



PRAIRIE PATRONS PLANTING PROGRESS

On a beautiful, warm Saturday, February 18, the Prairie Patrons, a group of bunch grass enthusiasts from the Friends of Edgewood and led by Susan Sommers and Chris Romano, planted 96 flats of purple Needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*) seedlings on



the southern slope of the Central Ridge of Edgewood. It is along this slope that the damage from past abuse by motorcyclists, bikers, and hikers is still evident. The group is trying to restore this area to its original natural state by removing exotics and replanting the native plants.

The seedlings were sown from seeds gathered last

June in the park. They were nurtured by students from professor Matt Leddy's classes at the College of San Mateo in the college greenhouse.



About 20 Friends and CSM volunteers helped with the planting. Shown are, from left

to right, Gladys Romano, Bob Young, Chris Romano, Susan Sommers, Heidi Romano, and Frank Figoni (standing) (others not identified). All participants will be credited in a future newsletter.

UPDATE ON EDGEWOOD'S MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan committee is fully engaged now in rewriting Edgewood's Master Plan. The committee consists of Carolyn Curtis, Bob Hartzell, Bill Korbholz, Kathy Korbholz, Susan Sommers, Nita Spangler, and Bob Emert.

An outline of the new Master Plan has been developed, and assignments for writing the various sections have been made.

The committee is working closely with Patrick Sanchez, Director of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department, which has ultimate responsibility to maintain a reasonably updated master plan. The current official plan dates back to 1982 and provides for the development of an 18-hole golf course on the site.

Over the next few months the committee intends to develop its first drafts of the plan and conduct public reviews of proposed operating and management principles.

If you would like to contribute or participate, contact Bill Korbholz.

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WILDFLOWERS THIS YEAR? YOU BET!

Those of us who visit there regularly have been enjoying the “greening” of Edgewood over the last couple of months, excited by the knowledge that the rainbow carpets will soon be following. With the heavy rainfall that we’ve had, and the promise of plentiful sunlight, we can expect a dazzling display of wildflowers this year. Susan Sommers predicts a fantastic California plantago show, wonderful clarkias, and terrific lupines. She also looks forward to a good spring dwarf flax display.

Included in this newsletter is a schedule of the wildflower walks planned for Edgewood this season. The walks are sponsored by the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and led by trained Edgewood Park docents (see Jan Simpson’s article in this newsletter).

EARLY ROADS OF THE AREA

By Nita Spangler

In 1853, when the San Francisco-Santa Clara County line was San Francisquito Creek, the Board of Supervisors meeting in San Francisco on November 14 authorized a road survey of county roads from the Redwood Embarcadero. There were three.

A lumber boom was going full blast in the redwoods west of Redwood Creek. Lumber, posts, and shingles were dragged and hauled to small ships that waited for high tide at small docks at an old rancho landing. San Francisco was a ready market for building supplies, needed to replace the structures lost in recurring fires and to keep up with growth.

In 1853, a squatter village with perhaps six or seven small structures was thriving at the Embarcadero, housing needed services for blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, teamsters, butchers, and other essential trades, including a saloonkeeper or two. The village boasted a Main Street that had recently been surveyed by a crew from the U.S. Coastal Survey. These surveyors produced a true North-South line for the street, perpendicular to the base line they had established between Ravenswood

Point and a hill on what is now the Sequoia Hospital property. The base line itself was part of a larger endeavor to map the bay by triangulation. Main Street connected the Embarcadero to the main county road between San Francisco and San Jose. The intersection at County Road also happened to be the juncture of a trail and hauling route from the redwoods near today’s Woodside.

This was the beginning of the busy Five Points intersection where El Camino Real, Woodside Road and Main Street would meet today but for a huge concrete traffic separation.

In December 1853, Deputy County Surveyor M. M. ODwyer signed and delivered the new road survey. Of the three South County Roads surveyed, the first was Martin Road, leading west from Main Street on the south bank of Redwood Creek to present-day Woodside and crossing over to San Francisquito Creek (along today’s Whiskey Hill Road) and Dennis Martin’s Blacksmith Shop. The distance was 6 miles 59 chains.

