



Skylines

SSA Speaker Series

Bats and Vineyards

PRESENTER: DR. DAVE JOHNSTON



Our speaker, Dr. Dave Johnston, will introduce you to many of the bats found in the Santa Cruz Mountains and describe how vital they are to our general ecology. He will talk about the issues bat populations face today here in the Bay Area and in North America. Dr. Johnston will discuss how to attract bats to vineyards and learn about the many pest species that bats consume in agricultural settings. Dave will also introduce the audience to some of the more unusual bats found around the world.

Dr. Dave Johnston is an Adjunct Associate Wildlife Ecologist and Bat Biologist at H. T. Harvey & Associates. Dave is a vertebrate ecologist who specializes in the foraging ecology and conservation biology of bats. He has studied bats for over 30 years and for the past 15 years he has focused on renewable energy and transportation projects in California and Hawaii. He has ongoing research projects involving the foraging ecology of bats in California,

Friday, April 24, 2026

TIME 7:00 pm – Refreshments
7:30 pm – Bats and Vineyards
presentation by Dr. Dave Johnston

PLACE *Thomas Fogarty Winery*
Hill House, 19501 Skyline Blvd
2.7 miles north of Page Mill Rd.,
across from Rapley Ranch Rd.



By Ami Jaqua

Fogarty wines will be available. We request a donation of \$10.00 per glass. Cash only. Light hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks will be provided.

Belize, and Costa Rica. Dr. Johnston is a hobby winemaker who started making wine as a student at CalPoly, San Luis Obispo, and he recently received the Alfred Nelson Lifetime Achievement award from Marqui's Who's Who in America.

IN THIS ISSUE

SSA Speaker Series.....	1	SSF&R News.....	5	Midpen News	10
South Skyline Association News	2	Focus on 'Zone Zero'.....	6	Classified Ads	11
SPUG Report.....	2	Hedgenettles	7	Special Attachment:	
What Do You Mean, Fire Safe?	4	Wonder of a Cool Breeze	8	Pumas of San Mateo County	

What the SSA is Doing

BY UDY GOLD, PRESIDENT, SSA

Strengthening Our Mountain Community – Together

Living in the Santa Cruz Mountains is a choice rooted in independence, resilience, and a deep connection to place. It also comes with shared challenges—winding roads, wildfire risk, access to services, and the ongoing need to ensure our voices are heard beyond our ridgelines. That is why SSA exists.

SSA represents more than 2,000 households across the Santa Cruz Mountains. Our mission is simple but powerful: to protect, advocate for, and strengthen our mountain communities. We focus on the big-picture issues that affect all of us—so individual residents don’t have to navigate complex systems alone—and we ensure that the realities of mountain life are understood by those making decisions that affect us.

Advocacy That Matters

One of SSA’s most important roles is monitoring legislation and regulatory changes that impact mountain residents. From land-use policy and insurance challenges to infrastructure funding and emergency response planning, SSA stays engaged so our communities are not an afterthought.

In 2025, SSA took a major step forward in addressing one of our most pressing shared concerns: safety on mountain roads. We convened a town hall meeting that brought together an unprecedented group of agencies, including the California Highway Patrol, County Sheriffs from Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Mateo Counties, Caltrans, and county managers. Together with community members, we discussed racing, speeding, and the increase in non-local traffic on our mountain roads.

This was a powerful example of what collective advocacy can achieve—creating a space where residents could be heard directly, and where agencies could better understand the lived experience of those who call these roads home.

Safety, Preparedness, and Connection

Safety and preparedness remain core priorities for SSA, particularly in a region where geography shapes daily life. Beyond roads and emergency access, SSA continues to support efforts related to fire prevention, evacuation planning, and community resilience. A prepared community is a safer community—and preparedness starts with shared understanding.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SPUG Price Report

Month/Year	Amerigas	Ferrellgas	Kamps	Suburban/SV
March 2026	2.750	3.060	3.411	4.500
February 2026	2.750	3.074	3.412	4.520
January 2026	2.750	2.998	3.412	4.520
December 2025	2.750	2.944	3.362	4.520
November 2025	2.750	2.911	3.190	4.520
October 2025	2.750	2.849	3.190	4.520
September 2025	2.750	2.742	3.190	4.520
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

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or current information on the SPUG 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.

At the same time, SSA recognizes that strong communities are built not only through advocacy, but through connection. In 2025, we hosted multiple educational lectures exploring the rich history of the Santa Cruz Mountains—covering topics such as the early mountain roads, the trains and carriages that existed before automobiles, and the critical role of water in shaping mountain life.

We also came together for a joyful community event filled with games, art, and a memorable potluck that showcased the creativity, generosity, and spirit of our neighbors. These moments remind us that SSA is not just an organization—it is a community.

Investing in Our Communities

SSA is not only about advocacy; it is also about investing directly in our mountain communities. Through grants and support for local projects, SSA helps turn community ideas into reality—strengthening neighborhoods, improving safety, and fostering collaboration among residents.

