

Edgewood Explorer



November 1994

Volume 1 Number 4

ANNUAL MEETING

The Friends of Edgewood held its first annual general membership meeting the afternoon of



Supervisors Lempert and Barrales, and Director Sanchez

Sunday, October 16, at, where else, the picnic area in the park. About 30 Friends attended, all bearing overflowing bowls and platters of homemade salads, main courses, and desserts to share with the other Friends there.

Special guests included Supervisors Ruben Barrales and Ted Lempert, County Parks Facilities Director Kendall Simmons, Parks Commissioner Nita Spangler, Ron Weaver (the ranger in charge of Edgewood), and San Mateo County Director of Parks and Recreation Patrick Sanchez. Last year to the day was Director Sanchez's first encounter with the Friends, at the combo victory celebration of the Save Edgewood Park Coalition and kickoff for the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve. He came up from southern California a day before officially starting his position as Director to attend our party and get to know us. After so many years when a lot

of us could only dream about protecting Edgewood from disappearing, the degree of cooperation we have had from Director Sanchez, the rangers, and the county government still gives us goosebumps.

We also elected a slate of officers at this meeting; and the current board gave reports on what we accomplished this year. Mostly we shmoozed with each other.

The New Slate

The board for 1995 is:

- ◆ President: John Allen
- ◆ Vice President: Jan Simpson
- ◆ Corresponding and Recording Secretary:

Laverne Rabinowitz

- ◆ Treasurer: Bob Young

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FRIENDS OF EDGEWOOD INSTALL SIGNS

By Carolyn Curtis

Under the direction of Ranger Lynne Fritz, on Sunday, October 16, six Friends of Edgewood installed the first of the new large wooden signs that announce at each entrance of Edgewood that it is a



Natural Preserve. The signs have two covered pockets, one for the County brochure (map) and one for the Friends of Edgewood brochure. Also prominent on the signs are No Bicycles and No Dogs, conveyed both in plain English and with the “Ø” symbol.

Helping were Stew Simpson, Guy Cohen, Ken Herdman, James Little, John Allen, Don Mayall, and Carolyn Curtis. An appreciative round of applause for them all!

These beautiful signs are the result of great cooperation between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends board. Toward the end of last summer a small group of board members met with Director Patrick Sanchez; together we worked out the types and wording of various signs we thought were needed. Later Director Sanchez and a few of us spent an afternoon at the preserve working through which signs were going at what points in the park and going through the specific wording.

Ranger Lynne Fritz followed through on this first batch of signs, the "entrance announcement" group.

This kind of work is valuable for the preserve; we'll help put up the three other signs (they'll be at all official preserve entrances) and other signs as well. If you checked the box for trail maintenance on the membership application and missed this chance to help, don't worry; there'll be other opportunities! If you didn't check the box but would like to participate in these efforts, call Carolyn.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL? WEED ERADICATORS!

By Bob Hess

The Invasive Weed Eradication Group, composed of members of the Friends of Edgewood, has as its objective to control the non-native plants that are invading the Preserve. The Invasive Weed Eradication Group is removing non-native plants such as Teasel and Broom, etc. In non-serpentine areas these plants are invading the Preserve by pushing out the natives and destroying their habitats. The non-natives do not have any natural enemies, since they come from other continents. The removal program does not use any poisons, and depends entirely on physical chopping, cutting, and pulling. Beginning in 1989, the Group has succeeded in eliminating most of the thousands of Teasel plants that had invaded the area. Now the Group is starting to remove Broom, Star and other species of Thistle, Olive trees, Pyracantha, and Cotoneaster. By removing the exotic plants, the natives can move back naturally or by revegetation, thus restoring the Preserve to its pre-European condition. The Group plans to continue its work until all invasive plants can be controlled, and then monitor the Preserve to maintain its natural state.

Since 1989 the Group has met every Friday morning and worked with mattocks, shovels, clippers, pruners, and saws to remove the exotic plants. The activity will continue until the invasion of the non-native plants is under control. Fifty-eight people have volunteered 1,418 hours over the past 5½ years. Those who were active and dedicated over the last three years are John Allen, Elly Hess, Jane

Kos, Alice Musante, Betsy Wallace, and Bob Young.

The Eradication Group receives support from the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, the Sierra Club, the California Native Plant Society, the Trail Center, and the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department. This support includes lending tools, picking up refuse resulting from weed elimination, and counseling. No funding is required as most of the group furnish their own tools and heavy-duty clothing.

If you can help with removing Star Thistle and other exotic weeds, call Elly Hess. We can set up special days for work parties. We need a lot of people to get rid of the Star Thistle.

