



Big Pines Volunteers

Volunteer NEWSLETTER

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"Caring for the Land and Serving People"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Pine Cones	2
Safety Tips	2
Big Pines History	3
Vandalism	4
Summer Programs	4
Volunteering	5

Special points of interest:

- Jackson Lake was last stocked on September 23rd.
- Hunting season for Deer and Bear opens Saturday, Oct 9th. Deer season runs through Nov 7th, while Bear season ends Dec 26th.
- Quail season opens Saturday, Oct 16th, and runs through Jan 30th.

Bears in the San Gabriel Mountains...



"Once upon a time grizzly bears were more plentiful in Southern California than pigs," wrote early Los Angeles historian Horace Bell.

The decline in numbers and final extinction of the California grizzly have left a faded trail in literature, most of it too dim to be read with accuracy.

In a few localities, the year and precise date in which the last bear was killed is known, but the last reported killing may have been some years before the grizzly actually became extinct.

Isolated males and lone females too old or without mates may have lived on to die from natural causes.

The greatest reduction in numbers was probably between 1849 and 1870. One of the last strong-

holds of the California grizzly was in the San Gabriel Mountains.

One of the last grizzlies, a nearly full-grown male, was shot by Walter L. Richardson on May 16, 1894, in Big Tujunga Canyon.

A grizzly was trapped and killed by Cornelius Johnson near Sunland in Tujunga Canyon on October 28, 1916 and for a time this was considered the "last grizzly" in Southern California, but it was revealed that shortly before this animal was shot a grizzly had escaped from the Griffith Park Zoo and most feel this was the same bear.



The last California grizzly, which gets its name from the grayish or grizzled tips of its fur, was shot in 1922 in Tulare County. Sadly, it survives today only on our state flag.



Prior to 1933, most authorities agree that there were no black bears in the San Gabriel Mountains! So where did our bears come from?

In an effort to put bears back into the "food chain" after the grizzlies were gone, as well as move some problematic "garbage bears" from Yosemite Valley, eleven bears were transplanted from Yosemite into the San Gabriel Mountains near Crystal Lake in November 1933.

Thus, all the bears in the San Gabriel Mountains are ancestors of those original Yosemite bears.

Why So Many Pine Cones this Year?...



Scientists say that you can expect to see these bumper crops of pine cones every three to seven years.



Big Pines – This year's bumper crop of pine cones and acorns is hard to avoid. No matter where you look the Pine trees and Oak trees are just loaded. It is definitely a "mast" year.

Why so many pine cones and acorns this year? Could it have something to do with the good winters we've had the past couple of years?

The phenomenon of "mast seeding", the intermittent production of large seed crops, occurs in many tree species and the causes have been debated by biologists for years.

It may be a response to favorable growing conditions in the previous season(s), or a strategy to increase reproductive success by satiating seed predators in a given



year so that there is a better chance for some seeds to grow.

Peter DelTredici, the senior research scientist at Harvard University, says: "Trees do this as a way of avoiding these predators, because if they produce the cones on erratic, unpredictable cycles the insects can't adjust to them."

Safety Tips... Campfires...

Learn how to safely start a fire. Never use flammable liquids to ignite or keep your fire burning. This means, avoid gasoline, diesel fuel, lighter fluid and other dangerous fuels.



It has been years since an open campfire has been allowed outside of an existing campfire ring in a designated campground in the Angeles National Forest. Still, campfire safety is a must even in the campground.

Paid and Volunteer USFS personnel spend much of their time teaching the public about proper fire safety in the forest.

Over Labor Day Weekend, with the campgrounds full, many were building illegal campfires outside of the campgrounds.

Campfire Safety tips:

- Use only designated campfire rings in the campgrounds.
- Clear the immediate area around the campfire, approximately 8 to 10 feet in radius and watch for embers.

- Keep the campfire contained within the ring, keeping them small (2'x2'x2'in size) so as to not let them get out of hand.
- Stack extra firewood upwind and away from the fire.
- Keep plenty of water handy and have a shovel for throwing sand on the fire if it gets out of control.
- Never leave a campfire unattended, not even for a minute.
- Teach your children to respect fire.

Extinguishing the Fire:

- Drown it with water. Make sure all embers, coals and sticks are wet. Be careful of the steam. Stir, add more water and stir again.
- Do not bury your coals or throw them in the trash.

Big Pines History... The Big Horn Mine



Vincent Gulch – Perched at some 7,000 feet on the east slope of Mount Baden-Powell, you'll find the Big Horn Mine. Local legend tells us that the mountain man Tom Vincent, alias Charles Vincent Dougherty, originally discovered the mine and named it for the Big Horn sheep he was hunting at the time of the discovery around 1895. That area, which included Prairie Fork, Fish Fork, East Fork and other canyons, had been active with gold mining operations for decades.