Since 1846, Dennis Martin had been logging in the redwoods, sending most of his lumber to Santa Clara and San Jose. With its own Catholic church and burial ground, Martin’s settlement had one of the first water-powered mills, but he could not later prove title to his lands and lost it all.

The second County Road was the Swasey Road, to Oakley’s Mill, which left Martin’s Road near the summit (today’s Woodside-Cañada Road intersection) continued through Cañada Raymundo to Edwin Oakley’s mill just beyond Tripp’s Store (Cañada Rd. intersection) to West Union Creek and Squealer Gulch. The mill was 7 miles and 13 chains from the Embarcadero.

The third County Road in the official survey was Whipple Road which began at Willard Whipple’s mill by West Union Creek in Cañada Raymundo and followed Cordilleras Creek canyon down to the savanna plain. The road then took a direct line across the flatlands (as mud and dust permitted) to a waterfront loading area on the opposite bank from Main Street. It was 5 miles 47 chains.

Whipple was a Mormon who came to San Francisco with a steam mill which he erected on West Union Creek in 1852. It was a substantial enterprise for the time, but Whipple suffered a fire and an explosion, and his lumbering lasted only three years. His first mill site many years later became the site of a large country home and his road is its driveway which crosses the Cañada to Edgewood Road.

Today's Edgewood Road was called Cordilleras Road until 1946 when San Mateo County widened and realigned 2.883 miles between Cañada Road and Alameda de las Pulgas. At that time, the road was renamed to match a connecting street in Redwood City's 1888 Wellesley Park Subdivision. A portion of Cordilleras Road was bypassed and kept its name.

At the time of the 1946 Edgewood Road improvement, there were 10 structures adjoining the right-of-way.

Today, Edgewood Road provides the main park entrance and marks the north boundary of Edgewood County Park Natural Preserve and the southern boundary of the Pulgas Open Space owned by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Portions of the older road through the canyon are visible north of the summit on a steep canyon wall. Hikers in Edgewood County Park will recognize Old Stage Road for its use during earlier times in the Cordilleras-Edgewood Road saga.

Here is an opportunity for today's drivers--many of whom never experienced the vicissitudes of automobile travel on steep, unpaved mountain roads in a "machine" that bucked and boiled--to think about the good old days.



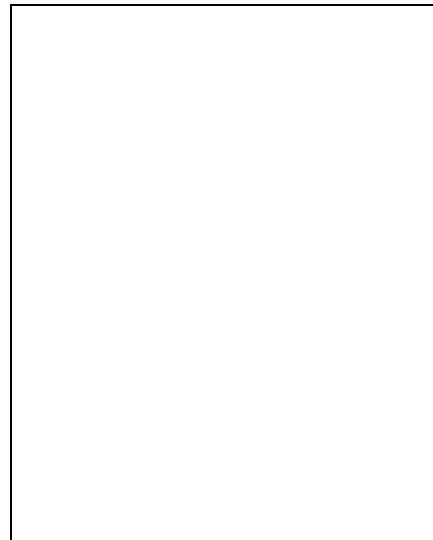
FOCUS ON...SUSAN SOMMERS

By Laverne Rabinowitz

Susan Sommers has spent much of her life as an environmental activist. Her convictions regarding preservation of habitats in their natural, original state are deep-seated and guide her ongoing work on behalf of Edgewood. As the botanist who has done

the most extensive fieldwork on the Park, she serves as chair of the Revegetation Committee of Friends of Edgewood) and as a key member of the Master Plan Committee. It's also her painstaking efforts beginning in 1969 that brought the potential development of Edgewood to public consciousness and, eventually, the defeat of the golf course proposal and declaration as a Natural Preserve.

Susan's hope for Edgewood is that people will assume the obligation to restore the Preserve to as natural a state as possible and that we don't love it so much that it is overused (as with Yosemite). "We want to keep this historical window on California's vegetative heritage, and people need to be prepared to do what is necessary to insure that."



