

# Edgewood



# Explorer

March 2006

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## DOCENT WALKS START MARCH 11

By Carolyn Strange

The docent-power manifested within this year's walks schedule is the most robust in years — the schedule is almost completely full already! Our docent crew grew with a large training class last year, so we have plenty of docents ready to help visitors appreciate and enjoy this spring's wildflower show as it progresses. Docent walks begin Saturday, March 11 and run every weekend through Sunday, June 11.

We're experimenting again with the Clarkia trailhead (at Cañada Rd.) on five Saturdays in April and May. Visitors found it last year, and were particularly abundant on the first Clarkia Saturday, requiring three docents! Turnout on other weekends was quite variable, perhaps due to weather. Docents like this approach to the serpentine grasslands, as do visitors who have experienced it, but we have to continue to get the word out to the public about this alternate walk.

The Docent Program and Habitat Restoration Program are also experimenting with another collaboration again this year. Two special Saturday restoration sessions are planned during the walks season. Work locations are chosen to increase the likelihood that the docent tours will encounter the Weed Warriors, offering visitors a live, interactive interpretive display on invasive plants and the ongoing restoration work in the Preserve.

To help with attracting visitors, we've tweaked and updated the flyer that was completely redesigned last year in a wonderful collaboration with the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Foundation. As the enclosed flyer notes, the specific (and highly robust!) docent schedule appears on the Friends web site at <http://>

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## FRIENDS RECEIVE \$10,000 REI GRANT

By Peter Ingram

As we go to press, Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) has notified the Friends that we have been selected to receive a \$10,000 grant, to go toward the stewardship of Edgewood Park & Natural Preserve. In an effort to help support stewardship of local parks, REI is dedicating \$1 million to 100 parks across the country. In partnership with nonprofit organizations like Friends of Edgewood, these funds are being dedicated to maintaining, preserving and caring for wonderful outdoor resources like Edgewood, for everyone to enjoy and experience.

Within the next few weeks, the Friends will be contacted by the San Carlos REI store, to set up a date to receive the check. In the meantime, REI would like us to begin thinking about the donation and working with Parks staff to determine how the money will be used. By April 7th, we will need to submit a project description.

We are excited about this generous donation and the possibilities it will create for improving Edgewood, providing volunteer opportunities, and enhancing visitor experiences. If you have suggestions, please contact us at [info01@friendsofedgeswood.org](mailto:info01@friendsofedgeswood.org) or leave a voice message at (866)GO-EDGEWOOD, (866) 463-343-9663). ♻️

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**A SENSE OF PLACE, EDGEWOOD NATURAL PRESERVE**

**By Susan Sommers Edwards**

For me, Edgewood Preserve epitomizes a sense of place. From my first visit in May 1969, I saw a panorama of beauty and felt a powerful response - one that gave me that sense of place.

From Edgewood to the Santa Cruz Mountain crests, the sky radiated over forest, savannah and grassland. Millions of blossoms separated the grassy slopes of the Central Ridge from those of the South Hill. The heady aromas of perfume from spring's burgeoning blossoms wafted on the zephyrs. On that glorious day I knew here was something of great value that urgently needed protection.

Sharing my concern and appreciation of Edgewood, Dorothea Kauffman enhanced my desire to identify the resources and stimulate preservation by others who recognized Edgewood's unique values. Most of the plants at Edgewood were new to me, as was the serpentine ecology. No local Natural History museum had serpentine displays. Arthur R. Kruckeberg was yet to publish his 1984 treatise on "California Serpentes". With Dorothea's support I became a catalyst for Edgewood's preservation. I knew interpretation was the key to its protection.

Through CNPS wildflower exhibits I learned about the wildflowers that were not in the reference library collections. President Doug Erskine of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter responded to my Edgewood concerns, by introducing me to June Bilisoly. She, Lennie Roberts, and others formed the Serpentine Protection League to protect the serpentine flora on the Farm Hill School site from development. Through my Serpentine League activism I met Tom "Doc" Lindenmeyer, an ecologist devoted to serpentine protection. In the mid '70s, at our initial meeting, he greeted me by asking, "So you want to know about serpentine, eh?" For more than two hours he educated me about serpentine

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**PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION FOR INTERPRETIVE CENTER IS COMPLETE**

**By Bill Korbholz**

Well, it doesn't look much like an interpretive center yet, but we do have a much more attractive and useful entrance to Edgewood at the Day Camp now that the outer parking lot and pedestrian bridge have been completed.