BYLAWS AVAILABLE

Here's the first paragraph of the interim bylaws, which contains our mission statement:

"The membership organization known as the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve is dedicated to preserving Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve in San Mateo County, California, and protecting its natural features, particularly rare, endangered, and/or threatened plant and animal species, as defined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Native Plant Society Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants."

Note: We need to change from "membership organization" to nonprofit, and will need other bylaws when this happens.

Our bylaws are brief (3 pp.) and to the point, without too much legalese. For a copy of the interim bylaws, call Carolyn.

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Carolyn Curtis

The Friends can look back with pride on a productive first year of existence. Together we

- installed many yards of protective fence and the first of the new signs
- designed signs for the preserve with Director Sanchez and Rangers Ron Weaver and Lynne Fritz
- got the revegetation effort underway with a highly successful pilot program, a cooperative effort with a local community college to propagate plants for more revegetation, and a small grant for propagation supplies
- published four issues of a pretty darn good newsletter [you ain't kiddin'! --ed.]
- produced a set of interim bylaws
- held several lively board meetings, working through other policies for the preserve
- put on a lovely party and annual meeting

The people who care about Edgewood are a special group indeed—it must be because we get to spend so much time in a beautiful place—and I've loved working with them for the good of Edgewood. I've been proud to represent them in a small way. I'll always treasure these days.

Love, Carolyn

AN OAK, BY ANY OTHER NAME, IS A QUERCUS

By Susan Sommers

The question is which one am I seeing? Among the 300 species of oaks, many will cross-breed (hybridize). The revelation of their mysterious identities requires a bit of the Sherlock Holmes sleuthing technique: a sharp eye, and the practical use of some clues. Some trees may be more difficult because of hybridization especially in regions where species overlap in their range. The main clues are the specimen's location (within what range); its bark, leaf, flower, fruit (acorn), and in some

instances the type of soil on which it grows. In all oaks, the flowers are in catkins (clusters of flowers without petals). The males are rather showy and near the tip of the branches, while the much less obvious females are located farther in on the branches.

There are primarily two groups of oaks growing at Edgewood: black and white. Within each group are species that either lose all their leaves (deciduous) and species that retain some of their leaves all year

Part	Black Oaks	White Oaks
Bark	Dark with irregular breaks in mature trees	Light color with furrows in mature trees
Leaf	Underside undistinguished green	Underside dull or pale
Acorn cup	Thin, overlapping scales	Thickened, knoblike scales
Acorn	Woolly inside, mature in two years for most species	Smooth inside, mature in one year

(evergreen). The black oaks will hybridize amongst themselves although not readily. The white oaks will hybridize readily amongst their deciduous and evergreen types as well as between the deciduous and evergreens. Hybrids will have some of their parents' characteristics and tend to be sterile.

At Edgewood the black evergreen oak representative is the Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). The white oak deciduous species includes the Valley or Roble Oak (*Q. lobata*), and

Part	Deciduous		Evergreen	
	Valley	Blue	Scrub	Leather
Hybridization	With Blue and Scrub	With Valley and Scrub	With Valley and Blue	N/A
Plant form	Tree	Tree	Shrub, can be tree-like	Shrub
Leaf	Deeply lobed	Lobed, not deeply	Shining	Dull
	Not blue	Blue-green	Few hairs on top	Hairs on top starlike
	No bristles	No bristles	Bristles somewhat curved	Bristles very rolled under
Cup	Deeply hemispheric	Shallow	Thick walls, somewhat knobby scales	Thick walls, very knobby scales
Acorn	Long, tapered	Oval, acute tip	Long, tapered	Ovoid, acute tip
Soil	Varied	Varied	Varied	Serpentine

the Blue Oak (*Q. douglasii*). The evergreen white oaks are represented by the Scrub Oak (*Q. dumosa*) and the Leather Oak (*Q. durata*).

You'll find Celeste Kirsher's beautiful drawing of the Valley Oak on page 6 of this newsletter.

ANNUAL MEETING (continued from page 1)

Committee chairs (not elected positions):

- ◆ Escaped Exotics Control: Elly Hess (call to volunteer)
- ◆ Edgewood Docents: Jan Simpson (call for info on training sessions)
- ◆ Newsletter: Bill Korbholz (call for info on submitting articles)
- ◆ Trail Patrol Coordinator (need someone; Lee Franks has had to give this up because of job relocation)
- ◆ Revegetation: Susan Sommers, Chris Romano
- ◆ Membership: Jessie Schilling (database); Carolyn Curtis
- ◆ Public Relations (Publicity and Exhibits): (need someone)

RE-VEG THE EDGE WITH CSM!

