



Wandering & Wondering

John Maybury

PEDRO POINT HEADLANDS ON THE MAP

Heather Mack wrote about Pedro Point Headlands in Bay Nature magazine, March 22. Here are some excerpts:

•The 246-acre park hosts a habitat now rare along the California coast – coastal prairie and shrubland home to dozens of species of native plants and wildlife. Spill-over funds from the Devil’s Slide tunnel project will bring parking and improved trail access, but the habitat restoration here has come largely thanks to a dedicated, grassroots group of stewards.

•In the 1960s and ’70s, Pedro Point Headlands served as the stomping grounds of a motorcycle club. Entire hillsides, weakened and scarred from tire tracks, crumbled away with the rains. To stabilize the hills, the motorcycle club planted Monterey pines, which, while native to other parts of the Central Coast, are an invasive species in Pacifica. It wasn’t long before the nonnative pine and eucalyptus trees began to dominate the area.

•The Pacifica Land Trust took over the land in 1995... More than 500 people (including coordinator Lynn Adams) have participated in restoration efforts over the past three years. In addition to dedicated workdays to remove invasive plants, spread soil, and plant natives, volunteers host guided hikes and local experts lead bird walks.

•Considerable work has been done since the land trust acquired the park, especially in curtailing the spread of the prevalent Monterey pines and eucalyptus. Outright removal of established groves can have adverse consequences, since they’ve come to support a variety of songbirds over the years, but smaller, sparsely distributed trees will be nipped in the bud.

•“It’s all about understanding the area,” says Mike Vasey, a San Francisco State University lecturer and chief botanist with the project. He says the goal is a healthy mosaic of native dune scrub alongside existing groves. “Nature doesn’t care what was here before,” he adds. “As long as we work alongside what’s made a home here, control the erosion and the invasives, [the land] can support native species.”

•The current work is facilitated through an unusual marriage of long-term scientific research and everyday volunteerism. San Francisco State ecologist Tom Parker and graduate student Brian Peterson have designed the

erosion control and revegetation methods, experimenting with a mix of adaptive management strategies to see which works best. Different sites have been chosen to test out different methods, from laying down straw and installing erosion-control fabric to seeing which native plants are most likely to establish a foothold in the soil. “This is going to be the hot spot of the Peninsula within the next couple of years,” says Peterson. “It’s important we get this healing process down first.”

SOLVING THE SOCIAL MEDIA PUZZLE

Three Monday evenings in June/July; exact dates TBD, cost \$150. The Internet and digital media bring organizations to life in unique ways: sharing stories about your work or engaging your stakeholders in campaigns to enhance your program/work. Digital media bring people closer while erasing boundaries of time and geography. Week 1, Introduction: using Facebook and Twitter; Week 2, other social media tools: Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram, what’s next; Week 3, Bringing it all together. Sign up now at media-alliance.org.

AUDUBON NATURE WALKS AT EDGEWOOD

Join experts from Sequoia Audubon Society on morning walks through Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve off Interstate 280 in Redwood City. The walks pass through woodland, chaparral, and grassland communities. You learn which resident and migrating birds use Edgewood and which native plant communities they depend on. You may see raptors, sparrows, warblers, bluebirds, and many more. No experience is necessary. The birding experts love to share their knowledge. These walks cover approximately three to four miles of trails and include some uphill/downhill sections. Bring water, a hat, sturdy shoes, and sunscreen. The walks are geared to adults, but capable, attentive children 10 years and older are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Heavy rain cancels. The walks take place on Sunday, April 14 and Sunday, May 12 starting at 8 a.m. from the Bill and Jean Lane Education Center. Space is limited and you must register to attend. For registration and information, please visit Friends of Edgewood online and click the balloons.

DWO: DRIVING WHILE OLDER

“Many people look forward to retiring and having more time for family, hobbies and relaxation. But as you get older, should you also consider retiring from driving? A study in the journal *Neuropsychology* has confirmed that older drivers—even if they’re healthy—tend to make more errors that can put themselves, and others, at risk...The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that crash rates per mile do increase for people over age

70 and especially after 80. But the statistics can be misleading, since older people tend to drive more on streets with intersections (not highways), where there are more accidents. Moreover, crashes involving older people are more likely to be reported, partly because older people are more likely to be injured. In fact, what is certain is that older people are more likely to suffer serious injuries and die in crashes than younger ones. Driving safely requires good vision, hearing and mobility, along with quick thinking, all of which can diminish with age. Changes in eyesight can make it harder to see, especially if there is glare from bright sunlight or from oncoming headlights at night. It may take you longer to read traffic and street signs. If you have hearing problems, you may not respond in time to sirens or horns. Reaction times may slow, so you’re not able to make quick decisions. If you have stiff joints and/or weak muscles, you may be less agile in turning your head to back up or check for traffic. Medical conditions including cataracts and sleep apnea and medications that many older people take can also impair driving ability, as, of course, can cognitive problems. In particular, older people are more likely to be involved in crashes when merging and overtaking another vehicle and at intersections (where they may drive too slowly, increasing the risk of being hit by another vehicle). They have more issues yielding the right-of-way, perhaps because they misjudge whether there is enough time to proceed or because they may fail to see the other vehicle...California is one of a few states looking into tiered screening approaches in which drivers are given cognitive, vision and road-knowledge tests and are observed for physical limitations. If they fail, they must take an on-road test. If you’re concerned about your driving skills, there are also self-assessment tools that ask questions and provide feedback about abilities.” (Berkeley Wellness Letter)

SITSEER

- Sign up for spring hikes on San Bruno Mountain: mountainwatch.org
- Sign up for river raft guide training and other outdoor opportunities: projectgo.org
- Live streaming and web cams now on Animal Planet

SWAMI SEZ

“In the end, we only regret the chances we didn’t take, the relationships we were afraid to have, and the decisions we waited too long to make.” (Anonymous)

WASTING AWAY IN MAYBURRITOVILLE

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