Be Part of the Change—Get Involved

SSA is not just an organization that represents the community—it is the community. Our effectiveness depends on the involvement, ideas, and energy of the people who live here.

We are actively seeking residents who would like to join the SSA Board and help guide our work. If you care about the future of the Santa Cruz Mountains and want to be part of meaningful change—whether through advocacy, community-building, safety, or education—we invite you to step forward. Board service is an opportunity to have a real impact, work alongside engaged neighbors, and help shape the direction of our mountain communities.

Just as importantly, we want to hear from you. If there are issues you believe SSA should be addressing—areas where you feel support, advocacy, or coordination is needed, or topics we are not currently active in—please let us know. Your perspective helps ensure that SSA remains relevant, responsive, and focused on what matters most to our residents.

Let's Shape the Future Together

The challenges facing our region are complex, but our collective strength is greater. When residents speak up, get involved, and work together, real progress happens. Whether you join the board, attend events, share ideas, or simply stay engaged, your participation makes a difference.

Your Voice Matters

We also want to hear from you. While SSA works across many areas, we know there may be issues, domains, or community needs where we are not currently active—or not active enough. If there are ways you believe SSA could better serve you or your community, we invite you to share your ideas and concerns. Your input helps us evolve, improve, and stay aligned with what matters most to the people we represent.

Looking Ahead

The challenges facing our region are ongoing, but so is our commitment. SSA will continue to:

- Advocate for fair and informed legislation
- Champion road safety, emergency preparedness, and fire prevention
- Support educational and community-building events
- Invest in community-led projects
- Expand opportunities for resident involvement and leadership
- Serve as a strong, trusted voice for mountain residents

Thank you for being part of SSA and for helping to build a safer, stronger, and more connected mountain community. Together, we are not only preserving mountain life—we are shaping its future and continue to protect what makes this place special—and ensure it thrives for generations to come.

What Do You Mean, Fire Safe?

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

In This Article

1. SSFSC News
2. What's in Your Wallet (and Glovebox) When You Have to Evacuate?
3. Managing your Defensible Space through the Seasons: Spring

1. South Skyline FireSafe Council News

CHIPPING PROGRAM CHANGE: In 2026, we will transition from our twice-yearly (spring and fall) chipping schedule to a single annual session. The dates for this year's program had not been decided at the time this article was created. Watch, as in the past, for the roadside banners, email group notices, and a notice on the [FireSafe Council's website](#) that will announce the 2026 chipping schedule.

2. What's in Your Wallet (and Glovebox) When You Have to Evacuate?

What if you receive official notice that you, family, pets, and livestock must evacuate immediately? Hopefully you have, and have read, and have it where you can read it again, the latest, updated edition

of your FireSafe Council's Prepared, Not Scared pamphlet.

I'm writing this article from the experience of my wife and I having been evacuated. In 2020 we were evacuated for 19 days due to the threat of the CZU Complex fire. Our reference guide in preparation for the next time is this pamphlet. I have already printed copies and placed them into the gloveboxes of all our vehicles. In my wallet, I now carry the new Prepared, Not Scared card. The size of a business card, it can link you to the online contacts and information contained in the pamphlet via your cell phone.

Here's the overview of the contents of the pamphlet:

- How to sign up for your county's alerts now.
- How to determine your Evacuation Zone ID.
- Phone apps to install and websites for staying informed.
- Getting ready to go when fire threat is imminent.
- What should be in your GO BAGS?
- Time to go! Resident information form to post in front window for responders.
- What if you can't evacuate?
- What if you're trapped in a vehicle?
- What if you're trapped on foot?

I suggest everyone read the pamphlet now. Click or scan the QR code included below to access the Prepared, Not Scared Cheatsheet online. This sheet includes directions on how to print your own pamphlet and wallet card.



You can request that the pamphlet and card be mailed to you SSFSC.outreach@gmail.com. Copies will also be available at community events.



CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

BY ANDY SEIGEL, CAPTAIN, SSF&R

This year has continued at a slower pace for incidents—a welcome respite after last year’s record call volume. In late January, I traveled to Lyons, South Dakota for water tender “pre-construction” meetings at the Rosenbauer factory. It’s a very busy place with over 70 apparatus in various stages of assembly inside, and another 50 outside waiting for their next stage of production.

This new water tender will be a big improvement on our current WT2951, starting from the severe duty chassis it will be built on. With twice the storage, twice the pump capacity, and the ability to dump the water from inside the cab (and left, right, and rear dumps), it’s surprising that it will be less than 4 inches longer than WT2951!

Pancake Breakfast!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 23rd, 2026, from 8–11am at the Saratoga Summit Cal Fire Station, 12900 Skyline Blvd. Still made from scratch, only \$10 per person, all you can eat, and free for kids under 12. We hope to see you there!



