

Valley Wilds

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Tales From Long Ago

By Ranger Jamie Greco

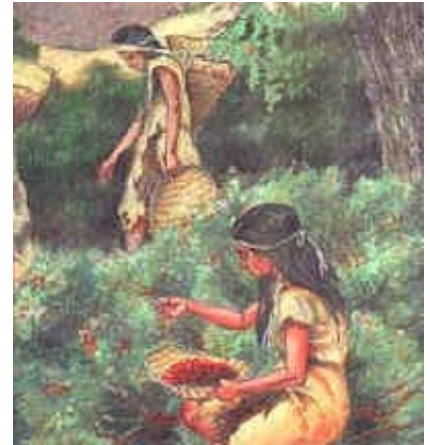
People have populated this area of California for thousands of years, but we live our lives very differently than the people who were here long ago...

Today, we send our children to school to teach them about science and the world around them. At night, when we are bored and tired from a long day of work, we turn on the television or our computers to relax. If we have deep questions about who we are or where we come from, many people turn to a vast array of churches or other types of spiritual or secular understanding. But a long, long time ago, before the great European migration, Native Californians had a very different way of doing things.

Shamans and elderly sages held very significant roles in Native Californian societies. They were the storytellers. But these stories

weren't just for entertainment. They answered the questions of the universe and educated generations upon generations of their people. One such story was told around the campfires of the Yokuts, a California Indian tribe. It explained how Coyote found his voice:

Long before man walked the earth, the whole world was flooded except Mount Diablo and another tall peak (which many scholars believe to be our very own Brushy Peak). Coyote lived on Mount Diablo. He was very lonely. One day Coyote decided that he needed a friend so he sat back on his haunches and howled as loud as he could to attract a friend, but only a faint whisper came out. Each day Coyote tried again, and each day his voice got a little louder. Finally, after five days of non-stop howling, Coyote was able to make the loud, powerful howl we know today. But still no one came to visit him. Eventually the great Eagle God flew down and whispered in Coyote's ear that he was proud of Coyote for not giving up until he got his voice. Great Eagle God promised a surprise for Coyote, a reward for his patience and courage.






Hours later, just as Coyote was about to lose hope in great Eagle God's promise, he noticed a feather floating in the water before him. Suddenly the feather began to multiply and flesh and bones formed, making a beautiful Eagle. Eagle flew to the tip of Mount Diablo and quickly made friends with Coyote. Coyote was so happy that he was not alone anymore.

After many days Coyote noticed Eagle admiring the other peak that poked out of the water. Coyote was scared that Eagle would want to leave him for the other peak. More days passed and finally Eagle became restless. Eagle told Coyote that they should go over to the other peak but Coyote was too afraid to try. He could not fly to the other peak like Eagle and he had never swum before. Eagle told Coyote that he was going to the other peak

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Livermore Area Recreation and Park District
4444 East Ave. Livermore, CA 94550
www.larpd.dst.ca.us
Ranger Office: 925.960.2400

Ranger-led Programs

Experience nature and history in a special way. Programs are generally 1 - 2 hours in length. A \$2 donation is requested. A \$5 parking fee is charged at both park entrances.

May Programs

Quick Look:

Full Moon Hike	Saturday, May 5th	8:30 pm
May Meander	Sunday, May 6th	2:00 pm
Owl Mothers	Sunday May 13th	7:30 pm
Spiders and Their Kin	Saturday, May 19th	2:00 pm
Solar Eclipse!	Sunday, May 20th	5:30 pm

Full Moon Hike

Saturday, May 5th

8:30 p.m.

Want to see the creatures of the night, but prefer to have a bright spring moon light the way? Come out to Sycamore Grove this Saturday for a hike under the light of the almost full moon. We may even get to see some of the elusive Eta Aquarid meteors! We will be walking approximately 2 miles on both pavement and dirt during this 2 hour hike, so be sure to wear sturdy, comfortable shoes. Cancelled if raining.

Ranger Glen Florey

Sycamore Grove Park

Wetmore Road Entrance



May Meander

Sunday, May 6th

2:00 p.m.

Join us for a hike into the hills to find the last flowers of spring. Among the grasses turning gold are hidden jewels including the mariposa lily, elegant brodiaea, clarkia and more. This will be a 4 - 5 mile slow paced walk that will last 2 - 3 hours. If this sounds too long for you, join us anyway and head back whenever you like.

Ranger Amy Wolitzer

Sycamore Grove Park

Wetmore Road Entrance

In Honor of Owl Mothers

Sunday, May 13

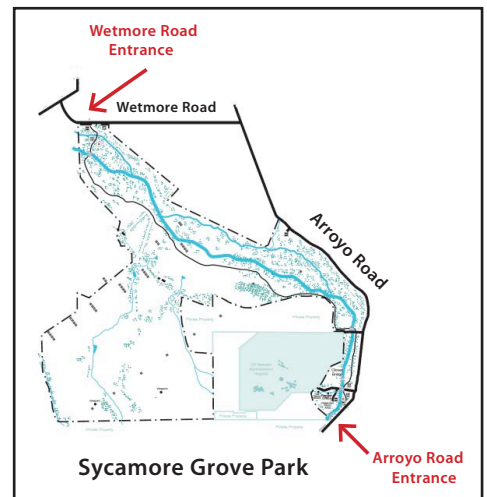
7:30 p.m.

For Mother's Day we'll visit with some of nature's most dedicated moms - owl mothers. This past January we looked and listened for courting Great Horned and Barn owls. That program drew so much interest we had to turn folks away. So, here's your chance, if you missed the last owl program, to experience owls in the wild. We'll search for nests, watch for these silent flyers and listen for the screeches of youngsters begging for food. Advanced reservations required by calling (925)960-2400. Space is limited so don't wait to sign-up.

Ranger Patti Cole

Sycamore Grove Park

Wetmore Road Entrance



More May Programs

Spiders and Their Kin

Saturday, May 19th 2:00 p.m.

They creep, they crawl and they give many folks the heebie jeebies. They are the eight-legged animals of our world – spiders (and their relatives). