FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD NATURAL PRESERVE

Explorer Edgewood

June 2010 Volume 17 Number 2

THE EDGEWOOD MOWING PROGRAM by Christal Niederer

The Edgewood Mowing Program. Mowing is one of our most effective tools for treating invasive plants at Edgewood. Mowing and hand pulling have greatly reduced yellow starthistle infestations throughout the grasslands. We've also used mowing to reduce cover of medusah ead grass, and to greatly increase the cover of wildflowers in the butterfly site. At the Inspiration Heights area, nonnative annual grasses have been crowding out our native wildflowers. The mowing was planned and timed to best enhance the habitat over the long term.

Taking no action will lead to greater loss. Some people feel that natural preserves should not be managed, that "nature should take its course." Unfortunately, most preserves no longer function naturally, in that natural disturbances (grazing, fire, flooding, etc.) have been removed, the climate has been altered (nitrogen deposition and global warming), and invasive species have been introduced. Protecting the biodiversity that remains usually requires active management. This is definitely the case at Edgewood.

The wildflowers at Edgewood are a huge asset. Many portions of the Edgewood grasslands, mostly those with a serpentine influence, still have dense populations of wildflowers. In other spots the wildflowers have largely been lost. While there are still native components, those areas are filled with invasive annual grasses and invasive annual forbs like thistles, filaree, cat's ear, and hawksbeard.

Maintaining the native wildflowers where we still have them is a huge priority, and mowing is our best tool.

Timing is critical. To be effective, moving must be done before seeds become viable. We have been closely watching seed formation in the wild oats and other grasses in our mow zone. The early ones had already matured, so mowing the first week of May targeted the bulk of the population. Waiting longer meant most of the grass seeds would already be viable, negating the benefits of mowing. Many of our native wildflowers are perennial, such as the larkspur, blue-eyed grass, yarrow, and California poppies. These plants rebound the year after a mow. Our annual wildflowers, like goldfields, tidy tips, and linanthus, are relatively short compared to the mower. Yes, some will be killed before they set seed, but those that survive will have much better growing conditions for their seeds next year. While we hate to see many of these lovely wildflowers trampled and cut, we strongly believe this treatment is the best way to improve the habitat in the long run.



Spring mowing works. As shown above, the side on the right was mowed the year before, decreasing non-native grass and enhancing habitat for native wildflowers in the butterfly site. A rotational mowing program has been going on for several years in the butterfly area, with huge success. We decided to try this in other areas. A test mow near the frog pond/butterfly gate took place in 2008, and monitoring showed large decreases in non-native grass cover compared with the control area. Success at these sites has led us to expand the program. The mowing rotation means we don't ever mow all the grasslands in a given year. In the butterfly area, once every three years works well.

Spring mowing doesn't look good the year it's done.

That's true. We will also use a harrow rake in the mowed area to break up thatch in late summer, opening up ground for the wildflowers to germinate. This won't look great either. But based on our experience here at Edgewood, we still have time to reduce the grasses and increase cover of our wildflowers. We should act before it's too late.

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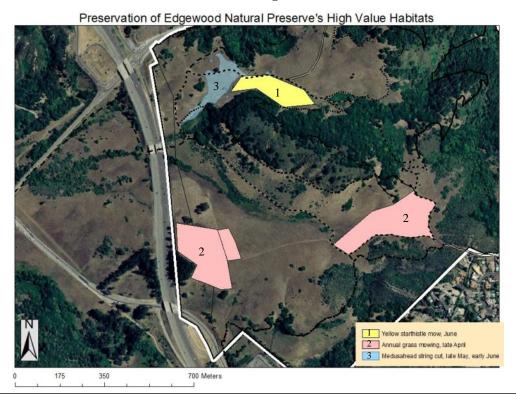
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Other techniques could be used. Hand pulling tends to reduce collateral damage, but it is simply not realistic for our weeders to tackle every challenge facing Edgewood. They are doing a fantastic job on the priorities they have chosen, and the mowing program is aimed at enhancing their efforts to reduce invasive plants. Grazing can be very effective in reducing grasses, but would be difficult to implement at Edgewood. Prescribed fire may be introduced in the future, but is difficult to coordinate frequently enough to maintain native grasslands in the long run. At this point, we know mowing works, and it's relatively cheap and easy.

2010 Mowing Areas



REPAIRING TRAILS AT EDGEWOOD by Tim Oren

Who's Been Messing with the Trails

If you've walked the Sylvan or Serpentine Loops at Edgewood this spring, you've likely noticed some new bumps and dips in the trail, and that some of the ruts, rocks and roots have been removed. This is a result of a joint project between San Mateo County Parks and the Trail Center, a 27-year-old volunteer organization dedicated to building and maintaining trails in the South Bay and Santa Cruz Mountains. A multi-year partnership between the two has built and repaired trails in San Bruno, Huddart, and Memorial Parks, and now Edgewood Preserve.

