

News from the Friends of

The Bernard Biological Field Station

Of the Claremont Colleges

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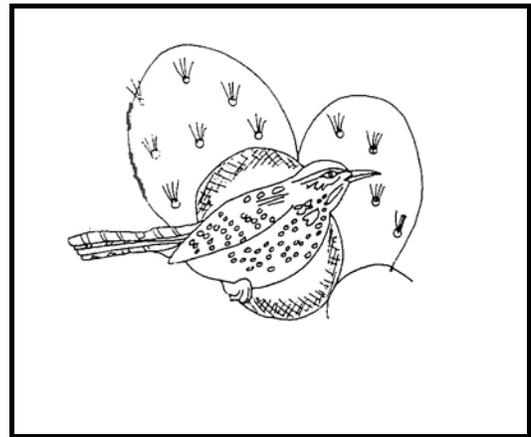
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www.fbbfs.org

What's new at the BFS?

- * The fire roads have been cleared making the fire department much happier.
- * The oaks along the entrance road have also been trimmed under the able supervision of the BFS manager, Stephen Dreher.
- * A large, colored map provided by the Friends, which shows the different areas of the BFS has just gone up on the bulletin board near the entrance.

Meet the inhabitants!



Your donations at work!

FBBFS painted and repaired the entrance sign

Before

After



The Coastal Cactus Wren

Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus couesi

These charming little birds are presently listed as a California State Species of Special Concern. Since they live exclusively in Coastal Sage Scrub, as that disappears to development, so do the wrens. They search the ground and scrub plants for insects to eat, although they also eat some fruit, especially if insects are scarce. Males and females look alike and they do not move around much, tending to stay within a couple of miles of where they were born.

Coastal cactus wrens nest almost exclusively in prickly pear and Coastal Cholla which protect the nest. They build dome-shaped nests from grasses, twigs, leaves, and other plant fibers, with a tube-like entrance often aligned to take advantage of ventilation from prevailing winds. They line their nest with feathers and down. They build nests at any time of the year and use them both for roosting and nesting. Sometimes the birds build several nests.

These birds are monogamous and mate for life. The female lays 3-5 eggs in early spring and sits on them for 16 days. After hatching, both the male and the female take care of the young until they are ready to leave the nest. If this is the second brood of the season, youngsters from the first hatching may help to feed their new siblings.

In the next issue: a map of the BFS

Cactus Wrens can live happily near roads and houses as long as they have the right type of habitat for nesting and foraging nearby. They do not seem to mind having people around but they cannot adapt to gardens. Hawks, snakes, woodrats, and feral cats hunt these birds or their eggs, but the biggest threat to their survival is loss of habitat.



Nettles (*Urtica spp*)

Many of us have quickly learned to identify this plant, naturalized in California from Europe long ago, after being painfully stung by the hairs on its leaves. These hairs release formic acid just like some ants do and can cause a painful, though fortunately short-lived, sting. There are both annual and perennial species, generally inhabiting moist areas. The species at the BFS, *Urtica urens*, pops up every year from underground rootstocks, especially in the shaded areas under the oaks. These are 6"-18" tall, with oval, coarsely toothed leaves arranged in pairs opposite each other along the stem. The tiny, green flowers appear in loose clusters in the spring. Nettles are the preferred larval food plant for a number of butterflies including the Red Admiral, and are relished by Brown Towhees.

Nettles (Sachikili) were also important to our local Native Americans, the Gabrieleno-Tongva, who used them in many ways. They gathered the plants after wrapping their hands in Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*) leaves for protection. Nettle leaves were rubbed on sore joints where the stinging of the nettles produced heat that soothed the painful area. Rheumatism sufferers whipped themselves with the plants to distract themselves from the pain. A tea was made from leaves and stems to treat chest colds, urinary problems, and general pain. A poultice of leaves was applied to the head for headache and to sore limbs. In addition to medicinal uses, the leaves provided a dye to restore hair color. The leaves were eaten raw, boiled, or steamed and the fibers used in basketry and for cordage.

