

Skylines

SOUTH SKYLINE ASSOCIATION

www.southskyline.org

JANUARY 2014

South Skyline Association General Meeting

SSA Board Elections and

Guest speaker, Ken Hickman

California naturalist, wildlife researcher, camera trapper
Presents Camera Trapping California: Photographic Nature
Stories from the Santa Cruz Mountains

Friday January 24th, 2013 at 7:30pm
Saratoga Summit Fire Station
12900 Skyline Blvd.

Camera traps are remote, sensor-triggered cameras that can last in the field for months, and "digitally trap" - or rather photographs all that passes by, from quail to coyotes. Thus making them ideal for passive wildlife surveys and studies. Over the last 5 years as a "camera trapper" and wildlife researcher, Ken Hickman has had the pleasure of regularly exploring and camera trapping some amazing areas of California, including the Santa Cruz Mountains, where he's currently working on multiple studies with MROSD and San Mateo County Dept. of Parks. In his photo-full presentation, Ken will talk cam trapping theory and technology, and show us what his cameras are teaching us about the birds and mammals of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Ken Hickman is a naturalist who specializes in wildlife research and surveys using camera traps. As such he works on projects with a variety of scientists and organizations in California, including the CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife and Professor Chris Wemmer (PhD Mammalogist; Fellow, California Academy of Sciences) on the Carrizo Plain, private ranchers in the Tehachapi Mountains and Mono Lake Basin, and with San Mateo County Parks and MROSD in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Ken has a B.S. in Physics from UCSB, and 20 years experience in technology, software, digital photography and Internet services with companies such as Netscape, Shutterfly and Yahoo!. His natural history writing can be found at: <http://natureofaman.blogspot.com/>

Please bring a dessert to share. SSA will provide beverages.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!

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PLEASE RENEW!!!

SSA memberships are due for renewal every January.

Mail to Ruth Waldhauer,
SSA Membership Chairperson,
22400 Skyline Blvd.
Box 35, La Honda CA 94020

What Is Your SSA Board Doing?

By Larry Watson

General Meeting

The October was well attended. The program was presented by the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) detailing their 40-year Vision Plan under development. MROSD manages 11 preserves within or bordering the SSA area and is a “neighbor” to most of us. The Board appreciates their efforts to incorporate community input into their planning.

SSA Board Turnover

We are sorry to announce that two Board members have announced that they will not be returning next year, Gary Gechlik and Grace Welcome. As a Board member and Vice-President for many years, Gary has made many contributions to the organization and our community. We truly appreciate his service. Grace Welcome’s service this year has given the Board a voice from the Northern end of the SSA area and we will miss her input. Thank you, Grace. At the time of this article, the Board will have two vacancies in the New Year. We are looking for candidates.

SouthSkyline.org Committee

The website committee is continuing to develop the plans for migration to a new platform that will support applications to improve the operation and communications of our organization. Current website activity is primarily SPUG price information and the download of past issues of *Skylines*. Please continue to share your ideas that would increase participation in the matters affecting our community.

South Skyline Association Board Elections

SSA Board elections will take place at the SSA January General Meeting. The following board members will be running for another term: Connie Kleinjans, John Harriman, Larry Watson, Marianne Rose, Ruth Waldhauer, Michael Rowe, and James Morris.

Gary Gechlik will not be running for another term. Gary was our vice-president and served the board for many years. He stood for three basic principles: the access to public schools for local children, the physical quality and safety of the road, and a safe community environment. The board appreciates all the time Gary has volunteered for the South Skyline Association.

Grace Welcome has also opted to resign her post on the SSA Board. The board thanks her for her service over the past year.

Interested in serving on the South Skyline Association board? We now have two openings on the SSA board. A board term is for 2 years. The board meets once a month, usually on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30pm. For more information contact the SSA President Larry Watson or any other current board member.

Larry can be contacted at 408-313-6293.

