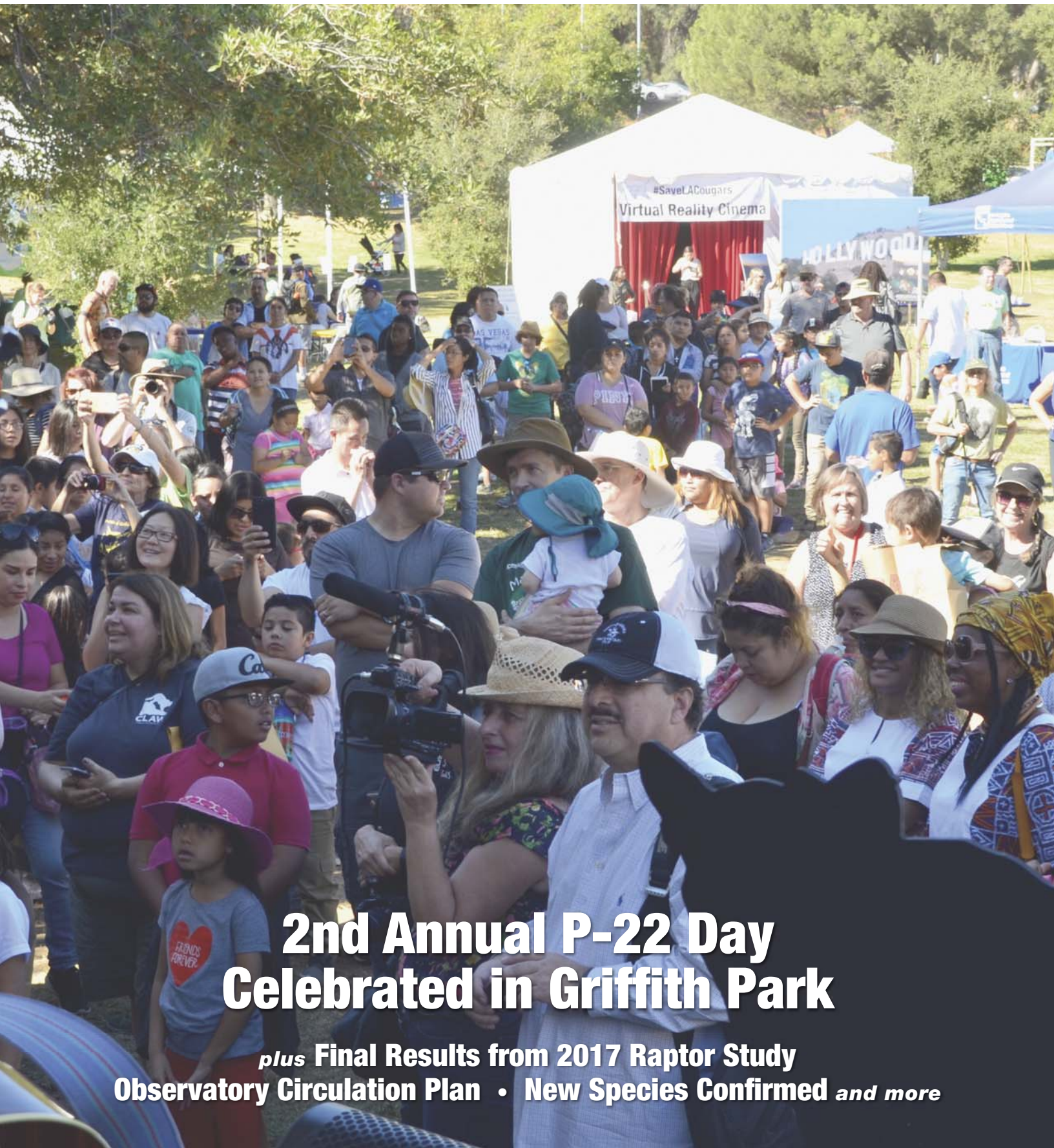




the griffith reporter

the newsletter of friends of griffith park/winter 2017-18



2nd Annual P-22 Day Celebrated in Griffith Park

plus Final Results from 2017 Raptor Study
Observatory Circulation Plan • New Species Confirmed *and more*



This has been another amazing year for Friends of Griffith Park.

A major part of FoGP's mission is to advocate on behalf of the park. This year presented several challenges as we try to find ways to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists who come to enjoy the world famous park and the Hollywood Sign while minimizing the impact the increasing number of visitors has on the park itself and on surrounding neighborhoods.

We were all shocked when it was announced that because of the lawsuit brought by Hollywood Sunset Stables, the long-time access point at Beachwood Canyon would be locked. We collaborated with Oaks Homeowners Association, Los Feliz Improvement Association, Beachwood Canyon Neighborhood Association, and Lake Hollywood Homeowners Association. In keeping with Col. Griffith's goal to have Griffith Park free and open to all, FoGP co-sponsored a rally in April to keep the Beachwood Canyon Gate open. The theme was public access for public parks. In May we filed a Motion to Intervene with the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust and Oaks Homeowners and in July filed a separate lawsuit that the gate closure was done unlawfully and to follow the judge's order that public access be provided as close to the gate as practicable.

