

# Trails and Tales

News for VIP Volunteers in the Montane Sector  
November 2012

Meet the Park Staff  
Article and photo by Bob Hillis



## VIPEVENTS

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> - Annual VIP Awards  
Banquet-Details below

Jessica Murany is a State Park Peace Officer (Ranger) at Palomar. She started her State Parks career in 2005 as a ranger at Ocotillo Wells State Vehicle Recreation Area. At O/W she did lots of first aid, did lots of off-road vehicle enforcement, and dealt with lots of drunks. She then transferred to the North Sector of San Diego Coast, working San

Elijo and South Carlsbad State Beaches, where she again dealt with lots of drunks. A little over two years ago she transferred to Palomar, where she, only occasionally, deals with drunks. Prior to becoming a ranger, Jessica was a K-8 and adult education ESL teacher. Hopefully, she didn't deal with any drunks at that time.

When I asked Jessica what she likes about working at Palomar, she replied "There are many aspects of why I like this park but to name a few I think the flora and fauna is fascinating, I'm intrigued by the park's giant trees, the scenery and vistas are breath taking, the history about the park and pre-park are interesting, I enjoy the variety of work I get to do and enjoy the responsibility I have to help keep this park moving forward and making it better. "

When I asked her where her favorite places are at Palomar, she answered" When I need a moment to get away from the park's and public's demands, I have a secret boulder that I sit on where I can stare out at the Observatory. There are many rewards to working here but the most rewarding are the views of the cloud formations surrounding mountain peaks and also the colorful sunsets."

When Jessica isn't at work, her interests are her home, pets, family, friends, and all of the activities that those entail. She also likes to travel and has been to nine other countries.

Jessica is a really good ranger and a very dedicated hard worker. The next time you are at Palomar and see Jessica, tell her "Hola".



Photo by Michele Hernandez

# 2012 Volunteer Awards Ceremony

Follow the searchlights, the trail of limos and the paparazzi to the Descanso Town Hall on November 10<sup>th</sup> for this year's Volunteer Awards Ceremony. This event promises to be the social gala of the year. All of the political and Hollywood elite, the movers and shakers, and various potentates will be there. Social Hour starts at 4:00, the potluck dinner starts at 5:00, and the awards start at 6:00, ending around 8:30. Please come and enjoy the one official time of the year that the Park says "Thank you" for all that you do. There will be a lot of great food and many opportunities to applaud your fellow volunteers. Bring your significant other, your drink, and a dish to share.

