

News from the Friends of

# The Bernard Biological Field Station

Of the Claremont Colleges

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P.O. Box 1101, Claremont, CA 91711

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## Folk Music Festival

Once again, we had a great time at the Folk Music Festival, one of Claremont's hidden treasures. The music was great and, in spite of the rain, quite a few children (and some adults) made badges and leaf rubbings and learned something about the BFS. Make a note to attend this delightful and relaxing festival next May.

## Community access!

There is once again a procedure in place for community groups to use the Field Station for educational purposes. Now we need to test it out. If your school class, scout troop, or similar group with insurance, would like to visit the Station, please phone the manager, Stephen Dreher (624-6661), to discuss details with him. You can get information about the history of the station, as well as about the plants and animals found there, on the BFS website ([www.bfs.claremont.edu](http://www.bfs.claremont.edu)). It is very important to get community use up and running again, so please do add it to your list of field trips.

### Sightings

- Thousands of Western Toad (*Bufo borea*) tadpoles in the vernal pool west of the lake
- Frilly fairy shrimp swimming on their backs in the vernal pool, and myriads of translucent water fleas.
- And later, dozens of tiny toads hopping around the edges of the drying pool.
- Blankets of yellow *Amsinckia* and mustard, with purple *Phacelia*, *Penstemon*, nightshade, and blue dicks.
- The delicate native peony with its brownish flowers.
- Families of California Quail out for a stroll.
- The best crop of prickly *Marah macrocarpus* fruits in years, peeking out from the vines draping the oaks.
- Carpets of yellow suncups.
- Huge crops of golden currants.
- Woodrat nests, large piles of sticks hidden in shrubs.
- Young plants of the endangered Nevin's Barberry.
- Large, red, Harvester ants, out and about in disturbed areas, searching for seeds.
- The huge, white, lavender-tinged trumpets of *Datura* in the grassland.
- The gray foliage and pink flowers of Milkweed.
- Lizards, basking in the sun, and turtles resting in the cattails.
- The white-centered, orchid stars of *Centaurium* and the true-blue stars of *Eriastrum*.

## Meet the Inhabitants



**Golden Currant**  
*Ribes aureum*

Golden currants bloom from February to April and are lovely plants, with 2" long, three-lobed, bright green leaves and groups of half inch, yellow, trumpet shaped flowers, which are beloved by bumble bees. The fruits are round, edible, and golden-orange. The thornless plants can form thickets up to six feet high and are found throughout the coastal sage scrub at the Field Station, much to the benefit of the insects, mammals and birds (such as California thrashers, Robins, Phainopeplas, and Solitaires) which eat the fruit. A photo of this plant is on the BFS website.

## Volunteers needed for 4<sup>th</sup> of July

Please offer to help for a couple of hours at the information booth or game booth, or to swell the ranks in the parade. You can carry a nifty sign and have a lot of fun! Send email to [bfsfriends@earthlink.net](mailto:bfsfriends@earthlink.net) if you can help.

The fruit was also prized by the Native Americans who lived in this area. In the drier, hotter days of June, the Tongva women opened their stores of dried currants and gooseberries, called "Kochar." They pounded the fruit with meat and fat to make delicious, berry-flavored "pemican," a staple of the Tongva diet. The berries themselves are high in vitamin C, phosphorus, and iron. When hard times came, the people boiled and ate the leaves and twigs, and added them to the daily meals of acorn mush.

Golden currant was also used medicinally. The dried inner bark was pulverized and smeared as a poultice on sores or painful areas. A decoction of the inner bark was drunk to lessen leg swellings, and the leaves were used as wound dressings. The juice of golden currant was used to cure sore throats and fever, and to treat burns.



**California Quail**  
*Callipepla californica*

The California Quail is a charming bird with a distinctive rallying call, sounding something like "quer-ka-go." They are small, plump birds, 9-11 inches long, with a gray breast, a brown belly with white blotches, and white streaks along the sides. The russet crown sports a small, black plume which curves forward. The males have black and white markings on the head and chest, which are absent in the females.

Quail like open brushland bordered by grassy areas, such as is found on the BFS. They forage in early morning and just before dusk, resting in between. They eat green parts of plants, seeds and fruits, and the occasional insect. Quail tend to roam in flocks of 20 to 40 from fall into early spring. Although they prefer to walk and outrun predators, they will take flight if they see danger, or to roost in trees.

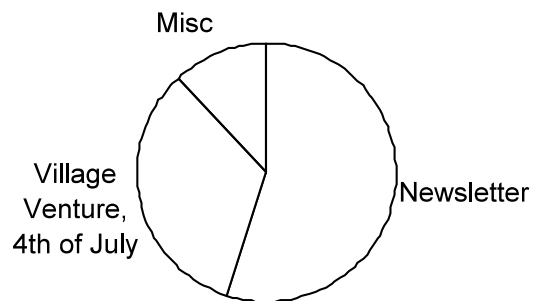
When breeding season begins in January, they pair up and the males become territorial. Between May and June, females lay a clutch of 10-17 creamy white, tan-spotted eggs, usually in a grass-lined area scraped out of the ground. Nests are usually very well hidden. The eggs are incubated for a little over three weeks, and then they all hatch at once, with the chicks up and running after their parents within an hour. Females collect their offspring with a sharp "pt-pt-ptpt." In just a few weeks, the chicks are strong enough to join the covey.

