



SSA Speaker Series

An Update on the Recovery of Big Basin After the CZU Lightning Complex Fire

PRESENTER: SHELBY KRANICH, REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL FORESTER

ARC (*Auten Resource Consulting*) Registered Professional Forester #3249 and the Manager of Forest Resilience Strategy, Shelby Kranich, graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry concentrating in Wildland Fire and Fuels Management. Having been born and raised in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Ms. Kranich developed a deep interest in the unique forested and vegetative ecosystems that span from the ridges to coastline and was hopeful of returning after college. Prior to obtaining her degree, Ms. Kranich pursued her passion for forest management by spending several summers in college working on the steep forested terrain of the Santa Cruz Mountains conducting fieldwork and planning for all aspects of forestry, much of which consisted of collecting and analyzing data for a tree mortality assessment following the 2009 Lockheed Fire.

Ms. Kranich began working for ARC Forestry in June 2020 and has since built a wide skillset developing and strategizing some of the largest forest health and fuels reduction projects completed and ongoing in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, she led post-fire



Friday, October 24, 2025

TIME 7:00 pm – Refreshments
7:30 pm – General Meeting announcements followed by the featured presentation and Q&A

PLACE Saratoga CDF Summit Fire Station
12900 Skyline Blvd.

Directions: Located on the west side of Skyline Blvd. approximately .6 of a mile north of the intersection of Skyline Blvd. and Highway 9.

Due to unreliable internet, there will be no option for a Zoom meeting this time. Please come and join us in person!

Please bring a sweet or savory dessert to share.
SSA will provide beverages.

forest assessments, monitoring, and planning efforts over approximately 24,000 acres of the burn scar with the ARC Forestry team.

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SSA Website Update to Our Membership System

BY DAVE ANDERSON,
SSA WEBMASTER



As most of you are aware, we have been working on improving the functionality of the website. We have implemented an autopay system that should relieve the apprehension about whether members have renewed for the year. This new functionality resulted in some problems with incorrect notifications to propane vendors, and issues with the autopay system.

NOTE: If you have already set up autopay with PayPal you can visit the subscriptions page in PayPal to check whether you are still enrolled in autopay. If you are, you should not have to do anything going forward.

First, I want to address the status of memberships with propane vendors. I have informed all SPUG vendors of any incorrect notifications and will give each of them a full list of current members per vendor after we get the site resolved and all members have had a chance to bring memberships up to date.

Some details: The implementation of our new functionality earlier in the year was rocky since we had to switch to a different Application Programming Interface (How our site interacts with PayPal) in addition to the fact that our membership model is not well served by available WordPress plugins. The norm as you may have noted with your phone/cable/streaming bills is to make the subscription applicable from the date of payment to one year later.

The existing model that I inherited is based on calendar year subscription with November and later “joins” applying to the full following year, grace periods after the first of the year and notification/messaging early in the year where we reminded people to renew. This required significant custom code which complicated the integration of autopay and seems to have been a factor in this recent problem.

The problem occurred in the process of demotion, which is the process setting accounts to “free subscriber” after the paid year is expired. When our site developer ran the demotion process, she was very careful initially and did not see problems with the first few small batches of demotions. So, she initiated a larger batch of demotions which had some problems where people who were paid up were improperly notified that their membership had expired.

Many members, concerned about staying current on their membership, went to the site to renew after receiving this notification. In some cases, accounts were renewed more than once. This presents a problem for reconciling on the back end, since once on autopay we don’t have any notion of “paid ahead” like we did before. We have to

reconcile and return all these extra payments. As soon as I realized that this was more than a handful of isolated issues, I asked our site developer to stop renewals ASAP, and putting the whole site into maintenance mode was the quickest way. We have brought some pages back, but renewals are inaccessible for now.

Our site developer has been working with the developer of the membership plugin to help resolve what seems to be a bug in the plugin. Once we have this solution, we will repair the data and reconcile the extra payments.

It is my intent to streamline the system and simplify it moving forward for reliability's sake. In the interests of doing so we had a discussion at our last board meeting where I moved to eliminate the calendar year electronic payment membership model and move to only accepting autopay or checks. The board approved the motion so this will be implemented as soon as practical.

