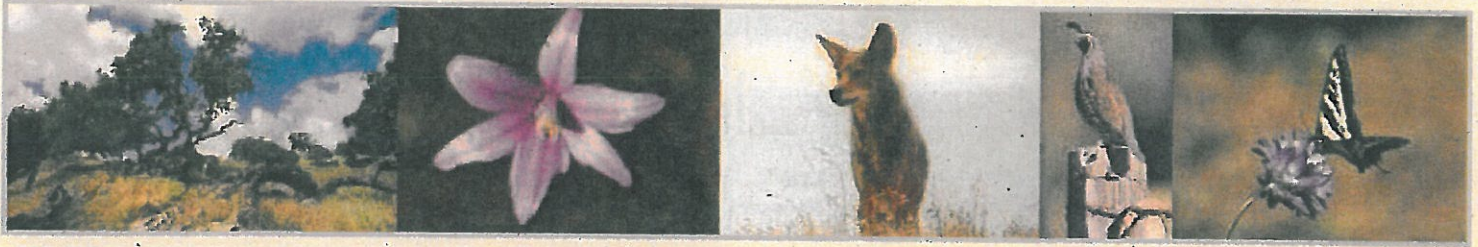


# Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation



Summer 2009

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I first volunteered with the Oak Habitat Restoration Project in the fall of 1991 and have been active as a volunteer on various restoration projects ever since. I joined the board after a few years and served as board president when Walnut Creek was planning for the opening of Lime Ridge Open Space in the late 1990s. I am pleased to serve again as President of the Foundation. It is a challenging time for our city and we need your help now, more than ever, to protect our open space.

Walnut Creek owns more than 2,700 acres of dedicated open space that will never be developed. It is a portion of our natural environment that we can enjoy every day. The City of Walnut Creek has an Open Space Staff to protect the open space and make it available by maintaining trails and other facilities. This financial commitment to the open space by the City is a part of Walnut Creek's heritage that we should not take for granted. The future of our open space will depend on broad awareness and an appreciation of its value.

Our Foundation has worked with the Open Space Staff, doing projects that could not otherwise be done and supporting the efforts of the Staff. Your membership in the Foundation supports our projects and demonstrates your support for the City's commitment to open space. You can broaden that support by introducing your friends to our open space. Invite a friend or neighbor to walk with you in the open space or organize a visit to Borges Ranch for your children and their friends.

There is so much to see in our open space. This newsletter contains a number of wildflower pictures taken in the open space this spring. Our website ([wcosf.org](http://wcosf.org)) has more pictures from this spring and from past years. Enjoy the pictures and plan to spend time in our open space looking at these flowers yourself next spring.

*Bill Hunt*

## OPEN SPACE MANAGER'S REPORT

Everyone has next door neighbors. Even land managers as large as the US Forest Service have private property owners whose land abuts the federal land. Here in Walnut Creek the City owns four large parcels of Open Space which are surrounded by private parcels. They are our next door neighbors.

Almost without exception these neighbors are pleased they have undeveloped land adjacent to their properties. Land that they know will always be protected for its natural values. What some of these neighbors see when they look out upon undeveloped land is opportunity. How that public land might benefit them in some personal way. Over the years staff have been faced with a number of private access gates into the Open Space. Many times they are not able to withstand the uses that are active within the Open Space such as keeping cattle out of their yard. Just last month a bull noticed there was fresh green grass just beyond the loose wire framed gate in a neighbors back yard. That bull had quite an impact before it could be removed. Another curious case is when a neighbor decided what was lacking on the Open Space hillside behind his home was a flag pole. So he gathered up his metal pole, metal in-ground sleeve and 60 pounds of concrete. Dig hole, set sleeve in concrete and erect flag pole. He was apparently surprised when it only took the ranger 48 hours to spot and remove the pole. Certainly this exercise could have been conducted on property in his own back yard but perhaps it would have lacked the larger public statement.

The Walnut Creek community is justifiably proud of the lands it has purchased and protected. They define our sense of community. Management of the lands is a balance involving public access and protection of the resource. Thankfully most of our neighbors are committed to the protection and enhancement of this natural area and that partnership is what makes us successful.

*Dan Cather*

## REPORT FROM BAYBERRY POND



The kids on the Lindsay field trip loved watching the frogs and tadpoles in the pond . . .



...and this Pacific tree frog seemed equally interested in them.

On March 16 a group of home schooled students took a Lindsay Museum field trip to Bayberry Pond. WCOSF members talked about some of the factors involved in restoration and gave the kids a tour of the site to see how we had applied them. The high point of the tour was the western toad and Pacific tree frog tadpoles in the pond. Later the kids participated in the restoration work by creating dead shade around the new native grass plants. Dead shade (criss-crossed piles of dead sticks and vegetation) helps the plant make it through the critical first summer by cooling the earth around the root and conserving moisture.