Construction under way September 2005

This work, begun in mid-2005, now provides 25 striped parking spaces in the outer lot, which is paved with a pervious asphalt to reduce drainage into Cordilleras Creek.



Construction completed February 2006

Visitors who use the lot are now drawn across the beautiful wooden bridge across the creek as

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## EDGEWOOD PHOTOS WEBSITE DEBUTS FOR DOCENTS AND PUBLIC

By Kathy Korbholz

Last year at the docents wrap-up party several people expressed interest in having a photo resource to make it easier for docents to identify Edgewood plants. A group of so-called Digital Docents volunteered to produce such a resource, and it was debuted at the 2006 docents Kickoff meeting on March 1.

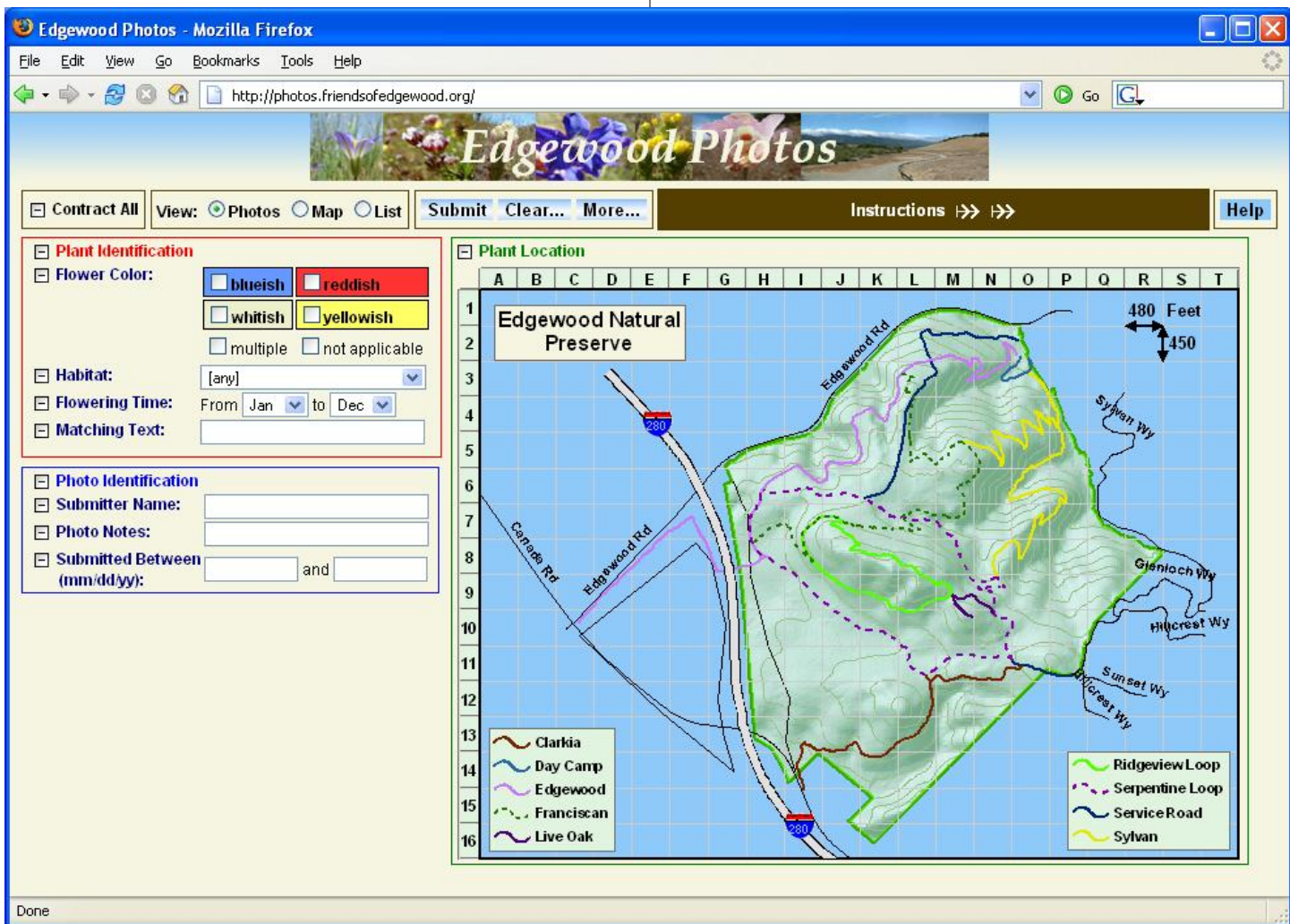
The Digital Docents, comprised of Craig Cummings, Frances and John Morse, Bill and Kathy Korbholz, and Ann Sunhachawee, developed a website for docents and the public alike. The public is invited to visit <http://photos.friendsofedgewood.org> to enjoy plant photos taken at Edgewood. Lots of other information is available as well, such as the dominant flower color, flowering time, habitat,

and approximate locations where the plants can be found at Edgewood.

