

RanchTalk

Elkus Ranch Program News

Fall/Winter 2010

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Elkus Ranch Turns 35!

Elkus Ranch celebrated 35 years of environmental education this month with an open house and cake, of course. Our guests enjoyed a beautiful day – sunflowers in bloom, baby goats playing and plenty of opportunities to share memories of the ranch. Birthdays and anniversaries are always cause to reflect on the years gone by as well as those to come.

*“We turn not older with years, but newer every day”
—Emily Dickinson*

Photographs of the ranch show tremendous changes over the last 35 years. New gardens, new conference center, new programs, new equipment, new staff and, most importantly, new children with whom we get to share the ranch.



Elkus Ranch in the 1970's

We have reached a place where our mission is clear and successfully implemented, our facilities match the intention of our programs, our Advisory Board is actively involved, and our staff are wonderful ambassadors for agriculture and the environment. Our summer



Elkus Ranch today

camps were full every session, the calendar for this school year was fully booked for fall programs and we look forward to a very busy spring. Winter months are filling up as well and our Lunch at the Ranch program had more reservations this year than ever before. Our facilities now need some attention and repair. While our leaky barn roofs will be replaced shortly, we still need to replace water storage tanks, upgrade our water system, do some structural and cosmetic repairs to the ranch house, and

spruce up the conference center. This last year has been extremely challenging with economic issues casting a dark shadow over all of our accomplishments and achievements. We are proud of our outreach, educational programs, and numerous alumni who value the Ranch, their experiences there, and want thousands of others to benefit from its programs. With your support, the best is yet to come.



We're Feeling a Little Fruity!

ON OCTOBER 10, 2010, the 4-H Million Trees Project visited Elkus Ranch once again and this time

planted several fruit trees. Near the conference center a plum, persimmon, pear and apple tree were planted and 2 additional apple trees were planted just outside the chicken coop. The 4-H volunteers not only acquired the trees, dug the holes, and shoveled the compost, they also thoughtfully encased the young trees in chicken wire to keep away our roaming deer. We are looking forward to all that delicious, nutritious fruit to share with our summer campers, visiting school groups, and the children who participate in our Lunch at the Ranch programs. Thank you Million Trees Project! We'll spend the next year thinking about plum jam, persimmon cookies, fresh pears with goat cheese, apples with peanut butter and . . . mmmmm.



It is hard to believe but winter break is right around the corner, and that means it is time for 2010 Winter Discovery Day Camp. Much like summer camp, campers will help with the ranch's daily chores, feeding the animals, cleaning pens, and tending the gardens. Winter crafts and cooking are also a part of a fun camp day at Elkus. Lots of free time to visit favorite animals, play games, and explore the ranch.

Camp will run 9am to 3pm, December 20, 21, and 22, 2010. For more information and to register please visit our website at cesanmateo.ucdavis.edu or give us a call at 650-712-3151 or email elkusranch@ucdavis.edu



Tired of your same old workout?

Weary of Zumba, Spinning classes and Boot camps?
Pocketbook getting low from gym memberships?

Try our FREE Poop Scoopin' Boogie Workout!

1 hour workout includes pitchfork stretches, manure lifts and squats, and wheelbarrow cardio all set to the raucous tune of donkeys braying and chickens crowing!

Post workout cool down includes quiet meditation in the garden or snuggling with a baby goat.

Get a great work out while helping keep Elkus

Ranch clean and tidy. Wear closed toed shoes and comfortable layers - all other equipment provided.

Where: Elkus Ranch

When: Weekday mornings 8:30 – 9:30

Cost: FREE

Advance sign up required at elkusranch@ucdavis.edu or 712-3151



News from the Board

By Christa Bigue

The Elkus Ranch Advisory Board members are committed to providing Elkus Ranch staff guidance and support regarding the operation, planning, development, funding, and use of the Ranch.

Despite the challenge to achieve these goals in the present budgetary environment of state cutbacks, the Elkus Ranch Advisory Board and staff have developed some very innovative solutions for the Ranch and its need for capital funds.

Take the roofing campaign, for example. The Adopt-a-Shingle program was a success in garnering donations and informing the public about the need for new barn roofs. With the bulk of the funding in place from grant money, requests for bids are being sent out to union roofers in the Bay Area, and construction is slated for some time in December.

Once the roofs are completed, the water system will be the Board's next big project. New storage tanks are needed and the Ranch staff expressed their preference to have two large tanks to insure that if one tank empties because of a leak, the second tank will still be available. Because the staff will need support from a professional to determine costs and needs in updating the system and installing the tanks, the Board is preparing to help them facilitate this project.