FoGP has representation on CD 4's Access and Mobility Study working group to

address congestion around the Hollywood Sign. We are supporting an Alternative Access Plan which would build a new people gate on Rec and Parks property to the right of the existing vehicular gate that is now locked. A series of short modular stairs would take hikers quickly from the gate up to the Hollyridge Trail while keeping them off the road to Sunset Stables. We support the increased use of shuttles from Metro stations to bring visitors into the park while reducing the number of cars in the park. We are continuing to negotiate a settlement to this sticky situation. If negotiations fail, we can fall back on our strong, yet arduous, lawsuit.

Working closely with the Department of Recreation and Parks maintenance and forestry staff, FoGP did three tree plantings in the park this year to counteract the damage caused by many years of drought and the infestation of bark beetles. Our biggest effort was on Earth Day, April 22 when 140 volunteers planted 150 small trees in Fern Dell using

a new watering technique. The partnership with Rec and Parks operates like a well-choreographed dance. Staff brings in an auger that digs holes with a precise diameter and depth for the trees. Our volunteers bring strong backs and willing arms to plant, stake, and mulch the trees. This collaborative effort means that we can get many more trees planted than if either group worked alone.

Our volunteers under the direction of Laura Howe continued to mulch vulnerable trees in Fern Dell and to provide water to help the new native plants in Fern Canyon through an unusually hot summer. We again hosted Friends of the Los Angeles River's annual cleanup at Bette Davis Picnic Area where volunteers pulled tons of trash out of the river.

As you know, education is a big part of FoGP's mission. To that end we co-sponsored a coyote hazing workshop to teach residents how to live with coyotes and keep them wild. We gave talks at the Los Feliz Library on the Raptor Nesting Survey, the origin of parks, and the Griffith Park fire of 1933. We hosted a Bird LA Day walk in the park. Partnering with the Sierra Club, we introduced 356 children to the wonders of a walk in the park. We tabled at environmental fairs at the LA Zoo and NBC Universal to educate people about the dangers of rodenticides and the health benefits of walking in the park. Our biggest education project of the year was co-sponsoring P-22 Day in the park. (See p. 3)

FoGP continues to support the park in numerous ways. We paid for the removal of a graffiti-covered abandoned water tank and set a precedent for the Department to remove other derelict tanks. We supplied direction for much needed new trail signage in the interior of the park to keep people from getting lost. We conducted the first ever Raptor Nesting Survey to learn more about our raptor species and how successful their nesting is. (See p. 4) We worked with the Boy Scouts to repair a small pedestrian bridge in Fern Dell near Los Feliz Boulevard.

Although we have accomplished much, we are often stymied by slow action and lack of focus on important issues by RAP. It is frustrating because there is so much more work in the park that we would like to do.

Marian Dodge

~Marian Dodge

Cover photo: Hikers arrive at P-22 Day. **This page:** P-22 makes a rare appearance in the Los Feliz hood to introduce the Liberty Canyon wildlife crossing. Several community activists were on hand to promote the concept.



2nd Annual P-22 Day ~Marian Dodge

The guest of honor was nowhere to be seen but his presence was everywhere. P-22 did his usual cat thing – he hunkered down in some quiet, cool hidden spot far away from people. But at Park Center his image was everywhere on Sunday, October 22. It was the second annual event to honor the park's celebrity mountain lion and focus attention on the hazards faced by all our wildlife.

The festivities were led by California Director of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Beth Pratt-Bergstrom. Over a four-day period Pratt and various groups of hikers replicated P-22's amazing journey from west of the 405 into Griffith Park. On the last leg of the hike from Cahuenga Pass into Griffith Park she was joined by FoGP's Gerry Hans, Mary Button, and Miguel Ordeñana. School children and L.A. Councilmember Paul Koretz joined them for the final push where they were welcomed by a large crowd of enthusiastic supporters. More than 75 nonprofits and agencies had booths promoting their efforts to maintain and expand open space and wildlife connectivity.

The MC for the day was TV host of SoCal Connected, Cara Santa Maria.

Councilmember Ryu (CD 4) read the proclamation designating October 22 as P-22 Day. Councilmember Ryu then declared his support for open space, habitat connectivity, and open access to parks to rounds of applause from a wildly enthusiastic audience. Ryu and Koretz were later joined onstage by Assemblymembers Laura Friedman (AD 43), Richard Bloom (AD 50), State Senator Anthony Portantino (SD 25), and Deputy Mayor Barbara Romero.

The NWF has assumed the challenge for raising the money needed to build the wildlife crossing at Liberty Canyon. Pratt proudly announced major donations from the Annenberg Foundation and from the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. Boeing presented its check at the event.

Councilmember Koretz promoted Laurel Canyon and Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife's (CLAW) *Let's Buy a Mountain* project

which is nearing its goal to purchase open space. When the fundraising effort launched, Councilmember Ryu pledged matching funds. Koretz's support was matched by Senator Anthony Portantino. Thank you all for your support of open space!

Councilmember Koretz presented biologist Miguel Ordeñana with a city proclamation for discovering P-22's presence in the park. The Griffith Park Connectivity Study was a collaboration between Cooper Ecological Monitoring (CEM) and US Geological Survey (USGS), initiated and funded by Friends of Griffith Park in 2011. FoGP board member Ordeñana was working with Erin Boydston of USGS and Dan Cooper in 2012 when he was surprised by the mountain lion's image in camera trap photos. When he realized it was a mountain lion, he immediately notified Dan and Erin who reached out to the mountain lion experts at National Park Service. Soon after, NPS's Jeff Sikich notified *National Geographic* wildlife photographer Steve Winter of a mountain lion residing in Griffith Park. Winter set up more sophisticated cameras which eventually led to P-22's most iconic shot with the Hollywood Sign in the background. A star was born.