✓✓✓ Sightings

- * A Swainson's Hawk was seen soaring over the Field Station in early September.
- *The lovely pink stars of *Centaureum venustum*, a 6" member of the gentian family, appeared during June.
- *The bright yellow daisies of goldenbush (*Ericameria*) are making a splash now.
- *And so are the cheery yellow exclamation points of telegraph weed (*Heterotheca*).
- *The cherries, *Prunus ilicifolia*, are in full fruit
- *And the young ground squirrels are racing around.

So, why should you donate money or time?

Within the next few years, CUC will present a master plan to the City asking for approval in principle of building on all CUC lands: the quarry, the golf course, and the field station. Once approved, there will be little chance to stop specific projects in the future, so it is very important that this master plan include agreements to preserve as much of the BFS as possible for as long as possible. It is highly unlikely that CUC will volunteer to do this so it will be up to Claremont citizens to make sure that adequate provisions are included. This depends on a citizenry that is educated about the field station and its value. Your donations are crucial to public outreach efforts. If all of us send only \$5 a year, it will pay for the newsletter and other activities. Planning ahead is better than waiting for the next crisis.

Village Venture

We still need help staffing the booths at Village Venture. If you are willing to donate 2 hours, call 621-6381.

☆☆☆ Film about the BFS ☆☆☆

"Contested Land", a student documentary by Lara Glueck on the controversy surrounding plans to build on the BFS, is a "must-see" for anyone interested in the topic. If you missed the showings at the library and on cable TV, call Steve Nagler (626-1185) for information on seeing the film.

Claremont University Consortium and the BFS

1. Signs: New signs have appeared at the entrance and along the Mills and Foothill frontages leaving no doubt about the Colleges' intentions:

“Claremont University Consortium
North Campus Property
Held in Trust for Future Expansion of the
Claremont Colleges”

2. BFS Governance: From its beginnings in 1976, decisions about the field station have been made by a volunteer Director with consultation and advice from a volunteer committee composed of biologists who use the Station. A couple of years ago, discussions began about formalizing the governance structure and hiring a permanent, paid, full or part-time Director with an official advisory committee of users. These discussions were underway when the lawsuit settlement was signed and the document includes a statement that a governance structure along these lines would be established.

So, what has CUC done about governance? The position of Director has been eliminated without consultation with the faculty, although CUC has said it will eventually be reestablished. The college presidents have appointed a committee to oversee the BFS composed of one member from each of the seven colleges, including KGI (which has not abandoned plans to build on the field station) and a non-scientist from CGU. It is not clear how decisions about use will be made.

3. Public use: The lawsuit settlement also states that public educational groups will again have access to the BFS with permission of the Director. Without a Director, it is not clear how this term will be fulfilled. We are presently working with CUC on procedures to be followed and should be able to tell you what they are in the next newsletter.

We will keep you posted.

raised in California. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1958 with a degree in Botany and a fascination with the natural world. He went on to earn a master's degree in zoology from Florida State University, and then a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in 1964. He met his wife, Alice Shoemaker, that same year. After three years teaching at Reed College, he joined the Pomona faculty in 1968.

Larry devoted a great deal of time to the City as well as to the Colleges, serving on the Environmental Quality Commission, the Planning Commission, and other community committees. He was a member of the board of directors of Claremont Heritage and an active member of the Pomona Valley Audubon Society, serving as President, on the Board of Directors and, of course, leading bird walks. He was also active in the Boy Scouts.

Apart from all this, Larry was one of the most caring, optimistic and enthusiastic people you could imagine. His joy in living and learning was contagious. He was always willing to fight for what he believed in. This included writing and speaking out in support of preserving the Field Station even when he was very ill. His beliefs, his humor, his kindness, his concern for others have all helped to shape our community and make it a better place.

Based on a eulogy by Rachel Levin

Just in time for the holidays!

The Friends is producing its own line of notecards! Beautiful illustrations of landscapes, bees, and flowers found at the BFS. These would make great stocking stuffers or package decorations, as well as notes to friends.



“A tour of the property readily convinces visitors of the importance of keeping such a beautiful expanse of land, shrubs, and trees for scientific purposes.”

Robert J. Bernard in “An Unfinished Dream”

In Memoriam: One of the best Friends

In April of this year, the BFS lost one of its strongest supporters in Larry Oglesby, Professor Emeritus of Biology at Pomona College. Larry was born in Oregon but

If you would like some call 621-6381. Three different packs will be available at the end of October.