I don’t have all of the details fully fleshed out yet for how we handle checks but I hope we can see fewer each year since they are a lot of work for our volunteers.

What this means for our users:

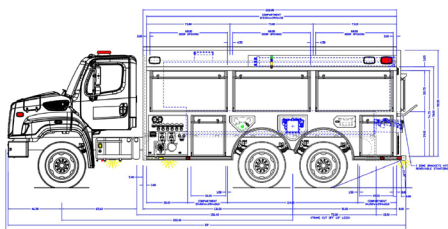
1. The first change will be to get the site renewals up, with autopay as the only electronic payment option. This will prevent the number of “paid-ahead” accounts that we need to track going forward from increasing. We hope to have a solution in place by the time you read this.
2. For folks that are paid ahead, you will get a notification to renew two weeks ahead of expiration, at the end of the last year paid—whenever that is. When you renew, it will be on autopay. The tool for self-checking your expiration date will continue to work.
3. **If you have been paying year by year and expired at the end of 2024, we will notify you when the site is available for you to set up autopay.** There is a small handful who expired in 2023 but have apparently not renewed, we will be contacting these people individually to find out if they moved or overlooked payment, etc.
4. We have not yet resolved how to handle membership expirations when paying by check. Speculatively, we may continue to use the expiration date at the end of the year model for this since it is updated by humans (no custom code involved), and it's easier for us if we can just extract the EOY expiration dates from the database and notify all at once. I intend to find some consensus on an approach to this at our next board meeting.

Apologies for the inconvenience and confusion. Thank you all for your patience, I appreciate the personal comments I’ve had in emails.

South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

BY ANDY SEIGEL, CAPTAIN, SSF&R

May 31 was a crystal-clear day for our pancake breakfast. We had a good turnout, helped by the Alto Velo cycling club that brought in 60 or so hungry riders over the course of the event. We served lots of pancakes, showed off a concept drawing of our replacement water tender, and had fire engine tours and demos with the help of our Cal Fire colleagues.



Water Tender News

We have selected Rosenbauer America to build our new water tender! The dealer, Burton's Fire in Modesto, has supplied several Rosenbauer apparatus to the Central Santa Cruz and San Mateo County fire districts in recent years. Burton's also

modified our current WT2951 some years ago, adding a pump discharge. We're excited to be working with Burton's again. With some luck, the unit will be delivered sometime in the summer of 2027.

Firefighter Spotlight!



Please welcome **Jesse Badger** to the spotlight!



Jesse moved to the area in 2023. He was motivated to join the fire department from an early experience—a family house fire, during which he helped evacuate

several family members and pets. As a Silicon Valley software engineer, it was difficult for him to work full time and attend the fire academy. But working with his management, he was able to carve out the time. Jesse described the academy as challenging, "but it got me in shape—I lost 15 pounds!" We're looking forward to working with Jesse. Welcome!

Recruiting

Unfortunately, we have no candidates for 2026 to join Jesse. We are still looking, but by the time you read this, we'll be out of time. We are setting our sights on 2027. There are many volunteer fire companies serving the Santa Cruz Mountains: La Honda, Kings Mountain, Loma Mar, Loma Prieta, and more. All need volunteers. If you live in their response areas, give them a call!

Visit us at: <http://southskylinefire.org>

SPUG Quarterly Report

Month/Year	Amerigas	Ferrellgas	Kamps	Suburban/SV
August 2025	2.750	2.785	3.510	4.520
July 2025	2.750	2.809	3.510	4.520
June 2025	2.750	2.801	3.510	4.520
May 2025	2.750	2.977	3.510	4.520
April 2025	2.750	2.977	3.510	4.520
March 2025	2.750	3.252	3.510	4.630
February 2025	2.750	3.275	3.510	4.630
January 2025	2.750	3.151	3.510	4.630
December 2024	2.750	3.049	3.410	4.630
November 2024	2.750	2.928	3.410	4.630
October 2024	2.750	2.796	3.410	4.330
September 2024	2.750	2.736	3.410	4.330
August 2024	2.750	2.874	3.410	4.280

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement go to our website: www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/. If you have questions, please email propane@southskyline.org.

SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Ferrellgas, Kamps, and Suburban Propane Scotts Valley. The open market price is more than \$1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price. **Please note: 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.

You are not required to pay sales tax on propane if you do not have natural gas available where you use propane. If you get your propane from Amerigas, you will need to submit a sales tax exemption form. Contact Amerigas for the form.

Membership dues are due every January. Those whose SSA membership has lapsed can be disqualified by our propane providers from receiving the benefit of the SPUG price. Membership can be renewed at <http://SouthSkyline.org/membership/>.

What Do You Mean, Fire Safe?

BY LARRY WATSON, BOARD MEMBER SOUTH SKYLINE FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (SSFSC)

In This Article

1. **Sad to see them go**
2. **Managing your Defensible Space through the Seasons: Fall**

1. Sad to see them go

Sadly, our FireSafe Council Board is losing three members: Ed Haynes, Debra Born, and Bill Hult. SSFSC wishes to express our deepest gratitude to these Board members who are moving away from the South Skyline area.

Ed Hayes has served on the SSFSC Board for 15 years including as President and Vice President. Additionally, he managed the free chipping program for well over a decade. Ed represented our FireSafe Council on the Santa Cruz County FireSafe Council for many years. His leadership will be sorely missed.

Debra Born served as a very productive board member for almost a decade using her extensive project management skills to obtain several high-profile grants, and then skillfully manage those projects. She also served on the education committee.

Bill Hult was one of our newer board members serving for 1.5 years and a real source of enthusiasm. He was our FireWise liaison and served on the Resource Conservation District's regional priority plan task force committee.

On behalf of our Council and the greater community that has benefited from their volunteer contributions, we say thanks and best wishes on your next adventures.

Please consider representing your neighborhood as a FireSafe project volunteer, doing something you're good at and that you enjoy, for our community's benefit. We also have Board member openings. Visit our website <https://www.southskylinefiresafe.org/>.

2. Managing your Defensible Space Through the Seasons: Fall

It's Fall and generally the peak of the wildfire season. What can you do now to improve your defensible space legally and safely to reduce risks until the rains begin?

First, you can participate in the FireSafe Council's Fall Free Chipping Program but note, the deadline for applications is October 15 so you need to act quickly.

Additionally, or alternatively, you can plan to burn the biomass (potential wildfire fuel) from your defensible space. This can be done indoors with a compliant woodstove or fireplace insert that utilizes outside air for combustion, or outdoors, where PERMITTED by pile burning when the season begins December 1. Firewood storage or burn piles (maximum of 4'x4'x4') should be located where if ignited by embers, should not ignite other fuels.

Wildfire is Nature's way of renewing overgrown biomass, supporting the succession or improvement of native plant communities, and sequestering some of the carbon captured by photosynthesis over decades into the form of charcoal or biochar. Being almost pure carbon it will exist for hundreds or thousands of years in or on the soil. Mimicking Nature's process by safely making biochar benefits us all. For more information on biochar, check out the video [Managing the Biomass in Your Defensible Space](#) on YouTube.



Las Cumbres Holiday Bazaar

Sunday, November 16, 2025

10am–3pm

**Support Our Local Wildfire Safety Organizations
and Our Mountain Artists**

The **Las Cumbres Holiday Bazaar** returns on Sunday, November 16, from 10am to 3pm, in the Las Cumbres Community Center just off Skyline Blvd, 18260 Las Cumbres Road, Los Gatos, 95033. The Bazaar benefits South Skyline Firefighters (Company 29) and the South Skyline Fire Safe Council, two local volunteer-based organizations dedicated to wildfire safety here in the mountains.

Do your holiday shopping while supporting wildfire safety and local artists. You will find high-quality handmade items, including jewelry, wearable art and purses, all-natural soaps and lotions, wood bread boards, paintings, pottery, local honey, kitchen accessories, and more.

Enjoy complementary wine tasting from local favorites Muns and Baccarossa Vineyards. Café Las Cumbres will be serving breakfast and lunch featuring homemade scones, muffins, quiche, soup, bread and cookies, along with coffee and tea. The Las Cumbres Pantry features local jam, home-made candy, fudge, applesauce, and other goodies. Little ones can explore the children's book and game corner, where gently used children's books, games and puzzles are available for a voluntary donation.