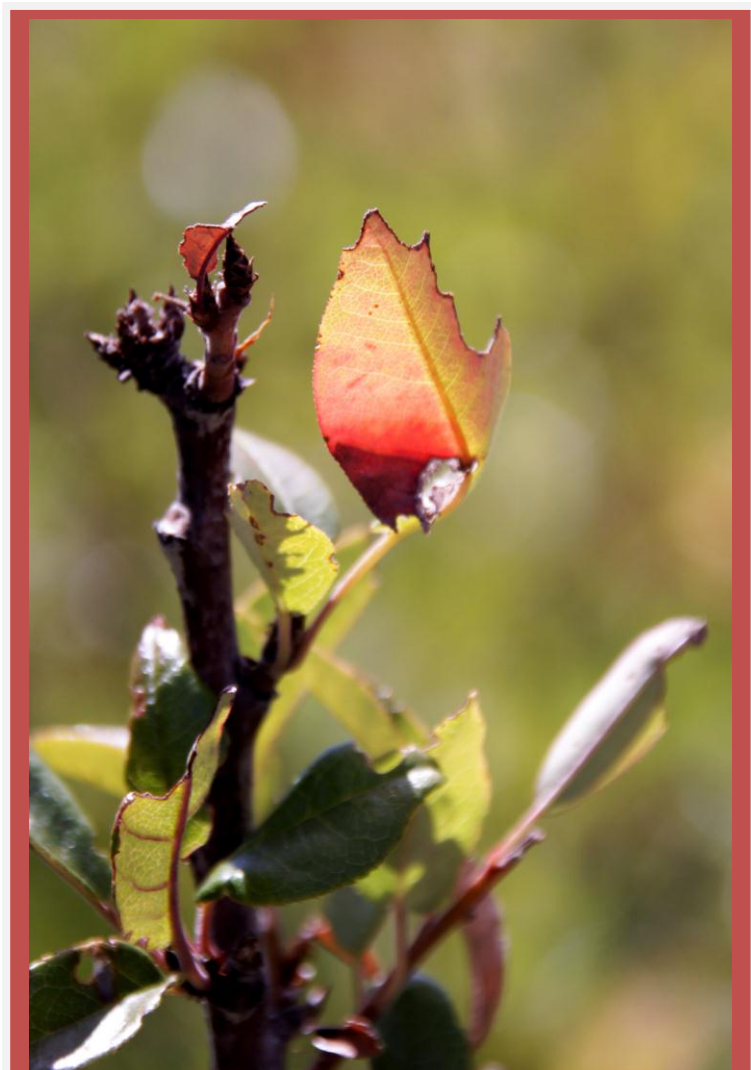


Photo by Michele Hernandez

## MBAU Article and Photos by David Tishenkel

The Cuyamaca Rancho State Park celebrated the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Mountain Bike Benefit Ride on Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup>. The Benefit Ride is presented by the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Mountain Bike Assistance Unit (MBAU) and is a fund raiser for Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Interpretive Association (CRISPA), a non-profit organization that assists the State Park with trail building, maintenance and interpretive projects to benefit the public.



The ride is booked as "One of the BEST autumn mountain bike events in San Diego County!" and did not disappoint. The ride was an 18mile course on fire roads and single track throughout scenic Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. A total of 277 riders participated and we raised and estimated \$10,000 Dollars.



Photo by Michele Hernandez



The benefit Ride is a High Roller Poker Ride where MBAU members are stationed along the route at 5 locations with Playing Cards. Each Rider draws a card from the deck at each card stop and is trying to make his or her best poker hand. An additional card pull was awarded at card stop 5 for folks who completed the optional extra 4 mile loop. Both Mark Webb and I were assigned to card stop 5. In light of the occasion I put on my special High Roller tires.



It was an enjoyable experience meeting, encouraging and thanking all the riders for their participation and we had a blast interacting and joking around with them all day long. Initially when we got to card stop 5 it was ghost town and I cranked up the music from my jambox and we waited for the folks to show up. We waited for quite a while and were wondering how many folks signed up and if anyone was going to actually show up at card stop 5. Our doubts were finally put to rest when the riders started showing up in a constant stream. Most of the Folks were very happy when we let them know it was the last card stop and that it was a final downhill stretch to the finish line and lunch awaited.



Photo by Michele Hernandez



The Riders then turned in their card sheets for prizes. Prizes were awarded for the best and worst poker hand and a large number of additional prizes were randomly raffled off. These prizes included bike parts, accessories, cycling apparel Julian apple pies, gift certificates, and much more! Grand Prize was a new Bike.

Huge thanks go out to all of our sponsors! A Special donation of \$150 from San Diego MTB Assn., Kona bicycle from Bob's Bikes, support from Zumwalt's bicycle center. Other special long time sponsors include REI, A16, New Belgium Brewing, Alpine Beer Co., Julian Pie Co., and Itsa Bike Shop.

In addition this event would not be a success without all the volunteers who setup and manage the event. A special thanks to Dan Long and the spaghetti crew. Yum!!

My experience within this event was very fulfilling as I got to do what I do best. Joke around with other folks all day long and talk mountain bikes. That was payment enough for any volunteer activity, but in the end one thing stuck with me for the rest of the day and I decided to share it with everyone. The Dad below pushed through the whole race with his son on a 2 person tandem bike. The Dad did most of the pedaling and was set on providing his son with an experience he would never forget. I spoke to the Dad after and congratulated him on his endurance and fatherhood. In light of this achievement I altered our T-shirt Logo in favor of the real thing.





