



NPS photo by Gavin Emmons

Condor 317 checking on her egg in the nest high on a crag near Scout Peak at Pinnacles.

100 years later, Condors return to breed

By Alacia Welch, Condor Field Crew Leader

The Condor Recovery Crew would like to take this opportunity to announce the first condor nest inside the boundaries of Pinnacles National Monument since recovery efforts here began! It is an understatement to say that this is a huge milestone for the program and the park as a whole.

Condors 317 and 318 chose a nest cavity located on Resurrection Wall, to the southwest of the central High Peaks. 317 is a Pinnacles-released female and 318 is a Ventana-released male, both will be 7 years old in a couple of

months and this is their first attempt at nesting. On March 24th, the egg hatched and now the parents are dutifully caring for their nestling.

The nest site is easily viewed from the Scout Peak bench overlook. Please inquire at a Visitor Center for directions to this location if you want to take a look. Be aware that the hike to the viewing area is strenuous and about 5 miles round-trip. Additionally, the Resurrection Wall area is now closed to hiking and climbing within the park for the

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Forecast update

By Eric Brunnemann, Superintendent

From the looks of it 2010 is turning out to be a good year. It was hard to tell at the close of 2009 how my predictions would fare (January Voice). This year so far has seen several programs come to fruition, and judging from the green hills, flowing streams, and plentiful flowers, I may have my best predictions-score-card in years. So from all of us at PINN, to all of you: Thank You!

- I predicted PINN would finally complete a boundary expansion. It only took two years and three months! On March 3, a notice appeared in the Federal Register announcing a boundary change to Pinnacles National Monument. Following multiple reviews by NPS in Washington, the Interior Secretary, and our own staffs in Oakland, Pinnacles now has Congressional authority to acquire three adjoining land parcels totaling 114.79 acres, including the old Bear Valley School House. It seems like only yesterday—December 21st 2007—when I had my conference call with our regional director and got the official “go-ahead!”
- I also predicted PINN would “acquire” Bear Valley School. We’re almost there! First your government has to seek Congressional authority, and approval from the Department of the Interior. That is done. Now I can legally put cold-hard-cash on the table and begin working with all three landowners about purchasing their land. By May this year if the Jefferson School Board agrees to our offer, PINN will acquire the old school house. We will then get to: work on that bell tower; have that community meeting so we all agree on how to rehabilitate the old school; and plan our collective vision for its future. Stay tuned – there is more to come.
- And what about that West Side? On Feb. 10 the National Park Service approved funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to replace and rebuild PINN’s West Side facilities. You could easily say PINN has been seeking funding for its West Side to provide adequate visitor and protection services since 1908! PINN is in process of reviewing its request for submission from small businesses to design and construct a visitor center, maintenance facility and park housing. Another prediction: mark your calendars for a groundbreaking ceremony some time in July of this year.

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Events Calendar

April 17-25

National Park Week

Entrance fees are waived as part of the National Park Week celebration. With a focus on fitness, the celebration is a great opportunity to visit Pinnacles during its spring best.

Saturday, May 8

Geology Field Day

Pinnacles Partnership presents a Geology Field Day in San Juan Bautista. The event includes local field trips exploring the San Andreas Fault, a rock swap, a host of workshops and activities, music, dinner and a star party. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. For more information or to register, go to www.pinnaclespartnership.org.

Saturday, May 22

Pinnacles Partnership Picnic

Come join Pinnacles Partnership for its third annual picnic from noon-5 at the Pinnacles National Monument Eastside Group Campground, sites 125 and 126. Free barbecue for members, informative displays, a wildflower walk and trip to the condor nest with park staff.

Saturday-Sunday, May 29-30

Pinnacles Fingerprints

Pinnacles National Monument will host Pinnacles Fingerprints, an event tracing the legacy of people on Pinnacles and their connections to the land. The event features ranger programs, exhibits, storytelling, information tables and living history demonstrations. For more information or to participate, contact Carl Brenner at carl_brenner@nps.gov or call (831) 389-4486, ext. 265.

Camp Pinnacles mounts a return

Small schools in rural areas such as San Benito County face unique transportation, staffing and resource needs. There are no school buses to transport children to school in many of the rural school districts and, for some families, the distance from home to school is considerable. In one-room schools such as Jefferson, K-8 students of all grade levels and ages receive their lessons together in the same classroom, sometimes from only one instructor. Few of the rural schools have the funds or space for a school library or other instructional materials that students in larger school districts enjoy.

