

Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates



Coast Barrel Cactus

August 2022

www.dictionaryhill.info

Rattlesnakes Awareness

We could have called this Snake Alarm, but if we remain aware of our snakes then there should be no need to be alarmed. Nevertheless, 40 people were bitten by snakes in our county last year. Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes are present on Dictionary Hill and can be dangerous. Snakes are part of the balance of nature on our hill where they control the rodent population. Please do not kill our snakes. They were living here long before the arrival of humans.



Local naturalist Jim Merzbacher has years of experience with snakes in our area. He gives us the following expert guidance. Wear lightweight ankle high hiking boots. Long pants if you plan on venturing beyond trails edge. Light long sleeves. It is advis-

able to carry a stick or pole as a barrier. Don't lift rocks or wood piles where snakes may be attempting to evade detection. Experienced herpetologists may look for them with a snake hook and special equipment to lift objects but will always replace the objects in their exact orientation and location. Startled rattlers are going to be the most dangerous. The first person spotting any snake should call out "SNAKE", that person should point continuously directly at the snake or its last known location or where it was seen going. The group should stop and not move in any direction if possible until they know which way to move away from the snake's zone. Move slowly and deliberately once the snake has been spotted. Keep at least six feet away from any snake. Check that all of your party are aware of the location of the snake. If you are unsure of the identity of the snake then treat it as a rattlesnake

Avary Rollins

Our New Dictionary Hill Ranger

This is a special day for the future of Dictionary Hill. We have a new County Ranger.

Avary has a degree in geography from San Diego State and is a U. S. Navy veteran. Originally from Washington State, she now calls California home. She is new to



the County Parks Department but previously worked in managing open space at the San Dieguito River Park. She says she loves her new assignment with the Dictionary Hill Open Space Preserve. Her favorite part of being a ranger is, "getting others excited about our amazing natural landscape and helping teach them ways to protect and enhance our environment." If you see

Avary while you're up on the hill, stop, have a chat, ask her those questions you have about the wild life, the geology—whatever is buzzing in your head that day.

We are grateful for the four years Avary's predecessor Craig Newson gave to Dictionary Hill. He was always approachable and knowledgeable.

We have come a long way since the years when Dictionary Hill was under continual threat from the developers who had visions of more California urban sprawl covering the hill to boost their profits.

Normally in at this time of year we see a high fire risk. With this exceptional drought the risk is super high. Take great care on Dictionary Hill.

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Local neighbors Sonya and Chris Heiserman on an exciting new development on Dictionary Hill

Dictionary Hill Open Space Preserve has been an official County Park for five years and is now beginning to actually look official.

We live at the end of South Barcelona where a rocky trailhead goes into the canyon. This trailhead, going to the left and to the right, has been used for years and was especially appreciated by local families and dogs during the pandemic shutdowns. We saw kids, babies in backpacks, dogs of various sizes, hikers both experienced and new, and bicycle adventurers too. We found it a little noisy at times but were happy that it provided open space and exercise to all those who had been trapped in their houses. People were tired of working from home and helping kids with Zoom classes, tired of not being able to go out and eat in a restaurant. They were tired of the gym being closed.

Now summer 2022 life has opened again. Hikers arrive at the trailhead on our end, and at the other

trailhead on Buena Vista on the south of the Hill. They have discovered Dictionary Hill Open Space Preserve. Yet hikers still did not know where the trails were and needed a map and some proof that yes, this was a genuine County Park. Then a couple of months ago several County Parks trucks and a crew arrived in front of our house on South Barcelona with lumber and equipment and constructed an official kiosk. One was already installed at the south entrance. Now these kiosks have been provided with a large park map, historical narrative and information. We've been promised an official trail plan, and trails will be built that are easier to traverse. We are hoping for more signage pointing the way to the 1,059-foot summit, and perhaps a peaceful bench or two. We can envision a sign at the



top pointing out all the surrounding peaks in the distance. The County is planting native plants at the top and has put in an elaborate system to water them until they are established.

Come check out the trails and new kiosks.

Sonya and Chris



Spot your hawks over Dictionary Hill.

The red shouldered hawk is a large bird with broad wings and a wide fanned tail with concentric stripes.

They will swoop to snap up lizards and small rodents.

San Diego Natural History Museum

The NAT in Balboa Park has a impressive new permanent exhibition on wildlife and conservation in Baja California. The fact that there is a border fence separating us from Baja doesn't mean that we are a different entity. From Dictionary Hill we can see well into Mexico. We are linked to the eco systems seen south of the border.

When you get the chance we very much recommend spending an hour looking at this NAT exhibition.

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DHOSA Monthly Meetings

Throughout the pandemic we have been meeting each month on Zoom. Now that most of us are fully vaccinated we are holding meetings in person again—spaced out in the open air. We hope to welcome people we haven't seen for so many months for a catch up chat. Bring your own coffee, tea and pastries plus a chair if possible.

If you want to be included email DHOSA president Karen Gless at dhosaorg@gmail.com