Continuing this year is our very popular on-line bake sale! Purchase delicious pies, cakes, cookies and other homemade treats on our website, www.lcbazaar.org and pick them up at the Bazaar. Check the website often—



new items will be posted every few days in the weeks leading up to the Bazaar.

Each of our vendors have donated wonderful items for our raffle. You can purchase raffle tickets at the door, or by emailing Judy Yee judyee@verizon.net.

You can help support the Bazaar:

- Donate gently used Children's books, games and puzzles—contact Chris Green imclgreen@gmail.com

- Donate pantry items (homemade jam, honey, spice mixes, etc.)—contact Mary Stepp mcstepp@yahoo.com
- Donate baked goods for our on-line bake sale—email bazaar@lascumbres.org
- Volunteer at the Bazaar (you'll have a good time!)—contact Vicki Perkins vperkins@post.com

We hope to see many of our South Skyline neighbors on November 16th!



An Update About the Ongoing Efforts to Crack Down on the Dangerous Racing Along Our Roads

BY KATHY SIMPSON

In the past few months, a concerted effort by a handful of South Skyline and Skylonda residents has produced some results in the effort to reduce the danger, noise violations and harassment from the racing and motorcycle communities that use these roads as their own, personal racetrack.

The California Highway Patrol and San Mateo County Sheriff's Office took the data presented at the spring SSA meeting at Fogarty Winery to heart. Over the course of spring and summer, they have put together multiple joint enforcement operations at Four Corners, along Skyline Boulevard and on Highways 9 and 84. We can't find exact figures but anecdotally, it seems that the two agencies combined have handed out at least 200 citations and impounded several vehicles.

This summer, for the first time thanks to the Transportation and Injury Mapping System collected in a database out of UC Berkeley, we're able to quantify the problem: 26 deaths and 854 crashes in five years on the 45 miles of road including Skyline Boulevard, Highway 84 and Highway 9. That's 170 crashes per year, on average, or 14 per month. **This is an undercount because it doesn't include side roads where crashes are frequent.** None of us will be surprised to do the math and see that is more than three per weekend.

Unfortunately, despite the added patrols, this has been a horrific summer for crashes and fatalities. For residents, three neighbors on south Skyline were involved in two high-speed crashes with devastating results (hospitalizations and lawsuits). We all need to be aware that entering a state highway from a road or a driveway puts the burden for fault on the driver entering the roadway, even if the driver on the state highway is speeding.

None of this summer's efforts were enough to prevent a cyclist's death at Four Corners on Friday, Sept. 5th, at 4:30 pm when a pest control truck turning left from Skyline onto 84 collided with a bicyclist coming into the intersection.

That accident has caused a large outcry, though, that is prompting even more enforcement.

After that fatality, SMC Sheriff focused an enforcement detail on primary collision factor violations and addressing concerns/violations at 35/84 on 9/6/2025 and issued 55 citations. Of the tickets written, 25 were for speeding

and 18 for stop sign violations. We can thank the town of Woodside and the San Mateo County Sheriff for their actions and support on this enforcement.

Caltrans/CHP have not yet done the Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) as committed in the online meeting with vista point neighbors and Caltrans.

In an online meeting on April 28, 2025, between Caltrans and neighbors local to the vista, Caltrans said it has no plan for reopening or permanently closing the vista parking lot because the cost of fixing solar gates that were broken between autumn 2020-July 2022 was \$20,000. The solar gates have been broken twice since then and left in the broken condition. Caltrans said they need to fairly allocate monies throughout the district.

From that same call, Caltrans has replaced the stolen rattlesnake sign at the entry fire lane (which is good since there has been a rattlesnake there since mid-July) and the stolen No Explosives/Flammables signs (which are the best they have for fire safety). Most recently, Caltrans in early September replaced the stolen hours closure sign at the exit as was committed in that meeting.