Susan (pronounced "Suzann") has spent most of her life in the vicinity of Edgewood Park, though she didn't discover the Park itself until 1969. She says her love of nature "just came with my

blue genes." Her family home in Lindenwood near Flood Park and a neighbor's land in the Santa Cruz Mountains provided many happy experiences in the natural settings of our area. Never considering botany as a career, she studied writing in college, designed posters, worked for a print studio in Berkeley and for SRI as a publications coordinator, and has been office manager for Indoor Design Plant Service in Palo Alto since 1987.

It wasn't until the late '60s and her discovery of Edgewood where she visited with her godmother Dorothea frequently, that she began to teach herself plant taxonomy. A treasured gift from Dorothea was the Jepson book on the flora of middle California, and when she later discovered the J. H.

Thomas guide on the flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains, it "became an appendage" as she pursued her learning in the park over the next 7 years.

Susan realized that what she was exploring in Edgewood was a "true California native prairie"--something few Californians have seen since the disappearance of the great prairies and the introduction of exotic flora with the settlement of the state.

Her battle began in 1969, when she became upset with the intrusion of off-road vehicles and motorcycles and turned to state officials about barring access from them. She joined the Save the Serpentine League, formed to prevent development of the Farm Hill site across from Canada College, and learned about due process and environmental review. She studied the recently legislated CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act), learning the rules and regulations, and started talking to "anybody and everybody I could" until finally certain conservation groups wanted to hear what she had to say and invited her to speak.

She continued working on her botanical list and teaching herself taxonomy and field identification. The list, plus 5 years of aerial photos of the serpentine's floral pattern taken by Susan as she hung out the door of a 2-seater Decathlon plane, gave the State Fish & Game officials the documentation they needed to confirm Edgewood's vegetative mosaic and diversity. In 1976 she discovered the San Mateo thornmint, which grows only in Edgewood and is now officially listed as endangered. When the California Native Plant Society published its list of rare and endangered species, Susan compared her botanical list with the publication and found 3 or 4 of Edgewood's plants listed as rare, endangered or threatened.

By the time a golf course was proposed Susan's efforts had brought awareness to many groups. When the County published its EIR for the new plans Susan studied it carefully and found, despite the fact that she had provided her lists of flora and fauna for use in making the biological assessment,

that there were gross "inconsistencies, inadequacies and inaccuracies." She prepared a lengthy criticism of the document, relating each error to a violation of CEQA statute. With this (and other) input, the CNPS filed a lawsuit against the County, which was eventually settled out of court. The battle continued for several more years, and Susan continued to work tirelessly on behalf of the Park. The action making it a Natural Preserve in 1993 was "a real gift, a really special bonus."

With the 24 years of advocacy behind her, Susan has enough future involvement to keep her very busy. She chairs the Revegetation Project, which will over the long term restore the native plant community to all areas of the Preserve damaged by vehicles, mismanagement and weeds. The Project will give back to Edgewood the biological integrity to support native wildlife and keep down the intrusion of weeds.

Meanwhile she continues to collect and send specimens to the UC Arboretum Jepson Herbarium that will constitute the basis also for her planned book on the flora of Edgewood. Stanford Prof. J. H. Thomas (author of *The Flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains of California*) is encouraging her to give priority to an Edgewood flora book and has offered her access to his own collection of several hundred specimens. Her botanical list formed the core of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of CNPS's "Flora of Edgewood Park," revised in April 1993 (and available through FOE). Susan also plans to return to San Jose State as soon as she can to complete her work on a degree in botany, which she began several years ago but had to interrupt for family reasons.

Despite the full-time job, ongoing outreach on behalf of Edgewood and now the Friends, and frequent visits to Edgewood to continue work on her botanicals, Susan finds time to create beautiful pieces of Persian embroidery. She also finds side adventure each fall at the Renaissance Faire, where she has worked for the last 14 years with her friends, The Bindu Jewelers.

Edgewood profits from Susan's expertise in another area: she is an extremely talented professional

photographer. In fact, she dedicated her life savings in the '70s to mounting a splendid photographic exhibition in the San Mateo County Hall of Justice and Records depicting the richness of Edgewood's open space. She has made some of her prints available for purchase through FOE in support of the Friends' efforts. As we already mentioned her skill includes aerial photography from small planes!