That's the organizational answer. The other answer is it is myself, my wife, Pat, and dozens of other volunteers—some highly experienced trail builders and many first timers. My wife and I became Edgewood docents shortly after we moved to the area in 2000, but we've been volunteering with the Trail Center since 1988. After we reported Edgewood's trails to be deteriorating (in step with the County's maintenance resources), the Trail Center proposed a repair project to Dave Moore and Carla Schoof, respectively the Parks Manager and Volunteer Coordinator for San Mateo County; a proposal that was accepted.

What Kills Trails

In a word, water. Rain runs straight down hills. Trails contour around them. Inevitably, the two meet. The water will quite happily adopt a trail as a streambed—as it flows down the trail, it gathers speed and carves out ruts, exposes rocks and roots, and ultimately makes the trail unsafe. Trail builders prevent this with drains—sloping dips, often combined with backing bars of earth, stone or wood—that shunt the water off the trail before erosion can occur.

But drains don't last forever. Trail users wear down the water bars and beat the trail surface to dust. Rain washes the soil and other debris into dips and fills them. As one drain fails, the water stays on the trail longer and builds up more speed, erosion quickens, and the next drain down the trail clogs up faster.

At first the damage is imperceptible to the casual observer: the trail actually gets smoother as bars disappear and dips fill up. Once the drains are gone, however, erosion sets in as water digs a streambed into the trail, and low spots turn into mud puddles. This is what has been happening at Edgewood, leading to rutted trails and exposed rocks and roots lurking for the unwary hiker or runner. Repairing the

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damage means not only eliminating the ankle-turners, but also replacing the drains to get the damaging water off the trail. Hence the new bumps and dips.



03-20-2010—Sylvan Trail before repair. Photo © Justin Knowles

Edgewood Is Different

Normally, Trail Center crews cut back vegetation for several feet on either side of a trail, so the path will be clear for years to come. Trail edges are leveled. Spoils are scattered off the side, to be covered by new growth in the spring. Soil, stone, and wood needed for construction are gathered on the work site if possible.

None of this works at Edgewood. Endangered species grow right up to the edge of the tread, and some seem to prefer the compacted soil there. Scattered spoils can create a starting spot for invasive weeds. Roaming off the trail is *verboten*.

Working with Ranger John Trewin, we developed new rules for Edgewood trail builds: all soil and stone debris was to be reused on the trail, and additional rock was to be hauled in from the Sunset Gate. Drains were to be built only at sites determined to have no endangered species present. Vegetation cutting was to be limited to poison oak at work sites, and supervised by an Edgewood docent.

What's Done, What's Coming

A Trail Center build is organized by a workday supervisor (at Edgewood, yours truly) who determines work sites,

assigns crews, and reviews the work through the day. Each crew is managed by a volunteer with multiple years of trail experience, who has gone through a leadership training program. Crews range from 4 to 10 volunteers, depending



03-20-2010—Sylvan Trail after repair. Photo © Justin Knowles

on the tasks assigned. The Trail Center provides all tools and work gloves, plus snacks at the end of the workday. Build days typically run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There are three builds scheduled at Edgewood this year. Our March build was bumped to a rain date, but still had a good turnout of 30 volunteers. Our April build, an Earth Day event, had over 50 volunteers in action. As a result of these two builds, we have completed work on the south leg of the Sylvan Loop, as well as on the Serpentine Loop between the Ridgeview and Franciscan intersections. Our final build of the year was on May 15th, and focused on the north leg of the Sylvan Loop, and on the Franciscan Trail between the Ridgeview and Serpentine intersections. Plans for work next year, if any, will be determined after the Trail Center and County review progress and additional needs. 📥

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you. ~ Frank Lloyd Wright

LITTERALLY SPEAKING — TRASH TALK

by Anne Koletzke

Oscar Madison: Now kindly remove that spaghetti from mypoker table.

[Felix laughs]

Oscar Madison: What the hell's so funny? Felix Ungar: It's not spaghetti.... It's linguini. [Oscarpicks up the linguini and hurls it against the

Oscar Madison: Now it's garbage!*

Garbage. In 1442, the Middle English word "garbage" meant "giblets of a fowl" or "waste parts of an animal," and was perhaps related to the similar-sounding Anglo-French word "Jarbage" that meant "a bundle of sheaves, entrails." A truly offal word. By 1583 "garbage" had the more general meaning of "refuse." By 1976—perhaps because by then we had accumulated so much of the stuff someone decided we needed to pay more attention to it, and so developed the "study of waste as a social science," better known as Garbology.