One of the most popular booths was Narrated Objects that created a *We ♥ P-22* coloring book so children can learn about mountain lions. The 138-page book features original drawings by a variety of local artists, as well as puzzles and games.

Entertainment for the day included the Ballad of P-22, seeing an awesome red-tailed hawk, dancing, and live music from Quetzal. Those who couldn't hunker down in the shade like P-22 sought relief from the heat with snow cones.

P-22 Day photos: LA Councilmen Koretz (left) and Ryu congratulate LA City Proclamation recipient, Miguel Ordeñana; FoGP with Assemblymember Laura Friedman and Joel Schulman from Poison Free Malibu; NPS Ranger Kate Kuykendall and Dennis Arguelles from National Parks Conservation Association; FoGP with State Senator Anthony Portantino; The *We ♥ P-22* booth was jam-packed with kids all day; a beautiful red-tailed hawk; hikers march into the celebration; Clare Darden from the Griffith Trust with Ranger Anne; Clare and FoGP board members; and, NWF's Beth Pratt-Bergstrom celebrates the end of a long hike with P-22.

2017 Griffith Park Birds of Prey: Final Report ~Courtney Aiken and Daniel S. Cooper

This last year, residents of Los Angeles took part in the inaugural year of the Griffith Park Raptor Survey, a citizen-science-led initiative looking to better understand a top predator in an urban ecosystem. Since 2007, Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc. has been conducting surveys on the flora and fauna in Griffith Park hoping to gain a better understanding of one of the largest urban parks in the U.S. The Griffith Park Raptor Survey is an attempt to continue this momentum, with the goal of documenting and tracking each raptor nest in the park and surrounding landscape. The data gathered by diligent volunteers represent the first specific, comprehensive dataset of an entire raptor community in the Los Angeles area.

The Los Angeles area provides potentially suitable habitat for multiple resident raptors including turkey vulture, red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk, great horned owl, barn owl, Western screech-owl, peregrine falcon, and American kestrel. Of those species, four were documented as nesting in Los Angeles in 2017: red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, Cooper's hawk, and great horned owl. Red-tailed hawks are one of the most common large raptor species in North America and are abundant nesters in Los Angeles. Red-shouldered hawks are commonly associated with riparian habitat but in the Los Angeles area they are more associated with lush residential areas with large, old trees. Cooper's hawk populations have increased in urban habitats like Los Angeles with the decline in falconry practices and lack of natural predators. Great horned owls are habitat generalists often using abandoned hawk or raven nests, as well as cliff ledges and man-made structures. While not a raptor, common ravens were prevalent nesters found in much of the survey area. They are one of the most widespread, naturally-occurring birds in the world and they provide an important ecological service through their scavenging of animal carcasses and human debris.

The survey area for the 2017 season included Griffith Park and nearby areas of LA within a 10-km radius of the park, roughly from the 405 freeway east to the Arroyo Seco/110 parkway,



Red-tailed hawk nest.



Great horned owl (in back) nest with nestlings.

south of Victory Blvd./Colorado Blvd, and north of the 10 freeway. This area took in the entire eastern Santa Monica Mountains, as well as Elysian Park, the Los Angeles River, Silver Lake Reservoir, Echo Park, Debs Park, Eagle Rock, and surrounding neighborhoods. Habitats within the survey area vary considerably from managed parks to urban neighborhoods, to rugged, deep canyons in isolated, wilderness-like areas.

The survey was supported by many citizen-scientist volunteers with a wide range of interests and backgrounds. A mandatory volunteer training workshop was held on two dates in February that acquainted individuals with monitoring and data collection protocols. Special attention was paid to data collection because many individuals already had prior birding experience. The goal: to ensure volunteers were comfortable with the protocols and learn how to recognize and observe nesting raptors, and how to gather viable data. Cooper

Ecological Monitoring biologists conducted surveys in the Griffith Park and surrounding area simultaneously to the survey, to identify and map existing potential raptor nests.

We also placed articles in local newsletters requesting information from residents on local raptor nests, which surprisingly generated several reports of backyard nests new to the count (that we likely would have never found!). Volunteers were then assigned at least one nest for which they were responsible over the duration of the nesting season. Data was collected on the nests about one to two times a month, including nesting stage during each visit (nest-building, incubation, etc.) and tree type/nest substrate. Success rate for each nest was tracked and the data was mapped to show trends and patterns.

Our first year yielded over 100 confirmed or potential raptor nests! Of those, 60 (including several ravens) were active and identified as to species. Red-tailed hawk nests were by far the most common (22 active nests), followed closely by Cooper's hawk (17 active nests). Given that Cooper's hawk nests are much more difficult to locate than red-tailed hawk nests, it is possible that there are more Cooper's Hawk nests in the study area, that will simply need to be found (and monitored) to get

an accurate tally of each. Equally low numbers of red-shouldered hawk (5 nests) and great horned owl (5 nests) were found, indicating either the rarity of each, or, in the case of the owl, the difficulty in finding an actual nest. The nest data was gathered by 115 volunteers from all over the Los Angeles region logging over 650 volunteer hours from February to July 2017.

