

Sedgwick Field Notes

Occasional Ramblings for Volunteers and Friends of the Sedgwick Reserve

October 2008

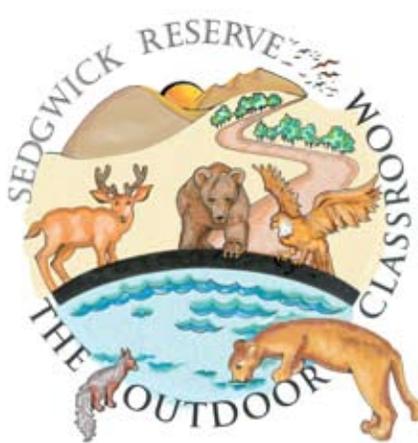
Sedgwick Reserve: The Outdoor Classroom

by Sue Eisaguirre

Inspired by Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, our new education program, Sedgwick Reserve: The Outdoor Classroom, is designed to help children experience the kind of intimacy with nature that many of us enjoyed as kids and, equally, to improve science education. During the 19th century "nature study", a hands-on approach to the physical world, dominated elementary school science teaching. In the later twentieth century, a textbook-based science education program replaced actual nature study. An increasing number of educators feel the textbook method is failing and are returning to a more hands-on approach. The Outdoor Classroom is based on this concept and is aligned with the California Fourth Grade Science Standards.

Students spend four full days, during different seasons, at the Sedgwick Reserve hiking in different ecosystems; working on restoration projects; learning geology while standing on actual fault lines; standing in exact spots where the Chumash once lived while learning their traditions and way of life; navigating with a compass; nature journaling; and, most importantly, enjoying the outdoors. The goals of the Outdoor Classroom are to introduce the importance of nature, give opportunities to learn and apply skills of scientific observation, provide experiences in the use of sensory abilities, and instill an appreciation for our natural resources.

Sedgwick Reserve docents are a key element in the success of this program. In addition to their general docent education program, each Outdoor Classroom instructor receives specialized training pertaining to the science curriculum. The excitement and love of nature that the docents convey encourages students' curiosity which leads to active participation and true learning. According to Jon Young, co-founder of the Wilderness Awareness School, learning is achieved when one is curious. Docent to student ratio is kept low—one docent for every four-six students—to ensure the individual attention that fosters the curiosity that leads



The new Outdoor Classroom logo.

to learning. Moreover, small group size and undivided attention given to each student allows special bonds between docents and students to develop.

Planned expansion of the Outdoor Classroom program will include fifth and sixth grade classes. The goal is to have students who attend as fourth graders return in the fifth and sixth grades to participate in grade-specific Outdoor Classroom programs that are also aligned with the California Science Content Standards. This continuity in the program will allow students to better understand concepts introduced in their first year at Sedgwick.

It is our hope to continue to include more schools, but continued funding will be crucial. Although the docents are volunteers, funding is needed to continue docent recruitment and training to ensure that the Sedgwick Reserve can provide the needed support for the Outdoor Classroom.



Sue greets the Outdoor Classroom participants from Los Olivos Elementary School.

Outdoor Classroom Launch party

The Outdoor Classroom program was officially launched on October 17th with a celebration to meet and thank the donors, teachers, administrators, docents and volunteers who have made this program possible. Over 50 people attended, snacking on “ranch style hoer d’oeuvres” prepared by our very own volunteer, Don Layton.



Bobbi Hunter, local artist, designed the Outdoor Classroom logo. (left)

Kate, modeling the new Outdoor Classroom T-shirt, chats with Susan Jorgensen and Alice Gillaroo. (right)



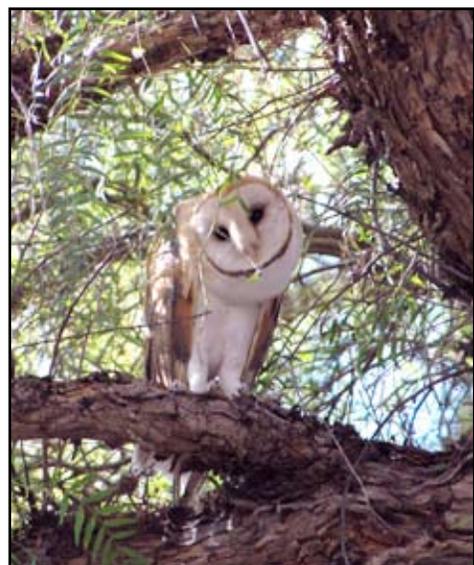
Sue and Kate present the Outdoor Classroom.



Los Olivos School Superintendent, Marsha Filbin and her husband Dave; Principal Gary Crispin and his wife Sue; and Bridget Buablits, 4th Grade Teacher gather around the new “Food Web” game.