SSA Membership Renewal

Please take a moment and renew your SSA membership for 2014. For just \$15 a year, your membership dues help SSA publish the Skylines newsletter, offer free classified ads, and provide speakers for our general meetings. Your SSA membership is also necessary to participate in the Skyline Propane User’s Group (SPUG) to get discounted rates on your propane service. A membership form can also be found on the SSA website at www.southskyline.org/join_ssa.htm

Send your dues to:

SSA Membership Chairperson
22400 Skyline Blvd. Box 35
La Honda, CA 94020

South Skyline Firesafe Council's Five Years of Accomplishments

by Ken Maclean, President

The South Skyline FireSafe Council, an all-volunteer Skyline group was instigated 5 years ago by **Dick Schwind**. Our mission is to help our homes be more resistant to wildland fires. **Ken MacLean** of Oak Ridge has been on our Board since our inception and he has now (thankfully!) taken the leadership as President. We have had a very faithful leadership group, particularly with **John DeLong** as Treasurer and the major contributions over these years by **Eric Isacson, Fred Glover, George Johnson, Judy Grote, John Drew, Nancy Brown, Kristeen Pemberton**, and now **Bill Guenther**. Dick is still a very active Board member. Also, local sponsors have volunteered many days of their time for our projects when we have used Ben Lomond crews for clearing.

Our major accomplishments during our 5 years have made our homes

much safer from wildland fire destruction. Made possible by your donations matched by the SSA these are:

- ◆ - Education/Awareness: ~30 articles and ~6 insert pages in Skylines.
- ◆ Defensible Space Consultations: ~70 (new, comprehensive program presently on hold).
- ◆ Highway Roadside Shaded Fuel Breaks (some with MROSD support): 7 miles.
- ◆ Free chipping at ~105 homes for Defensible Space (mostly with Santa Clara County FSC grant funds, some San Mateo FSC).
- ◆ Free chipping at Las Cumbres' massive community brush pile ~5 times.
- ◆ Community Private Road Fuel

Breaks partial subsidy: ~ 7 miles.

ALSO, we were awarded parts of two federal grants we shared with two other small FireSafe Councils. With these funds we **cleared 36 acres** of shaded fuel break along 4 miles of of the Kings Creek Truck Trail and about half of the above highway fuel breaks. **OUR VOLUNTEER EFFORT : 3200 hours!** I suspect none of the maybe 100 or so FireSafe Councils in CA can come close to this level of volunteer effort!

Do consider donating to our tax-deductible organization: SSFSC, Box 324, LaHonda, CA 94020. See our web-site, www.southskylinefiresafe.org Also, join us - we need help!

Dick Schwind, schwindr@yahoo.com

Current Board Members	Neighborhood	Board Responsibility
Patti Begley	Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County	Membership/Communications Committee, Website Committee
Gary Gechlik	Highway 35 - Long Ridge	Vice President; Programs Chair; BAAQMD
Kim Hamilton	Highway 35 - Oakridge	Public Works
John Harriman	Las Cumbres	Secretary
Eric Jewett	Saratoga Gap	Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator
Connie Kleinjans	Highway 35 - Page Mill Road	Treasurer, Website Committee
Larry Myers	Las Cumbres	Public Safety, SSEPO
Marianne Rose	Highway 35 - Long Ridge	Communications Committee, Website Committee
Ruth Waldhauer	Portola Heights	Membership/Communications Committee, SPUG, Website Committee
Larry Watson	Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County	President, Website Committee
Grace Welcome	Skylonda	Communications Committee
James Morris	Saratoga Gap	
Michael Rowe	Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County	

South Skyline Fire Safe Council

Defensible Space Programs

by Dick Schwind

SSFSC Provides Generous Help with Defensible Space and Private Road Fuel Breaks aided by Pacific Gas and Electric Corporation Grant Award.

Over the last five years many local homeowners in the South Skyline FireSafe Council Area have received free chipping to obtain their Defensible Space around their home. Our volunteers have done the coordinating for this chipping using Santa Clara County and San Mateo County FireSafe Council grant funds from the U.S. Forest Service. Those grant programs have ended.