Many nests found had apparently been active in the recent past (based on "whitewash" on the ground below the nest, and other clues), but were inactive in 2017. Whether this was due to the prolonged drought over the past 4-5 years, or some other cause, is not known. Future surveys are needed to determine a "rate of occupancy" for these urban nests, which may well be frequently vacant as raptors are forced to move around the landscape due to the high level of disturbance from living in an urban setting. We noted many examples of nest disturbance, from loud noise near the nest, such as an active home construction site a few feet away (Beverly Hills), to nest trees being cut down or severely trimmed during the survey (Highland Park, Lake Hollywood).

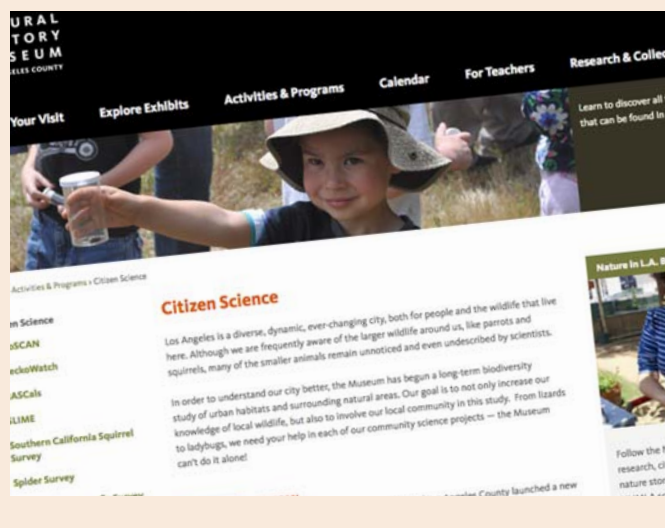
One interesting observation we made during the study was that the "native" interior of Griffith Park had relatively few raptor nests compared with areas located outside the park. Indeed, just a single raptor nest in the entire study was in a native oak tree, and just five were found in (likely) native sycamores. Pines alone represented 40% of the nest trees in the study, and ficus proved important as well, particularly in the most urban sites (favored by Cooper's hawk). The study highlights the importance of the large, non-native trees that exist in and around the park, many of which have

what is citizen science and how does it help communities?

Citizen (or community) science refers to collaborations between scientists and community volunteers, expanding scientific data collection opportunities and in turn providing scientific information access to interested community members.

Friends of Griffith Park encourages participation between community wildlife activists (which is really anyone with a curiosity about the natural world surrounding us) and the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles. There are a number of ways to participate in surveys and even better, there are a number of biologists and scientists on the receiving end ready and willing to help with questions or help identifying a "find." Whether it's a lizard, a spider, a plant, or a bat, if you have a question, chances are, they'll have an answer. Check out their website as well as *i.naturalist's* website. Sign up to get involved in community surveys. You'll be pleasantly surprised!

<https://nhm.org/site/activities-programs/citizen-science>
<https://www.inaturalist.org/>



matured – and are now the tallest trees around – since they were planted decades ago. While non-native, they clearly provide excellent nesting opportunities to the local raptor community, and have essentially outpaced native substrates. Perhaps an apparent lack of nesting raptors in the inner, more natural part of the park is due to the relative abundance of readily-available prey (fox squirrels, rats, and pigeons) outside the park, in urban/residential areas.

Lastly, the survey highlighted the importance of citizen-scientists. Though there are so many neighborhoods in Los

Angeles that probably play host to a raptor nest, it is impossible for a few biologists to find every one. Local support and knowledge is invaluable in a large-scale survey such as this. Multiple forms of outreach (Facebook, email, and good old-fashioned word-of-mouth) allowed us to reach a broad audience and get information from areas we otherwise would have not known supported raptors. We hope to continue to use citizen-scientists and reach new, interested Los Angeles residents.

With a great amount of interest and support for the survey, it will return in the spring of 2018 for its second year. We anticipate that the survey will grow to include new areas of Los Angeles, such as the floor of the San Fernando Valley, and will achieve better coverage of the Hollywood Hills, where we're sure we missed many nests due to the rugged topography and seemingly endless potential nesting sites. Future studies will look at the distribution and ecological interactions of the different raptor species in and around the park, and may involve leg-banding of chicks (by permitted colleagues) to support future individual identification. This would greatly enhance our efforts to track families and

start investigating demographic trends and developing testable hypotheses (e.g., are all/most of the local red-tailed hawks related, and are they developing unique strategies for living in an urban environment?).

If you're interested in taking part in the 2018 survey, please send an email to griffithparkraptors@gmail.com, or visit us on Facebook at "LARaptors."

Friends of Griffith Park funded the 2017 Griffith Park Raptor Survey and will extend the survey into 2018.

FoGP Lecture Series Cover a Range of Topics

Friends of Griffith Park's popular talks at the Los Feliz Library continue to draw standing room only crowds.

On June 15, Courtney Aiken and Dan Cooper presented the preliminary results of this spring's Raptor Nesting Survey. Due to a larger number of volunteers at the training sessions than was anticipated, they were able to expand the study to include some hawk and owl nests outside the park. (See p. 4) FoGP purchased a spotting scope to aid birders in monitoring the nests assigned to them. Volunteers monitored 49 active nests and numerous nests that may have been active earlier in the season. Owls don't mess around; they start nesting early in the season so next year's survey will have to start earlier to catch them doing their thing. Birders are a dedicated and enthusiastic group. Participants proudly told the audience about the fledglings in "their" nests. There was a lot of Q & A at the end of the program, but the best part was that many more birders asked if they could be included in next year's survey. Yes, you can! Watch for announcements about the 2018 training sessions.