Both teachers participating in this years’ program attended the celebration. Jessica Morris, Ontiveros School (left) and Bridget Baublits, Los Olivos School (right)



Otis the Owl delighted all whoooo saw him!

Director's Page

By Kate McCurdy

I spent the bulk of my summer in the office, which faces the majestic Figueroa Canyon behind serpentine terraces of the upper Reserve. From my desk I can join the natural world just by looking up — coyotes passing through Seabloom's research plots, the migration of bluebirds, deer moving in the tall oats, golden eagles visiting "their" trough on the knoll. It's been a long, hot and dry summer, much of it spent managing the first of many construction projects in and around the Field Station. It has been an exciting time watching new buildings — and their scientific potential — sprouting from mustard beds at Sedgwick. Most notably, construction of the dome for the Las Cumbres Observatory was completed over the summer. The telescope is slated to be installed this winter.

Eisaguirre spent the summer developing the Outdoor Classroom program and curriculum, which launched in late October. Other outreach efforts were scaled back over the summer and will be resumed this winter as funds allow.

Twenty-five scientists from 15 different universities worked tirelessly on research projects this summer, regardless of weather conditions, rattlesnakes and eye flies. And despite those same hazards, 23 Sedgwick docents and volunteers banked a total of 117 days of service at the Reserve between July and October. Not included in this tally is the Trails Committee: Sam Babcock, Laura Baldwin, Rick Fellows, Joe Fiore, and Doug Binkley, who worked diligently this summer installing wooden posts at major road and trail junctions in the southern quadrant of the Reserve to help identify major trailheads. Speaking of which, have you purchased your trail marker yet? There are only a dozen or so



The Tipton Meeting House.

Momentous progress has been made on the Tipton Meeting House, which broke ground in March, 2008. By summer's end the spectacular new classroom, multipurpose and administrative building will be about half way finished. The building, designed by Thompson Naylor & Associates and currently being built by Dennis Allen & Associates, will likely earn a 'Platinum' Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating for the impressive suite of green features built into the building's design and construction. It will take another eight months to complete the project. We're looking forward to the hearth warming party.

More daunting than the summer heat has been contending with budget cuts. The state's budget crisis has affected both the University and Natural Reserve System, and our already meager staff has had to endure partial lay-offs. In August, long-time land steward, Rick Skillin, accepted a full-time job in Carmel. Barb Huebel, the Reserve's office manager, will be scaling back to half time starting in November. Sue



One of the Trail Junction Posts

left and cost \$20 apiece. Anyone who has ever sunk a post in Sedgwick's summer soil knows just how hard this crew has worked on this project! A special thanks to Bruce & Cathy Straits' and the Jorian Hill Vineyard for their generous sponsorship of this project.

All and all, it's been an industrious summer at the Reserve. The Sedgwick crew continues to toil laboriously, but I myself will never tire of the Reserve and its potential, both on the ground and from the view from my office window — colors, motion, serenity, truth — just a window pane away.

New Observatory and Your Outdoor Lighting

By Nancy Emerson



The Las Cumbres Global Telescope Project's Sedgwick Observatory continues to move ahead with the 32 inch telescope scheduled to be installed by the end of November. Their very high-powered staff will then spend several months testing the telescope and the computer connections. This system will allow astronomers and students to use the telescope if they are part of this project, which spans the world at our latitude. When testing is completed, there will be access for UCSB faculty and students as well as younger students in our Valley with trained volunteers helping them.

But if the telescope is to reach its maximum efficiency, those of us who live in the Santa Ynez Valley need to work on our own outdoor lighting. The Save Our Stars Committee of Women's Environmental Watch, which I chair, and the Las Cumbres Global Telescope staff have asked County Planning to add the following items to the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, which is part of the Draft Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan Update:

1. A ban on existing and future mercury vapor light fixtures, which are especially harmful because of the specific wave-lengths of light they emit.
2. A 15 mile radius special status area where low pressure sodium lamps would be required and all lamps would be below 4050 lumens.

Here are some steps you can take right now to reduce sky glow, prevent glare and neighbor lighting trespass from unshielded or partially shielded outdoor lighting.

(This message is for both Valley and South Coast docents as sky glow from the South Coast negatively affects the night sky in our Valley.)

1. Check your own outdoor lighting – home, store or office, farm or ranch.
2. Replace mercury vapor light bulbs - energy hogs which emit specific wave-lengths of light very detrimental to telescope work.
3. Use light bulbs with as low wattage as possible. You will be surprised how much even a 15 watt incandescent bulb illuminates an area. If using fluorescent bulbs, use very low wattage as light seems more intense than the equivalent incandescent bulb.
4. Retrofit un-shielded security lights for which shields are available or buy new, fully shielded fixtures.
5. Replace unshielded or partially shielded decorative fixtures with the fully shielded, architecturally diverse fixtures now available.
6. Turn off unneeded lights at night and purchase timers and sensors for those you must use. (Needs and wants are not the same thing.)

