

Hello Nature friends,

Spring is here in Placerita, and suddenly many wildflowers are in bloom. We have a new crop too of 15 brand-new docents who finished the docent training and are going to graduate at the end of March. Welcome to the Placerita Canyon Nature family! We wish you all many years of enjoying the park and teaching our guests about nature.



The Rattler

Sponsored by the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates
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Placerita Canyon Nature Center
Over 50 Years of Nature Education
March 2016

Braille and Handicapped Trail

You might have read in previous issues of the Rattler that a Braille trail is in the planning phase that would also be handicapped accessible. What we did not know was how this was going to be made possible because of the steep incline on a part of the Heritage trail, before the bridge. We have learned that the new trail will change to a board walk built on pillars for the steep part. It will reach the Oak of the Golden dream on an even level. The stream bed won't be changed. Eight interpretive displays in Braille signage will enhance the visit for our sight-impaired visitors, plus plants with pungent smells and vivid colors will border the trail...it will be a unique experience in a County park.



Sylvia Altamirano

Sometimes Placerita docents are able to multi task. Sylvia Altamirano has been a docent at Placerita since 2003, but she is also a volunteer at Hart Park and we are so proud to announce that Sylvia was named Hart Park Volunteer for February 2016. Sylvia volunteers with the park animal keeper, assisting with the daily care and feeding of the animals. Congratulations, Sylvia.

Strategic Plan Meeting

The wheels of change have started to turn! Jim Southwell had the first meeting, and eight eager docents came to review the previous Placerita goals and establish new goals to ensure a bright future for the Nature Center.

Golden Current

by RuthAnne Murthy

If you take a stroll along the Canyon Trail, you will encounter a native scrub called Golden Currant. It has brilliant yellow tubular flowers that grow in clusters. The 1/2-2" leaves are beautifully scalloped and tender. The plants are summer deciduous. Later in the year, 1/4 " yellow, smooth-skinned berries will develop. The berries are food for the birds and larval food for butterflies. They are of the Ribes family which includes currants and gooseberries. They fade quickly, so don't wait too long before you go take a look.

Pond Cleanup

by Fred Seeley

On a beautiful morning on February 22, our educational pond received it's annual thorough cleaning by a hardworking group including Jack Levenberg, Ron Nichols, Joan Fincutter, Karen TS Gilbert, Roxanne Correa, Cynthia Silberschein, Suzy Herman, and Fred Seeley. The pond looks great and we eagerly await mama and papa toads and frogs to do their thing. Thanks to all for your hard work!!!

Outreach

Outreach programs are doing extremely well and a regular visiting schedule to Sulphur Springs school every Monday in March has been requested. Schools who cannot come to the Nature Center can ask to have docents come to their school to show them the animals and explain about their interaction. It is always extremely well received and is a fantastic opportunity for the students to ask questions and learn about nature.

Bridget the Skunk

Yes, skunks can have tape worm too, but Bridget is getting medical care and doing much better. Her diet is being carefully monitored and she should be feeling in great shape again very soon.

Open House

Open House is coming on May 14. Thirty vendors have been contacted and it is very heart-warming to see that Disney Ranch is again going to let us use their parking lot for the event. We have the best neighbor.



Olivia Miseroy is Doing Fantastic Work

Olivia is upgrading the taxidermy animals in the Interpretive Center display and the classroom. She just finished a beautiful acorn woodpecker flying with an acorn in its beak. The Hoary bat has been totally renovated and looks fresh and new. She is starting with a rough form for a rabbit and a rattlesnake is being painted. The rattlesnake will have a place of choice close to the roadrunner so it can become a good teaching tool, explaining the interaction between roadrunner and rattlesnake! Olivia is extremely busy with her new job as ground maintenance 1 at Devil's Punch Bowl and she is doing all these projects for Placerita in her spare time. Thank you so much Olivia, you are an artist and a professional and we are forever grateful for your talent and dedication.

Moving the Beehive

All our guests visiting the classroom are fascinated by the beehive but it is a little too high for small children to have a good view. Jack Levenberg, Jim Crowley and Ray Orloff are going to lower the display so that all, tall and short, can follow the bees' activity easily inside the beehive. Great idea!