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



FIRE SAFE CONTINUATION

3. Managing your Defensible Space in the Spring.

- Start pruning and thinning now if you want to participate in the free chipping program this summer. See the website for [chipping prep](#).
- For those in Santa Cruz County that participate in the Backyard Burning program, you have no more than at most a couple of weeks left to wrap up for the season.
- When your grasslands begin to dry, it is the time to mow and “weed-whack”, putting that flammable biomass onto the ground and reducing your wildfire risk.
- Spring is also the season for home inspections to determine your readiness for the coming fire season. You can request a [free, confidential inspection](#) by your FireSafe Council or do it yourself with our [inspection form](#).

Focus on 'Zone Zero'

BY NIKKI HANSON – SSFSC BOARD MEMBER

Q: When it comes to fire-preparing my property, where is my most important area to focus on?

A: "Home hardening" and "Zone Zero," a.k.a. the structure and its immediate 5-ft buffer.

Although fire season might not be in the forefront of our minds right now, spring is an ideal time to see what we can do to improve the ember-resistance of our homes for the all-too-quickly approaching dry season. In recent decades and years, numerous large-scale wildfires have generated a large amount of in-situ data (among all the devastation). Researchers can use this information to see what qualities in a structure's environment and construction enable it to survive a fire. The data have shown, in addition to ingress/egress, the most critical fire-safety measures involve ember-proofing your structure and the immediate 5 ft perimeter. The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety is an independent organization dedicated to applied research, which has allowed for further testing in controlled experiments, and deeper understanding of how to build homes that will survive fires

(<https://ibhs.org/risk-research/wildfire/>). With so many details and suggestions, the process of modifying your structure can certainly be daunting! That said, having a visual guide can at least make home hardening and defensible space more readily understood. Check out this free PDF with all the latest recommendations including many helpful illustrations:

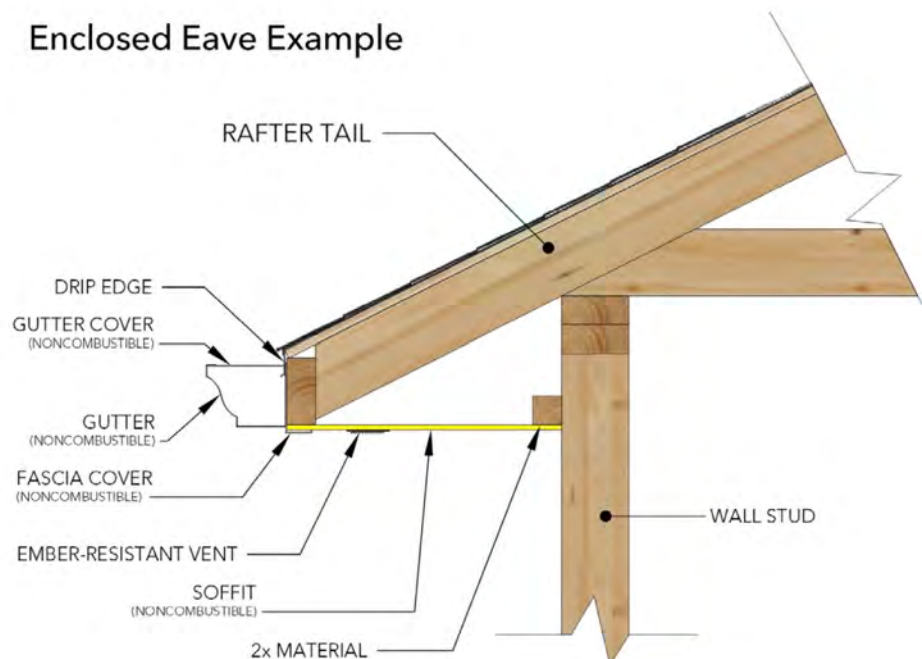
<https://wildfireprepared.org/wp-content/uploads/WPH-How-To-Prepare-My-Home-Checklist.pdf>

For an abbreviated version of home hardening recommendations, check out South Skyline FireSafe Council's recently updated home "inspection form," a concise double-sided 1-pager, which is available to download on our website: <https://www.southskylinefiresafe.org/programs-2/home-advisory-program/>.

For further assistance in home hardening and defensible space, please reach out to us for a free and confidential home advisory consult! homeadvisory.ssfsc@gmail.com

