

RanchTalk

Elkus Ranch Program News

Spring/Summer 2011

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Special Guests at Elkus Ranch

On April 5, 2011 Elkus Ranch hosted 3 local dignitaries: Ann Campbell, County Superintendent of Schools, Supervisor Don Horsley, District 3, San Mateo County, and Chris Hunter, Chief Legislative Aide to Supervisor Horsley.



Pictured from L-R: Tracey Walsh, Supervisor Don Horsley, SMC Superintendent of Schools, Anne Campbell, Diane Centoni, and Joyce James, back row (l-r): Leslie Jensen and Kathi Baxter. Not pictured: Chris Hunter and Marilyn Johns.

Marilyn Johns, County Director for Cooperative Extension of San Mateo and San Francisco Counties provided our guests with an overview of the relationship between the county and the numerous programs run by Cooperative Extension and the University of California.

Elkus Ranch Advisory Board Members Joyce James, Tracey Walsh and Diane Centoni, Elkus staff members Leslie Jensen and Kathi Baxter provided a tour of the ranch which included observing 60 excited and energetic Kindergarten children from Cipriani Elementary School in Belmont participating in an Environmental Education program. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to share the work we do and our commitment to providing outstanding educational experiences for Bay Area children.

Thank you Anne, Don and Chris for your time and interest in Elkus Ranch.



It's raining. It's pouring.

The barn roof project was completed in January of this year and despite several weeks of unrelenting rain, the barns were safe and dry. No more buckets placed strategically to catch the drips. No more worries about wet feed and slippery floors. Alliance Roofing Company of San Jose re-roofed both barns and our restrooms between storms this winter. Alliance also installed new gutters at both the Conference Center and the restrooms at the ranch. Many private donors as well as local foundations came together to help fund this project and a permanent "Thank you" display is currently under construction and will be displayed in the Upper Barn. Let it rain!!



New Water Operator at Elkus Ranch

We are happy to welcome our new water treatment operator, Ignatius 'Iggy' Nelson to the Elkus Ranch team.

As many of you may know Elkus Ranch has its own water treatment plant. We draw our water from Purisima Creek, pump it up

the hill where it goes through a complicated treatment process, with the end result being clean, safe water for our humans, livestock, and gardens. This surface water treatment system requires a certified water treatment operator.

A fourth-generation San Franciscan, Ignatius grew up in Pedro Point Pacifica, located on the coast. After enlisting in the Army, he learned reverse osmosis and was the first operator of the treatment unit located at the Gulf of Aqaba in the Middle East serving the needs of his unit, the 27th Engineer Battalion (COMBAT) (AIRBORNE). Upon his return, he was deployed to Central America to operate wells. After returning to the San Francisco Bay Area he went to work for the San Jose Water Company as a system operator. Over the course of his 28 year career he has remained in the same vicinity working for Palo Alto, San Bruno and Foster City. Loving to "play Tourist" in his home state, Ignatius and his wife of 21 years, Karen, have made many trips to the rural areas of California. Ignatius also loves playing golf and drinking coffee.

Elkus Ranch is on Facebook!

Click the Facebook button below to see our new Elkus Ranch Facebook page, hit the "like" button, and connect with us to be updated on future events, pictures, and announcements we make from time to time. We'd love your feedback, suggestions, pictures, and comments about your experiences at Elkus Ranch.

Our thanks to Carolyn Battaini, Elkus Ranch Advisory Board member, for setting this up for us!



Master Gardener Update

Come and join the UCCE Master Gardeners of San Mateo & San Francisco Counties for our third annual Educational Garden Tour and Plant Sale on Saturday, **June 18, 2011**, 10am to 4pm. Enjoy the beauty of seven water-wise gardens from Burlingame through Redwood City. This is a great opportunity to learn about alternatives to thirsty lawns, creating wildlife habitats, hillside gardening, growing edibles and choosing low maintenance plants for a beautiful garden. For more information please go to www.MasterGardenerTour.org. We hope to see you there!

Summer Events



Summer is right around the corner, and that means some fun at Elkus Ranch. **June 11th** from 10am to 2pm is our annual **Sheep to Shawl** event. The public is welcome to watch our sheep get sheared, dye wool, grind corn, and visit our friendly livestock and bountiful gardens. The Elkus wool spinners are on hand to demonstrate their craft. At \$5.00 per person, it's about the best deal around. Bring a picnic lunch, the kids, and enjoy beautiful Elkus Ranch. *Reservations are required.*

Discovery Day Camp, another great Elkus tradition will run for five sessions throughout the summer. Children from 6 to 11 years become ranch hands as they help care for the animals and gardens. Hiking, playing games, cooking, and crafting, are some of the fun activities we fill our camp days with. *Registration is required.*

For more information on both events, please visit our website at <http://cesanmateo.ucdavis.edu> and click on the Elkus Ranch tab.

Survey Says . . .

We recently asked all of you to provide us with your impression of the ranch facilities to help us prioritize improvements and repairs this year. Overwhelmingly your responses were very positive and encouraging. The majority of those who responded to our survey indicated that the ranch, while rustic and aging, is in a beautiful setting and provides visitors with wonderful opportunities to experience farm life in a safe and engaging manner. A common concern however, was the condition and availability of the restrooms, especially during popular and well attended public events such as Sheep to Shawl and Pre-School Days. Our staff has also identified several projects including repaving the driveway from Purisima Creek Road to the bridge and from the turn off to the Conference Center all the way up to the barns to insure accessibility even during the rainy season, upgrading the restrooms in the ranch house, and finding a solution to the erosion problem where the sheep and horses access the upper pasture. Currently we are working on determining a budget for each of these items and identifying sources of funding.