In August, after applying much pressure to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen), three rangers volunteered and picked up the piles of alcohol bottles and cans that I had collected in spring 2024 in the coyote brush. A few rangers and I continue daily pickups at the vista. In the last month, I have picked up over 1000 pieces of broken glass from a small section in the center of the vista hill. Midpen says glass is biodegradable, so they aren't worried about it. Caltrans won't pick up any broken glass because the crew could get injured. In my view, it could start a fire or cause an injury to wildlife or to a person/pet who walks in the vista area, so I pick it up.

Midpen has plans next year to do a fuel reduction project at the vista which means cutting all the coyote brush down. This will enable them to better see and find the litter (especially any toxic substances) that vandals regularly throw into the current brush area.

The SSA Board has begun conversations with the California State Parks Department about addressing the late-night noise, drinking, and spinning donuts at the Sempervirens Point parking lot (aka Skidpad) on Highway 9.

California Sagebrush Provides Contrasting Beauty

BY SARAH SCHOEN

California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) is an aromatic, sprawling, gray-green shrub. The contrasting color from most other foliage draws the eye.

The evergreen shrub grows 2 to 3', and sometimes up to 5' tall. Leaves are alternate and threadlike (filiform), entire or divided. Their margins are curled under, making them appear even thinner than they are. They have a strong, sagelike scent to discourage herbivory. However, they should not be used as a substitute for culinary sage, which is not related. Stems are woody at the base, narrow and flexible above.

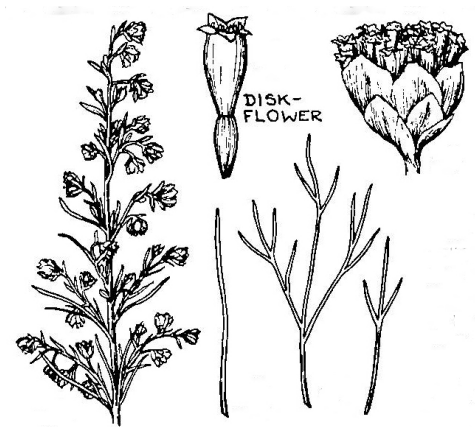
Flowers are very tiny and yellow green to yellow. A member of the

Aster Family, Asteraceae, there are disk flowers, but no ray flowers. Disk flowers are in clusters (racemes), nodding at the ends of the stems. Under a hand lens, you may view a mixture of female flowers surrounded by bisexual flowers. Fruits are light weight achenes, distributed a short distance by wind.

California sagebrush is drought tolerant. Although evergreen there are two sets of leaves. Winter leaves are larger. In hot dry conditions of summer, these can drop to the ground and be replaced by smaller leaves. Roots are shallow and threadlike, allowing them to absorb a passing light shower where the rain does not penetrate far into the soil. And their light gray-green color helps keep them cooler than plants with dark green leaves. To demonstrate this to children during field trips in the chaparral, I have them place one hand on a child's dark hat, and one hand on another child's light-colored hat. Their eyes widen and there is no argument about the effectiveness.

California sagebrush is also fire adapted. Oils are flammable and may be allelopathic, inhibiting competing species. After a low severity fire destroys the above ground portion, plants may crown sprout from the base. Seed germination is also improved after a fire due to heat cracking of the outer seed covering and to the presence of char. More deeply buried seeds can survive a medium severity fire.

An ecologically beneficial plant, California sagebrush provides cover



CA Sagebrush (McMinn 1974)

for small birds. Well to our south, it is preferred nesting habitat for the federally threatened California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*).

Once when hiking Fremont Older Preserve, I noticed a cottony substance growing over several California sagebrush plants. Anytime I see something odd growing from plants, I immediately suspect a plant gall. These growths are from tiny



CA Sagebrush in Flower



CA Sagebrush Midge Gall by Hilary Hart

insects inducing the plant to create a home for their developing larvae. Turns out it was from the California sagebrush gall midge (*Rhopalomyia floccose*). If I had dug down into the cottony mass, I would likely have

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Take a Hike: Another Side of Sam McDonald County Park

BY KIM BORICK

If you are looking for a peaceful, moderate hike under 5 miles consider some of the less traveled roads in Sam McDonald County Park. Located a few miles west of “downtown” La Honda, this 850-acre property features redwood forest, open grassland and long views of the Pescadero Creek watershed to the coast. This suggested hike is a loop that includes both wide fire roads and single-track trails. It also offers an additional detour for the curious and history buffs.