## Flash! Ever wonder what the plants look like?

The BFS website now has a plant list and has also begun to attach pictures to the organisms' names. If you would like to see what some of the over 200 species of plants identified so far at the BFS look like, go to [www.bfs.claremont.edu](http://www.bfs.claremont.edu) and choose biota, plants.

## Money Matters!

Here's a little chart to give you an idea of what proportion of the Friend's expenditures goes to different activities ("miscellaneous" covers such items as post box rental). Not one cent is spent on administration. All the work is done by volunteers. Funding comes from your donations, the auction, the yard sale, and the game booths at Village Venture and 4<sup>th</sup> of July.



Although we cover our costs and have a small cushion, it is important that donations continue to be sent so we are ready to step up public outreach efforts when the Colleges bring their new master plan before the City for approval. This is likely to be sometime in the next year or so and the plan will ask for permission to build on the BFS. Contributions of all sizes are very welcome!

## Another email address:

To be added to our mailing list, to send material for the newsletter or to make suggestions, email the editor at [bfsfriends@earthlink.net](mailto:bfsfriends@earthlink.net).



*"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"

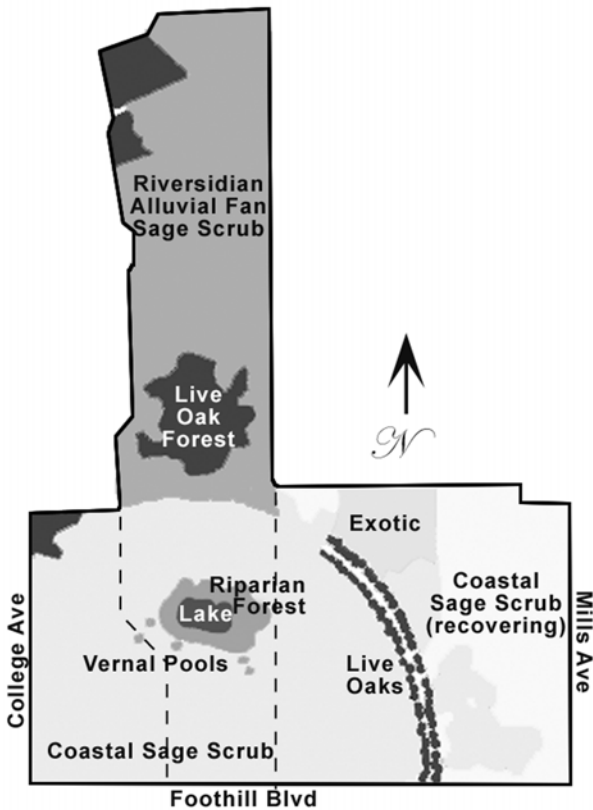
# Some History of the Land North of Foothill

Page numbers refer to "An Unfinished Dream" by Robert J. Bernard

- 1924: Miss Scripps authorized the purchase of 250 acres north of Foothill and donated it to the Colleges for educational use.
- 1925: Money donated for building the Memorial Infirmary on the land north of Foothill (p 106). Completed 1931.
- 1926: The land given by Miss Scripps (except for 59.7 acres on the mesa and its slopes), a 3.85 acre Native Garden Preserve, and the site of Scripps College were designated as an endowment for Scripps College. Any of this land used for later institutions had to be purchased from the trust with the proceeds going to Scripps.
- 1935: 10 year lease given to the City on 30 acres of land north of Foothill for a park (p 116).
- 1943: Sale of 10 acres east of the Infirmary road approved. Sale not completed. (p 229).
- 1945: Board voted to sell 76 acres north and west of Indian Hill Mesa to developers (p 242).
- 1948: Land on mesa leased for five years to Japanese gardeners for growing flowers.
- 1950: Thirty acres sold to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden so it can move to Claremont. In addition, colleges bought back (for three times the selling cost) 54 acres of the 76 previously sold and then sold this also to RSABG
- 1957: Faculty housing developed on 10 acres of land north of Foothill (p 118) (Blaisdell Ave); houses now privately owned.
- 1958: Ground broken for the School of Theology (p 544).
- 1959: Golf course established as interim use (p 116).
- 1964: Consortium agreed to College of the Immaculate Heart moving to corner of Foothill and Mills. Project abandoned 1970 (p 732).
- 1973: Claremont University Consortium considered building 18 hole golf course on future site of BFS.
- 1975: Board of Fellows recommended selling 20 acres of the remaining land north of Foothill for development (p 703) to reduce tax burden, in spite of Scripps Trust requirement that it could only be sold for educational use.
- 1976: RSABG granted use of 10 acres for Baja California annex (p 401). Essentially same site as proposed for KGI Never constructed.
- 1976: Donald McKenna arranged for Kennametal Foundation to donate \$600,000 to CUC so it could buy the current BFS land from the Scripps Trust, fence it, and construct the lake, plus \$100,000 for an endowment.