The South Skyline FireSafe Council will soon announce two new programs to continue free/subsidized Defensible Space chipping using our own funds. We expect to launch this program at the South Skyline Association January General Meeting, see page 1 of this 'Skylines' for time and location. Shortly after the new programs will be posted on our website, www.southskylinefiresafe.org

The **Pacific Gas and Electric Corporation** has awarded our Council a **\$1000. grant** to help provide our new Private Road Fuel Break program. Thank you PG&E!

We plan to make a major drive this year to help our communities with private roads develop good fuel breaks along these roads. We will be helping communities with the paperwork if they choose to use the Cal Fire Ben Lomond crews.

Contact me to direct your request for these programs. Dick Schwind 408-867-9422 schwindr@yahoo.com

www.wmsb.net
www.LosGatosMountainHomes.com
www.SantaCruzMountainsWineries.com

Adopt-A-Highway by Ruth Waldhauer

Saturday, November 16, was sunny and crisp. Great weather for the Adopt-A-Highway clean up. Enthusiastic SSA volunteers did a meticulous sweep.

Ami Jaqua and friends adopted a section of Skyline Boulevard from Rapley Ranch Road north to Old La Honda Road. Their effort is separate from SSA. Many thanks to them for keeping Skyline beautiful!

SSA volunteers are responsible for gathering litter every two months. The sweep takes about an hour and a half. So far there are over 150 names on the honor role listing those who have participated. We love getting new recruits. You will find it rewarding and fun.

Contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth.waldhauer3@gmail.com



Shown in the photo are: Patty Meeko, Robert Bradford, Amen Leonian, Rick Howard-Smith, and Eric Jewett. Great Picture Ruth!

South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

by Andy Seigel, Captain, SSF&R

Promotion!

I am delighted to announce that Les Niles has been promoted to Volunteer Engineer (driver/operator). This promotion is the culmination of some 25 days in the classroom and many hours of driving around our response area. It's a big effort, and comes along with new responsibilities.

2013 was the busiest year ever for Company 29 with over 200 incidents. That's 25% more than last year: 70% medical aid and vehicle accident calls, 16% smoke investigations, 7% fires, and 7% other (including trees/wires down, public assist, etc.).

In November, we assisted with water supply for the control burn in Big Basin State Park, moving about 24000 gallons of water over 5 days. In the spring, we put Engine 2911 in service to replace Engine 2921.



In October, Arnie Wernick retired after 33 years with the department. Though we did not add to our ranks in 2013, we held a number of events throughout the year focusing on recruiting.

Over the course of the year we received many donations through the SSA membership drive, as well as a grant from the SSA. With these donations we added two additional compartments, a more powerful portable pump, and some hose fittings to the water tender.

We are very thankful for your support.

We have two new recruits in the pipeline for 2014. They will bring the roster up to 7. We have already started recruiting for 2015. No prior experience is necessary as long as you're over 18. We'd like to increase our ranks significantly to make up for recent attrition. Please contact us to learn more if you're interested in joining the team -- use the contact form on our website, <http://southskylinefire.org>.

SSA BOARD ELECTIONS

SSA Board elections will take place at the SSA January General Meeting.

Current board members who are on the ballot for re-election are: Connie Kleinjans, John Harriman, Larry Watson, Marianne Rose, Ruth Waldhauer, Michael Rowe, and James Morris. There are two vacant seats. SSA hopes to find someone from the Skylonda area to fill Grace Welcome's slot, and another from the area south of Skylonda to somewhere near Long Ridge. It is beneficial to SSA to have representatives from various neighborhoods.

Step forward and volunteer! SSA fosters a sense of community spirit, keeps residents informed of public agency actions and other issues of concern in the SSA sphere of influence, protects the rights and represents the interests of those in our area, and engages in various projects to enhance the unique South Skyline environment.

Interested in serving on the South Skyline Association board?

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SPUG QUARTERLY REPORT

by Ruth Waldhauer

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members.

For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement, please contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth.waldhauer3@gmail.com or 650-948-1466.

