



# The Creek Crier

Malibu Creek Docents  
P.O. Box 4790  
West Hills, CA 91308

Winter 2013

A Cooperative Association with Malibu Creek State Park

Website: [www.malibucreekstatepark.org](http://www.malibucreekstatepark.org)

## Spring Continuing Education Flowering Plants of Malibu Creek State Park

*To be able to call the plants by  
name makes them a hundredfold  
more sweet and intimate.*

- Henry Van Dyke

Doug Allan, Peggy  
Burhenn, Nellie Cusworth and  
Fred Nuesca will use a mix of  
classroom and outdoor activities  
for the Spring Continuing  
Education Training on March  
23, 2013.

Spring is the perfect season  
to plan some intimate time with  
the many plants in our beautiful  
park. Please join us on this  
spring day to learn about MCSP  
flora, some surprising botanical  
facts, and hear a Chumash guide  
to medicinal plant use. There  
will be lectures and interactive  
adventures. Please join us for  
this fun filled and educational  
event on March 23, 2013 from  
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM in the  
Administration Building at  
MCSP. Bring your lunch.



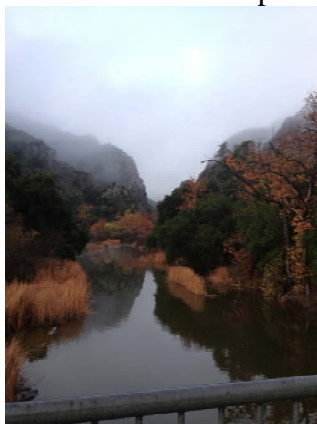
Photo: Rick Montgomery



**D. Lindsey Templeton**  
**Supervising State Park Ranger**  
**Angeles District-Malibu Sector**

Hello All,

It was so nice to see all of  
you at the Holiday Party and  
occasionally in our beautiful  
park. This winter has been  
special with beautiful (but cold)  
days and more than usual  
visitors and families enjoying  
Malibu Creek. The picture I  
took below was after a quick  
rain lifted and a suspect could  
not be found (A long story that  
cannot be told in this space).



As always, a giant thank you  
goes out to you volunteers who  
make the "Malibu Creek"  
experience special. All of the  
Rangers appreciate what you do  
and appreciate all of the help.  
We are all looking forward to  
this spring and summer. The  
excitement for campfire and  
other interpretive programs is

stronger than I have ever  
experienced and I speak for all  
of the Rangers by saying you  
volunteers make us better and  
make us want to accomplish  
more. I look forward to the  
Summer BBQ as Hayden and I  
will cook some Tri-Tip,  
(Hayden confirmed).

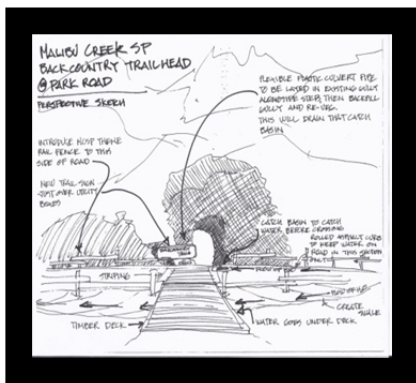
Thank you again for all the  
kindness and education that you  
bring to our visitors!

## DOCENT ACTIVITY CALENDAR

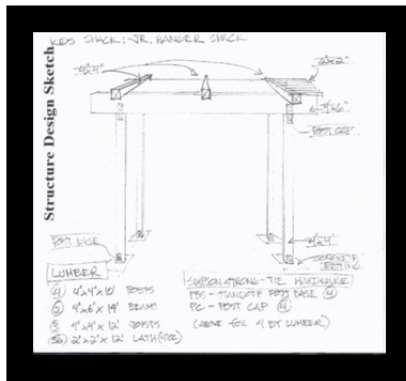
- Business Meeting  
March 16, 2013  
10:00-12:00 AM  
Visitor Center
- Spring Continuing  
Education  
March 23, 2013  
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM  
Administration Building
- Earth Day – Volunteer  
Activity  
April 13, 2013  
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Lower Parking Lot
- Field Ecology Weekend  
April 13 & 14, 2013  
Group Campground  
Cost: \$50/adult 15 & older  
\$25/child 6-14  
Contact Doug Allan at  
[topcreek1@verizon.net](mailto:topcreek1@verizon.net)  
(310) 579-7667

## Malibu Creek Docents Get Grant for Two Park Improvement Projects

Malibu Creek Docents just received notice that we are a recipient of a 2013 Earth Day grant from the California State Parks Foundation for \$5,500. The grant will fund two projects: The first project focuses on the entrance to the main trail to the back country (across the street from the lower parking lot). The extensive erosion around the stairs leading from the lower parking lot will be repaired and a new drainage system will be installed. Then a new deck with benches and signs will be constructed. See draft sketch below.



