

### Safety Reminders for Open Space Users

Walnut Creek is one of the few cities that owns and maintains open space land for the use of its residents and others. Hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders share the trails and roads in five open space areas around the city, and some are heavily used.

To keep users safe and to protect the open space lands and the plants and animals who live there, our friends at the City of Walnut Creek Open Space Division ask you to observe the following rules:

#### All Users

- On trails, hikers yield to equestrians, and bicyclists yield to equestrians and hikers.
- All plant, animal, and geological features in the open space are protected and may not be harmed or removed.
- Firearms, weapons, motorized vehicles, camping, fires, alcohol, and smoking are prohibited in the open space.
- Take litter out with you. Keep our open space trash free.

#### Bicyclists and Hikers

- Bicyclists should ride only on double track trails (over eight feet in width) unless posted otherwise. Single track trails are reserved for pedestrians and equestrians.
- No off-trail bike riding. It destroys plants, animal homes, causes erosion, and



If John Muir had walked past Shell Ridge on one of his sojourns, he might have seen wildflowers like this on Fossil Hill, near the Sutherland Gate at Shell Ridge Open Space. Volunteers, working every other Saturday, have planted 12,072 native plants in the 2015-16 season. Photo: Sandy Biagi

## Natives 12,072; Mustard 0

The Mustard Eradication Project, started several years ago to get a handle on the proliferation of this invasive non-native, has evolved into the Fossil Hill Native Plant Restoration Project, for why remove one alien invasive weed only to have it replaced by another?

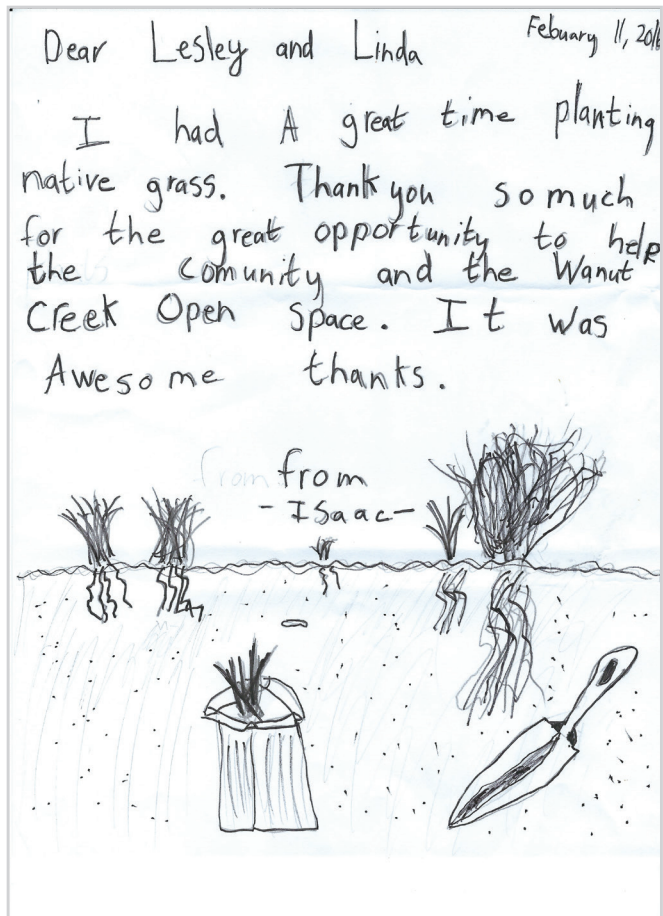
What's more, removing mustard eliminates a flowering plant attractive to pollinators. So in addition to planting many native grasses, we've planted and encouraged many perennial, and more recently, annual native wildflowers. It is our goal to introduce local California native plants to newly cleared sites so that they may seed and spread, or not spread, on their own without having to deal with the overwhelming

competitive nature of introduced non-native species. To this end, we spend most of our time weeding after the planting season is done with a goal of keeping non-natives to less than .001% of the biomass.

To date, we have found some species reproducing magnificently on their own. Others, however have declined in areas where they have been placed, but have thrived elsewhere. It is a constant process of watching and learning and allowing. We are most excited when native species, not known from within miles of our site, show up on their own. That we call success.

—Phil Johnson

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**We Get Letters**

A fourth grade class from Springhill School in Lafayette recently visited the Sutherland area of Shell Ridge and helped volunteers plant native grasses. We received this letter (with excellent drawings) from Issac, thanking us for the experience. Thank you and your classmates, Issac!



**Joe Stadum**

Foundation Board member and long-time volunteer Joe Stadum passed away last February. He also served on the Walnut Creek Parks, Open Space and Recreation Commission, was a volunteer for Save Mount Diablo, Muir Land Trust, East Bay Trail Dogs, and the Rossmoor Trails Club. We'll miss his energy, strong work ethic, and good humor.