In 2009, Pinnacles Partnership launched the Camp Pinnacles pilot program designed to meet the unique needs of the K-8 rural schools in the gateway communities to Pinnacles National Monument. In April 2009, students and teachers from Tres Pinos elementary school spent a day at the Monument learning about the Pinnacles ecosystem and artistic expression. In May 2009, students and teachers from Jefferson, Bitterwater-Tully and Paicines came together to spend two days and one night at the Monument to focus on the K-8 science curriculum in an outdoor setting. In addition to science lessons, students learned safety on the trails, etiquette in the use of an expensive telescope and set-up/ break-down of camp. Each student also had opportunity to express what they learned via visual and

performance art.

The 2010 Camp Pinnacles is scheduled for June 3-4 when students and teachers from Jefferson, Bitterwater-Tully and Willow Grove elementary schools will focus on Earth Sciences and Astronomy. This

year, the program will be held on a private ranch rich in geological resources for study of the San Andreas Fault. Lead instructors for the upcoming Camp Pinnacles include a geologist and local astronomers.

If you would like more information concerning this new pilot project, please call Julie

Dupris at 831-673-1100 or Paula Grace at 831-634-1012 ext 12. If you prefer e-mail, please send your request to julie@dupris.com or paulagrace@graceandalbert.com.



Getting the dirt on invasive weeds

By Tim Regan, Pinnacles Partnership

PIPA was the first group to sign up for the Adopt-a-Site program to control invasive species at the Pinnacles Campground. The area we have been assigned is campsites 20-32. Last year we had a very good response, with 60 volunteers helping and over 24,000 weeds pulled.

What are invasive plants and why should we be concerned?

Invasive, non-native plants are introduced from other parts of the world. The spread of invasive plants is a primary cause of degradation to ecological systems. Invasive plants, also known as weedy or noxious plants, can displace native plants and animals, and reduce habitat and food sources for native insects, birds and other wildlife.

Examples of plant invaders that currently pose the greatest ecological threat to Pinnacles are:

- yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)
- Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*)
- stinkweed (*Diuriscus graveolens*)
- summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*)

Invasive Plant Species can have severe negative impacts on many of the cultural and natural features that make Pinnacles a spectacular and enjoyable place to visit. Many invasive species are able to:

Displace Native Plants: Invasive species out-compete native plants for limiting resources such as water, sunlight and nutrients. Native plants are often reduced to small, isolated patches or can completely disappear from an area. Invasive species together with habitat loss have caused the

extinction of countless plant species in California.

Disrupt Native Wildlife: Many animals are adapted to use very specific plants for food and habitat. When desirable plants are replaced by invasive species, the animal's food source or habitat is lost. As native plants shrink in numbers, so will the number of animals that depend upon the plants. Many invasive species also are poisonous or harmful to animals.

Change Fire Regimes: Invasive species can increase the frequency, seasonality and intensity of fires in Pinnacles National Monument. Many native plants and animals that would otherwise be unaffected by invasive species can be displaced by changes to the fire regime.

Alter the Visitor Experience: Invasive

plants can transform spectacular displays of showy wildflowers into large, unattractive monocultures. Thorns and irritants on invasives can transform inviting and accessible areas into impassable thickets of thorns and brambles.

Impact Cultural Resources: Pinnacles is home to a flora that is important to California native culture. These plants often thrive in areas now threatened by the spread of invasive species.

Our next weed pull is just before our annual picnic, May 22 from 9 a.m. to noon. If you are interested in being part of this important program please contact Tessa Christensen at Tessa.Christensen@partner.nps.gov or Tim Regan at Tim.Regan60@hotmail.com



Yellow star-thistle

USDA

Condor recovery reaches milestone

Condor, continued from p. 1

duration of this nesting season. Stay tuned for when the closure is lifted.

We want to give a bit of information on our strategies for managing this nest. We will enter this nest up to six times during the incubation and nestling stages. The first entry is to replace the egg laid by 317 with a dummy egg. The second entry replaces the dummy egg with an egg laid by a pair in one of the captive breeding facilities. The other entries will be to

perform routine health checks, including testing blood for lead levels, and administering vaccinations. We will also document the physical development of the nestling over time. During the final entry, we will attach a wing tag and transmitter to allow us to monitor its' movements once it flies from the nest.

Last year at the RS Bar Guest Ranch, we performed the same schedule of entries and there were many questions about why we had to replace the egg. The first reason is that these condors are first time parents and there is a much higher chance that their egg could be infertile or unable to hatch. By placing a fertile egg from a zoo into a nest, we reduce the potential for nest failure. Additionally, in central California, Ventana Wildlife Society and Pinnacles National Monument have documented some condors laying thin-shelled eggs. This eggshell thinning is most likely due to toxins that bioaccumulate, such as DDT or its close relative DDE. Due to these incidences of thinning, it is a general rule that we replace eggs in nests. A thin-shelled egg has a higher



NPS photo by Gavin Emmons

Condor 317 examines her egg.

chance of dying of dehydration if left in the nest. Also, bringing the wild laid egg to the zoos allows us to study the eggshells and tissues to determine degree of thinning and possible causes.