Tom Vincent and his partners dug deep into the mountain and found walls of gold ore some 25 feet in width. Unfortunately, it was very hard work and they could not afford to extract the gold from the hard rock.

They worked this claim until approximately 1898 when they sold it. Tom Vincent preferred mining gold from the stream beds in the canyons. It was much easier, though he kept two other nearby claims called Blue Cat Mine and Little Nell Mine.

There was a lot of hype and great flurry over the mine. An article in the Los Angeles Times boasted a mine that was developed to a depth of 300 feet and had been crosscut in several places for a

distance of some 1200 feet in length, showing a body of gold ore of over 50 feet in width between the walls, containing two million tons valued at over \$8,000,000. The mine was to employ 250 men.

This exaggerated hype lasted a very short time. By the following year only three men were listed as being employed at the Big Horn (one of them being Tom Vincent himself), taking approximately 100,000 dollars worth of gold from the mine, a far cry from the \$8,000,000 estimate.

Over the last 100+ years the mine has changed hands many times. The Wilderness Land Trust bought the historic Big Horn Mine parcel, some 277 acres, in September of 2007.

The rising price of gold made re-opening the mine attractive for the Wilderness Land Trust but early tests had revealed that although much gold lies deep within the mine's shafts, it is buried deep within hard rock. Even with modern mining methods, it would be a chore to retrieve. Because of this, the Trust optioned to transfer the Big Horn Mine to the U.S. Forest Service.

The Big Horn Mine has produced 3,701 ounces of gold, 2,430 ounces of silver and 1,357 pounds of copper.



Then



Now



Vandalism Cleanup...

Reputedly, the largest Grizzly Bear in California was shot in Soledad Canyon in 1873. It weighed 2,350 pounds.

The grizzlies supposedly grew larger in southern California because they spent less time in hibernation.



Vincent Gap- Frank Trujillo has painted over the graffiti that had plagued the signs at the junction of the Vincent Gulch and Big Horn Mine Trails. Signage was added to help educate hikers about the wilderness.



Big Pines- In August, vandals peppered the historic Big Pines Recreation Hall with BBs, damaging numerous panes of the vintage 1926 glass. Repairs were made and it looks as good as new.



Weather Extremes Big Pines Station

September 2010

Low: 9th 39°

High: 3rd 89°

Wind: 4th 30

Precipitation: .00in



**Grassy Hollow
Visitor's Center**

www.grassyhollow.net

Grassy Hollow Summer Programs...

The Grassy Hollow Summer Programs finished the season on Labor Day Weekend with successful programs dedicated to "Old Man" Tom Vincent.

On Saturday evening about 75 people attended the campfire program at Table Mountain Campground to enjoy a sing-a-long and Tom Vincent himself, telling stories about his life.



The following morning approximately 35 hikers made the half mile trek from Vincent Gap to the actual cabin Tom Vincent lived in from the 1880s to 1926. To the hiker's surprise Tom Vincent was there to greet them. He welcomed them into his home to have a look around and shared some gold.



For more on the history of the Big Pines visit the "Wrightwood Historical Museum", located at 6000 Cedar, Wrightwood.

It is open every Saturday from Noon until 4:00 pm



c. 1925



c. 1930

Interested in Volunteering out of the Historic Big Pines Station?

Call: (760) 249-3504 or Email:
Aaron Katona: akatona@fs.fed.us
Todd Cook: mtcook@fs.fed.us or
Ron Heinig: rheinig@fs.fed.us



The Wrightwood Communications Group has a disaster preparedness net each Sunday evening at 6:00 pm.

<http://www.kw6ww.com/>



Wrightwood CERT has weekly FRS Nets on Sundays at 5:30 pm.

<http://www.wrightwoodcert.com>



Non-profit 501 (c) (3)

Upcoming meetings (3rd Tues each month)

Tues Jan 19, 2010
Tues Feb 16, 2010
Tues Mar 16, 2010
Tues Apr 20, 2010
Tues May 18, 2010
Tues Jun 15, 2010
Tues Jul 20, 2010
Tues Aug 17, 2010
Tues Sep 21, 2010
Tues Oct 19, 2010
Tues Nov 16, 2010
Dec 2010 - No Meeting

7pm, at the
Wrightwood Museum
6000 Cedar St.
(Old Fire Station)

Meeting Information:
(760) 249-5248



Current Fire Danger

The Volunteers of the Angeles...

Meetings of the Volunteers are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the United Methoist Church located at 1543 Barbara Street in Wrightwood. All meetings are open to the public.

Volunteers of the Angeles National Forest
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