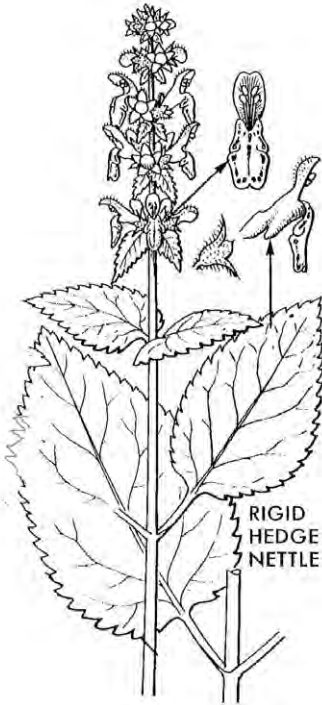


Enclosed Eave Example



Hedgenettles Border the Trails

BY SARAH SCHOEN



Rigid Hedgenettle, Niehaus and Ripper 1976

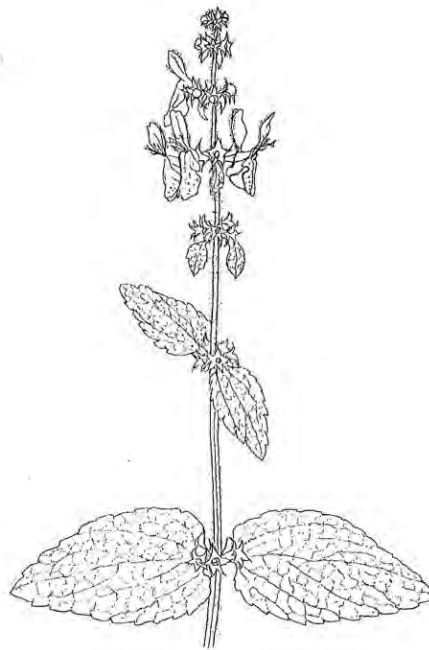
Hedgenettles are perennial herbs in the mint family Laminaceae. They all belong to the genus *Stachys*, Greek for ear of grain. It refers to the spike of flowers on the stem. There are at least 3 different hedgenettles in South Skyline. All have square stems and opposite leaves.

The first and most common is rough hedgenettle (*Stachys rigida*). Leaves and stems are both covered with stiff, sometimes sticky hairs. *Rigida* is for the rigid hairs. Leaves are rounded with toothed margins. Veins on the surface are prominent, giving the leaves a cobbled appearance.

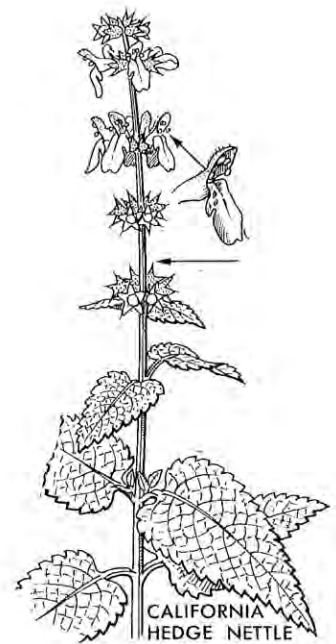
Flowers of all the species have 5 fused petals in 2 lips. The upper lip is made of 2 petals and the lower lip of 3. The flowers are bilaterally symmetrical from left to right. There is a floral tube (corolla) connecting each flower to the stem. Flowers have 4 exerted stamens and 1 exerted pistil.

Rough hedgenettle flowers grow on the upper stem from the leaf axils—the connection between the leaves and the stem. There are 3 or more flowers at each axil. Like most members of *Stachys*, there is a protuberance called a bulb at the base of the corolla. Inside the corolla, about midway, is a ring of hairs. These are strongly oblique. The flowers are pink or purple with white spots. They bloom from March to July.

California hedgenettle (*S. bullata*) is more delicate with a weaker stem. Leaves have deep veins, giving them a wrinkled appearance. *Bullata* means wrinkled or puckered. The leaves are soft with soft hairs and the base is heart-shaped (cordate). When leaves are crushed, some detect an aroma of lemon or citrus. Flowers are pink or lavender with white spots and grow at the top of the stem. The corolla does not have a bulb. Inside the corolla,



Bugle Hedgnettle, Keator 1994



CA Hedgenettle, Niehaus and Ripper 1976

the hairs are horizontal and near the base. The fused sepals (calyx) are spiny at the tips. These flowers bloom from March to September.

Bugle hedgenettle (*S. ajugoides*) has narrower leaves with a wedge-shaped base. Flowers can be mostly white or light pink with some pink or purple lines and spots and have a bulb at the base of the corolla. Inside the corolla, about midway, hairs are strongly oblique. Flowers bloom in whorls from the leaf axils from April to September.

Hedgenettle flowers provide nectar for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The lower lip is a landing pad (if needed) and the spots and lines show the way to the nectary.

Ohlones used California hedgenettle medicinally. It was used as a poultice externally or a decoction internally to treat swollen or infected sores, stomach aches, and sore throats. A poultice was also used to treat earaches.

Wonder of a Cool Breeze

BY WILL WYMAN

I returned to the green foothills late in life after wandering around along the California coast for many years. It had been decades since I walked down the historic, dusty gravel road known as Rapley Ranch Trail. It was an unseasonably hot day and as soon as I heard the cool sound of water in Woodruff Creek I felt at ease. The road meandered through dark woodlands filled with oaks, conifers, madrone and bay, all leaning to and fro, fighting for daylight. I couldn't help but let my mind wander.

I wondered about what happened to the pioneering rancher, Jimmy Rapley, toothless and blind in old age but still able to tell tall tales of the old Stagecoach Saloon, a popular way station during the gold rush days welcoming loggers and hunters and fisherman who were coming and going from the Coast to Redwood City. I also couldn't help but think about the Ohlone and Muwekma tribes and wondered what these Native Americans thought of the relentless tide of white pioneers that claimed their tribal lands and disrupted the natural balance of life. Where are they now? Gone like the wind?