The second project will be the installation will be a **Kid Shack** in the campground. This construction project will be a Ramada for Junior Ranger and other educational programs for children. See design below.



We are working closely with Tom Dore, Associate Parks and Recreation Specialist, who planned and designed both projects, and Angel Alba, Park Maintenance Supervisor, who helped us to create the budget. Both will continue to work with us on the projects.

As with last year's Earth Day grant project, work on both projects will be shared among docents, park staff and volunteers on Saturday, April 13. We will need lots of docents and other volunteers to complete the work on both projects and do a park litter clean up with teams competing for prizes for the most trash collected and the oddest object found.



**Photo: Fred Nuesca – from last trash pick up**

There will also be opportunities to volunteer prior to April 13. More details to come. The Foundation will provide lunch for all of the volunteers. This will be lots of fun – ask anyone who volunteered last year. Stay

tuned for more details in the next few weeks.

Anyone who would like to work on the planning process, please email or call Sue Jennings at [jensusa10@yahoo.com](mailto:jensusa10@yahoo.com) or 818.716.7572.

## Indian Paintbrush



**-Marcia Balbus**

Aptly named and easily identified, Indian Paintbrush is a perennial in the Santa Monica Mountains that blooms primarily from February through May among grassy areas in coastal sage and chaparral. It grows from 1-2&1/2 feet tall from a woody root-crown, with bright red or red/orange tips that resemble a brush dipped in paint. The brightly colored “brushtips” or fingers are actually the leaves, called *bracts*, while the true flowers are minuscule and can be seen with a magnifying lens.

The botanic name is *Castilleja affinis*, and there are three other plants in the same *Castilleja* genus growing in our local area, with about 200 annual and perennial species growing in the Americas and Asia. All species in this genus are described as hemiparasitic because they send out suckers to the roots of other plants for sustenance. The genus is named in honor of Domingo Castellejo,

a botany professor in Cadiz, Spain.

Unlike almost all other native plants in the Santa Monica Mountains, there is no recorded use by the Chumash Indians for Indian Paintbrush, according to Chumash ethnobotany researcher Jan Timbrook. However, two Chumash tribes came up with some picturesque names for this plant: "Coyote's headdress-pin" in Barbareno and "Coyote's rectum" in Inseno.

#### **Sources**

Nancy Dale, *Flowering Plants*

Milt McAuley, *Wildflowers of the Santa Monica Mountains*

Jan Timbrook, *Chumash Ethnobotany*

Wikipedia

## **Malibu Creek Library Collection**

#### **Chris May**

The Visitors' Center in Malibu Creek State Park has a small collection of books and videos that are currently available for docent use. The collection is located in the backroom of the Visitors' Center in what is a cozy study with table and chairs. The books are shelved in wooden cabinets with pull-down glass doors so as to keep the park's mice and other four-legged creatures from feasting on the collection. In the not too distant future we hope to make the collection available to members of the public as well, for use in the Visitors' Center only. Ed Costello and I divided the collection into six categories,

with entries for each arranged alphabetically by author. On the website, there will be six up-to-date lists of the collection and the books are arranged into the same six categories on the shelves in the Visitors' Center library room. However, within each of these categories, the books in the library are not arranged alphabetically -- at least not yet (and even then, probably not for long!). Copies of these same up-to-date lists appear with the books in the library. We will try to periodically submit updated collection lists for both website and library shelf purposes.

The books are arranged into six categories: (1) Fauna; (2) Flora; (3) History: Natural and Human; (4) Recreational Use & Preservation; (5) Malibu Creek State Park; and (6) Filming at Park.

## **Public Hike Calendar**

- **Welcome Walk**  
February 24, 2013  
March 30, 2013  
April 27, 2013  
May 26, 2013  
June 29, 2013  
10:00-12:00  
Lower Parking Lot
- **Yoga & Hike**  
March 9, 2013  
9:30-12:00  
Lower Parking Lot  
Bring Yoga Mat  
Rain Cancell
- **Malibu Creek State Park Wildflowers & Birds Walk**  
April 6, 2013  
8:00-12:00  
Paramount Ranch  
Picnic after hike

## **Training Corner**

#### **Jerry Rosen**

We'd like to welcome our new members: Socorro Gamboa, Jeannine Lewis, Michael Sadeghi, Christopher Jones, Maryann Hammers, and returning member Lena Alexander and her daughter Nicolette. Socorro and Jeannine have completed their Visitor Center training and are eagerly awaiting our *Spring Continuing Education* Interpretive training day in March.