## IAU Article and Photos by Bob Nuttmann

I have not been back to Cuyamaca since late July of this year. We were gone for several months seeing other parts of the USA. When I hiked up the Azalea trail yesterday I was really surprised by the changes.

We did have a very full park. The Paso parking lot was full, and most of the parking spots on Rt 79 through the park had visitors parked in them.





I met 16 visitors on the route from the parking lot to the Azalea creek / falls area and back.



Even though the trail was in many areas wet or muddy, the park vegetation is mostly dry. There were really huge changes in the amount of vegetation on some parts of the trail.



The above area the last time I saw it was mostly hemmed in by Ceanothus. Although I do like Lilacs, I have to say the experience of a hiker on the Azalea trail is much improved by not walking for great stretches with a wall of Ceanothus on both sides.





I have to say I think it took a huge amount of work to do this clearing, and my hat is off to the people involved. But the result is that many of the larger plants like pine trees, native Holly, and Manzanita will benefit and it will be a step toward the park looking like it did pre 2003.

When I got to the falls area the Azalea bushes were starting to turn fall colors and the blooms had long since left. The native Columbine had also finished for the year and looked like it was headed into hibernation for the winter.



I did spot this Penstimon just before you cross the stream.

## TMU Article by Dave McClure

Trail wise, we've had some significant improvements over the past couple of months. Much of the credit goes to Ken McIntyre and "The Lads" who have been starting work at 7am every Wednesday for the past couple of months. Because of this group, the long closed Sugar Pine Trail is now cleared and usable all the way from the Minshall Trail junction to the top of Middle Peak. Clearing the Ceonothus from this trail was a Herculean task. Many sections were so choked with brush that it was almost impossible to even walk through it. And pushing your way into these thickets resulted in almost immediate disorientation where it could be difficult to even tell which way was up. On even the best days, the crew was lucky to get a hundred feet cleared after working all morning. Clearing the brush did uncover a number of fallen trees that then had to be dealt with. Add into this mix a number of Poison Oak patches and you can get an idea of how difficult this task was. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure of experiencing Sugar Pine Trail, now would be the time to check it out before the winter snows hit. Both hikers and equestrians can experience some great views of the lake and the desert as you approach the top.



Photo by Michele Hernandez



Photo by Michele Hernandez



*Photo by Steve Boland*

Another milestone has been reached in the clearing of the Harvey Moore Trail switchbacks which have been choked with overgrown Ceonothus for quite some time. Our crews have been working on this all summer and the last section was finally cleared this past week. Our gratitude goes out to Ron and Erin Robillard who, earlier this summer, started this whole project by taking a group of volunteers from the Back Country Horsemen in from Upper Green Valley Fire Road back to the Harper Creek crossing area and started working their way up the switchbacks. Then, Ken and the crew went in for several weeks and slowly worked their way up. This included a couple of Saturdays working with a group of Sierra Club volunteers. All this work still left a stretch at the top of the trail which Ron and Erin came back and worked on and then finally last week, Ken and the crew walked in from Granite Springs and finished it up. Some work still needs to be done to clear Ceonothus stumps, but the trail is basically clear and usable thanks to all these volunteers.

Ken and crew are now working on Kelly's Ditch and a bit of light at the end of the tunnel is beginning to show. This section of Kelly's Ditch over to Heise County Park has been an on again off again project since last spring. Steve Boland and a group of MBAU helpers did several

Saturday's worth of work earlier this year. The District Trails coordinator, Jim Dascoulias has taken his seasonal workers in there and also worked solo in clearing out the brush. There have been a couple of Saturdays with regular TMU volunteers working. Ken is optimistic at this point that he will soon be able to drive around to Heise Park and start working in from that direction rather than taking the increasingly long walk in from the end of the fire road.