Fully shielded fixtures are now available at prices comparable to those of un-shielded ones.

Please call or e-mail me if I can answer questions as you evaluate your outdoor lighting situation. (693-1386 or fnemerson@verizon.net)

Farewell to Rick



After eight years as Sedgwick Reserve steward, Rick Skillin resigned from the NRS at the end of August. Rick is enjoying success in the new job he started on September 1st. He is now working in Monterey County as a lead with a foreclosed-home management agency. His going-away party on the last Friday in August was fun and well attended. Thanks to all who came, wrote, contributed and/or hugged Rick goodbye

Bird Walks

by Fred Machetanz

The White-Crowned Herald

Photos Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Immature White-crowned Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrows arrive at Sedgwick from their breeding grounds in Alaska and Canada in late September and leave in mid-April. I enjoy the return and the delightful singing of the White Crowns in the fall. Perhaps it is a welcome sign of the changing seasons akin to the Easterners' new palette of colors in their fall oak and maple tree leaves.

Described in 1772 by J.R. Forster as an "elegant little species", the abundance and conspicuousness of the White Crown have helped to make it one of the most studied of song birds.

The White-crowned Sparrow is a member of the genus, *Zonotrichia* (from the Greek "bird with bands") which includes our common Golden-crowned Sparrow, our rare White-throated Sparrow and Harris's Sparrow, a migratory bird of the south-central U.S., which rarely reaches the West Coast.

The White Crown has been described as "a large and long-tailed sparrow with bold black and white crown stripes, plain gray underparts, streaked back and orangish bill. Immatures show crown stripes which are dark brown and creamy." (Garrett and Dunn)

There are five subspecies of White-crowned Sparrow. The subspecies found at Sedgwick and generally in the Santa Barbara region is Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. For more complete and recent information about White Crown classification, I refer you to the National Geographic *Complete Birds of North America*. In the Gambel's subspecies, the white eyebrow streak extends to an orange-tinted bill. Other subspecies have yellow and pink bills and shortened eyebrow streaks.

For insight into the behavior of Gambel's Sparrow, I quote the lyric description of William Dawson:

"It is as flocking birds that we know these ubiquitous Crowners best. They feed beside the road or in the edges of fields, stealing out from cover one by one, not without misgiving ... until the ground is covered with them. At a sound, at a suspicion even, the flock rises noisily and bolts for shelter. Secure in the depths of weed or bush, they wait silently until danger is past or if it does not pass, they begin to edge away or depart by ones or twos or dozens for more distant fields."

Male Gambel's Sparrows arrive on their breeding grounds in Alaska early in May with females arriving ten days later. The female selects the nest site, usually on the ground, and crafts the cup-shaped nest of grass, twigs, rootlets, and then lines it with fine grass, animal hair and feathers. Four or five eggs, cream white to pale green, spotted with reddish brown, are incubated by the female for 11-15 days. The young are fledged 7-12 days after hatching. Both parents feed the young. (Cornell Lab of Ornithology Birds of North America Monograph)

According to Kenn Kaufman, the White Crowns feed mainly on seeds of weeds and grasses. In summer months their diet extends to buds, flowers, small fruit and insects. As with most sparrows, the young are fed insects.

The song of the White Crown is a pleasant series of whistles, buzzes, and trills delivered in a minor key.

I hope the imminent arrival of the White-crowned Sparrows give you as much pleasure as it does me. Their presence and unique song is much appreciated at Sedgwick and I shall miss them when they are gone. Good Wishes!

Cuttings from the Nursery

By Nancy Stearns

- Botanic Name:** *Eriogonum elongatum* Benth.
var. *elongatum*
- Pronunciation:** er-ee-OG-an-um ee-long-GAY-tum
- Common Name:** Long-stem wild buckwheat or
wand buckwheat
- Family:** Polygonaceae (Buckwheat family)

Common in dry, rocky places; in coastal sage scrub, chaparral, foothill woodland. Erect, herbaceous, loosely branched perennial, 2-6 feet tall with slender, whitish, grayish stems and whitish, pink flowers. Blooms summer through fall, turning a rusty brown when the seeds mature. Flowers are densely-packed, rounded heads approximately ¼ inch and are found along the airy wand-like stems. Stems may persist more than one growing season with new stems forming every year. Leaves are ½-2", elliptic, wavy margined (the margin is the edge of the leaf), tomentose (covered with densely interwoven hairs), basal (occurring near the ground or base of the plant).