Joe Stadum Photo: Brad Heckman

**Foundation Historian Seeks Items of Interest**

The Foundation has begun organizing our archives, and this is an opportunity to make sure that your open space history is noted and saved. Nancy Dawson Dollard ([nddollard@astound.net](mailto:nddollard@astound.net)) is acting as our historian and gathering information to be included in the archives. Newsletters, newspaper articles, letters, notes, photos, and other historical items that you may have tucked away are all things that we're hoping you can share.

Items will be scanned and can be returned to you if you so desire. Please contact Nancy to share your memories and historic items.

**Vandals Damage Bayberry Pond Restoration Site**

Longtime Foundation volunteer Gene Schulting, returning from an oak tree maintenance session in North Lime Ridge near Bayberry Pond, found a half dozen "teens and pre-teens who set up a bike run from 25-50 yards uphill from the Bayberry Pond gate, which was kept in open position, with a small ramp next to the pond. A rider would travel downhill full speed and vault into the pond with a big splash..."

Gene scolded them, told them such activity was not allowed, and had them restore order to the area and leave.

While it's unlikely the young folks had malicious intent, the pond area at Bayberry is a sensitive restoration site and damage was done there. If your family includes young cyclists who like to ride in the open space, please review with them the rules for safe and courteous conduct in the open space in "Safety Reminders for Open Space Users" in this newsletter. And if you encounter people breaking the law and damaging the open space, please contact the police. We depend on residents and open space users to watch for and report lawbreakers there.



Bluebird box photo: Lesley Hunt; inset: Brad Heckman

## Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring

After a lapse of several years, the Lime Ridge North bluebird trail has a new monitor—WCOSF member Brad Rose (inset). Brad has also taken over the trail at Boundary Oak Golf Course. Volunteers with the statewide California Bluebird Recovery Program record eggs laid, chicks hatched and fledged, and which cavity-nesting species used the box. The birds need human help to prosper because there are not enough old trees with natural cavities to accommodate a growing population.

## Owls Well In Our Open Space



Photo: Dirk Muehlner

### Shell Ridge Horned Owls

Dirk Muehlner, avid Shell Ridge hiker, naturalist, and photographer, has kept watch on this horned owl nest for several weeks. His perseverance resulted in this photo op: Two horned owlets awaiting mom and dad.

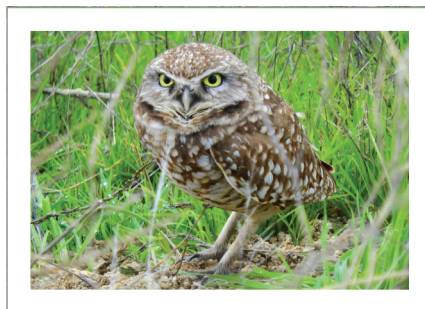


Photo: Brad Heckman

### North Lime Ridge Burrowing Owl

A Foundation restoration project in North Lime Ridge was abruptly canceled when volunteers, including photographer Brad Heckman, spotted this burrowing owl near the restoration site.

### Safety Reminders

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degrades our open space. We are visitors in the open space and should leave it unharmed.

- Hikers should stay on official trails.

#### Dogs

- Walnut Creek Open Space is one of the few park areas that allows dogs to be off leash, except for the South Lime Ridge area where dogs are not allowed.
- Off-leash dogs must be present with and in sight of their owner, and under verbal control. They must not jump on, chase, or threaten other people, dogs, cattle, or wildlife, and must come when called. If your dog isn't friendly to others, please leash it.
- Dog owners should clean up after their dogs. Dog feces are unsightly and troublesome for other open space visitors, and can spread disease to other dogs and wildlife. Plastic bags and garbage cans are available at most entrances.
- Coyotes are inhabitants of the open space and can pose a danger to dogs. Call and leash your dog if you see a coyote.



## Going Green:

### Electronic Newsletter Available

You can view our newsletter on your favorite mobile device or computer. We post it on our website ([wcosf.org](http://wcosf.org)), and we'll be happy to send you a pdf version as well. For the pdf, just send an email to [newsletter@wcosf.org](mailto:newsletter@wcosf.org).



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 **Yes, I want to help protect and preserve Walnut Creek's Open Spaces.**

We invite you 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. Interested? Drop us an email at [volunteer@wcosf.org](mailto:volunteer@wcosf.org), visit our website at [www.wcosf.org](http://www.wcosf.org), or fill out the form below and mail it to WCOSF, Box 309, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0309.

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

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CITY

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EMAIL (WE NEVER SHARE)

PATRON—\$500  BENEFACTOR—\$250  SUSTAINING—\$100  SPONSOR—\$50  FAMILY—\$40  INDIVIDUAL—\$25

**I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO:**  MAINTAIN OAKS  PLANT NATIVES  CREATE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS  HELP WITH OUTREACH

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