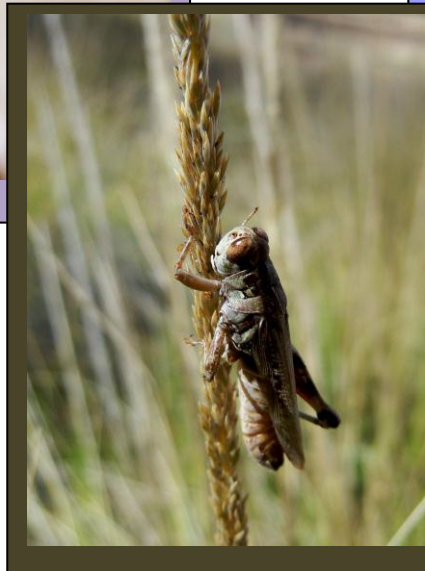
Speaking of Ken's "crew", please allow me to extend a big Thanks from all of us to Howard Wiggins, Wally Borschel, Ken Bonus, Dave Capron, Scotty Mills, John Martinez, Scott Crellin and Paul Schmidt for all their hard work and assistance. This crew is at our Paso tool shed at 7:00 am ready, willing and eager to get to work on the trails.

For a fun and productive Saturday morning, all are invited to join our Saturday morning Hike 'n' Hack brush clearing crew. This regular event is on the first Saturday of every month and is led by our volunteers Michele Hernandez, Susan Russo and Elizabeth Baker. The meeting place is at 8:00am on the first Saturday of every month at the Paso Maintenance Yard. One and all are invited and welcome to join the crew to go for a fun hike and help clear some brush off a trail. We provide all the tools, all you need to bring is yourself and some sturdy hiking shoes. Bring along a friend or family member and show them our park. Contact Susan Russo for more information – her email is elsewhere in this newsletter.

As I said in my last month's article, our longtime volunteer John Sproule under the tutelage of another longtime volunteer, Ron Matzenauer, has mastered the park's sign computer and we are now busy replacing missing and damaged trail signs. But we can't repair or replace a sign if we don't know there is a problem. So if you notice a missing or damaged sign, please let me know so that we can correct the problem. A problem we have encountered with the trail signs is that the durable Trex posts that the park has used for years to mount the signs to are no longer available. So we have had to resort to using treated 4X4s to replace missing or damaged posts. The 4X4s will adequately do the job, but they are not as durable as the Trex posts and don't last as long. We are looking for an economical substitute of some sort for the Trex posts, but have had no success so far.

Finally, we're all looking forward to the Annual Banquet on November 10 at 4:00pm at the Descanso Town Hall. I'll be sending another reminder email out to my TMU mailing list within the next week. If you need directions or have any questions, please let me know. I'm looking forward to talking to each and every one of you to personally thank you for your service to the park within the past year.

Good Bye Bugs of Summer by Michele Hernandez





## MAU Article by Bonnie Slager

Our big event in October was our sensory training. About 30 members participated either Saturday or Sunday at Pillsberry Ranch. Our horses were exposed to loud noises including low flying planes, helicopters and gun fire—all recorded, not real. Then they got to go through all sorts of scary things. Sort of like Halloween for horses. Also, we talked about Park visitors that want to “pet the horsie” or walk up behind the horses. We don’t want a visitor kicked or bit by their actions.

The weather is hot one day and cool the next as well as windy from time to time. I will try to let you know the weather before you head to the Park but it might change by the time you get there. Remember if you don’t like the weather it will probably change in an hour or two. Be sure to bring a blanket for your horse as the nights are cool and the days still warm.

See you all at the awards dinner in November.