The route begins at Sam McDonald County Park’s main parking lot on Pescadero Creek Road. Look for trail signage near the picnic tables pointing to the **Towne Fire Road**. Proceed with caution across Pescadero Creek Road to connect with the road that climbs up into the redwood forest. Take a few breaks to catch your breath along this marvelous .7-mile section of your route and enjoy the sensation of being high in the treetops. Keep to the fire road all the way to the top (by-passing the trail junctions on your left.)

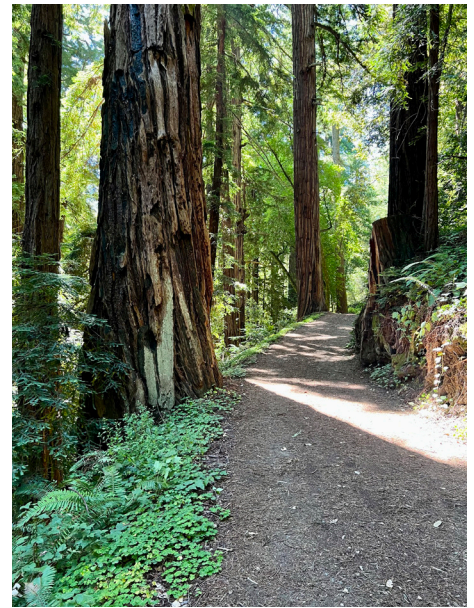
As you emerge from the forest into open grassland the road splits in two directions. Turn right and proceed gradually up the hill onto the **Ridge Fire Road** and back into the redwoods. After a short distance, the redwoods transition into mixed fir and oak woodland. Views quickly open on the west side of the ridge taking in miles of the Pescadero Creek watershed. Butano Ridge rises above the left side of the valley; look for the “bottle brush” trees on the ridge tops,

evidence of the 2020 CZU fires. To your right, there are “peeks” through the trees of Mindego Hill.

Once you’ve reached the top of the hill the remainder of this undulating 1.3-mile ridge road makes for a pleasant walk. Butterflies seem to love it up here. Watch for the remarkable fir trees with multi branch growth resembling a candelabra, dripping with lichen as if purposely decorated. On weekdays there are rarely other walkers here, but you may encounter people riding horses, especially during summer and fall when the nearby Jack Brook Horse Camp is popular. On occasion you may be passed by a park truck or someone with a horse trailer along this section of fire road.

Once you arrive to the metal gate at Pescadero Creek Road, carefully cross the roadway and re-enter the park. Continue the northerly direction you’ve been going and follow signage for the **Old Stage Road Trail**. Do not take the Forest Trail heading down the hill unless you are prepared for a steep 1.5-mile return to the parking lot. Proceed along the Old Stage Road Trail for .3 mile until you come to the junction with the **Chinook Trail**. Turn right and head deeper down into the redwood forest. In .3 miles the trail passes into the heart of the Chinook Youth Campground. There is plenty of log seating; it’s a perfect spot to take a break. As of this writing county restoration activity is underway so the camp is not being used by any groups.

Follow the road downhill through the



Sam McDonald Redwoods by Kim Borick

camp to the intersection with **Uncle Man Road** where you will turn right to complete the remaining .9 mile back to the parking lot. This will be all the nicer if you are able to time your visit with early afternoon sunlight streaming through the redwoods. Restrooms and picnic tables await at the parking lot; it’s a treat to be able to take the time to linger here.

Planning to add in the bonus? This leads you to the old forest cabin that belonged to the former owner of the park land - the legendary gentleman named Sam McDonald (1884–1957.) Instead of turning onto the Chinook Trail, stay on the Old Stage Road trail. There are a couple steep sections near the bottom where it intersects with Old Man Road. (Trekking poles come in handy.) Here you will make a short out and back detour to Sam’s cabin by turning left. Stay on the road; the residences near the creek on the right are private property. Shortly you’ll come to a clearing with an old

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CA Sagebrush Late Summer Foliage

seen the bud galls, 2 mm in diameter and tightly attached to the plant.