The Board is also very aware that costs to maintaining the Ranch's water system are increasing and that they will need to consider the rising price for water when considering operating costs and preparing future budgets.

Because monetary gifts contribute significantly to the operation of the Ranch, the Board is working with the University of California so donations can be given to Elkus Ranch through its website with the use of a credit card.

The Board has also been busy reevaluating the purpose and structure of the Conference Center with the intent of attracting more meeting groups to utilize the space. Local designer Katja Rimmi provided suggestions and a budget for renovations to the space. New window treatments, chairs and a projection screen will be purchased and installed this year as part of a multi-phase initiative to revamp the space.

Lastly, to better execute Elkus's mission in maintaining and improving the Ranch facilities and its environmental education program, the Board is interested in networking with other boards serving like-minded organizations.

Master Gardeners at Elkus Ranch Demonstration Garden

Submitted by Jan Didur, MG 2008

This summer the Master Gardeners at Elkus Ranch investigated comparative yields obtained from planting directly into raised beds versus containers. Containers included wire frames, 10 and 15 gallon plastic pots, burlap bags and in one case a commercial potato bag. Carola potatoes, Persian cucumbers and eight types of sweet lettuces were grown. Weekly



observations were made on growth, vitality, and presence of disease and pests. Taste tests were enthusiastically engaged in by all.

In addition, a study on ground cover substitutes for Northern Coastal lawns was conducted. All three lawn substitutes met expectations.

The trial on *Echinacea purpurea*, chia, is not yet complete.

Results from these studies provide valuable information for all home gardeners, especially those with limited space. For details about these and other studies, visit our website at: <http://cesanmateo.ucdavis.edu> and click on the 'Master Gardener Program' link.

Barn Owls at the Ranch

Submitted by Julie Mathiason, Elkus staff

We have a resident Barn Owl at Elkus Ranch. She can usually be found in the barn early in the morning. If we are lucky we get to see her as she swoops down over our heads before heading out the window of the barn.



If you listen carefully, you can hear the wing beats interrupted by gliding as she flies.

She can be found roosting during the day in the Redwood trees outside of the barn or in the Juniper trees near the ranch house. Barn Owls, *Tyto alba*, are generally nocturnal, but it is not uncommon for this species to be seen at dusk or to be active at dawn or even occasionally seen in flight during full daylight.

Barn Owls specialize in hunting small rodents and reptiles. There are plenty of open grassy hills and creeks for the owls to hunt in at Elkus Ranch. Our Barn owl leaves evidence that she has been eating her prey in the barn at night by what she leaves behind. Barn owls cannot digest the bones or the fur of animals so they spit out a ball of bones and fur onto the barn floor. We call this ball of bones and fur an "owl pellet". We can examine the contents of the "owl pellet" and see exactly what the owl has been eating. Next time you visit Elkus Ranch, ask to visit the Barn Owl's residence!

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

— Malcolm Forbes



Thank you to our most recent donors!



Laura Bigelow & Michael Medlin, Pamela Chang, Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation/Christa Bigue, Elizabeth Gunther, Nina Hopkins & Family, Carolyn Livengood, Paul, Karen, Jack & Will Meadow, John Mendiola & Family, New Leaf Community Market, Douglas Oliver, Marilyn Pratt, and Geri Sullivan.

Elkus Ranch is a 501(C3) non-profit entity, donations are tax-deductible. Your donations help fund; feed for the animals, sponsor scholarships for classrooms, and help us to improve our programs and ranch grounds. We appreciate all donations and no donation is too small. Thank you!

Please make all checks payable to: UC Regents and mail to :

Elkus Ranch Administration Office
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Phone: 650-712-3151
Fax: 650-712-3153

2010-11 Calendar

Winter Discovery Day Camp	December 20, 21, 22
Spring Pre-school days	March 16, 17, 18
Sheep to Shawl	June 11, 2011
Discovery Day Camp session 1	June 13-17, 2011
Range Camp	June 19-24, 2011
Discovery Day Camp session 2	June 27-July 1, 2011
Discovery Day Camp session 3	July 11-15, 2011
Discovery Day Camp session 4	July 25-29, 2011
Discovery Day Camp session 5	August 8-12, 2011

Elkus Ranch Wish List

4" plant pots
Foam camping mats (not air)
Garden tools such as: pruning shears, gloves, trowels
Deck furniture for conference center
Bed sheets & old towels
Cloth napkins and tablecloths



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