By Chris Romano

Prairie and antelope in San Mateo County? Yes, before the Europeans obviously conquered them through cattle grazing, development and in the case of antelope, hunting. Sadly, the California antelope genotype is extinct, but there is one unique place of prairie left, our own Edgewood Park. Edgewood Park is the second most unique plant community in California. Because it contains serpentine rock, European grasses have trouble taking hold. Thus we are left, for the most part, with a primeval prairie. This prairie consists mainly of Purple and Slender Needlegrass. Both are

perennial Bunch grasses, living for many years.

Now that Edgewood Park is a preserve, we are left with the cleanup job. In the 70's, the land was overrun by motorcyclists. The scars are still very evident. Craig Dremann has pictures from the 60's which show that the central hilltop was solid purple needlegrass. Motorcycling destroyed this hilltop prairie, compacted the soil, creating ideal conditions for exotic plants.

Susan Sommers is directing the official park restoration. There are many projects that need to be worked on, including exotic removal, mapping and monitoring habitats, working with the Federal, State, and County Departments who monitor endangered species, as well as growing Bunch grass.

The Friends of Edgewood's Bunch grass group, nicknamed Prairie Patrons, is made up of people who wish to donate time, supplies or money to grow and plant Bunch grass seedlings in the damaged areas. This project will take years. A small test plot was planted last winter, with good success. In June Bunch grass seed was carefully collected from the park, and stored in preparation for winter sowing. Susan Sommers, Craig Dremann, and I have proposed a large project this fall.

Horticulture professor Matt Leddy, of the College of San Mateo, has enthusiastically offered to grow 100 flats of Purple Needle grass in the college greenhouse. He is having his propagation class fill, fertilize, and water the flats. CNPS donated funds for the 30 bags of sterile soil, 4 lbs. blood meal, 10 lbs. bone meal, and 4 lbs. phosphate needed for the project. The seeds are sprinkled on nearly full flats, then the fertilizers are sprinkled on top, and then ¼" of soil caps the flat. The flats must be watered several times a day for the first 10 days.

In late January or early February, depending on the rain and cold, the little seedlings need to be planted out. There might be enough seedlings to heal a large part of the worst scar. The grasses will be about 3" tall. Gentle volunteers will be needed to plant grass clumps 6" apart. When the grasses

grow, their roots will commingle, excluding exotic weeds, holding, and healing the scarred slope.

If you would like to "Re-Veg the Edge" in late January or early February, please call Susan Sommers, Craig Dremann, or Chris Romano. We will need volunteers, as up to 900 sites may be planted.

Again three cheers for Professor Leddi and his students, who are certainly Prairie Patrons! Big cheers for Susan Sommers and Craig Dremann, and little me, who envisioned the project.

DOCENT TRAINING KICKOFF

The docent training for next spring's hikes got underway Thursday October 20 at the home of John Allen, docent coordinator. An enthusiastic group of about ten docents-to-be attended. Carolyn Curtis told the saga of the recent history of Edgewood Park and how it became a preserve.

Susan Sommers gave Edgewood's longer history, explaining how the property stands at the confluence of three historic climatic zones and has thus inherited such a range of plant life, with holdovers from the days when North America was tropical (bay trees, western leatherwood), the ice age when Siberian vegetation came over the land bridge (conifers), and more recently, when the land became warmer and vegetation came up from southern North America (chaparral plants). In her beautiful slides she introduced some famous Edgewood residents, such as the San Mateo Thornmint and Bay Checkerspot butterfly. The slide show also included less photogenic parts of Edgewood's history: the hideous damage caused by off-road vehicles in the '70s.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

... by sending in the panel in this newsletter with your check. Be sure to check boxes to participate in Friends of Edgewood activities. Sending in your renewal saves time and energy for a hardworking volunteer and saves the Friends money on postage. Thank you for your support during the past year!

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)

Drawing by Celeste Kirsher

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Bob Buell

Achillea millefolium, the scientific name for the circumpolar common yarrow, takes its genus name from the Homeric warrior Achilles. He is thought to have used yarrow to treat the wounds of his warriors. The leaves are reported to stop bleeding, and a poultice helps heal inflammation, according to

Nancy Dale's 1986 book *Flowering Plants*. There are also other reported medicinal qualities of common yarrow. The Yuki Indians of California drank a tea made from the leaves and flowers to treat consumption, stomach ache, and headache, as recorded by V. K. Chestnut in his 1902 volume *Plants Used by the Indians of Mendocino County, California*. According to Chestnut's book, the Yuki also used the tea as a lotion for sore eyes. Common yarrow has been used "...since ancient times to treat

colds, fevers, and many other human ailments," wrote Helen Sharsmith in her 1965 *Spring Wildflowers of the San Francisco Bay Region*. The specific epithet, meaning "thousand leaves," refers to the finely divided leaves.