On July 13, guest speaker and FoGP boardmember Richard Stanley tackled some of the demands facing parks in today's world. Stanley began with the question why have parks at all? What human needs propelled the universal formation, development and adoption of public parks? What challenges confront parks today? Is the idea of parks overdue for revision?

Stanley traced the development of parks: an area of natural, semi-natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment and recreation or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. From the first park, the Garden of Eden, to our modern Griffith Park, man has tried to enhance human life by drawing closer to the natural world. Ancient Romans had the atrium for the family and the gods. England had deer parks that served the squire. Renaissance and Baroque royalty ordered parks into formal gardens. Later, these formal gardens gave way to a carefully cultivated natural, but man-made, style. The 19th Century saw the rise of the rural ceme-



tery, a kind of idealized rustic necropolis that influenced outdoor furniture, World's Fairs and even Disney parks.

Photographers returned from distant corners of America with images so compelling that the idea of a park designed to preserve unspoiled natural beauty formed: the national park. Urban social stress led to the idea of large city parks with a democratic intent such as New York City's Central Park. Stanley traced the creation, decline and restoration of Central Park, the nation's most-used park. Its salvation was assured only after the city of New York chartered a non-profit, publicly-run organization, the Central Park Conservancy, to raise funds and administer the Park's \$80 million annual budget.



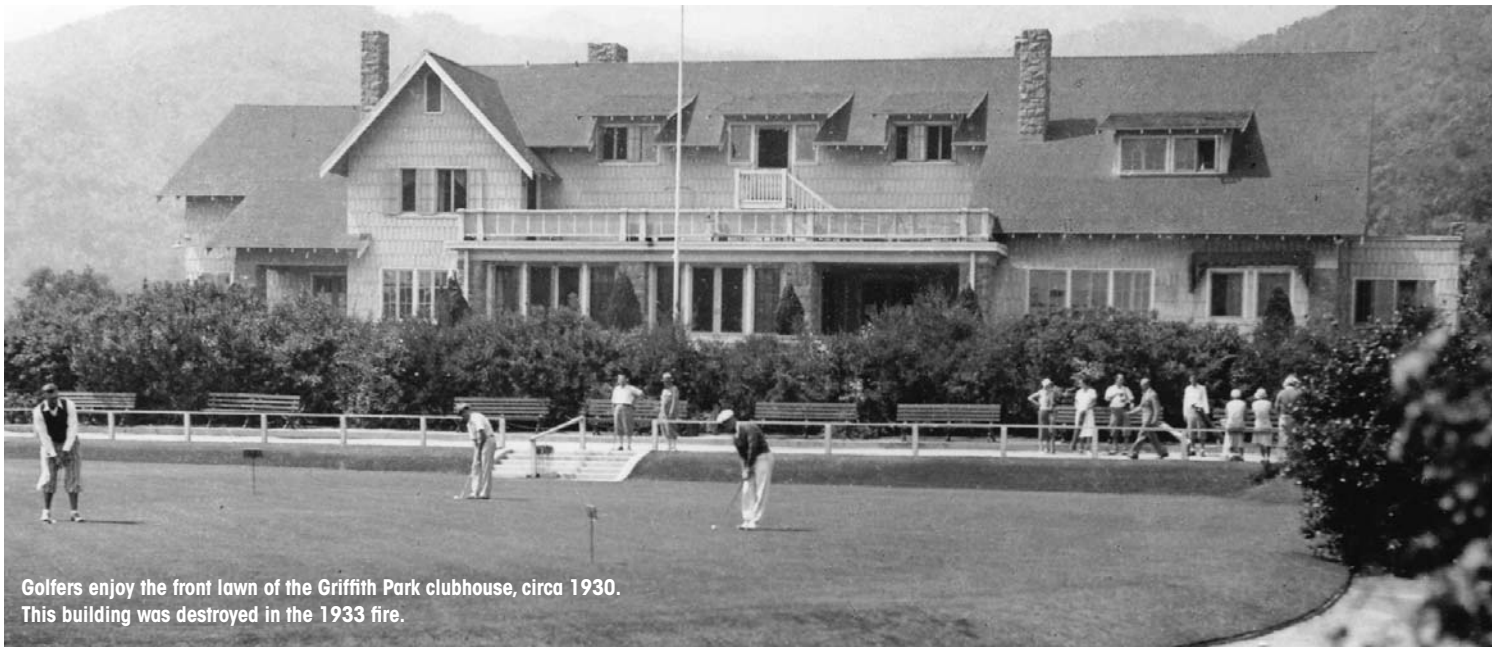
Special Screening of "The Cat That Changed America"

On Thurs., Oct. 19, Friends of Griffith Park and the LA Zoo and Botanical Gardens held a special screening of the documentary on P-22. The film was followed by a panel discussion with biologists Dan Cooper, Chris DeMarco and LA Zoo Director John Lewis. The discussion was moderated by FoGP's Gerry Hans. Many thanks to the LA Zoo for hosting this well attended event.

Join Friends of Griffith Park

Help protect the park for future generations!

Sign up today at friendsofgriffithpark.org



Golfers enjoy the front lawn of the Griffith Park clubhouse, circa 1930. This building was destroyed in the 1933 fire.