Someone so intimate with the Park finds it hard to list "one favorite spot." Susan loves the view from the ridge, overlooking the south hill, especially in spring, and recalls one day watching a red fox loping along and two golden eagles gliding low over the hill. She loves the north hill and the old grove of oaks on the east end, the waterfall grotto on Sylvan Trail and many places in the woods. "Every time I walk out there I still see something new. That's one of the wonderful things about Edgewood--the discovery!"

Edgewood Natural Preserve owes a huge debt of gratitude for its existence to Susan Sommers and her relentless efforts to protect it and bring it to the attention of the public. It's only "natural" that she should be featured in the Explorer. Thanks, Susan!

CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF THAT WEED CALLED TEASEL

**By The Invasive Weed Eradication Committee,
Elly Hess, Chairman**

It's early on a sunny, warm Friday morning in May on Edgewood Natural Preserve in San Mateo County and Alice Musante lifts her mattock to about eye level, then swings it down at the base of a four-foot tall weed, knocking it to the ground. She has succeeded in decreasing the population of a very prolific plant called Teasel.

The Teasel that we have in Edgewood is *Dipsacus sativus*. It is not a native plant of California; its origin is Europe. Very few insects attack it here, so it thrives, especially in relatively moist ground. Fortunately, it does not grow on serpentinite soil. The plant is a biennial; however, in our temperate climate it often lives beyond its normal two-year life span. It is very drought-tolerant since it has a

carrot-like root that remains in the ground all summer without drying out. Some of the roots are twelve inches long.



In the new Jepson Manual *Dipsacus sativus* has the common name of "Fuller's Teasel," while in most flower books *Dipsacus fullonum* carries the common name of "Fuller's Teasel."

Six years ago our small group of volunteers, under the direction of Elly Hess, began working in (then) Edgewood Park to see if we could reduce the number of Teasels. At that time there were thousands of healthy Teasels, primarily located in six separate areas in the west side of the Park.

When we first started our control programs we thought that, if we didn't allow all plants in any one area to reseed, then, within two years, that area would be clear. We found, however, that at first our work seemed to have hardly any impact on the selected areas and the Teasel continued thriving. Apparently seed from prior years remains viable and continues to germinate over a period of three to five years. Our persistence in weeding Teasel-infested areas year after year only started paying off about the fifth year.

We believe we now, finally, have that weed under control. There will always be a few new plants that sprout each year but these are easily removed.

Our method of controlling Teasel is as follows:

1. In early spring when the new plants can be easily pulled from wet ground, we spade them out one-by-one. In this way we remove the root from the soil and know that we have definitely reduced the weed population by one.

We realize that we are disturbing the soil when we spade, and are probably giving older seed in the soil the opportunity of germinating with the

next fall rain. However, we feel the advantage of removing a large plant outweighs the chance of allowing some small plants to sprout the next year.

2. When the ground dries so that it becomes difficult to dig out the roots, we shift to light-weight mattocks and cut off the crowns of plants just below the soil surface. At this point the seed heads have not yet matured.
3. After seed heads mature, we carefully cut off each head and place it in a bucket. Hundreds of seeds spill out into the bucket at this time.

When the bucket is full, its contents are dumped into a large plastic bag. When the bags are full of seed heads, they are tied at the top and put in a spot where they can be picked up and removed from the property by a park ranger.
4. About six weeks after the dead-heading operation, we make a sweep of all the areas we have previously cleared. Any Teasels that we find at that time are disposed of.

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By John Allen

After the rains in January the plants at Edgewood are bursting forth with Spring growth. Many are starting to bloom. It shows all the signs of being an outstanding year for wildflowers.

It promises to be a good year for Edgewood in other ways, too. The Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve are active in many areas of benefit to the Park. A group of volunteers is working with San Mateo County Parks people to develop a master plan for Edgewood. An ambitious revegetation project is going on, planting native bunch grass seedlings on the east slope of the central ridge. Plans are under way to establish a trail patrol. The ongoing effort to rid the park of invasive weeds continues each Friday morning. These things are all happening because of the efforts of many dedicated volunteers who care about Edgewood. These and other projects can be

successful only with the help of our members. To them I wish to express my appreciation. More help is always needed so if you have some time to donate to Edgewood please let me know.