Eventually, after taking a left at the old Halfway House that guards the historic Stage Coach Saloon, now a jumble of old weathered boards and broken windows, at the entrance to Langley Hill Quarry, the joyful bubbling melody of Woodruff Creek grew faint and evaporated into the blue sky, as the road climbed on up to greater vistas and greener pastures. After cresting the summit, I found myself on a lonely ridge top with a view of the setting sun, all aglow out on the distant Pacific Ocean, refreshing and renewing my tired spirit.

The Skylines welcomes and encourages submission of creative writing efforts from our South Skyline residents. The following story is this author's second contribution. Enjoy his story "Donkeys in the Dust" in the January 2026 Skylines. (Send articles to skylineseditor@yahoo.com)

I felt grateful for the peace and quiet of these green foothills west of Highway 280, where wild animals can still prowl without fear of being displaced by the never-ending development of human civilization down in Silicon Valley. I can't really begin to describe the warmth and peaceful feeling that was flowing through me.

Then I came around a bend and practically stumbled over a dead rattlesnake and saw the animal tracks. Lots of paw prints, either a bobcat or a mountain lion leading off into the brush. Suddenly I heard the bushes rustle and felt the hair on the back of my neck stand up. Once the apex predators of the Northern California environment, now mountain lions are so scarce they are on the endangered species list. But they are still on the prowl, rarely attacking humans thank goodness, and are still a protected species.

After throwing a few stones into the bushes, suddenly there was some movement. So, I hollered loud and clear, "Go on, I'm not your dinner, get along!" as not one, but three mountain lions, one large female and two of her kittens, bolted out of the brush and across the road bounding gracefully down into the canyon where Mindego Creek flowed. Apparently, they were more thirsty than hungry, thank goodness!

Eventually, after quite a few deep breaths, my heart stopped beating like a hummingbird and my pulse returned to normal. I couldn't help but contemplate the wonder of life while gazing at

the glowing golden hills of Langley, Mindego, Skyline Ridge, and Windy Hill up on the radiant skyline just east and soaring above the quiet little hamlet of La Honda. As the sun sparkled and melted into the ocean, a cool breeze picked up, lifting my spirits like the soaring red tail hawks that circled on the thermals in search of prey, transporting my thoughts to another place, far, far away.

Suddenly I was around a campfire with my father, and about a dozen friends from Stanford's English Department, in the magical Milestone Basin of the Sierra Nevada. We were laughing and recalling how we tracked and rustled seven skittish donkeys on that frosty morning, leading them back to camp from their perch on a sunny bench miles from camp. Then after we finished shoveling down some granola for breakfast, we packed them all up before our long dusty trek over Forester Pass later in the day, which became quite an adventure during a wild summer snowstorm.

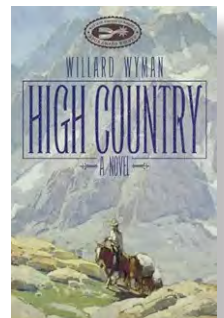
Not only was he a trail wise packer, but he was also a former student of Wally Stegner, who must have been a great teacher, as my dear old dad also loved the sound of mountain water and had a way with words, some might say a bit irreverent even, weaving them into wonderful stories about a different time in a different place, when he was a young cowboy learning the ropes as a packer in Montana. Just like Woodruff Creek, weaving down alongside the historic Rapley Trail into the wooded canyon west of Skyline Ridge and north of Langley Hill Quarry, I hung on to my father's every word, which I stored away like hay in a barn for future use someday.

Now that he's gone over the final pass, I think of him often. The old packer's stories give me perspective on the relative ease of my modern life. Yet I'm also grateful to have had a chance as a big-eyed child to ride horseback with him on the wild and windy trails of Langley Hill. Or to wake up early before dawn to rustle the kicking and biting donkeys into old trucks and head east, across the central valley before it heats up, for the cool climate, awe inspiring alpenglow, and rocky trails of the High Sierra. Those were surely some memorable summer camping trips, where I learned not only to pack and track but also to wrestle words into flowing sentences, wild stories, and tall tales from the High Sierra trails.

Nothing quite like packing donkeys in the high country of Kings Canyon or Sequoia National Park. I cherish those fleeting moments, and know there is a wild connection, whether I'm walking down the Rapley Trail recalling my youth in the glorious green foothills of the Bay Area or hiking over Forester Pass in the majestic High Sierra.

Editor's note:

The author's father, Willard Wyman, was an award-winning author and South Skyline resident. In 2007 he was a guest speaker at the SSA meeting at Fogarty Winery. He shared how he drew from his own personal experiences as wrangler, guide, and mule packer, as a genesis for his fictional novel **High Country**. This first novel won two Spur Awards in 2006 for Best First Novel, and Best Novel of the West.