Griffith Park's 1933 Fire

~Kathryn Louyse

Friends of Griffith Park is privileged to have speakers on a variety of park-related topics. This past August, our guest speaker was Mike Eberts author of "Griffith Park: A Centennial History" who discussed impacts of the 1933 fire.

Today, various firefighting techniques are employed to quickly knock down flames, but in Griffith Park's 1933 fire, the simple shovel was the tool primarily utilized by workmen enlisted to fight the fire. Sadly, due to their inexperience, approximately 150 men were injured, and at least 29 perished in the deadliest LA fire, pushed by winds through deep brush-filled canyons.

Published records from the time, stated that more than 3,700 relief workers were involved in various activities throughout the park when the fire broke out. Workers were usually divided into smaller squads and depending on experience, tasked with brush

clearance, road- and bridle-path building, planting, or dam construction. The vast number of laborers in the park was a response to the widespread depression still gripping the country as men were forced to work for less than a dollar a day, and glad to have the opportunity.

The morning of the fire started out innocuously, but by mid-afternoon the temperature had heated up considerably when Park Superintendent Frank Shearer became aware of smoke emanating from a small area in the Mineral Wells Canyon. Shearer raced toward the fire, while city landscape engineer Fred Roewekamp headed down to the golf clubhouse to raise the alarm. As Shearer got close to the flames, he engaged some park workmen in the immediate area to help extinguish the fire, but by then it had exploded upwards, into the tree canopy.

Author Mike Eberts described the aftermath of lives lost. "The bodies were laid in a row on a concrete floor under a huge canvas shroud. Most were so badly burned that they could not be identified, except by their belongings, which were kept in an old apple crate. This odd, macabre little collection of trinkets included two inscribed belt buckles, a high school class ring, a chauffeur's badge, a Ford ignition key, a collapsible cup, a little square glass bottle, a blue sunglass lens..." Later, individuals were identified by personal items: a class ring helped identify Roy Brown. Others were identified by dental records, but some were transient and remained unidentified.

Recently I spoke with Leonard Loa, son of John Loa who in 1933 was on one of the work crews when the fire broke out. Like many day laborers of the era, the 21-year-old Loa was sent to Griffith Park to help clear brush. Leonard remembers his father talking about the experience of being so close to the flames that his clothes were burning and his shoes were practically melting from the heat. But Loa was one of the lucky ones who survived while others sent in another direction to fight the conflagration were killed.



One of the bodies recovered is escorted down a slope in Griffith Park.

photos from LA Department of Recreation and Parks



Observatory Circulation Plan Declared a Success ~Gerry Hans

One of the key features of the newly-implemented *Griffith Observatory Circulation and Parking Enhancement Plan* is the funding of DASH buses to shuttle park patrons to the popular Griffith Observatory venue using parking fees generated near the venue. According to Griffith Area Superintendent Joe Salaices, it's working.

In July, over 35,000 visitors (800-1,000 per day) rode LADOT's DASH to the observatory. Shuttle buses from the METRO Red Line were often full and extra buses had to be added. Other visitors parked their cars for free at the Greek Theatre lots and took the quick trip to the top.

The popularity of the observatory is only increasing. Is it the *La La Land* effect? Maybe. Another reason is the City's promotion

of this site for Hollywood Sign viewing in order to reduce traffic into nearby residential areas. The observatory reported attendance up a whopping 50 percent in July 2017 versus July of 2016! The Griffith Observatory holds spot #3 in the ranking of favorite LA tourist attractions.

But while more and more people are using the shuttles, the bad news, per Salaices, is that Rec and Parks continues to struggle with too many vehicles entering the park. Over 270,000 vehicles entered the observatory area in July, from either Vermont Avenue or Fern Dell! Traffic jams occur in Fern Dell regularly on busy days, and the efficiency of the shuttle buses diminishes as they struggle through gridlock.

Salaices says that Rec and Parks is actively looking for offsite parking options and other ways to promote public transit into Griffith Park. A walking path along the road from the free Greek Theatre parking area to the observatory is also planned for the near future.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

When it comes to educating kids about the joys of hiking in Griffith Park, FoGP has a secret ingredient – board member Felix Martinez. An avid hiker, Felix has hiked in the park with the Sierra Club for years. He knows every inch of the park and loves to share it with others.

Friends of Griffith Park has partnered with the Sierra Club for the last seven years to take students to the park under their Inspiring Connections Outdoors program. FoGP helps pay for the school buses. Felix and his Sierra Club cohorts lead students and teachers on hikes. Sometimes a biologist like Miguel Ordeñana is available to show the students how to recognize paw prints or critters. The idea is to inspire the next generation of stewards for the park.

So far this year Felix has introduced 356 students to the park. Felix enlightens them with stories about the park's history, trees, flow-

ers, birds, coyotes, deer, the river, and the Anza Expedition. Since many of the students are immigrants, they can identify with the members of the Anza Expedition.

Felix is the spice that makes the park come alive for them. He has a twinkle in his eye that imparts his love of the park to all. He calls the students *mi hijo*, and they look to him as their *abuelito*. He keeps them under control but with gentleness just like their own grandfather would. The taste of the park the students get from Felix will inspire life-long park lovers.



photo: Shawn Sites

Transition Time for the L.A. River and Griffith Park?

~Brenda Rees

There are plenty of discussions happening right now about renovating the Los Angeles River. It seems every week another company or entity is announcing a new vision for revitalizing (and/or capitalizing?) on the future of the river.