Photos by Margaret Benfante



*Photo by Michele Hernandez*

## News from the Visitor Center Store by Barbara McCoy

I am excited to announce that we have reordered the very nice PORT AUTHORITY DENIM SHIRTS. This is a long sleeve shirt and the mountain lion stepping up on a rock is embroidered on the front. Right now we have all sizes from small to 2XL, so for the best selection shop soon. If you have not seen the 2013 calendar that Jason assembled for us to sell, with really great photos from the Park, you need to stop by the store soon as quantities are limited.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank a very special group of volunteers that once or sometimes twice a month open the store and the museum making it possible for our Park visitors to have a great experience in our Park. Many times the store volunteers are the only ones there and will have 50 visitors in one day so they are very busy. A special thanks goes out to-- Karen Alexson, Marge Cooper, Molly Jean Featheringill, Jo Fritschel, Michele Hernandez, Dan Jones, Phyllis and Greg Meckstroth, Mary McGerald, Phil Price, Heather Reed, Susan Russo, and last but not least Ellen Siebern. When you are picking up your radios please open the back door to the store and say hi to this very special and dedicated group of volunteers. I'll see you in the Park



Photo by Michele Hernandez

# Volunteers help make Palomar Mountain SP 2012 Apple Festival a Success and other News by Rick Barclay

In spite of the wet and woolly weather, Palomar Mountain State Park's 2012 Apple Festival was a smashing success, with over 405 guests in attendance. Park staff worked hard to organize the October 21 event with the assistance from many volunteers, whose contributions included grooming the 100 year old apple orchard, preparing apple goodies and putting on demonstrations of pioneer activities, such as wool spinning, apple cider pressing, and making corn husk dolls.



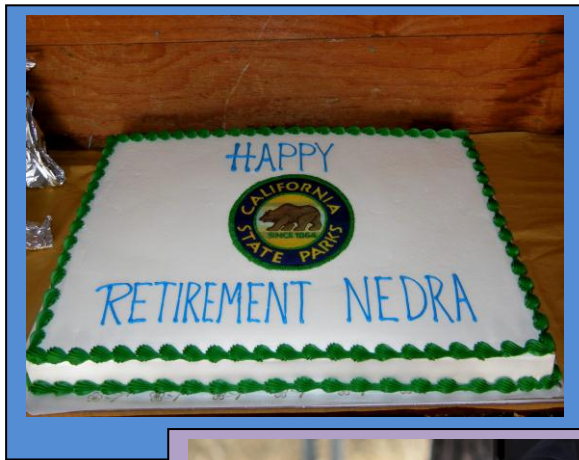
For more pictures visit:

[http://palomarsp.org/photo\\_gallery/Palomar%20Mountain%20State%20Park%202012%20Apple%20Festival/album/](http://palomarsp.org/photo_gallery/Palomar%20Mountain%20State%20Park%202012%20Apple%20Festival/album/)

## Eagle eyed volunteers nip forest fire in the bud

On Saturday Oct 27th, Palomar TMU volunteer Jim Zevely and friend Helen were scouting a variety of trails in order to assess maintenance needs when they came upon an unusual and potentially devastating situation. In Jim's words "Our timing was very good on this trip. At the site of the Scott's Cabin rebuild we came across a tree stump on fire. Long, slow burn that was picking up pace as the wind came up. Helen jogged all the way back to Park Headquarters to report it as I kept watch at the site to stop it from spreading (mine was the easy part). Rangers and firemen arrived on the scene as soon as they got the call. It took a while to get the fire out." Origin of the burn is still under investigation. Thank you Jim and Helen!

# Nedra's Retirement Party by Michele Hernandez



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CRSP Park Headquarters (weekdays only) -- 760-765-3020

Paso Picacho Kiosk (for weekends) -- 760-765-3023

Green Valley Kiosk -- 760-765-3024

Palomar Headquarters -- 760-742-3462

**Send articles and photos**

**(please, include photographer's name)**

**for next month between**

**the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> to-**

**Susan Russo- [nebulae3sma@hotmail.com](mailto:nebulae3sma@hotmail.com)**

Photo by Michele Hernandez