Trash. The English word "trash" had a less food-oriented source in the Old Norse word "tros," which meant "rubbish, fallen leaves and twigs," or "trask," which meant "lumber" and "baggage." It may also have come from the ancient Swedish word "trasa" that meant "rags, tatters." By 1604, Shakespeare was using the word "trash" in Othello to refer to something of no value: "Who steals my purse steals trash." By 1620 the word "trashy," meaning the "worthlessness of something," was in common use; and by 1895, the verb "to trash" was being used to describe the act of discarding something as worthless. But it wasn't until 1906 that the word really came into its own, at least here in the United States, where we—once again taking a stand against the British, who still insisted on taking out their household *rubbish*—were busy taking out our household trash.

Litter. Around 1300, "litter" simply meant "a bed," or "a bed-like vehicle carried on men's shoulders," which no doubt came from the Anglo-French word, "litere" that meant "portable bed." Somehow by the early 15th century. the meaning of "litter" had been broadened to mean "straw used for bedding," and by the late 15th century to mean "offspring of an animal at one birth" (because they were born on a bed of straw perhaps?). It wasn't until 1713 that the verb "to litter" meant "to strew with objects." And by 1730 the noun "litter" had acquired the additional meaning of" scattered oddments, disorderly debris." Although the word "litterbug" first appeared in 1947, the use of the word "litter" as a verb in the sense of "the act of dropping litter"—e.g., along Highway 280 for Edgewood's Road Warriors to pick up—did not come into use until 1960.

*Simon, Neil. The Odd Couple http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=garbage http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/garbage http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=trash http://www.merriam-webster.com/netdict/trash http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=litter http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/litter

LITTERALLY SPEAKING — BABY TALK

As overheard and retold by m.m., meadow mouse & field reporter for the Explorer



Baby squirrels in their den beside Edgewood Trail watching people watching them during Norma Jean Brody's Wildflower Walkon 05-02-2010 . Photo © Gerry Colvin

- "Hey, they're back!"
- "Who?"
- "Those two-legged creatures."
- "You mean the birds?"
- "No, not the birds, dummy! The other two-legged creatures. The big ones. And this time there's a lot of them."
- "Lemme see!"
- "Me, too. I wanna see, too."
- "Move over so I can see. Ow! Get your foot out of my face. Geeze, brothers are a pain! OK then, I'll just climb on top of you. . . . Wow! There are a lot of them. What are they doing?"
- "Dunno. I think they're looking at that flower."
- "All this time?"
- "Maybe they're hungry and are thinking about eating it."
- "One of them seems to have an awful lot to say about it."
- "And another one is pointing a box at it. Maybe it's a trap!"
- "It's not a trap, silly, it's a camera, and it takes a picture of whatever it's pointed at."
- "And how do you know that, Miss Smarty Pants?"
- "Mama told me!"
- "Well, don't look now, but that box is pointed at us!"
- "Not just the box, they're all looking at us."
- "Maybe they think we're a flower."
- "Maybe they're still hungry."
- "Maybe we should go get Mama." 🗞



THE HEALING PLANTS OF EDGEWOOD The Creative Trilogy by Mary Anne Leary

For this Summer issue of the *Edgewood Explorer*, I thought it would be interesting to talk about three native flowering plants growing in Edgewood Preserve that support the creative process. The three plants are the Douglas Iris (*Iris douglasiana*), California Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and Indian Paintbrush (*Castelleja affinis*). The Douglas Iris, which grows off-trail in the Clarkia Canyon, can be readily seen on other preserves in the nearby area, so please, no going off-trail unless you have a permit to do so!! The Douglas Iris is the early bloomer of the three, being seen February to June; the California Blackberry blooms in the riparian woodland areas from April to June; and the Indian Paintbrush can be found in the woodlands from March to August.



Douglas Iris (Iris douglasiana) Photo © Alf Fengler

The word "Iris" is the Greek word for rainbow, and Iris was the Greek goddess of the rainbow. She is said to have found her reflection in the iridescent iris flower. Iris delivered the messages from the gods to humanity, thereby creating a bridge between the earthly and heavenly worlds; we will speak later of this healing signature for the Iris flower.