SSA has agreements with Amerigas/San Jose, Kamps Propane, Suburban Propane/San Jose and Suburban Propane/Scotts Valley. In October FerrellGas signed an agreement to give SSA members a SPUG price. FerrellGas is an employee owned company. SSA is happy to have them join!

Information is also available on our website: WWW.SouthSkyline.org.

The open market price is about \$1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price. Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices SSA posts are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on a keep-full basis, not will-call service. Some propane companies offer members 55 years of age or older a 2 cent/gallon discount in the addition to the SPUG group price. **Those whose SSA membership has lapsed will be disqualified from receiving the benefit of SPUG price for propane.**

	Amerigas	Suburban/San Jose	Suburban/Scotts Valley	Kamps Propane	Ferrell Gas	
July	1.83	2.049	2.049	1.89		
August	1.83	2.049	2.049	1.89		
Sept	1.86	2.199	2.199	1.94		
Oct	1.94	2.29	2.29	1.99		
Nov	2.1	3.04	2.499	2.18	2.23	*Prices shown per
Dec	2.39	3.11	2.89	2.19	2.30	Gallon
Jan	2.59	3.549	3.199	2.69	2.64	

“Take a Hike” Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve by Ruth Waldhauer

On those clear winter days when you can see forever choose Russian Ridge.

From the Russian Ridge parking area at the northwest corner of Skyline Boulevard and the Page Mill/Alpine intersection, follow the Bay Ridge Trail and climb the steep rise. After a long switchback you pass a trail that leads left (south) to a trailhead on Alpine Road. However continue along the Bay Area Ridge Trail, go 0.2 mile to another junction where you can go right to the summit of Borel Hill (2572’). Few spots can beat this ridge for views that take in the Peninsula from Bay to ocean. From Borel Hill on a clear day in winter, with bin-

oculars you can see the snow-capped Sierra Nevada through the gap of Niles Canyon to the northeast and the Farallon Islands to the west.

If it is too cold, just hike back to the parking area. But try to keep warm so you can get to explore the Ancient Oaks. From Borel Hill return to the Bay Ridge Trail and turn right for a very short distance to meet a trail leading west which will bring you in 0.4 miles to the Ancient Oaks Trail -Turn left. Oak limbs arching over the trail form a welcoming canopy. Many of the oaks and buckeyes here are cloaked with a thick layer of moss. Many of the trees have multiple

trunks rising from massive bore holes. Did they sprout from the stumps of ancient trees after a long-ago fire?

On about 0.3 miles you will meet a trail leading uphill to the left. Ignore it and continue on for another 0.2 miles where you meet a nameless trail. Turn left (uphill). Here open views are exhilarating. About half way along you will find a memorial bench. Enjoy! After 0.4 mile uphill you will meet the Bay Ridge Trail. Turn right and you will soon be at the Russian Ridge parking area.

Maps are available at the sign board in the parking lot. ENJOY!

Western Coltsfoot Flows Downstream

By Sarah Schoen

Every winter, western coltsfoot (*Petasites frigidus* var. *pallmatus*) comes in backwards. It starts with a perennial network of rhizomes, hidden in the mud along creeks and flood plains. Then in February, thick leafless flower stems emerge out of nowhere, connected to the rhizomes underground. Whitish, feathery clusters of flowers, reminiscent of unopened dandelions, bloom until April.



Photograph by David Schoen

Leaves emerge as the flowers wither. Also connected to the rhizomes underground, they almost seem to be from a different plant. Basal leaves are large, 4" to 1 1/3 foot across, and nearly as wide as long. They are highly lobed, palmate (hand-shaped) and may be toothed. Leaves are smooth green on top and felted white underneath. The genus *Petasites* is from the Greek *petasos*, like a broad-brimmed hat. As summer progresses and creeks dwindle, the plants often fill up patches of the entire creek bed. Leaves are then dropped in the fall.

