

The Clear Print

The San Diego Tracking Team Newsletter



Presenting the Daley Ranch Tracking Team

By Duane Boney

A tracking team on Daley Ranch has been in the planning stages for almost two years, and what was once merely a nice idea has now come to fruition. It would never have been possible unless the San Diego Tracking Team was involved. SDTT has the experience, legitimacy and ability to mentor in citizen science that most local organizations do not have. Last spring, Barry Martin, the founder of SDTT, came up to Dixon Lake in Escondido and put on a tracking workshop and led a tracking hike. That really garnered some interest and caused a snowball effect on the motivation of a number of potential trackers. In addition, Sally Thomas, the President of the Friends of Daley Ranch was at that workshop and immediately saw the potential to gather data that might be used to convince people of the necessity of habitat purchases to keep the Daley Ranch from being completely isolated.

The Friends of Daley Ranch and the Daley Ranch Volunteers paid for six scholarships for the beginning tracker/naturalist class and six more scholarships for the intermediate class. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve Tracking Team, the original team that went on to form the umbrella organization SDTT, did all the training at Peñasquitos Ranch House. During that time, April through July, I organized four monthly hikes to keep the trackers fired up and to get some dirt time. On July 17th, Barry and I went out and set up a transect on the Daley Ranch in anticipation of surveying it with the summer survey. We will do our first survey on Sunday, August 22nd, at 6 AM. We hope to have at least one or two more transects set up for the fall.

Right now our main focus is to do what we can to establish and maintain a wildlife corridor to the east of Daley Ranch that reaches into the more immediate backcountry in and around Valley Center. Without the support and sponsorship of the San Diego Tracking Team and The Friends of Daley Ranch, this never would have been possible. The Daley Ranch Tracking Team is now a reality and we now have a wonderful opportunity to contribute to conservation in the San Diego region.

Thank You, Database Volunteers

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who have done the data entry work over the last several years - Harry Manning in 2002, Tylene Williford in 2003 and now Sundeep Amin in 2004. Without them we would not be able to make use of all the data we have collected over the years in our many surveys! And through their feedback about the data entry process, we are now making a few changes to the database to make data entry easier and less error prone in the future.

Lois Warburton was a member of the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve Tracking Team, the Mt. Woodson Wildlife Trackers and a founding member of the SDTT who sadly developed cancer of the pancreas. During her illness and after she passed, her husband Harry Manning volunteered to do data entry even though he didn't particularly like computers. At that time we were several years behind in getting the data sheets into the database. In June of 2003, Harry moved to upstate New York to be closer to his children, and even so he offered to continue to do data entry from there if we couldn't find someone else.

Tylene Williford is a member of the Mt. Woodson Wildlife Trackers, and performs surveys with Ann Hunt. She offered to Ann to pick up where Harry left off as long as her job commitments permitted. When Tylene finished her tour of duty in early 2004 the database was totally up to date. She is currently an accountant with an HMO, studying to be a paralegal, and lives in Poway where she is a very active outdoorswoman, doing lots of hiking, climbing and mountain biking.

Sundeep Amin is a young bio-technologist who has accompanied Barry Martin on a number of wildlife surveys over the last year. In Spring of 2004 he said to Barry that he would be happy to assist with data entry for a year. He is very fast and entered all of Winter 2004 in 10 hours. He is now in the process of entering data for Spring of 2004.

Countless hours have also gone to designing, maintaining, and improving the database itself. Rick Botta, president and founding member of the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve Tracking Team, originally developed the database.

Since then, Doug Hansen has been the key guy on the database for many years. He even did data entry for a while until we found others that could help with that. He worked with Steve Romeo to define the data flow and changes necessary to support the CyberTracker effort. Doug has been a long time member of the LPCPTT –teaching and assisting in many of the trainings and leading lots of transects. Doug took a leave to go back to school and change careers from Software Engineer, database type, to High School Biology Teacher, but throughout he has been our chief database engineer.

Roman Diaz has also played a vital role in the development of our database. It is he who processes and interprets the data so that trends can be seen. Roman is a software development executive and project manager who, like Barry, is also a musician. He has even started his own software consultancy focused on data warehousing for the BioTech industry. While we are unlikely to see him tracking in the dirt, Roman is also a valued SDTT volunteer.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, August 14: Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels offered. This is a great opportunity to introduce people to tracking, so tell your friends.

Saturday, September 11: Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels offered.

Friday, September 24 and Saturday, September 25: Advanced Tracker Naturalist Class, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm Friday and 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturday at the Peñasquitos Ranch House. This class is open to everyone who has completed our Intermediate class (or equivalent), even if it was a while ago. Contact Rick Botta (858-672-0584, rmbotta@earthlink.net) to sign up as a student or to help out.

Saturday, October 9: Monthly tracking walks, 8:00 am to 10:00 at the Peñasquitos Preserve Ranch House. Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels offered.

Saturday, October 16: Fall Wildlife Survey Volunteer Training at the Ranch House in the Penasquitos Preserve, be there by 9:45 to register, class runs from 10:00 until 4:00, bring a bag lunch, water and dress as for a hike. This is an introduction to tracking, essential for transect volunteers. All experienced trackers are welcome to attend and you are invited to come and help set up (look for tracks), assist with instruction or just review. Experienced trackers who do not wish to attend the training may sign up for transects by contacting Lani (858-513-0359, lani.noreke@tapestryolutions.com.)