The key aspect at our current stage of condor recovery is to give the parents the best chance they have of raising a young condor who will eventually take its first flight from a nest in the wild. That young bird will then learn from its parents how to forage for food and interact with other condors.

The hope is that the information we gain from the intensive management of these birds will result in a better understanding of the issues they face. With this understanding, we can more appropriately manage the flock and accelerate the rate of the population's recovery. Our aim is to hasten the day when we can take a step back and simply observe them from a distance.

One last update that you may be interested in is that Condor 514, the juvenile that fledged last fall from the RS Bar Guest Ranch nest is doing well and flew to Pinnacles in March!



New staffer Joins PIPA

Hello, my name is Joseph Smith. I am working with Pinnacles Partnership as a liaison officer to facilitate good communication between PIPA and Pinnacles National Monument. I will be helping Paula Grace, acting executive director, as much as I can, especially in reallocating all the many tasks she has been performing for PIPA.

My first big request to all of you members out there is come participate! We have many upcoming events, such as Geology Field Day, and I hope you can come.

I am really happy to see we have so many members, but don't forget that PIPA is project- and event-oriented! So look at the Upcoming Events, and mark your calendars.

I will see you at the Annual Members Picnic and Meeting!

Video documentary chronicles the story of California Condor

Editor's note: Documentarian John Mark Maio of Hollister writes briefly about a project that brought him to Pinnacles National Monument.

By John Mark Maio

The documentary project, titled, "Masters of the Skies – The Story of the California Condor" focuses mainly on the human effort to save this magnificent bird from extinction.

A large portion of the video documents the present-day condor recovery efforts taking place at Pinnacles National Monument. It's been an incredible experience

to go out with the condor recovery team and film the condors and the crew at work. The condor recovery team is one of the most hard-working and dedicated group of individuals I have ever known.

Producing the documentary has also involved hundreds of hours of researching old articles, personal correspondence, and records from historical archives. In addition, I went through reels and reels of rare motion picture films of condors from the 1930s and 1940s.

The documentary includes interviews with many notable individuals who have been involved in the condor program throughout the last century.

Once the project is completed, I plan to donate portions of my additional original footage to Pinnacles National Monument for their historical archives.

The project has been filmed on high definition and the scope of the project is much larger than originally planned. The subject is important and deserves the extra effort and time. The completed movie will run about 100 minutes in length. The project should be completed sometime this summer.



PIPA Weed Pull and annual Members' Barbecue

Sunday, May 22, eastside Group Campground sites 125-126

- Board of directors election
- Guided walks
- Information

Information: info@pinnaclespartnership.org

The Settlement of Bear Valley (1865)

Editor's note: This is the third in a series exploring the Ben Bacon Ranch Historic District.

By Timothy Babalis

Historian, National Park Service

Euro-American settlers first began moving up the San Benito River and into the Dry Lake area as early as 1859 or 1860, following the old River Road which brought mercury from the mines at New Idria and the Panoche Hills north to San Juan Bautista. The earliest of these mines was opened in 1854, but Bear Valley was not settled until more than 10 years later in 1865. Despite the difficulty of getting there, the valley had many qualities to recommend it to the homesteader of that day, not least of which was the abundance of artesian springs in the vicinity of the Pinnacles and the relatively high water table on the floor of the valley itself. Why Bear Valley was not settled until later than the rest of the neighboring country, despite its natural resources and relative proximity to the River Road, may have had much to do with confusion over whether the land was truly unencumbered, given how close it was to an active Mexican-era *rancho*.

Confusion over land titles was a common problem in California at that time. In 1865, the federal land courts were still in session and had not yet finished their task of determining the legitimacy—and the legitimate boundaries—of the numerous grants which the United States had been compelled to recognize under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the agreement which had ended the Mexican-American War and ceded California to the United States. At least two *ranchos* lay within the general vicinity of Bear Valley. One of them, the Rancho San Lorenzo (now better known as the Topo Ranch) regularly used Bear Valley as upland pasture for its cattle and would not be patented for another five years. When it was, its boundaries were fixed several miles south of Bear Valley, but this would not have been known for sure prior to the court's final decision.