California Blackberry is a climbing vine, its name being derived from the Latin word for bramble (a rough thorny shrub or vine). Blackberries are edible and can be made into jellies or jams. The Native Americans used the blackberry leaves and roots medicinally, as they have astringent qualities that are useful for intestinal problems such as



California Blackberry (Rubus ursinus) Photo © Kathy Korbholz

dysentery and diarrhea. The root-bark has diuretic and tonifying qualities that make it a good remedy for cystitis and hemorrhoids. The root-bark is also the most astringent part of the

plant due to its high tannin content, and can be used for sore throats and gum and mouth inflammations. Syrup can be made from blackberry fruit and root bark along with honey for a cough remedy. Though the blackberry plant is difficult for humans to handle or walk through, it provides a safe refuge and sustenance for many small animals and birds.

Indian Paintbrush was named after a Spanish botanist, Domingo Castillejo, in 1782. A Native American legend about the Indian Paintbrush tells of a young warrior who wanted to paint sunsets with his war paints, but he found his paint paled in comparison to the beautiful vibrant col-

ors of nature. Out of his frustration and desire to rival nature's artistry as much as was humanly possible, he asked Great Spirit for assistance, and the legend says that Great Spirit gifted him with paintbrushes that matched the colors he desired.



Indian Paintbrush (Castelleja affinis) Photo © Kathy Korbholz

And so the young warrior was able to paint sunsets with the "Indian Paintbrushes," leaving his used brushes along the way as he traveled the mountain meadows! In terms of herbal use, the stem of the Indian Paintbrush plant is toxic, so it was not eaten or used medicinally. The sweet tasting flowers, however, were used as a condiment, being eaten with other fresh greens; they were also used for treating rheumatism and strengthening the immune system. The Chippewa Indians used the flowers as a brightening hair wash.

So how can these vastly different flowers benefit us as we engage in a creative process? The Iris flower essence helps to provide inspired artistry, and is most valuable when we need to start a project, but lack the creative inspiration and ideas that are necessary to get started. Once we can connect with the ideas we want to put into creative expression, the Blackberry supports the forces of will that are necessary to take action and manifest these ideas into form; this is a wonderful remedy for those who procrastinate or struggle with indecisiveness. So, now we have the creative ideas (Iris), and we are beginning to take the appropriate action (Blackberry), but we find ourselves exhausted by the creative process—it is much easier to think about writing a book than to actually do so. This is when the beautiful Indian Paintbrush comes to the rescue by assisting with vibrant physical resilience in order to see the project through to completion! In conclusion this creative trilogy may be the perfect medicine to help you to tackle those long-awaited projects you want to cross off your list!

A healthy and happy summer to all! ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

Kaminski, Patricia and Richard Katz. Flower Essence Repertory Kaminski, Patricia. Flowers that Heal: How To Use Flower Essences

http://www.altnature.com/gallery/Blackberry.htm http://www.glacier-national-park-trawel-guide.com/indianpaintbrush.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castilleja

NEW DOCENTS by Mary Wilson

We had another group of great docent trainees this year! There were eight of them: Dave Hershey, Pamela Hitchcock, Ralph Hunter, Patty Jasper, Melissa Lukes, Chula Morel-Seytoux, Richard Moyer, and Diana Quon. I hope you will get to meet them when they lead their Wildflower Walks next season. Dave, Ralph and Diana are Friday Weed Warriors who heard about the class from Paul Heiple and Ken Himes—Thanks Paul and Ken! In addition, two docents from prior training classes, Katherine Dollard and Laurie Alexander, regularly attended this year's classes to refresh and expand their knowledge.

I am very grateful to our presenters for their expertise, dedication, and the encouragement they give the traineesnot to mention the inspiration they provide both inside and outside the classroom. Thanks to John Allen, our trainees learned the history of Edgewood and the names of the various landmarks in the Park. From Paul Heiple, they learned the geology of Edgewood, and from Ken Himes, they gained knowledge of the chaparral and oak woodland communities. Toni Corelli, in a very short period of time and with many stories and jokes, taught the docent trainees to recognize huge numbers of April wildflowers. And last but not least, Ty Freiberg, a Coyote Ridge docent, who graduated from our docent training last year, made some interesting suggestions at one point, and promptly got himself recruited to teach the "How to Lead a Wildflower Walk" portion of the training this year.