TRAIL PATROL ORGANIZES

by Nancy Mangini

On February 9th, a meeting was held at the home of Nancy Mangini to discuss formation of a volunteer trail patrol at Edgewood Natural Preserve. Although attendance was small due to a competing meeting of the Native Plant society, those who did come made suggestions that are likely to form the basis of this new interest group.

According to Ron Weaver, the San Mateo County ranger assigned to manage Edgewood Natural Preserve, members of a volunteer trail patrol should function as informed park stewards who can help the general public enjoy access to a park in appropriate and mutually beneficial ways. Not surprisingly, the first step in transforming a group of interested volunteers into informed park stewards will be a certain amount of training.

Training For The Trail Patrol

The County will be conducting two evening training sessions, on March 14 and 28, for members of the Volunteer Horse Patrol who perform similar stewardship functions in Huddart and Wunderlich parks. According to Weaver, if 12 or more people sign up for participation in the Edgewood Park Trail Patrol by March 10, our group may be invited to join in that training session. County training is said to include instruction in back-up procedures, observation and reporting techniques, and discussion of legal and jurisdictional issues.

After completing the county training course, members of the trail patrol can attend a workshop given by Margaret Marshall on conflict resolution skills. Margaret is a member of the Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve and an employee of the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center.

First Year Goals

Assuming an adequate number of volunteers can be recruited and trained, regularly scheduled weekend patrols could be organized and fielded as soon as late spring or early summer. Trail patrol members would wear identifying jackets, carry and distribute informational materials, offer assistance to park visitors, and carry communications devices in the event that rescue or law enforcement services are needed.

Sign Up Now

If the trail patrol is to operate in 1995, now is the time to step forward and volunteer. For more information on joining the Edgewood Park Trail Patrol, contact Nancy Mangini.

DOCENT TRAINING UPDATE

By Jan Simpson

The Edgewood Preserve docent training class is well underway. Ten fresh and faithful docents-to-be are receiving training by Ken Himes, Toni Corelli, Susan Sommers, Bob Buell, and Bill Kirsher, members of the California Native Plant Society.

The topics discussed during the first and second sessions were the history and geology of the area. The January and February meetings concentrated on identifying and learning about the plant communities and the plants at Edgewood. Slide presentations and weekend field trips reinforced the information learned about the remarkable Edgewood Preserve.

The docents wrap up their course in March and invite you to join them on the Spring Wildflower Walks (see the enclosed schedule).

..... ✂ 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.

Name

Address

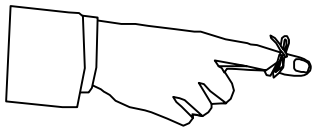
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- \$15 Basic membership
- \$25 Family Membership
- \$7 Student/Retired Membership
- \$50 Supporting Membership (includes *The Flora of Edgewood Park*, and the 28-minute video *Saving Edgewood Park*)
- \$100 Benefactor Membership (includes *The Flora 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.

Particular interests:

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Docent | <input type="checkbox"/> Exotics control |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Revegetation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Trail/fence maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edgewood Master Plan Revision | |



UPCOMING EVENTS

☐ **Thursday, March 9, 7:30 pm; Saturday, March 11, 10:00 am.** *Docent Training.* These are the final training sessions for Edgewood Docents, cosponsored by the California Native Plant Society and the Friends of Edgewood. For more information, call Jan Simpson.

☐ **Tuesday, March 14; Tuesday, March 28.** *Trail Patrol Training.* The first two sessions for Edgewood Park Trail Patrol are scheduled for these dates. To sign up, contact Nancy Mangini.

☐ **Saturdays and Sundays from March 11 through June 11.** *Wildflower Walks.* See the enclosed flyer for specifics, or call Jan Simpson or John Allen.

☐ **Sunday, May 21.** *Third Annual Explore the Edge Run/Walk.* The Emerald Lake Homeowner's Association has sponsored and organized this popular event for the past two years. This year ELHA will be unable to run the event, so volunteers are needed. If you are interested in participating and helping with organizing this event, contact John Allen.

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 for all to enjoy the natural beauty and habitat. The newsletter is produced by Bill Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends.

Friends of Edgewood Natural Preserve
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