The site is set up to allow users to search a database by a number of different criteria and answers questions like:

- What was that pink flower I saw on the upper Clarkia trail?
- Where can you see Mariposa lilies?
- How do I tell the difference between fat and slim Solomon's seal?
- What am I likely to see blooming along the Edgewood trail in May?
- Where can I find that California lomatium on the Edgewood trail?

A password-controlled docents-only website has also been created. It gives docents access to a bit more information, and provides a virtual home for them. ☺



## BIRD SONG (PART 1)

By Lee Franks

The advent of the breeding season each spring is announced at dawn by a chorus of bird song that continues intermittently throughout the day. With practice, birders can identify a species by its songs and calls even without seeing the vocalizer, and we infer that birds can similarly distinguish between members of their own and other species by voice alone. But “when” and “how” is song learned? How does each species “know” which sounds are appropriate and should be learned. The answers to these and other related questions have long served as a focus of research by ornithologists.

Learning songs and singing them is not easy for birds. The feats they accomplish for their small size are quite incredible. Learning is a gradual process that takes place over a period of weeks or months, and is often restricted to an early age. Typically, a vague, jumbled “subsong” appears first. Within a month or so, a subsong develops into the first attempts at producing mature but unstructured repertoires.

Much more material may be developed than is actually needed for the eventual repertoire, but eventually the young bird selects a few syllables, perfects them, and organizes them into a correct pattern. Some young sparrows use only 1/4 of the syllables they learned and practiced in early phases of song development.

Where do birds get their songs from? Studies of song learning have led to the “auditory template hypothesis”—the idea that each species is born with a neurological model of what its song should sound like, and it develops that song by matching sounds that it hears from older singing birds with the template in its brain. This process enables a young bird to filter out inappropriate sounds and to produce sounds matching the template.

Song learning is selective, so that if offered a choice, birds will learn their own species’ song. If offered only songs of other species or if reared

in isolation, learning does not occur and only a simplified approximation to the normal song develops.

The vocal virtuosity of birds stems from the structure of their unusual and powerful vocal apparatus. Birds do not have a larynx like we do. Instead they have a syrinx, a unique organ located in the body cavity at the junction of the trachea and the primary bronchi. The syrinx is the equivalent of the human sound box. It contains membranes which vibrate and generate sound waves when air from the lungs is passed over them. The muscles of the syrinx control the details of sound production; birds with more elaborate vocal muscles produce more complex songs.

But unlike our sound box, which is situated at the top of the trachea, the birds’ syrinx is set much lower down, at the junction of the two bronchi (air tubes) leading to the lungs. This means that the syrinx has two potential sound sources, one in each bronchus. The separate membranes on each bronchus produce separate sounds, which are then mixed when fed into the higher vocal tract. This complex design means that the bird can sing two different notes at the same time or even sing a duet with itself.

The loud, complex territorial songs of birds are among their most conspicuous and familiar vocal displays. Usually these are long-distance communications (carrying 50 to 200 meters or more) and convey information about the identity, location, and motivation of the singer. Territorial songs serve as signals to potential rivals that the territory is occupied by a resident male prepared to protect his exclusive use of that space and any associated females.

Inseparably coupled to the warning message is advertisement to unmated females. Female attraction to territorial male song is the first step toward courtship and pair formation. Included in the acoustical structure of songs are features that birds use for both species and individual recognition.

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## HABITAT RESTORATION 2005 IN REVIEW

By Ken Himes



Volunteers contributed 2,762 hours towards controlling invasive plants at Edgewood County Park and Natural Preserve in 2005. This amount surpasses

our previous high of 2,549 hours in 2004. But are we making progress? The answer varies depending on which species are considered.

Abundant rainfall, well spaced and occurring over a long season made for ideal growing conditions for native and non-native species in 2005. Although, it was one of the better wildflower viewing seasons, Italian and yellow star-thistle plants rebounded with densities not seen in several years.