Eriogonum is from two Greek words: erion, wool and genu, joint or knee. Woolly knees indeed! The inflorescences, or flower structures, are cyme-like (branched inflorescence in which the central flower opens before peripheral flowers), resembling small balls along a slender gray stem. *Elongatum* means elongated or lengthened, referring to the long stem that the flowers or "woolly knees" sit upon.

Eriogonum is the largest dicot genus in California, with more than 125 species in all. They range in size from tiny annuals to 8 foot tall shrubs. California buckwheat, *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, another attractive native, is now blooming and setting seed along roadsides all over California, hence its name. It has white flowers turning rusty brown against dark green evergreen foliage.



Photo from www.calflora.net

The Chumash used several *Eriogonum* species medicinally. A tea of wild buckwheat, '*an*', was used to stop hemorrhage. A cold tea made from leaves purified the blood and a tea made from the roots of *E. elongatum* was taken cold or hot with sugar as a remedy for fever.

You can see both the long-stem buckwheat and the California buckwheat growing in the demonstration garden by the studio patio, or pick one up in a 5-gallon container from Sedgwick's native plant nursery for a \$10 suggested donation.

Give long-stem buckwheat a well drained, sunny site in your garden. Like other members of its genus, it has nectar-rich flowers which attract insects. It also provides seeds for birds, and has a deep tap root which provides erosion control. When planted en masse its leggy appearance is quite attractive, attracting honey bees and butterflies, the long stems waving in a breeze. Great for dried floral arrangements.

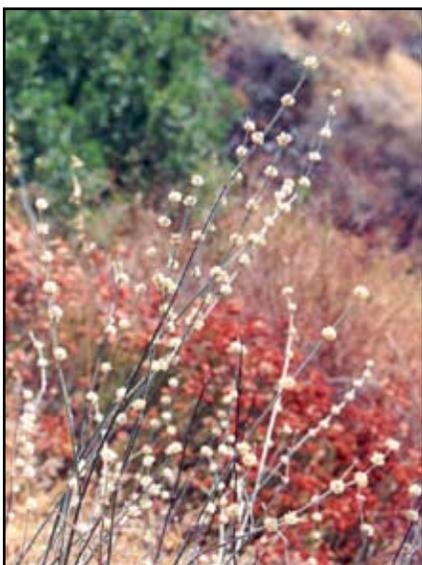


Photo from www.calflora.net



Photo from calphotos.berkeley.edu © 2007 Neal Kramer

THE HIKING PROGRAM

By Nick Di Croce

We can hardly entitle this article “The Public Hiking Program” since we cut off the public hikes in June and probably won’t resume them until November, partly due to the heat, partly to the potential fire hazard, and partly to the crazy deer hunters at the top of the Reserve.

However, the “Summer Sizzler” hikes that we ran this summer for docents and guests turned out to be enjoyable. A couple of them were begun at 5 p.m. in order to avoid the heat and to provide an alternative experience, especially the “Full Moon” event as well as the other hikes that let us picnic during the dusk hours at the Reserve. A nice setting.

A couple of the summer docent hikes were used for training: one had an emphasis on chaparral plants and another featured geology of the Reserve — ably led by Susie Bartz.

Notices are out for the start of the fall season hikes. Note the exciting additions to our public hikes: tours of the old barn, the new observatory, the pond, and the new Tipton House, as well as a set up for painters at the pond, and the use of a bocce ball court are all planned for those who don’t want to hike and would like to just enjoy the Reserve attractions while the hikes are being conducted.

Happy Trails.

Getting Involved

There are myriad ways you can support the Sedgwick Reserve. Volunteer help is always appreciated, from office tasks to watering restoration sites to assisting with public events. Contact Sue Eisaguirre for more information (686-1941 ext. 4 or eisaguirre@lifesci.ucsb.edu). Financial support is critically needed this year and always greatly appreciated. There are a number of “wish list” which are listed on our website.

Lastly...come visit!

Sedgwick Reserve Event Schedule

November

- 7 Friday Docent Training First Class
- 8 Saturday Public Hike
- 14 Friday Docent Training: Ecology and ecosystems
- 21 Friday Docent Training: Plant Communities
- 28 Friday No class Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 2 Tuesday Outdoor Classroom Ontiveros School
- 3 Wednesday Outdoor Classroom Los Olivos School
- 5 Friday Sedgwick Holiday Open House 3:00-6:00 p.m.
- 11 Thursday Docent Communication Meeting 9 a.m.
- 12 Friday Docent Training: TBA
- 13 Saturday Public Hike
- 19 Friday Docent Training: TBA
- 26 Friday No class Christmas Holiday

January

- 9 Friday Docent Training: K-12 training hikes
- 10 Saturday Public Hike
- 16 Friday Docent Training: Oaks and Issues
- 23 Friday Docent Training: Animal tracking
- 30 Friday Stunt Ranch Field Trip

