

# Rancho del Oso

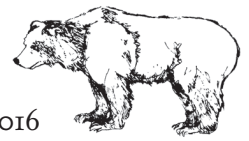
Nature and History Center

News

April–June 2016



Volume 31/2



## ❁ Wildflower Weekend! ❁

Saturday and Sunday, April 23 and 24 ❁ 12 to 4 pm ❁ Nature Center



Late winter rains have promised a profusion of spring wildflowers in the Waddell Valley. Rancho del Oso's elegant and botanically captivating annual event will have on display an impressive collection of vibrant wildflowers. Botanist-led wildflower walks will be offered at 10 AM and 1 PM on Saturday and Sunday.

You'll see buttercups, shooting stars, and western wake robin included in an exhibit of over fifty flowering native plants and several non-native species that are found in the western portion of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The assortment of shapes, sizes, colors and forms are a delight to the senses.



**Come visit the Nature and History Center**

**Open Saturday–Sunday, 12 noon to 4 pm**

**Check us out on the Web and join us on Facebook!**

**[www.ranchodeloso.org](http://www.ranchodeloso.org) and [www.facebook.com/RDOSP](http://www.facebook.com/RDOSP)**

# What's Happening at Rancho del Oso

Those who spend time hiking around Rancho del Oso are often enthused and enamored by the delicate salamanders that amble along the forest floor. With a camouflaged dorsal surface and an alarmingly bright orange belly, the californian newt (*Taricha torosa*) migrates to pools of water to reproduce. Our Salamander Saturday event on March 5 was inspiring and educational. Herpetologist Amy Patten shed light on an array of these diverse amphibians while live salamanders were on display. Family friendly activities and a ranger-led hike brought visitors from all over the bay area.

Recent rainy weather has created excellent growing conditions for wildflowers. Throughout the year, Rancho del Oso is home to a great abundance of diverse and endemic wildflowers. The vibrant leopard lily (*Lilium pardalinum*), a personal favorite, often establishes itself atop Berry Creek Falls creating a splendid juxtaposition of color amidst a tapestry of greens and falling water. Remember to check out the annual Wildflower Weekend.

Waddell Creek Association welcomes new volunteers to Rancho del Oso. Wilderness Patrol Volunteer Training is being offered in April to recruit active and passionate volunteers who will contribute to the inspiration, education, and enjoyment for visitors at Rancho del Oso. Thank you to all who contribute to making Rancho del Oso a dynamic and welcoming community.

—Jeremy Lin



## Waddell Valley Wildflower and Nature Hike



Saturdays, April 9 ❖ June 11 and Sunday, May 15 ❖ 10 am

Join docent **Scott Peden** and learn to identify many of Waddell Valley's plants within Rancho del Oso's seven diverse habitats. Observe the monthly change of the ecosystems. Each walk is unique as blooming flowers and pollinators are constantly in flux. This walk is a leisurely four-hour amble that is great for learning while experiencing the native habitat. Bring lunch, questions and spirited fervor! April's hike starts at the yellow gate across from the Waddell Beach parking lot. May and June hikes start at the Nature and History Center.



## Waddell Valley Birding



Saturdays, May 14 and June 11 ❖ 8 am

Birding for all skill levels. Join Interpretive Specialist **Jeremy Lin**, for an approximate two mile hike to observe, listen, and enjoy morning birding in Waddell Valley. We will take our time and move slowly. Bring binoculars, a bird guide and readiness for silent observation, as we witness wildlife awakening on a splendid spring day. We will meet on the deck in front of the Nature Center.

### Join the Waddell Creek Association!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Membership categories; please check one:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100 |
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with your check, payable to:

**Waddell Creek Association**  
c/o Jesse Bregman  
519 Van Ness Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

## ☞ Vice President's Spring Tidings ☞

Spring is coming soon and there will be wildflowers to greet us on every trail. Before I retired, I walked out and just enjoyed them; now there is time to learn a little more. Reminiscing earlier working days teaching students with learning difficulties, I was going to use some of those techniques to teach myself.

Taking a coastal docent walk with an expert, I heard with despair that the docent knew everything. I knew about a dozen names. It all sounded like Sanskrit. I backed off and asked myself how I had cajoled my students. Break up the task and make it small enough to digest. Had I found anything interesting? I began to notice that as I neared the coast, many of the blossoms were yellow and I wondered, why? The answer amazed me. The plant in order to survive had to attract pollinators, birds and insects in a foggy coastal area, and yellow would be most easily seen through the mist. So lesson one, find something super interesting that you are bound to remember and build on it.

Reading something once doesn't mean you know it. Revisit the information or the place again. Take a second look, or even a third. Don't forget the mnemonic device. A big word for writing a verse or catchy line to secure something in your memory. Write it down, smell it, best not to touch for obvious reasons, note color and location, then go back again for a second look. Building on this, what about little jingles like, leaves of three, let it be. (Before I could read, that kept me away from poison ivy—now poison oak—in the mid-west!) Make up your own to joggle your memory.

Limit your expectations. Walk a long distance for the exercise and the joy of being outdoors, and choose a small segment for identifying the flora along the way. Today, I will concentrate on the flora at the forest edge. I take a small sketch pad, draw a few plants and jot down color, size, odor, and location. At the car, I look up the identification in the plant book. Bit by bit, it sinks in. Now, with smartphones containing excellent cameras, you have another tool. Soon you will have some core knowledge in your short and long term memory.

As Walt Hays said so elegantly, looking back, we've come a long way toward realizing Hulda's dream—the sharing of the beauty and diversity of Rancho del Oso with the broadest audience. Your memberships and contributions continue to play a vital part in pursuing her legacy and our mission.—*Joyce Rosenstiel*

## ☞ Snake Park Saturdays ☞

April 9 ☞ May 14 ☞ 2 pm and June 11 ☞ 10 am

Why are snakes important to us? How do they see, smell, taste, hear? What and how do they eat? What does a snake feel like? Several snakes will be on display and native reptile adaptations will be discussed in the beautiful backdrop of Waddell Valley. We will meet up at the Ranger Station, a short hike in from the parking lot at Waddell Beach on Highway 1.

## ☞ Nature Wander ☞

Sundays, April 10 ☞ May 8 ☞ June 12 ☞ 1 pm

Find out what's growing, living and blooming right now in the Waddell Valley on this approximately one mile, one-hour-plus guided walk with docent naturalist **Ann Garside**.

Ann will share information about the plants and habitats of Rancho del Oso, as the group walks from coastal scrub through one of the remaining five distinct populations of Monterey Pine left in the world. Show up with curiosity and energy. Hikes start at the Nature Center.



## Waddell Creek Association

3600 Highway 1  
Davenport, CA 95017

*Return Service Requested*

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## Rancho del Oso — Coastal Section of Big Basin Redwoods State Park

The Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center is open to the general public.

The Center is located 2 miles south of Año Nuevo (or 16 miles north of Santa Cruz) just off Highway 1.

Turn at the first road south of the Waddell Creek bridge and follow the signs. Extreme weather may cancel events; please call ahead.

For more information or to register for events, call 831 427-2288 or email [parksrdopis@parks.ca.gov](mailto:parksrdopis@parks.ca.gov).

### **Go Green!**

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## Our Mission

*The Waddell Creek Association, in cooperation with California State Parks, works to educate and inspire public appreciation and stewardship of the extraordinary natural and cultural resources of the Waddell Valley, by providing resources and support for volunteer and educational programs at Rancho del Oso/Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Your membership helps us achieve these goals.*