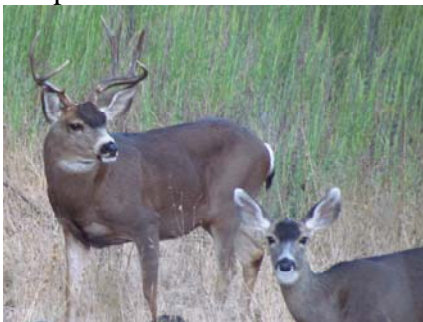
*Photo: Wasim Muklashy*

*Field Ecology Weekend* produced by the Topanga State Park Docents will be held once again in our group campground the weekend of April 13 and 14. Camping is encouraged and the weekend offers a full agenda of speakers covering a wide assortment of interesting topics. There is a poster in the Visitor Center with a schedule of topics for anyone interested. If you would like to attend, please contact Jerry Rosen for registration forms and more information. Cost is \$50, which includes both days, camping for 2 or 3 nights in the group campground, and attendance of the topical events of your choosing.



For the new docents in training, remember that attendance at the *Spring Continuing Education* event counts as one of the three required interpretive training day and the Field Ecology Weekend counts as 2 of those days. So attendance at both events can complete your required interpretation training for elevation to full active docent status. Remember to register via Jerry Rosen to get credit for the events.

For continuing docents, the *Spring Continuing Education* event at no cost is a benefit of being a volunteer at Malibu Creek State Park. It is an enjoyable way of socializing with your fellow volunteers and picking up some tidbits of knowledge you can share with our park visitors.



*Photo: Rick Montgomery*

Kudos go to Linda Elden, who has developed and conducted 3 very successful Interpretation Days this year. Since Topanga Docents have not been able to conduct their Fall training, we have offered our own Fall training to allow our docents to complete their interpretive training requirement. It was so successful, that we will continue to offer at least 3 interpretive training days a year; but spaced out over the year. The best

thing about our program is 1) it's free to our docents as an entertaining continuing education program and 2) it provides training opportunities to new docents without having to wait for the September Topanga Docent program. The Topanga Field Ecology Weekend in April and the Fall Training program in September are still options for meeting our interpretive training requirement.

### **Malibu Creek Docents Provide Vital Support for Malibu Creek State Park**

Malibu Creek Docents as cooperating association with Malibu Creek State Park have to deliver a report to the state every year (this is why Jerry hounds you to fill out your time sheets). In our 2012 Volunteers in the Park Report to the State we reported 1,786 docent hours on Administration, 1,286 hours on Interpretation events such as Welcome Walks, Geology Walks, School hikes etc., 452 hours on Maintenance, 1,941 hours staffing the Visitor Center and 330 hours on Special Events. We reported a total of 5,846 docent hours for 2012. If you do the math – this is over 146 weeks of work or the equivalent of 3 full time employees.

***Congratulations to all the  
Docents for their hard work  
and Support of Malibu Creek  
State Park!***

### **Bobcats: Living on the Urban Edge**



*Photo: Rick Montgomery*

Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) are small robust cats that inhabit much of North America. They can range in color from tawny brown to reddish, and can vary in their in their degree of spotting. In southern California they weigh between 12-25lbs (5.5-11.4kg), with the males generally being about 4-7lbs larger than the females. Their tails are shorter than those of most cats, about 10in (24cm), but not absent as is sometimes thought, and their tails can often easily be seen from a distance.

The National Park Service (NPS) has been continuously studying and radio-tracking bobcats in the area since 1996, one of the longest bobcat studies ever. From this long term study, They have found that bobcats are still present in many of the remaining habitat fragments throughout the Simi Hills from Thousand Oaks to Calabasas and surrounding communities. Prior to 2002 they had relatively high survival rates in these areas. Bobcats mainly reside in the natural areas, although some

individuals will visit the surrounding neighborhoods occasionally and a few will do so frequently. This may be in part due to animals passing through residential areas attempting to link habitat fragment together that on their own have become too small to support a bobcat home range.