We definitely lost ground to Italian thistle, *Carduus pycnocephalus*, as we didn't cover all four treatment sites in spring 2005. Canceled sessions due to late spring rains were one factor. In addition, Italian thistle continues to increase in densities. It is also shade tolerant and occurs in woodland areas and at Edgewood is becoming more widespread than yellow star-thistle.

We worked on yellow star-thistle, *Centaurea solstitialis*, in summer and made a modest advance. We covered 27 acres of continuing treatment sites and removed most plants. One site, which had no plants in 2004, had one plant in 2005. Sharp-eyed Paul Heiple removed it before it could produce seed.

In addition to 27 acres we advanced into a new

treatment area approved for our 2005-2007 permit. Dense stands of YST made for slow going but good attendance allowed us to advance and remove plants in another two acres. Another positive was our late season sweeps for YST plants that were missed in our earlier site visits. We probably archived near zero densities on most sites with these additional sweeps.

In the fall, we worked in the complex of seasonally moist meadows near the west kiosk. Bristly ox-tongue, *Picris echioides*, and bull thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*, continue to have reduced densities. There are now vigorous stands of native California oatgrass, *Danthonia californica*, visible from the Edgewood Trail near the site of the west kiosk.

The verdict is still out regarding our efforts to control French broom, *Genista monspessulana*. Five to ten years after removing adult plants at sites in Edgewood, germinated seedlings are still coming up like corn in an Iowa field. I have heard that seeds can remain viable for up to 70 years. Although we have cleared a total of five and one half acres of broom plants, these sites are by no means restored. We do hope to continue these efforts at Edgewood for years to come. This is critical if we are to be successful in our eventual control of French broom.



Drew Shell talks to docent walk attendees

I want to thank all those volunteers who helped out at Edgewood Preserve in 2005 and look forward to working with you in 2006. See you at Edgewood. ♻️

## ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

By Ken Seydel and Bill Korbholz

A total of 9 different volunteers helped us clean our section of I-280 adjacent to Edgewood during January, February and March 2006.

During these winter months debris levels are usually lower, but you'd still be surprised by the amount of trash dropped out there.

During these 3 months, we filled 35 bags of assorted garbage in 17 elapsed hours, and we are now \$12.25 richer.

Thanks to our freeway warriors who joined us during this period: Brian Cole, Carolyn Dorsch, Billy James, Bill & Kathy Korbholz, Jane Kos, Susan Russell, Ken Seydel, Jan Smith, and Michael Yantos.

If you have an interest in joining our great group please contact Ken Seydel. We will see that you are safety trained and equipped with your very own Picker, hard hat, goggles, gloves, and bright orange vest. ♻️

*(DOCENT WALKS, Continued from page 1)*

[www.friendsofedgewood.org/docent.htm](http://www.friendsofedgewood.org/docent.htm). A PDF of the flyer is also available. Please help distribute the flyer around as much as possible.

To help ensure that our docents are up-to-date on the latest goings on, we planned a Kickoff Meeting for March 1st. This year the agenda was packed, with guest presentations from Lee Franks, talking on bird conservation, and Dr. Stuart Weiss, talking about his research on the Bay checkerspot butterfly. In addition to our usual updates we also had a presentation from our "Digital Docents" who have created an incredibly useful new web-based flower identification resource for Edgewood [see article on page 3]. Docents are always eager for "continuing education" so they can better help visitors in making their own connections with Edgewood and Nature.

Come out and join us for some walks in the Preserve! ♻️

*(SENSE OF PLACE, Continued from page 2)*

ecology. He championed the preservation of Edgewood by stimulating the local citizenry to activism.

I talked to everyone, everywhere, about Edgewood. As I gave slide shows and led spring tours for schools and groups, people's interest grew. After about a decade, other organizations started to include Edgewood in their springtime tours. This grass-roots "interpretive center" was mobile; it traveled by foot, by word of mouth, and through local slide shows. The circle of interpretation expanded as people responded to their own sense of place at Edgewood.

During the Edgewood Environmental Impact Report (EIR) review period, the first public collection of Edgewood interpretive material was installed in the Hall of Justice and Records in San Mateo County. More than thirty large color prints of my Edgewood photographs were displayed with placards describing the significance portrayed in landscape, flower and butterfly pictures. During EIR discussions, Lennie Roberts, the Committee for Green Foothills, and other grass-root groups brought Supervisors, planning personnel, and the public to the photographs. They would, point to the photographs and say, "See! This is what we're talking about." Lennie said the pictures were most helpful to educate people about the need to preserve Edgewood's extraordinary ecological value.