As you may or may not know, a generous portion of the Los Angeles River is contained within the boundaries of Griffith Park – from the north side near Burbank southward through Glendale to Atwater Village. Alterations to the river in these – or any other part of the 51 miles of the river for that matter – could very well impact human visitation to Griffith Park as well as the flora and fauna that live in the park.

Friends of Griffith Park closely monitors all proposals, auditing potential changes through a lens of preservation, inclusion and environmental impact. Currently we're actively watching three proposals which have made recent headlines.

AECOM Proposal: Lincoln Heights Jail to 7th Street

Last year, L.A. City Council approved an 11-mile plan with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to utilize the efforts of architect Frank Gehry as means to revitalize the river from Griffith Park to downtown; this year, city officials put out the call to design firms about their river visions via the L.A. River Downtown Design Dialogue.

Several firms have presented ideas, including a recent extensive version from L.A.-based AECOM, a multinational construction and engineering company, which wants to increase green space and provide much-desired housing along the banks of the river.

AECOM's 4-mile plan overlaps some of the 11 miles in the Army Corps' plan and involves using hundreds of acres of river-adjacent land, reshaping the city core and making cleaner trains for the nearby Piggback Parcel railyard in addition to converting much of that 120-acre industrial location into green space for recreation and tourism and river access.

Visit our website friendsofgriffithpark.org

Glendale Narrows Riverwalk Bridge: Flower Street to Ferraro Soccer Complex

California Assemblymember Laura Friedman is working hard to secure \$20 million in state funding to complete Phase III of the Glendale Narrows Riverwalk which opened to the public in 2012; the long-awaited bicycle and pedestrian bridge would span the L.A. River and connect the Glendale green space walkway/bikeway system with the Los Angeles bike trail and Griffith Park. More than 100,000 residents live within one mile of

the proposed bridge which is also within blocks of Dreamworks and its nearly 3,000 employees. Additionally, up to 7,000 new employees at the soon-to-be Disney's Grand Central Creative Campus could use the bridge as a way to combat traffic congestion. If the funding bill is passed by the legislature, the bond measure will go before voters for approval in 2018.

Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act: Griffith Park

A new bill simultaneously introduced in both houses of Congress would place nearly 200,000 acres of land in and around Los Angeles under federal protection. Proposed by Representative Adam Schiff and Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act would double the size of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area with the addition of Griffith Park, much of the L.A. River and open spaces in the Santa Susana Mountains and the Santa Clarita Valley. Schiff says that by bringing these areas into the NPS, park officials can create and maintain new hiking trails,

monitor wildlife and provide financial assistance for preservation-related projects. Schiff originally introduced the Act in 2016 (an earlier report and interview by FoGP can be accessed at <http://www.friendsofgriffithpark.org/the-rim-of-the-valley/>) but it was never considered by committee. While the Trump Administration has moved to chop recreation areas and national monuments and open others up for oil and gas exploration, Schiff sees the inclusion of these urban green spaces into the NPS fold as a way to protect them with expanded finances and better programs.



Reimagining LA, from AECOM proposal



City of Glendale pedestrian bridge rendering



Schiff's recent Rim of the Valley presentation at Brand Library

New Griffith Park Snake Species Confirmed

~Gerry Hans

No offense P-22, but Griffith Park's reptiles have always intrigued me. I even like the rattlesnakes because they keep rodent populations in check. Seeing a California kingsnake or a ring-necked snake is a special treat which can make me smile for weeks. Even rarer, a sighting of the coast horned lizard, allows me bragging rights with my naturalist friends for months. Unfortunately, these lizards seem to be disappearing in recent years. However, documenting a new snake species for the park, the Western thread snake, was beyond all expectations!

Until this new finding, five different snakes were on the species list of Griffith Park as observed in recent years. In order of frequency of my own snake observations in the park, they are: Southern Pacific rattlesnake, California striped racer, San Diego gopher snake, San Bernardino ring-necked snake, and the California kingsnake.

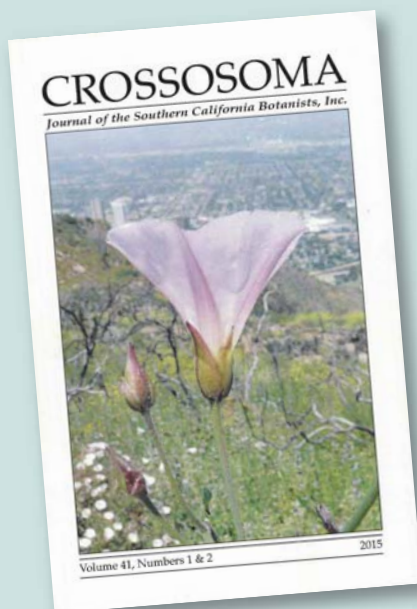
The Western thread snake (*Rena humilis*), also known as Western blind snake, is very small with a blunt head and tail. Its nonfunctional eyes are just dark spots. The reason no one has ever seen this snake is that these snakes spend nearly all their life burrowing in the soil eating ants and termites. The one I found on the edge of Western Canyon Road had apparently been hit by a car.

Dr. Greg Pauley, herpetologist at Natural History Museum of LA County was excited about the discovery, saying there are only a couple of records of the species in the entire Santa Monica Mountains area. Up until now, there was no record of this species east of Sullivan Ridge, which is west of I-405!