A Spring Hike with Your Dog

Check out this Midpen Guided Activity

Tails & Twilight Trails

Saturday, May 9, 2026

7:00 pm–9:00 pm

Windy Hill Preserve

Approximate Total Miles–3

Join Docent Naturalists Ani Agahian, Mary Ann Frank and Minh Pham for a serene sunset adventure. You and your dog (or just you!) will travel the Betsy Crowder Trail around Sausal Pond on this moderately-paced hike before beginning your ascent partway up Spring Ridge Trail for spectacular views of the Santa Clara Valley. Along the way you'll dive into the rich history of the land and explore nature's nightlife. Dogs are welcome but not required—just your sense of curiosity and love for outdoors. Remember to bring a flashlight. **Reservations are required and will be accepted on or after April 25 at 12:00 p.m. (Noon) and close May 8 at 2:00 p.m.**



Where to Meet

The Lower Windy Hill Parking Area at the lower portion of the preserve is located on Portola Road. Please note: This parking lot fills quickly. Please do not park on Portola Road: parking is strictly enforced.

For more information go to <https://www.openspace.org/events/guided-activities/tails-twilight-trails-3>



Join Midpen at Our Skyline Field Office Project Open House

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) is building a new Field Office on Skyline Blvd., and they are extending the following invitation for the South Skyline community.

Please join the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for an Open House.

Date: Saturday, June 6th

Time: 10am to 2pm

Place: Skyline Ridge Parking Lot (22000 Skyline Blvd) to discuss our proposal for a new Skyline Field Office at 1185 Skyline Blvd, Palo Alto.

Site plans, floor plans, building elevations and visual simulations will be on display, and staff will be available to answer any questions that you might have. We look forward to seeing you there.

Classified Ads

Community

FREE FIRE FITTING FOR THOSE IN THE SOUTH SKYLINE FIRE & RESCUE PRIMARY RESPONSE AREA.

This 2 ½ inch fitting will allow the connection of a fire hose to your water supply and can be utilized by the fire department to access the water necessary for fire suppression. Blue reflectors are also available. Please visit <http://southskylinefire.org/> for more information in the "Help us help you" section.

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

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CUSTOM GATES: Enhance and Protect your property. You have seen Bill Sorich's metal gates and art along Skyline Blvd. including the Fogarty Winery.
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DOG DAYS—AWARD WINNING DOG TRAINING SINCE 1995

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A local and reliable business that specializes in Crown thinning & cleaning, Hazardous tree removal, poison oak removal, and property cleanup, 24/7 emergency. Free estimate. Insured and bonded. CSL#991767 650-208-2734
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919 Washington St., San Carlos. Award winning wines, many Santa Cruz Mountain varietals. Tasting room open Fridays 5-9 pm and Saturdays/Sundays 12-5 pm.

SOLAR CONSULTATION

For a free, no obligation solar consultation from your mountain neighbor, please contact David Morgan dmorgan@simplysolarcalifornia.com (408) 348-5781. Simply Solar is a local Northern California company installing North American made panels.

SKYLINE BROADBAND SERVICE

Offering high-speed wireless Internet with speeds up to 50 Mbps in much of our 500-square-mile coverage area.
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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:

June 7, 2026.

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 2026 Monthly SSA Board Meetings 7:00pm

May 14
June 11
July 9

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	Skylonda	
Evan Dellor	Portola Heights	Vice-President
Udy Gold	Portola Heights	President
Rich Lee	Portola Heights	SSEPO, Chief Fun Officer
Ann Waldhauer	Portola Heights	Secretary
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 **June 7, 2026**

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.

PUMAS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

HISTORY AND LEGAL STATUS OF PUMAS IN CALIFORNIA

From 1907-1963, a bounty hunting program paid hunters to kill mountain lions in California. In 1990, California voters passed Proposition 117, which permanently banned the hunting of mountain lions and established them as a “specially protected mammal.” In 2020, the California Fish and Game Commission listed pumas in this region as a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act.

Adapted from "Coexisting with mountain lions" by True Wild and All Hands Ecology (formerly Audubon Canyon Ranch).

Published Sept. 2025

Photos: All Hands Ecology, Luiz Barroso, Bigstock Images, Ashley DeMeyere, David Foster, Richie King, Kate Remsen, UC Santa Cruz Puma Project

Maps: Google Earth

Illustrations: WildFutures, Panthera



PUMAS ARE NATIVE CARNIVORES IN SAN MATEO COUNTY



*Also called mountain lions, cougars, or panthers
- they are all the same species!*

Pumas like to stay hidden, preferring areas of connected cover provided by bushes, creeks, drainages, and areas with dense vegetation.

Creeks and ravines are often used as corridors through otherwise open or developed areas.

Pumas try to avoid people and are most active at night between **dusk** and **dawn**.