California sagebrush has been used medicinally and as a material of construction by many peoples. Ohlones applied a poltice of the leaves to teeth for pain, used a decoction as a bath for rheumatism or colds, and applied a poltice to the back or took a decoction for asthma. The Chumash used California sagebrush to treat headaches, the steam from sagebrush baths to treat paralysis, and the whole plant for ritual purification after a death. The wood was used to make foreshafts for composite arrows, to create windbreaks for dance areas, and as firewood. Spanish Californians treated California sagebrush as a panacea and used it in a wash to treat wounds and swelling. It was used by goldminers to rid their beds of fleas.

Inspired by indigenous uses, an NIH team investigated California sagebrush as a pain reliever. They extracted sagebrush stems and leaves, along with 2 other herbs into alcohol in the dark for several weeks. They applied a small amount of the liniment directly to the skin over areas of pain, such as arthritis. The liniment was effective primarily due to the sagebrush's monoterpenoid compounds temporarily blocking signals through TRP channels in sensory nerves. The liniment likely also had an anti-inflammatory effect.

California sagebrush is found in coastal lowlands and mountains from Marin County south into Baja California. It is tolerant of most soil types, including low nutrient soils, as long as they are well drained. In our area California sagebrush grows in coastal scrub, chaparral, and open woodlands below 2600'.

red, log cabin on your right surrounded by cyclone fence. This was Sam's beloved "Chee Chee Wa Wa."

From here, return the way you came to the junction with Old Man Road. You will re-enter the redwood forest and pass by additional youth camp outbuildings. It's an approximate 1.5 miles back to the parking lot on this route.

Who is Sam McDonald and why was he admired and respected not only during his lifetime but also decades after his death? Learn more about Sam's life and his La Honda property from the [San Mateo Co. Parks](#) website and/or his memoir published in 1954 "[Sam McDonald's Farm](#)."

Along with Heritage Grove in the Alpine Road corridor, the Sam McDonald, Memorial and Pescadero Creek County parks are interconnected and combine to form the 8,000+ acre Pescadero Creek Complex. The main parking lot for Sam McDonald Co Park is located at 13435 Pescadero Creek Road west of La Honda. Restrooms and picnic tables are available but sadly dogs are not allowed in the park. There is a fee per vehicle; this is waived for seniors on weekdays. Whether paid or free, each vehicle owner must complete the self-registration envelope to park here. Be aware that cell phone coverage in this area can be spotty to non-existent. If the park and area are new to you, you may want to download the park's trail map before you visit or review the large map at the parking lot before starting your hike. Happy Trails!



Sam McDonald Ridge Hikers by Kim Borick

Wild Turkey: An Introduced Species

SUBMITTED BY FREDDY HOWELL IN OCTOBER 2001 SKYLINES

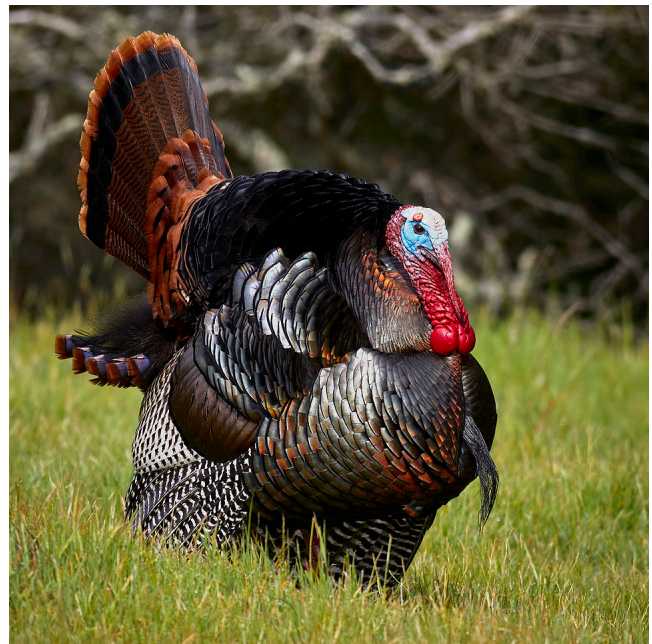
There is a lot of folklore surrounding the Wild Turkey: first Thanksgiving, turkey shoots and Benjamin Franklin's choice for the national bird. Wild Turkeys are native to the Eastern and Midwestern parts of the country. They are not native to California. In the East, native populations were greatly depleted in the early 20th century due to habitat destruction and over hunting but have been reintroduced to their native lands. According to David Sibley's *Guide to Birds*, birds of mixed ancestry have been widely introduced beyond their natural range and are now found further north and much further west than ever before.