It is time for Edgewood's mobile, grass-roots Interpretive Center to have a new permanent home where ideas and values can be shared with people of all ages. The new Interpretive Center can provide a place to begin field trips, to offer educational opportunities, and to encourage stewardship. As envisioned, the Interpretive Center is both a beautiful and an enriching gift to Edgewood. I deeply thank the Friends of Edgewood for your contributions and your efforts to ensure that Edgewood will continue to provide a sense of place—a place that continues to excite future generations as it did on that spring day in 1969. ♻️

(BIRD SONG, Continued from page 4)

Birds sing songs as well as give calls. Songs are constructed differently and serve a different purpose. It is bird song which has captured our hearts; however, bird song and singing is limited to only one order of birds, out of 30 that exist, namely Passeriformes (5712 species worldwide). Even then not all passerines (the name given to species within the order) sing songs and less than half the birds in Edgewood Park are genuine songsters.

In Part 2 I'll discuss Song Dialects, Bird Calls, and Mimicry.

References

Ornithology, Frank B. Gill ; W. H. Freeman and Company, New York

Birder's Handbook , A Field Guide To The Natural History Of North American Birds, Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, Darryl Wheye; Simon & Schuster Inc, New York

(INTERPRETIVE CENTER, Continued from page 2)

they enter the park.

Completing the lot seemed to take forever, as the initial paving failed due to soil slumping, and we had to wait for fair weather to make the repairs and perform the striping.

Phase 1 also includes restoration of the creek habitat, which involved removing non-native plants and the accumulated trash. In the coming months native plants will be installed to help prevent bank erosion.

Fundraising continues to be the number one priority, as we need to raise about \$1M for the rest of the building fund. Construction is still scheduled to begin in 2007 so that our center will be operational in time for the 2008 docent walks. For more information, contact the Parks Foundation's Executive Director, Julia Bott, at (650) 321-5812 or info@supportparks.org.

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 their 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.

Name
Address
City State Zip
Day Telephone Eve Telephone
Email

- \$10 Student/Retired (includes quarterly newsletter)
\$25 Friend (newsletter)
\$50 Advocate (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards)
\$75 Supporter (newsletter plus choose one):
Set of 6 Edgewood photo reeting cards and 1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood
\$100 Steward or \$250 Guardian (newsletter, set of 6 Edgewood photo greeting cards, plus choose one):
1-year subscription to BAY NATURE magazine
Toni Corelli's Flowering Plants of Edgewood

- Please do not send any premiums.
I am enclosing a gift of \_\_\_\_\_.

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 would like to participate in the following:

- Docent program
Weed management
GIS/GPS mapping
Schools outreach
Newsletter/web
Habitat restoration
Public relations
Adopt-A-Highway



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- ❑ *Saturdays and Sundays, Mar. 11 - June 11, **DOCENT-LED WILDFLOWER WALKS.*** 10 am, Day Camp and Clarkia Trailhead. See [www.friendsofedgeswood.org](http://www.friendsofedgeswood.org) for details.
- ❑ *Sundays, Mar. 26, Apr. 30, May 28, **BIRD WALK.*** Meet Audubon Society docent Lee Franks at 8 am at the Day Camp kiosk.
- ❑ *Saturdays, Apr. 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, July 29, **RESTORATION DAYS.*** See [www.friendsofedgeswood.org](http://www.friendsofedgeswood.org) for details.
- ❑ *Monthly, **ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY.*** The next sessions are scheduled for 4/1, 5/7, and 6/3. Contact Ken Seydel to volunteer or for more information. ♻️

**EDGEWOOD SATURDAY RESTORATION DAYS**

This year the Friends of Edgewood and the California Native Plant Society are planning five Saturday restoration days. Come join the weeding parties on these dates and help keep Edgewood a place where the natural beauty and wildlife of California can thrive free from alien weeds. The dates are April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, and July 29.

The April date will meet at 9 am at the Clarkia trail head. Later dates do not have starting times yet. Check the kiosks and the Friends of Edgewood web site for information on those dates. You can also get information by calling Paul Heiple or emailing John Allen. ♻️

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 Bill Korbholz with assistance from Laverne Rabinowitz and contributions from many Friends. For more information about the Friends of Edgewood, visit our web site at [www.friendsofedgeswood.org](http://www.friendsofedgeswood.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 [info01@friendsofedgeswood.org](mailto:info01@friendsofedgeswood.org).

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