Along with Greg Pauley, I alerted biologist Dan Cooper about the find immediately. Dan said it's a good example of a species we figured was probably there, but never could find it because they are so secretive. The Western thread snake has something in common with P-22, I guess!



Flora of Griffith Park Published



Crossosoma Vol 41, #1 & 2 now available online at friendsofgriffithpark.org/shop/

Biologist Dan Cooper, Friends of Griffith Park's scientific advisor, has been honored with the acceptance and publication of "Flora of Griffith Park" by a prestigious botanical journal, *Crossosoma*. The published report is the culmination of ten years of survey work, collecting wild (not planted) species in the park.

Scientific surveys and studies initiated and funded by Friends of Griffith Park provide a solid basis of flora and fauna, much of which was previously unavailable, to help manage and protect the natural wonders of the park. The famous discovery, of course, was of mountain lion P-22 in 2012 during the Griffith Park Connectivity Study, also managed by Cooper. However, of all the surveys undertaken as part of a collective known as the Griffith Park Natural History Survey, the Griffith Park flora survey was the most challenging, long term and database-intensive.

Cooper's completed work was accepted for publication by *Crossosoma*, the Journal of Southern California Botanist, Inc., and published in July. The study represents the first extensive treatment of native plant species in Griffith Park, arguably the most significant area of open space in the Los Angeles basin. Cooper hopes the document will serve as an inspiration for future investigators studying our local natural history found within this urban area.

"Flora of Griffith Park" solidly documents 423 indigenous and/or naturalized plants and their distribution. From this work, we now know that Griffith Park supports nearly half the entire flora (species) known in the entire Santa Monica Mountains, and is a major storehouse of regionally- and locally-rare species, including the spectacular Humboldt lily and Plummer's mariposa lily.

The 87-page printing of the report and annotated checklist is impressive. Friends of Griffith Park purchased 100 additional copies making them available online for those interested in the flora of this parkland. Books are available in our webstore for \$10.

Attack of the Killer Beetles

~Kathryn Louyse

First came the California drought and as we well know, droughts are really, really bad for trees. Droughts compromise the health of trees to such a degree that invasive beetle species have managed to take hold and create even more damage. Although some forecasters suggest the drought is over, trees in CA are continuing to die at alarming rates with over 100 million dead or dying... thus far.

Walking through parts of Griffith Park it's easy to see how destructive and prolonged this damage has been to the tree canopy. Recreation and Parks has been taking an aggressive stance against new beetle infestations, cutting down branches or trees as a precaution against falling trees. But trees are continuing to die, and thus far, no solution is on the horizon. In an attempt to counteract the mass eradication, new trees are being planted with help from community volunteers and maintenance staff. *Want to help?* Keep your eyes open for tree planting/watering opportunities with FoGP!

But the larger question has yet to be answered: how long before a solution is found?

The goldspotted oak borer (*Agrilus auroguttatus*) first came to the attention of San Diego authorities in 2004 as the Dept. of Food and Agriculture was conducting a study on exotic woodborers. Reports suggest this pest originated in infected firewood imported from southeastern Arizona. By 2008 this beetle was attacking large-diameter coast live oak, canyon live oak and black oak in several California state parks. In order to combat the infestation, firewood originating from these parks was quarantined.

However, the devastation has continued to spread northward infecting trees in portions of Riverside, Orange and Los Angeles



Counties. This massive die-off will have consequences far beyond the health of trees and parklands.

In addition to the goldspotted oak borer, the polyphagous shot hole borer (*Euwallacea* sp.) is attacking and infecting box-elders, California sycamores, coast live oaks, avocado trees, white alder, Japanese maple, liquidambar, and red willow trees. Another beetle, the Western sycamore borer (*Synanthedon resplendens*) targets sycamores and coast live oaks.

According to reports by the U.S. Forest Service, invasive beetles could kill 38% of all trees in Southern California's populous areas, putting more than 28 million trees at risk. Worse, RAP may lose upwards of 100,000 trees in city parks.

So, here's the bottom line. LA will suffer enormously if a solution to combat various beetle infestations isn't quickly found and implemented. For some time the city has been struggling due to the community's lack of green space and a diminished tree canopy will certainly exacerbate the problem.

Hopefully once this infestation is contained, the city can move forward in addressing the "heat island effect" by planting more trees, providing shade and abating greenhouse gas emissions.

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-06/documents/treesandvegcompendium.pdf>



Support FoGP's Ongoing Efforts to Protect the Park

Join us today... friendsofgriffithpark.org

Show your support for Friends of Griffith Park!



Friends of Griffith Park
P.O. Box 27573
L.A., CA 90027-0573

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PASADENA, CA
PERMIT #562

It's easy to look and
stay cool in our
100% cotton T-shirts
and hats.
They're
available at
our e-store.

Check it out at
[friendsofgriffith
park.org/shop](http://friendsofgriffithpark.org/shop)



photo: Brian Lane

The We ♥ P-22
Coloring + Activity Book
makes a great Christmas gift for kids
and grandkids.
138 pages of drawings,
games and activities
of our favorite feline.
[https://narratedobjects.
myshopify.com](https://narratedobjects.myshopify.com)

Join Friends of Griffith Park

Volunteering for different
efforts in the park
will help to preserve this
urban wilderness!

friendsofgriffithpark.org



ADVOCACY • SUPPORT • EDUCATION • SERVICE