Over the next 20 years there were several plans to build on different parts of the BFS. All were opposed by faculty and students and all were abandoned for one reason or another.

- 1996: Colleges began a land planning process and considered the proposal of the Keck Graduate Institute as the seventh institution.
- 1997: Board of Fellows approved KGI in January. Policy Council voted to build KGI on BFS in March. Board of Fellows approved.
- 1998: CUC submitted North Campus Master Plan to the City, asking to build KGI on the field station and graduate housing nearby.
- 1999: Draft environmental impact report (EIR) submitted for public comment. Architectural Commission approved EIR in spite of considerable citizen opposition. Friends appealed the approval to the City Council. Appeal denied. North Campus Master Plan considered by the Architectural Commission, using EIR info.
- 2000: NCMP development agreement approved by AC and Council in spite of considerable citizen opposition and acknowledgment by the City that not all the damage could be mitigated. Friends of the Bernard Biological Field Station brought a lawsuit maintaining the EIR was inadequate. The Coalition to Preserve Claremont's Character circulated a referendum petition during August asking that the development agreement be put on the ballot, and gathered well over the number of signatures necessary to do so. CUC started negotiations with the Friends. CUC barred BFS use by all non-college groups. Settlement terms for the lawsuit were agreed to by the Friends and CUC in November. The City rescinded its approval of the NCMP also in November. CUC then reneged on the settlement terms it had agreed to and negotiations resumed.
- 2001: Negotiations continued until February when the settlement was finally signed.  
Major terms: CUC agreed to preserve a narrow 45 acre strip (map on back) for 50 years, to re-institute BFS access to public groups for educational purposes, to provide more support, both financial and otherwise, to form a new governance structure, and to delay asking for any development until the City approved a Master Plan for all CUC land (quarry, BFS, golf course).  
KGI stated it had no immediate plans to move to the BFS.
- June: CUC decided to demolish the Infirmary. City refused permission until Master Plan is approved.
- July: CUC disbanded the Steering Committee, the faculty group which oversaw the BFS, and eliminated the position of Director. An Advisory Committee was formed with one member from each of the seven colleges, including one from KGI. The lawsuit settlement specifies public access must be approved by the director. As there is no longer a director, the manager has taken over this function.
- September: CUC put up signs at the BFS saying "Claremont University Consortium. North Campus Property. Held in Trust for Future Expansion of the Claremont Colleges"
- 2002: CUC transferred ownership of the western 11.4 acres of the BFS to KGI, which is allowing its continued use as part of the BFS. KGI will need approval of a new development agreement if it decides to build there.  
CEO Brenda Barham Hill confirmed that CUC plans to build on all the land it owns, including the BFS, golf course and quarry, and that a master plan is being prepared.
- 2003: Procedures for community use of the BFS for educational purposes finally developed and ready to be implemented.



Now owned protected ----- not protected -----  
by KGI for 50 yrs

| Useful addresses              |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| City of Claremont:            | P.O. Box 880, Claremont, CA 91711<br>www.ci.claremont.ca.us            |
| Claremont Colleges:           | www.claremont.edu  |
| The Claremont Courier:        | 111 S. College Ave, Claremont CA 91711<br>Phone: 621-4761              |
| The LA Times:                 | Inland Valley Edition, 5555 Ontario Mills Parkway,<br>Ontario CA 91764 |
| Inland Valley Daily Bulletin: | 2041 E. Fourth St, Ontario CA 91761                                    |

## How big is big enough?

A field station is land left in its natural state for use in the study of complex interactions between plants and animals. The usefulness of such natural laboratories depends on size and shape. Extinctions occur frequently in small areas, due to smaller populations. The current 85 acres is just large enough to maintain reasonable stability in the existing ecosystems. Narrow shapes increase the amount of pollution by noise, air, water, and pesticides from surrounding areas, and increase the chances of competition from exotic (non-native) species.

## Who uses it?

The BFS is used by Claremont Colleges faculty and hundreds of students every year, as well as by many schoolchildren from Claremont and the surrounding areas. It has also been used by college classes from as far away as Long Beach, by scout troops, and by members of the public.

## What's there?

There are over 30 acres of the fast-disappearing coastal sage scrub community with a number of Species of Special Concern. *Since much of Claremont was originally covered with coastal sage scrub, it is a fascinating window into our past.*

There is a stand of oak woodland in the north where water wells up along an earthquake fault, there is annual grassland slowly returning to coastal sage scrub in the east, and there is a one-acre, man-made lake excavated in 1978 which is a sanctuary for western pond turtles displaced by development.

*“Dedicated to Education  
and the Environment”*