California Indians had many uses for western coltsfoot. The Yuki tribe hemmed in from the sea by their enemies, used the plant as a source of salt. Leaves and stems were dried, and then burned slowly on a piece of redwood, surrounded by coals. The resulting ash was high in salt. Other tribes had medicinal uses, including using the rhizome to treat early grippe and tuberculosis (Concow), treatment of sickly babies

(Karak), and placing leaves in hot water to treat arthritis (Tolowah).

Western folk medicine also uses western coltsfoot. A tea is used internally as an expectorant and cough suppressant. A decoction is used externally to treat arthritis, and a poultice of leaves is used to treat contusions, sprains, and external injuries. NOTE: because western coltsfoot contains poisonous alkaloids, its use is NOT recommended by novices.

Western coltsfoot is related to European coltsfoot, *Tussilago farfara*, which was also used in folk medicine. Apothecaries of France displayed a coltsfoot leaf on the door to advertise sale of herbal medicine. *Tussilago* means cough dispeller. Both plants got their common names because early leaves emerge with the lobes facing downward, looking somewhat like the hoof of a colt.



Coltsfoot in seed by Hilary Hart

Western coltsfoot likes to grow with its rootstock wet all or most of the time and with minimal competition from other plants. Streambeds are just about perfect. Further north where rainfall totals are higher, western coltsfoot also grows along roadsides. Western coltsfoot grows in mixed evergreen and redwood forests below 4200 feet from Alaska and Canada south to Monterey County.

Amateur Radio Simulated Emergency Test

By Lisa Short Chupity

At 10 o'clock Saturday morning, October 19, 2013, a high magnitude earthquake was the setting for the annual SC4ARES simulated emergency test. This test is held every year, usually in October, to insure the local amateur radio operators are ready in an actual emergency. Skills tested are: being able to change frequencies on handheld radios, relaying a message, sending a Radiogram, and for some operators, receiving a message on one frequency, and sending the same message on another frequency.

The earlier versions of these drills varied. One year involved a search and rescue operation using GPS and mapping skills. But it was later realized the best skill we could have, is to be able to communicate on various frequencies on a wide variety of hilly terrain, from one community to another. This has evolved over the last three years to using 2 meter simplex frequencies in each community to send messages to community net control operators. These community net control operators in turn, use 40 meter simplex frequencies to communicate to a distant central EOC (Emergency Operations Center), in this case, at the La Honda Fire Brigade building in downtown La Honda. From EOC in La Honda, we can use the same simplex frequency to send messages to the American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter in Burlingame.

This year's "script" was drawn by SC4ARC president Jeneen Sommers, and SC4ARES Emergency Coordinator Linda Bennett. Although it is called a "script", the focus is for local radio operators to use all the skills they've learned over the years to effectively communicate in a disaster

setting. Jeneen said, "I wanted to keep it simple - just a simplex and high frequency test to see who could or couldn't be heard. We learned much, and not everything went smoothly". Linda wanted to add other skills like relay and damage reports to the scenario. "My goal was to make sure we could reach everyone who participated via simplex relay to a HF (40 meter) hub." The term "simplex" means we don't use a repeater to transmit our communications. Instead, we transmit from radio to radio. The hilly terrain makes it difficult to reach far away stations, and we resort to relaying messages to farther distances. Linda went on to say "even the 40 meter hubs needed to relay with each other on assigned simplex frequencies because not all hubs could reach EOC. I included "inserts", which were damage reports, injuries, etc. because it is vital to transmit such information as accurately and to the point as possible."

Radio Officer Peter Chupity used a computer protocol called PSK 31 (Phase Shift Keying, 31 Baud). This is a popular computer-soundcard-generated radioteletype mode, used primarily by amateur radio operators to conduct real-time keyboard to keyboard chat. "Text messages, basically," said Peter. "The computer is hooked up to the radio and antenna. It worked just fine, getting to the Red Cross office in Burlingame. The problem came when there was much traffic in a short time. I was sharing a radio and antenna with Linda, and just when I was sending a message to Mike Yamamoto at the Red Cross in Burlingame, another message came into EOC for Linda."