*Photo: Aurelio Albaisa*

However the lush landscapes of residential areas also attract many types of smaller animals which provide a great food source for bobcats. Bobcats are strict carnivores. The NPS has found through scat studies that bobcats in this area mainly prey on rabbits, but also consume other small animals such as woodrats, squirrels, pocket gophers, and mice, all of which can be plentiful in urban areas.

Although these bobcats in the NPS urban study area are occasionally killed by human related events such as vehicle strikes, and dog attacks, these events are relatively rare, and likely don't affect the population. However starting in the spring of 2002 the NPS witnessed a disease epidemic in urban bobcats, and their numbers decreased dramatically in the following months and years. Animals were dying with severe infections of notoedric

mange, a disease caused by microscopic mites in the skin. Since 2002, more than 30 collared bobcats have died with mange infections. In addition to having mange disease, all of these individuals also tested positive for exposure to the anticoagulant chemicals commonly found in some types of rodenticides (rat poisons), and most of them had relatively high levels of the compounds. Further evidence of the impact of this mange disease epidemic has been seen in the NPS scat surveys. By the fall of 2002, the number of bobcat scats collected dropped by about 70%, indicating a steep decline in the bobcat populations of the area. The number of scats has remained low since this time.



*Photo: Aurelio Albaisa*

To prevent secondary poisoning of bobcats and other wildlife, the NPS suggest residents and business owners try to use other types of rodent control such as rodent-proofing buildings and food storage areas and using wooden snap traps or rat-zappers. If rodenticides must be used, avoid ones with anticoagulant chemicals such as bromadiolone, difethialone, or diphacinone.

## Backbone Trail Trek

The 2013 Backbone Trail Trek is tentatively scheduled for May 4-11, 2013. Registration will begin in February and fills quickly. If you are interested, the web site is:

[www.smmtc.org/bbtrek/](http://www.smmtc.org/bbtrek/)

## Campfire Programs at Malibu Creek State Park



Perhaps one of the oldest camping traditions is the camp fire. Originally used as a tool for survival in the wilderness, now campers gather around a camp fire in the night to enjoy camaraderie, music and songs and marshmallows gently toasted & not a cinder cone if you are skillful in your roasting. Campfires have a magical way of bringing people together, inviting them to laugh, sing, and enjoy the outdoors. The sparkling golden hues of the fire, the crackles of the wood popping, the bright constellations above, and the warmth of people gathered around. The summertime campfire grabs you by the hand and asks you to sit and relax... together.



The cool evenings under the stars, enjoying the outdoors and good times has been a part of the camping way of life, and we want to give visitors to Malibu Creek State Park the opportunity to experience that same tradition. The MCSP Docents are planning to sponsor through the summer a series of campfire programs that are designed for campers, but open to anyone who wants to stay in the park for the evening's interpretative program.

Our goal is to create a memorable and educational event in the evening around a campfire *and we need your help to do it.*

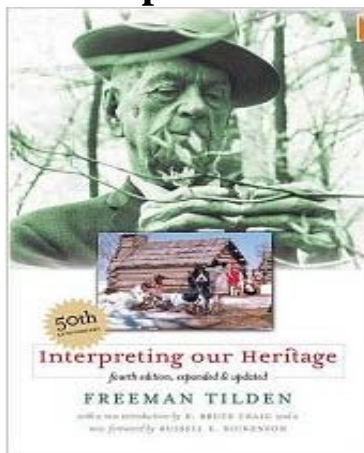
The plan is to have docents be the master of ceremonies for approximately 10 campfire programs this summer. We will be working with the MCSP Rangers and other naturalists who will be providing the interpretative content for the programs, while the docents will be setting up, introducing the naturalists and rangers, and cleaning up after the event.

If you are interested in working on this program – you only have to commit to 1 or 2 Saturday nights this coming summer, email Joel at [jkallich@charter.net](mailto:jkallich@charter.net).



Photo: Rick Montgomery

## What is Interpretation?



In 1957 a man called Freeman Tilden wrote a classic book called, *Interpreting our Heritage*.

Heritage Interpretation refers to the activities carried out by guides or docents whether they be in stately homes or state parks. “In most places the visitor is exposed, if he chooses, to a kind of elective education that is superior in some respects to that of the classroom, for here he meets the Thing itself- whether it be a wonder of Nature’s work, or the act or work of Man.” Tilden explains. So what can we learn from Tilden? Probably the most important thing that we can learn is that we must let our passion for nature and Malibu Creek State Park shine through us to the visitors to our Park. Tilden’s six principles of interpretation can help us be more effective as docents – not to say that we aren’t already doing a pretty good job – just we can always try to improve what we do.