Thank you for your feedback and continuing support of Elkus Ranch. We hope to have some of these projects underway before the end of the year.

Help Elkus Win an Orchard!



Please go to www.communitiestakeroot.com and place your vote once a day (*please, no more than one vote per day, additional votes will not be counted*) from **April 15, 2011 through August 31, 2011.**

Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, Inc. and the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation have teamed up to provide twenty (20) fruit tree orchards in various locations in the United States.

Decisions on where to plant the orchards will be determined by public voting. You can help us win one of these orchards by registering and casting your vote. **Thank you for your support!**



4-H Foundation Executive Director Visits Elkus Ranch

Submitted by Carolyn Battaini, Elkus Advisory Board member

It was a beautiful, sunny day on the Half Moon Bay coast on Nov. 22nd, 2010 when Annette Leeland, Executive Director of 4-H Foundation in CA, came to visit Elkus Ranch. Annette has served as the Executive Director since July 2010, and she wanted to get to know her territory and discuss how to make our partnership stronger. She has a strong interest in providing greater opportunities in youth development by collaborating with allied partners like Elkus Ranch.

Our paths intersect in many areas. You may or may not know that in the beginning of it's life, Elkus Ranch was known as the Elkus 4-H Youth Ranch. While the two programs serve youth in different ways, we are both under the same Cooperative Extension umbrella.

Before the tour, Annette, Marilyn Johns, (San Mateo & SF Co. Director, UC Cooperative Extension), Carolyn Battaini (Elkus Advisory Board member), and Leslie Jensen (Program Coordinator) shared ideas to provide deeper experiences for our students, coordinate our aligned youth programs, and deepen our relationships with donors and the community. It was agreed by all who participated, that this visit was an important step to building a stronger relationship with each other.

With Annette's 15 years of experience in fund development,(Big Brothers Big Sisters, in Anchorage, Alaska, and Livingston, Montana) she was quickly able to break through obstacles and be the conduit to provide the ability to accept online credit card donations through the 4-H Foundation website. (See link at the bottom of this article.)

Elkus Ranch and the San Mateo County 4-H Youth Development Program have reached thousands of Bay Area youth and adults in teaching water conservation and water quality at 4-H Clubs, 4-H Farms, 4-H Summer Camp, Elkus Ranch Day Camps, Elkus Ranch school groups, Range Camp at Elkus Ranch, and California 4-H State Leadership Conference. The 4-H Million Trees Project (4HMT) which began in 2008 as a seedling in the minds of Pacifica 4-H'er, Laura Webber and her dad, Tom, after they watched the Al Gore documentary "An Inconvenient Truth." Over the next few months the idea developed, like a fast growing sapling, to become the 4-H Million Trees Project (www.4hmilliontrees.org.) This group of young people have planted several trees at Elkus Ranch. In 2009-2010, through community outreach and the 4H2O Water Conservation Pledge, we reached over 21,000 bay area youth!

In these uncertain and challenging economic times, Elkus Ranch and the 4-H Foundation will continue to look for ways to actively collaborate and to show the important value of how we all

help to improve the lives of our Bay Area youth, families, and communities.

Visit our website for more information on how to donate through the 4-H Foundation at: http://ucanr.org/sites/elkus_ranch/Donate/

(Pictured at left from l-r: Marilyn Johns, Annette Leeland, and Leslie Jensen; not pictured: Carolyn Battaini)

Flora & Fauna

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes*

aura, is a bird found throughout most of North and South America. We see them most every day soaring high over Elkus Ranch. The Turkey Vulture is a scavenger and feeds almost exclusively on carrion. It finds its meals using its keen vision and sense of smell, flying low enough to detect the gasses produced by the beginnings of the process of decay in dead animals. The Turkey Vulture can often be seen along roadsides feeding on roadkill, or near bodies of water, feeding on washed-up fish. It also will feed on fish or insects which have become stranded in shallow water. It plays an important role in the ecosystem by disposing of carrion which would otherwise be a breeding ground for disease. It inhabits a variety of open and semi-open areas, including subtropical forests, shrublands, pastures, and deserts. The vulture is often seen standing in a spread-winged stance. The stance is believed to serve multiple functions: drying the wings, warming the body, and baking off bacteria. The typical adult Turkey Vulture measures 26–32 inches long with a 68–72 inch wingspan and a weight of 3 pounds. The body feathers are mostly brownish-black, but the flight feathers on the wings are silvery-gray beneath, contrasting with the darker wing linings. The adult's head is small in proportion to its body and is red in color with few to no feathers. It also has a relatively short, hooked, ivory-colored beak. The feet are flat, relatively weak, and poorly adapted to grasping; the talons are also not designed for grasping, as they are relatively blunt. Tracks are large, between 3.75 and 5.5 inches in length and have a small web between each toe. At Elkus Ranch we know something is dead when we see several Turkey Vultures circling overhead.



Submitted by Julie Mathiason, Elkus staff

We never know the worth
of water till the well is dry.

~Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia*, 1732



Thank you to our most recent donors!

Carolyn Battaini, Allan & Rosa Brody, Diane Brosin, Mrs. Odie B. Cook, Natalie Cowen, The Estate of Jean Lettsinger, John Mendiola, Wayne Ota, Terri Pacheco, and Jonathan Propp.

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

To donate online with a credit card please see our website for instructions:
http://ucanr.org/sites/elkus_ranch/Donate/



2011 Calendar

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
Fall Pre-School Days	September 28-30, 2011

Elkus Ranch Wish List

4" plant pots
Foam camping mats
Garden tools
Push mower
Old Towels
Children's rain gear- boots and coats



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