UPDATE ON EDGEWOOD'S MASTER PLAN

A committee has now been formed to work with the County to update Edgewood's Master Plan. The current plan dates back to 1982, and describes the two uses of the park as (a) passive and active recreation such as hiking, riding, picnicking, and day camping, and (b) provision of an 18-hole golf course with clubhouse, practice range, cart trails, and parking for 225 vehicles.

The revised Master Plan will represent the County's formal commitment to maintaining Edgewood as a natural preserve, and will also specify the operating guidelines and plans for the next 5 years. The

committee hopes to complete the revision of the Master Plan during the second half of 1995. If you would like to help, call Bill Korbholz.

MISCELLANY...

We need a lawyer who can advise the board on setting up the organization as a nonprofit, including appropriate bylaws and other paperwork. Please call John Allen if you are or have a lead on such a person.

You're welcome to attend board meetings. Your board is not some secretive cabal! It's composed of hard-working people who care about Edgewood, just like you, and it welcomes participation! The next meeting is Wed. January 11, 1995, 7:30 pm, at the home of Jan & Stew Simpson. Call Jan for directions.

..... ✂ clip here ✂

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

New or continuing members of the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve are asked to pay membership dues annually to offset the expenses associated with preserving Edgewood. If you would like to join the Friends, continue your membership, or simply make a contribution, please clip and complete this section. Mail it to the return address on the back of this panel with your check payable to **Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve**. With your membership or contribution, you will receive four more issues of the Edgewood Explorer.

- \$15 Basic membership
- \$25 Family Membership
- \$7 Student/Retired Membership
- \$50 Supporting Membership (includes *The Flora of Edgewood Park*, and the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park*)
- \$100 Benefactor Membership (includes *The Flora of Edgewood Park*, the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park*, and a 16x20 poster-photo)
- In addition to my dues, I am enclosing a gift of _____.
- Please send _____ copies of the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park*, at \$12 each.
- Please send _____ copies of *The Flora of Edgewood Park* at \$3 each.

Name

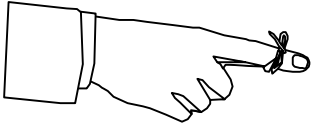
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Particular interests:

- Docent
- Newsletter
- Revegetation
- Legal
- Edgewood Master Plan Revision
- Exotics control
- Trail patrol
- Public relations
- Trail/fence maintenance



UPCOMING EVENTS

☐ **Nov. 17, Nov. 20, 1994; Jan. 12, Feb. 9, March 9, 1995. Docent Training.** Training sessions for Edgewood Docents, cosponsored by the California Native Plant Society and the Friends of Edgewood, will continue monthly through February. For more information, call John Allen.

☐ **Friday, November 11, 10 am - 2:30 pm.** *MROSD Hike: Fall in the Preserves -- A Naturalist's Hike.* Join MROSD docent Carol Belew for a 3-mile round trip hike up the Polly Geraci Trail in the Pulgas Ridge Preserve. After winding down the lovely Blue Oak Trail you'll cross the road to Edgewood for lunch and a two mile hike up the Edgewood Trail to the serpentine grassland.

Bring binoculars, a hand lens, and field guides. Meet at the Edgewood park-and-ride lot.

☐ **Sunday, November 20, 10 am - 3 pm.** *MROSD Hike: Fall: The Four Seasons of Edgewood.* Explore the diversity of Edgewood, from the serpentine grasslands to the oak woodlands and chaparral areas, as nature prepares for winter. MROSD docents Bill and Kathy Korbholz will lead this leisurely 5-mile hike. Bring a lunch and meet at the Edgewood park-and-ride lot.

☐ **Saturday, November 26.** *Project Day at Edgewood.* Ron Weaver will lead a work project at Edgewood, involving the installation of signs or barricades, or other maintenance activities. This is a great opportunity to put some muscle behind those well-meant words of support. For details, call Ron.

The Edgewood Explorer is published four times yearly by the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to keeping Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve a place where all can enjoy the natural beauty and habitat. The newsletter is produced by the interim Publishing Committee: Carolyn Curtis, Bill Korbholz, Laverne Rabinowitz, and Angela Sutton. To submit articles or suggestions, contact Bill Korbholz.

Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve
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