Interpretation is to help people gain a sense of place and to respond to the beauty of their environment. An interpreter helps visitors to recognize a

location as more than just another mountain, river, or forest. For the past 50 years, Tilden's principles have remained highly relevant to interpreters and docents across the world.

## New State Parks Director Anthony Jackson



Major General Anthony L. Jackson is the 19th Director of California State Parks, and was appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown on November 13, 2012, and sworn-in by Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird on November 16, 2012. Major General Jackson has a Master’s Degree in history from San Jose State University (1973). Jackson is also a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, and the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (1998). Before his retirement from the Marine Corps in 2012, Jackson served as Commanding General Marine Corps Installations West.

The retired Marine and his wife were among the outdoor enthusiasts who dug into their pockets last year to save a beloved local park after Gov.

Jerry Brown's administration announced there was no money to keep dozens of them open. He is now charged with managing 280 facilities across 1.3 million acres with a \$500-million budget. A Sierra Club official calls him 'the right man at the right time.' He said he is currently talking to supervisors within State Parks to figure out what are the top financial needs within parks, particularly when it comes to the system's long backlog of deferred maintenance. He also noted the warm reception he has received from Parks staff and said he was excited that his official uniform will have five stars, compared to the two he earned in the Marines.



*Photo: Rick Montgomery*

### **Tiny Tasty Tidbits**

- ❖ Bill Selby, famed weather speaker at Topanga Docent trainings, has a new website: <http://www.rediscoveringthegoldenstate.com/>
- ❖ Installation of new trail markers will be happening soon & we need a few good strong docents who want to pound something into the ground with a sledge. Contact Joel at [jkallich@charter.net](mailto:jkallich@charter.net) to join the work crew.

## **UCLA Dedicates La Kretz Center Field Station**

The new La Kretz Center for Conservation Science was dedicated on January 22 in the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, as a part of UCLA's Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. The National Park Service made the property available to UCLA through a joint-use agreement, with financial support from philanthropist Morton La Kretz. The Center, located on Mulholland Drive west of Kanan Road, will be working in partnership with the NPS, California State Parks and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, to conduct critical research and scholarship, and provide overnight accommodations for visiting researchers. Thanks to the exceptional generosity of

Mr. La Kretz, conservation science in the classroom will now be expanded to conservation practice in the field.



*Photo: Rick Montgomery*

### **The Creek Crier**

Send us stuff for the Crier by the press date listed below -

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Press Date</b>
Spring	April 6, 2013
Summer	August 3, 2013
Fall	November 2, 2013

# Malibu Creek Docents Officers

Photo: Wasim Muklashy

President	Sue Jennings
Vice-President	Rick Montgomery
Secretary	Jerry Rosen
CFO	Barbara Bowersock
Treasurer	Avril Allan
Past President	Kathy Julian
Liaison Ranger	Lindsey Templeton



## Malibu Creek Docents Media

Creek Crier Editor	Joel Kallich jkallich@charter.net
Malibu Creek Docent Webmaster	Brian Rooney elroon@earthlink.net

[www.malibucreekstatepark.org](http://www.malibucreekstatepark.org)

## Malibu Creek Docents 2013 Spring Hikes

We will continue our tradition of Spring hikes for docents, especially the newcomers, who want to explore the park. Approximate times and difficulty, listed below. We hike fairly slow so we can smell the roses on the way.

Hike Date	Rain Date	Hike	Difficulty
Saturday February 16	Saturday February 23	the Valley Floor, Lost Cabin trail, Forrest trail and Malibu Lake dam	moderate, pretty level
Sunday March 17	Sunday March 24	Lookout trail, Yearling trail, Deer Leg trail, Reagan Ranch, Cage Creek trail	fairly strenuous, hills
Saturday April 20	Saturday April 27	Backbone trail, West of Corral Canyon	moderate, mostly downhill
Sunday May 19	Sunday June 2	Backbone trail, East of Corral Canyon	moderate, steep down hill
Saturday June 15	Saturday June 22	Stunt Road to Tapia	moderate up and down hill

Reservations for all hikes required by 6pm the Thursday before the hikes. No reservations: no hike.

All hikes start at 9 am in the lower parking lot.

Wear sturdy shoes. Bring water and lunch or snack.

A forecast of rain at 6pm the night before a hike, indicating substantial rain, postpones the hike to the rain date.

Same for fire closure. **Call Tom Kaplan at 818-216-7696 or email at [tgkaplan54@gmail.com](mailto:tgkaplan54@gmail.com), leave your phone number!!**