Another big challenge was to those in

the community who acted as community net control. These people were charged with receiving messages in one frequency, and transmitting those messages on another frequency to EOC. Bryan Osborne was one of these people, and he was stationed at the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ranger station on the corner of Alpine Road, and Skyline Boulevard. "I felt like a juggler", Bryan said. "Things would be nice and quiet, then there would be many conversations at once." He was sending and receiving messages on 2 meter simplex, 6 meter simplex, and 40 meter simplex, sometimes all at the same time! "I really needed a scribe, as well as a second pair of ears to make sure I was hearing these messages correctly."

Emergency coordinator Linda Bennett summed it up: "The SET was a huge success in that everyone was able to reach someone, to get their message through. It was my goal to have this become an actual operations strategy in case the repeater fails."

The SC4ARES is an amateur radio emergency service covering the mountain and coastside communities of La Honda, San Gregorio, Pescadero, Butano, Loma Mar, and the South Skyline area. It is affiliated with the SC4 Amateur Radio Club. SC4 Amateur Radio Club welcomes those interested in amateur radio for emergency communications and neighborly talk. License is free. Simple exam: No Morse code. We offer classes. Visit

www.sc4arc.org or write:

SC4ARC, PO Box 237, La Honda, CA 94020

Advertisements

SERVICES

The Whole Mountain Source Book, an annual resource book for the Santa Cruz Mountains, is expanding to include the South Skyline Association area in our 19th edition. Advertising puts your business in the hardcopy edition and on the website www.wmsb.net. The deadline is Jan. 31, 2014 with publication at the beginning of April. 408.353.3535 or advertise@wmsb.net.

Residential Design Country and urban custom houses, remodel and additions. 20+ years experience in California. Local references (economic and high end) See some of my work at: <http://www.TSVresidential.com> Taruno S. Vega 650-747-0654 taruno@coastside.net

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Dog Days Since 1995 Training, Exercising, Socializing. We have two sessions that begin each season, Monday evenings & Saturday mornings at Woodland School in Ladera (Portola Valley) 650-851-5500 Winner 2013 Daily News BEST Dog Trainer & BEST Dog Day Care

SC4 Amateur Radio Club Welcomes those interested in amateur radio for emergency communications and neighborly talk. License is free. Simple exam: No Morse code. We offer classes. Visit www.sc4arc.org or write: SC4ARC, PO Box 237 La Honda, CA 94020

Skyline Broadband Service - Now offering speeds up to 25 Mbps broadband in the South Skyline area. <http://SkylineBroadbandService.com> 650-917-9279

Ads are free to members. Membership is \$15 per year. Membership forms are available at www.southskyline.org Please limit each ad to approx. 45 words. Ads will be shortened when space is limited. Email ads to: Skylineseditor@yahoo.com **SUBJECT LINE: AD PLACEMENT** or mail to Skyline Ads: 22400 Skyline Blvd #35 La Honda, CA 94020

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For those members who receive the Skylines through the Post Office please consider the option to receive it on-line. This will save paper as well as postage. If you sign up for this option you will be notified by email when the next issues is released. Sign up and update your email address with Ruth Waldhauer at: ruth.waldhauer3@gmail.com or 650-984-1466

Those member who live locally where we stuff mail boxes will continue to get a paper copy.

SSA Calendar-General Meeting –
Friday, January 24, 2014 at
7:30pm. Saratoga Summit Fire
Station at 12900 Skyline Blvd.

Business Meetings on
Thursdays at 7:30p
January 9th, February 13th, March
13th and April 10th.

President Larry Watson
408-313-6293
Editor Tanja Anderson
408-882-7829
Ruth Waldhauer 650-948-1466 for SPUG



Skylines is Published Once A Quarter

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Ads are free to SSA members. No continuing ads will be accepted. They must be resubmitted for each issue.

Skylines Ads and News Articles: The Deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is **March 5, 2014.**

Send all ads and articles to: Skylines Editor c/o 224400 Skyline Blvd #35, La Honda CA 94020, or SkylinesEditor@yahoo.com, 408-867-3973, ***Subject Line for articles should read: FINAL DRAFT***

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.