Back in December, we sprinkled seeds of 4 grasses and 3 flower species on the spoils pile beside the dam. For months we thought the effort was failure, but gradually more and more plants came up. In addition, at least two volunteer native species appeared. The grass seedlings we planted are doing well now after a somewhat shaky start. The spring rains made up for the dry winter.

Among the trees we planted, the willows, oaks, and buckeyes have been successful. However, only one cottonwood cutting has survived. We planted seeds of several chaparral species. Only the coyote brush germinated, but it is doing well.

Since April, we have been mowing and weeding. The weeds are under control in the areas we have planted and not too bad elsewhere.

## WILDFLOWERS OF THE WALNUT CREEK OPEN SPACE

Enjoy this sampling of the wildflowers that we saw in our open space this spring. See below for the identity of each flower and visit our website ([wcosf.org](http://wcosf.org)) for more images and additional information. And by all means, visit the open space next spring to experience it first hand...it is truly beautiful!



1. Buttercup
2. California Rose
3. Elegant Clarkia
4. Red Maid
5. Mariposa Lily
6. Foothill Penstemon
7. Datura
8. Red Bugler Penstemon
9. Coyote Mint
10. California Lotus
11. Woolly Sunflower
12. Ithuriel's Spear
13. California Poppy
14. White Nemophila
15. Baby Blue Eyes

## RECENT HAPPENINGS FROM OUR OPEN SPACE



### BATTLE BETWEEN PREDATOR AND PREY

Take a very close look at this mule's ear bloom and in the upper right quarter of the petals you will see a beautiful crab spider. It's a perfect example of their hunting posture as it waits among the ray flowers of this large composite. Notice that its legs are arranged at almost right angles to the body - like a crab. They don't spin a web to catch their prey but grab it with their powerful front legs and of course inject poison with their chelercia. It can be quite a battle between predator and prey. It is typical for the crab spider to be colored like the petals of this particular species of flower.

*The information for this article was supplied by Barney Howard*



### OAK HABITAT UPDATE

Project Volunteers completed checking the winter's acorn plantings in early May. We found a high success rate with the majority of successful plantings coming from coast live oak seedlings. The coast live oak supplied the largest quantity of acorns in the 2008 harvest. We are now beginning the summer watering program and will water the plantings once every four weeks into October. Upcoming watering dates are July 24, August 22, September 19 and October 17. Additional watering sessions will be added if we have an especially hot period. On September 5th we will have our annual acorn harvest. To take part in any of the dates mentioned above, meet at 8:30 a.m. in the gravel parking lot above the north end of the large Bounday Oak Golf Course parking lot.



### THE BLUE BIRD BOX TRAIL OF NORTH LIME RIDGE

Brian Murphy puts the finishing touches on a bluebird box installation on the new bluebird trail in Lime Ridge North. Alan Carreon of the City planning department built the boxes, and Bob Brittain and Bob Simmons laid out the route. So far 8-10 chicks have fledged, not bad for the first year.



### SPRING BIRD WALK

Participants watch a bird as leader Maury Stern (fourth from right) comments on its behavior. The weather was perfect and we saw a good variety of birds. Some of the birds you might see while hiking in our open space include the western bluebird, the ashthroated flycatcher, anna's hummingbird, turkey vultures, lesser goldfinches, acorn woodpeckers and many more. Spring bird walkers enjoyed the wildflowers as well.



### FROM HOWE FRIDGE TO LIME RIDGE

Optimist Bob Simmons, responding to a suggestion by Ranger Art Janke assembled a ragtag group of planters on the late date of February 20, led the team up the Lime Ridge drainage that's snuggled in between Mangini Ranch and Crystyl Ranch, and guided the planting of some 100 lucky acorns from the Howe fridge (thanks, Ralph). The planting team included, along with Simmons: Brad Heckman, Bob Suzuki, Joe Stadum, and David Ogden. Simmons later acknowledged it was almost an oh-by-the-way kind of project put together at the last minute and late in the planting season. There was no

reason to be optimistic. Lo and behold, about 40% germinated and are now healthy seedlings. They've been tubexed, watered, and otherwise pampered and are on the way to becoming hardy members of the Lime Ridge drainage. Thanks to all involved.

*David Ogden*

Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation  
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## Yes, I want to help protect and preserve Walnut Creek's Open Space

We invite all who share this goal to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Memberships and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. There are numerous areas where you can help. If you are interested, please leave a message at 925-939-6610, drop us a note or email, or visit our website at [www.wcosf.org](http://www.wcosf.org).

### I would like to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email (*we never share*) \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills I am willing to share \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to volunteer!

\_\_\_\_ Oak Restoration Project  
\_\_\_\_ Native Grasses  
\_\_\_\_ Quail Habitat  
\_\_\_\_ School program

#### MEMBERSHIPS

Benefactor.....\$250  
Sustaining.....\$100  
Family.....\$40  
Individual.....\$25  
Senior.....\$15

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