Meleagris gallopavo in scientific circles, is truly a magnificent bird when seen close up. Some of its feathers are beautifully mottled in brown and buff; others are striped in dark brown and white. The males are particularly stunning when strutting their stuff with full tail up and fanned, face wattle swelled up and humming gutturally to attract one or more mates. These are not small birds. Beak to tail, our turkeys range from 37" (50" wingspan) for females, to 46" (64" wingspan) for males. While they don't weigh as much as their domestic counterparts, the males average 16 pounds and the females about 9.

Their main habitat is in woods, mountain forests and wooded swamps. According to Kenn Kaufman's *Lives of North American Birds*, depending on the part of the country, they are also found in pine-oak forest, chaparral and arid grasslands. They are usually found near some type of oak, as acorns are a favorite food. Therefore, we see them all over the place. One family has a whole flock of turkeys, one tom with his harem of females and several adolescents that slowly meander through the "wash" behind a cluster of homes. Periodically, they come up on the deck for a better

view, with one brave soul venturing onto the roof as they look out. Most of their diet consists of what can be found on the ground: berries, leaves, grasses, roots, bulbs.

Springtime brings thoughts of love (lust?!?) for the turkeys and after all the display and mating, the female scratches a nest on the ground and lines it with grass and leaves. She lays 8–15 eggs, white to pale buff and dotted with reddish brown. Since females sometimes share the same male, there may be more than one female's eggs in one nest. It seems as if just one female gets the incubation and nursery duty. Incubation takes about 25–31 days. The little downy chicks are pretty self-sufficient. They can feed themselves almost immediately, can fly short distances at 1–2 weeks and are full-grown in several months.



Ha Ha!

*Why do vampire bats drink blood?
Because coffee keeps them awake at night.*



Classified Ads

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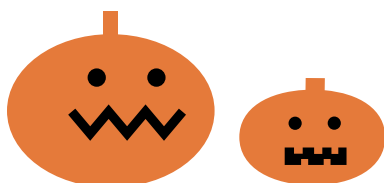
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When placing an ad: Please limit each ad to 45 words. Due to many requests, we will attempt to keep a list of ads that will run every issue. However, there is no guarantee that an ad won't be missed because of our changes in staff. If you want to be on the list, make a request to "run until canceled." It is best to resubmit ads for each issue. Next deadline:

December 7, 2025.

Classified Ads are free for SSA members. Membership is \$20 per year. The online SSA membership application is at www.southskyline.org. Email ads to: skylineseditor@yahoo.com



SSA Calendar 2025

Monthly SSA Board Meetings 7:00pm

November 13
December 11
January 8

For further updates
contact Udy Gold:
president@southskyline.org

Current SSA Board Members

Dave Anderson	Highway 9 – Santa Cruz County	Webmaster, Public Safety
Patti Begley	Highway 9 – Santa Cruz County	Skylines Editor, Website Committee
Barbara Bekins	Highway 35 – Rocky Creek	Treasurer, Public Safety/Water, Website Committee
Noa Doitel	Skyline Blvd. – Windy Hill Area	
Evan Dellor	Portola Heights	Vice-President
Udy Gold	Portola Heights	President
Rich Lee	Portola Heights	SSEPO, Chief Fun Officer
Susan Stucky	Portola Heights	Grant Administrator
Ann Waldhauer	Portola Heights	
Matt Voss	Skylonda	Hospitality

Board positions are available.

Contact Udy Gold – president@southskyline.org

Skylines Ads and News Articles

The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is **December 7, 2025**

Skylines is published once a quarter: January/April/July/October

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Limit ads to 45 words. Free for SSA members.

Send all ads and articles to: SkylinesEditor@yahoo.com

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