The first Euro-American to settle Bear Valley was already familiar with the legal complexities surrounding Mexican land grants. Dr. Americus Powers was at that time fighting to preserve a small farm he had bought from an unscrupulous developer in the agricultural community of San Leandro, just south of San Francisco Bay, on land he believed was legitimately open for sale. But the land was also claimed by a *ranchero* as part of his Mexican-era grant. When the land court ultimately upheld the *ranchero's* claim, Dr. Powers and his neighbors were forced to either pay for their lands a second time or leave. Powers had prepared in advance for this possibility by searching out other lands free from similar encumbrances, and so, by the time of his eviction from San Leandro, he had already discovered Bear Valley and confirmed its value for homesteading. He had also made sure that the valley lay within the public domain and was not part of a Mexican land grant.

Dr. Powers established his new homestead in 1865 in the very center of Bear Valley along the east shore of Sandy Creek. (The Bear Valley Schoolhouse was later built on a portion of this land, which Powers donated for the purpose.) He claimed 160 acres and within 10 days had erected a small house, a barn and stables. The following season he cultivated 65 acres of wheat and barley and later installed two miles of fencing so that he could graze sheep and a few horses. Dr. Powers' property included a perennial spring, a rare and valuable resource in that dry land.

Dr. Powers was soon followed by several of his relatives and a few acquaintances

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History, from page 7

from San Leandro. These newcomers quickly established a small community of homesteaders in the valley. His brother-in-law, Aaron Rockwood, was the first to follow later in 1865, settling on 160 acres with his own family next to Powers. Rockwood's young nephew, Henry Melendy, came at the same time and established a homestead at the far north end of the valley near the mouth of Bickmore Canyon. Although this land lay some distance from his relatives, Henry chose the site for its proximity to a reliable spring, which flowed much of the year and created a marshy area near the center of the broad valley floor. Henry described the waters of this spring as "blue and soft" at the time he first settled here. By December, he had constructed a simple, one-room cabin and fenced a corral and a small garden. Since this was the beginning of the rainy season, he may have also sown his first crop, if he had seed and the equipment, but this is not recorded.

The earliest to settle at the south end of Bear Valley (near the Pinnacles) were Elizabeth and Myron Bacon and their six—soon to be seven—children. Arriving one year later, in 1866, they also followed Dr. Powers from San Leandro. Elizabeth Quigley Shell Bacon would become one of the first Euro-American women to settle here and was later called "Grandma Bacon" by many of the local residents. She had three children by her first husband, Philip Shell, who had died of an accident in 1854 while the couple was still living in Oregon Territory. After marrying Myron Bacon soon afterward, Elizabeth and her new husband moved to San Leandro in 1858 to be close to members of his family. Elizabeth Bacon's oldest son, John Shell, was Henry's age, and the two quickly became close friends. John was with Henry when he first went down to Bear Valley to inspect the area with his Uncle Aaron, and John selected a site near the confluence of Sandy and Chalone Creeks as a likely homestead location for his own family. With Henry's assistance, he built a small cabin here in 1865 to establish his claim to the land.

John spoke highly of Bear Valley when he returned to San Leandro the following year, and eventually Elizabeth and Myron decided to move south as well. In November of 1866, the entire family came to Bear Valley to settle on the land John Shell had chosen for them. This was not yet an official claim, since Bear Valley would not be formally surveyed for another decade, but eventually the family did file on a quarter section of land which was patented under Elizabeth Bacon's name in 1881. Shortly after arriving in Bear Valley, Elizabeth gave birth to her seventh and last child, Benjamin Franklin Bacon, who was born that December during a winter storm as the swollen waters of Sandy Creek flooded across the floor of their primitive cabin. Ben was the first Euro-American child to be born here.

Come join Pinnacles Partnership for the 3rd Annual Members Picnic and Meeting at Pinnacles National Monument

Held in the Group Campground, sites number 125 and 126. Please attend our meeting and the election of new board members! We need you there! There will be free barbecue for members, information display tables, and the opportunity to participate in ranger-led programs such as a walk to the new condor nest in the park, an ethnobotanical wildflower walk and other fun events. Good Company Good Food!

Superintendent's forecast

Predictions, continued from page 2

- Finally, I think I'm going to keep a closer watch on those "good-looking boy condors" from Big Sur. For the second year running a condor from the Ventana flock has paired up with one of our female condors and set up housekeeping. Last year as you may remember the pair nested and fledged at the Rock Springs Ranch. This year's pair chose to nest at Pinnacles in the High Peaks. Ventana Wilderness Society is our partner 501c3 for the care of the Big Sur condors (<http://ventanaws.org/>). For more than two years these flocks have been flying together, so it's no surprise we have pairings from within these two flocks. In the meantime, our fledgling at Rock Springs has been taking longer flights and is finding its way to Pinnacles! If you want to set up scopes and help the public see this year's nesting pair, please contact Mark Paxton (paxtonm@sbcglobal.net) or Ronnie Johnson (veronica_johnson@nps.gov).