PUMAS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL ROLE

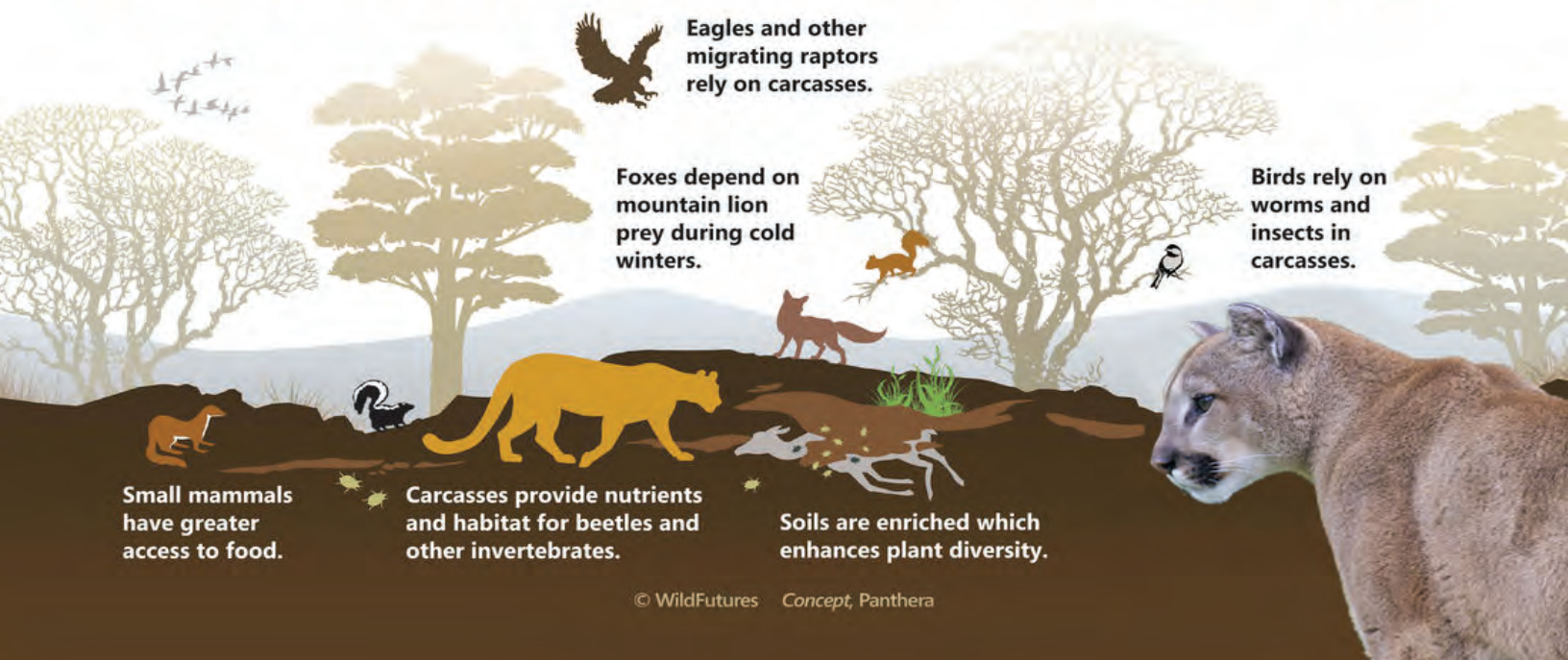
In San Mateo County, pumas are currently the only large carnivore and primary predator of deer. By hunting deer, pumas influence deer movement. Their leftovers also provide food for many other species, such as turkey vultures, eagles, and beetles.

Pumas cannot roar, but they can purr. They also can make a caterwaul, which can easily be mistaken for a human cry or scream. Females caterwaul when they are ready to mate.. Young kittens make birdlike chirps and mews.

Pumas are important to a healthy ecosystem!

Taking steps to avoid conflict will protect pets, livestock, and wildlife.

Mountain Lions Increase an Ecosystem's Health and Biodiversity

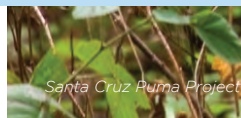


PUMAS...

🐾...can jump 15 feet high and 40 feet across

🐾...can fit through a 7-inch diameter hole

🐾...are most active between dusk and dawn



Pumas have large territories and occur at low densities.

A male's territory typically overlaps with multiple females' territories. UC Santa Cruz Puma Project has found that in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the average territory size is 73 sq. miles for males and 30 sq. miles for females.