Again, many thanks to all! ®

People from a

planet without
flowers would
think we must be
mad with joy
the whole time
to have the things
about us. ~ Iris Murdoch

JUNIOR EXPLORERS — DOCENT TRAINING By Carol Hankermeyer and Herb Fischgrund

"Junior Explorers" is the name we have given to our special Edgewood field trip programs for children: school classes, scouts, and home schoolers. And this spring Junior Explorers offered a valuable training program, "Leading Children in Nature," that was open to docents from Edgewood and other San Mateo County Parks, as well as the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation staff. We were able to accomplish this project thanks to a generous grant from the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, obtained by Herb Fischgrund. The docent training consisted of one evening class and two field sessions with naturalist Diane West-Bourke, who is the regular docent trainer for Filoli and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Thirty people from Edgewood, Coyote Point, Fitzgerald Marine Preserve, and Filoli attended the evening class held on March 11 at the Veterans Memorial Senior Center in Redwood City. Diane's topic was *How to be an Effective Nature Guide*. She presented methods she uses to engage children actively with their natural surroundings, and to awaken their curiosity and appreciation of living things. She discussed how to organize a walk and use guided inquiry to help children discover nature's wonders for themselves. She explained the use of themes to structure the content of a walk, integrating observations about living things into meaningful concepts of how they function together in whole ecosystems. Diane supplemented her talk



Diane West-Bourke conducting a field workshop for docents working with children. Photo © John Bradley

with excerpts from an educational video, *Take a Walk with Me*, produced by the Environmental Volunteers. It was so popular that Laurie Alexander arranged a viewing of the whole video on another evening. Among the readings Diane recommended were Joseph Cornell's two books, *Sharing Nature with Children* and *Sharing Nature with Children II*, and Ernest Williams' *The Nature Handbook*.

On March 13 Diane led a field trip for 20 docents from the Day Camp, applying concepts and techniques she had presented at the evening class to real situations we encoun-

(Continued from page 6)

tered on the Sylvan Trail. These ideas and strategies were further developed at the April 30 field workshop with 15 students attending. In one clever demonstration,



Diane West-Bourke, feather in hand, conducting the evening class for docents working with children.

Photo © Herb Fischgrund

she used Oreo cookies to illustrate the concept of plate tectonics. There was also a welcome snack for grateful docents.

This training program was a very worthwhile experience for everyone who participated. It gave insights and practical techniques that can be useful for leading any group—not only children, but adults, too. We were very fortunate to receive the financial support of San Mateo County Parks and Recreation and engage Diane West-Bourke as our instructor.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

New or renewing members may clip and complete this section to pay **tax-deductible** annual membership dues. Please send your check, payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve**, to the return address on the back of this panel. Renewing members can determine their membership expiration date by checking the six-digit code to the right of their name on the mailing label. For example, if the code is 06/2006, membership runs through June 2006.

Questions? Call (866) GO-EDGEWOOD or contact membership-coordinator@friendsofedgewood.org.

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POISON OAK



Photo © Kathy Korbholz

Western Poison Oak (Toxicodendron diversilobum) in full bloom



The first question I ask myself when something doesn't seem to be beautiful is why do I think it's not beautiful. And very shortly you discover that there is no reason.

~ John Cage

| \$10 Student/Retired (includes quarterly newsletter) | | | | | | | |
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| Please send copies of Common Native Wildflowers of Edgewood (\$2.50), copies of the Edgewood Vascular Plant List (\$3.00), copies of the Apr-Jun 2004 Bay Nature magazine (\$6.00), copies of Flowering Plants of Edgewood Natural Preserve (\$25.00). Includes tax, S&H. All items subject to availability. | | | | | | | |
| I wo | Doo GIS | G/GPS mapping | follo | owing: Weed management Schools outreach Habitat restoration | | | |

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The sun will not rise, or set, without my notice and thanks.

~ Winslow Homer

EDGEWOOD WEED WARRIORS

Want to become an Edgewood Weed Warrior? Go here to learn more: http://edgewood.thinkersrus.net/



- □ ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY, sometimes known as TRASH TIME. The next sessions will take place on 6/5, 7/11, 8/7, & 9/12. To volunteer or get more information, contact Ken Seydel.
- □ CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter NATIVE PLANT SALES. Hidden Villa Ranch in Los Altos Hills 10 AM—1 PM Wednesdays 6/09, 6/16, 6/23, & 6/30. For more information, go to http://www.stanford.edu/~rawlings/blazcon.htm?date=2010-06-02

It's up to us to save the world for tomorrow. It's up to you and me ~ Jane Goodall

The Edgewood Explorer is published quarterly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Edgewood for the human, plant, and animal generations to come. The newsletter is produced by Anne Koletzke with contributions from many Friends. For more information a bout the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at www.friendsofedgewood.org, mail us at PO Box 3422, Redwood City, CA 94064-3422, call or fax toll-free at (866) GO-EDGEWOOD (866-463-3439), or email info@friendsofedgewood.org.

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In summer, the song sings itself.

~ William Carlos Williams