Pinnacles Partnership friends

Albert, Mary	George, Daniel & Devii Rao	Norman, Deborah
Arvin, Monica	Grace, Larry & Paula	Orrungroi, Paul
Babalis, Timothy	Hain, Helen	Parker, Ann
Bartlett, Bev	Hain, Paul	Parnell, Sean
Baumgartner, David	Hain, Peter	Paul Mondragon
Belli, Joseph Paul	Hall, Michael B	Paxton, Mark
Bellina, Paul	Harris, Larry	Paytk, Stacy
Bengard, Karen	Harris, Steven	Petterson, James R
Berg, Erez	Hawkins, Jack, Cindy, Taylor & Rachel	Reese-Petry, Jack
Black, Edith	Hubbard, Chris & Toula	Regan, Timothy
Brosseau, Kim	Ivy, Peggy & Jarvis	Rupp, Laurel
Brunnemann, Alana & Kathlyn	Jacinto, William	Scazighnini, Cheri & Lee
Brunnemann, Eric	Jameson, John & Patricia	Scherbinski, Scott
Brunnemann, Suzi	Jameson, Thomas Halley	Schmidt, Eric
Bumann, Jason P.	Johnson, Carol & Steve	Schmidt, Stanley & Meredith
Campos, Johnny & Kelly	Johnson, Gordon & Carol	Serafini, Maureen
Cauthen-Wright, Denise	Judd, Arthur K.	Shriner, Jan
Cauthen, Dorothy	Kaplan, Grace	Silberstein, Mark & Jane
Christensen, Tessa	Kempf, Clay	Skanky, Glen
Coddington, Terry	Kenyon, Nancy & Alma Wood	Smith, Laura
Coile, Jennifer	Larson, Dan	Soper, Gilbert
Cole, David	Lawrence, Donna & David Voss	Steiner, Sara
Copenhaver, Edith	Lee, Karen	Terry, Tom & Maria
Copenhaver, Elizabeth	Lewis, George & Barbara Nicora	Tompos, Eszter
Coplan, Shoshana	Likins, Tod	Uhor, Erica
Cordone, Richard	Louie, Denise	Utterback, Alan
Crawford, Erica	Luther, Michael D	Van Rooy, Frank & Sharlene
Curry, Joseph & Sheryl Sobin	Maio, John & Mary	Victorine, Bruce & Alie
Demaree, Susan	Mansfield, Gary	Welch, Alicia
Doering, John	Matulich, Susan	West, James Rockwell
DuPris, Julie	McClane, Michael	White, Amy
Enroth, Richard	Menke, Doug	Williams, Gordon & Beverly
Fitz, Christopher & Jane Parker	Murphy, Geraldine	
Foley, Nants & Tim	Nadolski, Ed & Michelle	
Fuller, Scott	Nelson, Edith	
Galindo, Rob & Leticia		

The Pinnacles Partnership presents

Geology Field Day

2010 San Juan Bautista

- *Trekking the Faultline (local field trips)
- *Dinner & “not-necessarily rock music”
- *Scoping the Night Sky

WHERE: Windhaven Ranch, San Juan Bautista

WHEN: Saturday, May 8th 9am-midnight

ADMISSION: \$10 adults/\$5 under 18

(vendors and exhibitors free)

Day activities include:

- * join in on a “rock exchange” (bring a bucket of rocks to share & trade)
- * sign-up to lead or join in on group talks, presentations & demonstrations
- * sign up for a local geology field trips
- * learn about Pinnacles National Monument
- * take a self-guided tour to the San Andreas Fault in San Juan Bautista
- * learn about earthquake faults and local geology
- * learn about landslides, fire, and flood hazards
- * personal and community disaster preparedness
- * learn to identify rocks & minerals
- * learn about lapidary and jewelry metal craft
- * study geologic maps and geologic educational resources
- * talk with scientists about ongoing research and investigations in the region
- * teacher and student study and relaxation space - all day!
- * join in a raffle, a silent auction, and more! (Got samples to donate?)
- * enjoy nearby San Juan Bautista, Fremont Peak SP, or wineries along the fault
- * just come and enjoy a day, dinner, and star party on Windhaven Ranch

Bring a demo!

See and do
geology as art

Bring an instrument!

Help make songs and music
about rocks and geology

To register:

<http://www.pinnaclespartnership.org>

Proceeds to support
Pinnacles National Monument