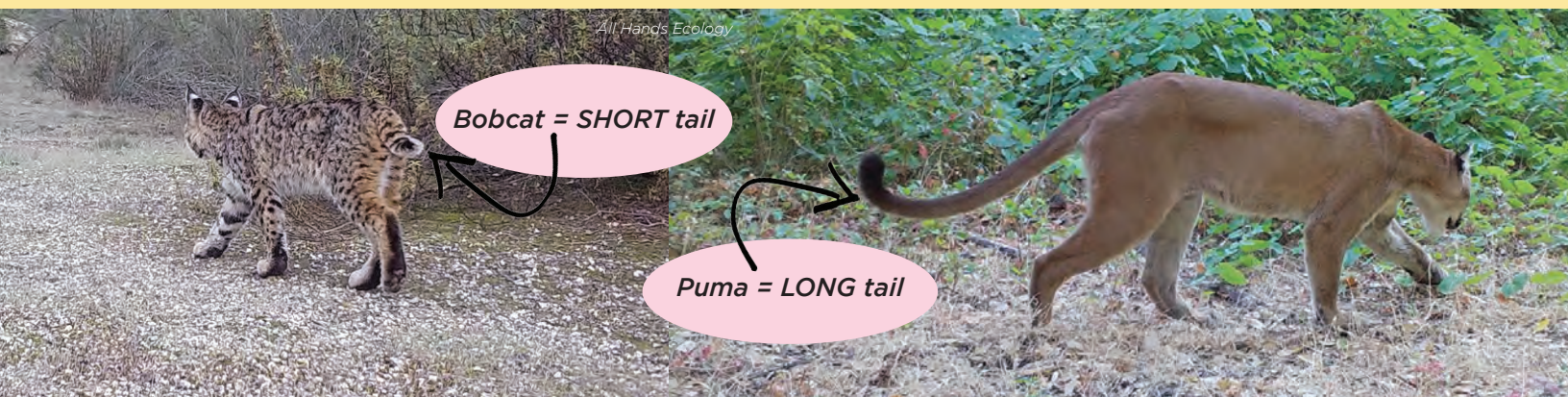


Males and females spend 2 to 3 days together when they are breeding.

Kittens can be born any time of year and stay with their mom until they are 12 to 18 months old. If you find a kitten, do not touch or attempt to catch it. Report it to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) at (707) 944-5531

Bobcats are often mistaken for pumas.

In photos, it can be difficult to tell the animal's size; the best way to differentiate the two species is by tail length - bobcats have short tails while pumas have very long tails.



HOW TO KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE

Add these strategies to your pet care routine:



The safest place for a cat is indoors, especially between dusk and dawn.

Build an outdoor enclosed area, like a “catio” to give your cats the benefit of being outside but the safety of being inside.

Keep dogs leashed. Pay attention to their behavior as dogs can often sense wildlife long before you do.

Feed your pets inside and keep pet food in a secure and locked container. Accessible pet food often attracts smaller mammals such as raccoons and rats, which then can attract larger predators like coyotes and pumas.



Steps to take while hiking or biking:

- Hike in pairs or groups, especially if hiking between dusk and dawn
- Wear a helmet when mountain biking
- Keep young children close



SPOT A PUMA? FOLLOW THESE STEPS!

Encountering a puma in the wild is rare and they typically are not a threat to people. Attacks on people are incredibly rare. Enjoy the sighting and consider these general safety guidelines:

-  If you encounter a puma, **never approach it** and **never run from it**. Pick up small children without turning your back to the puma. Leave the puma an escape route.
-  If the puma approaches or acts aggressively toward you, **wave your arms to look bigger, shout, and throw rocks, a water bottle, or backpack** if it attacks.
-  If attacked, **fight back**. Pumas have given up on attacks when people fought back.



In San Mateo County, pumas primarily eat deer.

However, they will also feed on almost any other animals including coyote, rodents, and raccoons.



Pumas typically drag their prey to an area with cover to feed. Remains will often be “cached” (covered with sticks and soil) for them to **return to feed on every night until the carcass is fully consumed.**



Any puma that comes across *unprotected* pets or livestock may view them as prey - *this is not unusual behavior.*

Killing a puma for preying on pets or livestock causes the vacant territory to be filled by one or more pumas and *does not solve* the underlying risk to unprotected domestic animals.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR LIVESTOCK SAFE

The best way to keep your livestock safe is to put them in a predator-proof-pen overnight from dusk till dawn.

A predator-proof-pen includes a fully enclosed and secure roof and no gaps bigger than 7” in diameter.

When building a predator-proof pen and deciding where to graze your animals in early mornings and late afternoons, consider the following (next page):

This is just one example - there are lots of other ways to create an enclosure!



CONDUCT YOUR OWN RISK ASSESSMENT

Does your property include lots of thick vegetation or a creek that pumas may use as movement corridors? Do you frequently see deer? Do you live near open space?

CREATE A VISUAL BARRIER

Pumas are visual predators so having a visual barrier (like shade cloth around the lower part of the pen) may reduce the chance of livestock being harassed or injured through the fence.

AVOID THICK VEGETATION

Place the pen in an open area away from vegetation cover and wildlife corridors, like creeks.

BE CONSISTENT!

That one time you forget to put your animals in their night pen may be the one time a puma happens to walk past.

RECYCLE, REUSE, RE-PURPOSE

It is often possible to use existing infrastructure or materials to make a secure predator-proof pen.

***Want a free on-site consultation for how best to keep your animals safe?
Contact Dr. Carolyn Whitesell: cawhitesell@ucanr.edu***

Santa Cruz Puma Project

UC Santa Cruz Puma Project uses GPS tracking collars and other techniques to study pumas in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

UC Santa Cruz Puma Project: santacruzpumas.org

CA Department of Fish and Wildlife: wildlife.ca.gov

If a puma poses an imminent threat, **call 911**

Wildlife Incident Reporting (WIR) for non-emergency wildlife sightings or incidents: apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir

**UC Cooperative
Extension**

