

Options for land acquisition were discussed in detail, with specific local Torrey Pines parcels identified. The necessity for a clearly stated goal was emphasized, as well as the need of people to establish a connection with the issue. This was described as being achieved through coordination of local groups and through fund raising for emergency needs.

An informational packet was provided by the Trust for Public Land, 82 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 495-5660. A copy is available at TPA.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. Torrey Pines Association members in attendance were Sally Speiss, Bob Conway, Frances Armstrong, and Jessie LaGrange. Bill Fait represented State Parks and Recreation.

The annual meeting of the Lagoon Foundation and election of officers will be on Monday, October 14, 1985, at the Greystone Inn on Carmel Valley Road at 7 p.m. Our thanks to Karen Watling of Greystone.

**TORREY PINES DOCENT SOCIETY**

President: Glenn Dunham

Deadline for Torreyana copy  
is the 25th of each month.

Send contributions to:

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**Poetry Corner**

"O who can tell  
the hidden power  
of herbes and  
might of magick  
spell?"  
sang Spencer in  
the "Faerie Queen."

**JUDY ON DUTY**



JUST AS I ALWAYS SUSPECTED!!!

WARD KOU

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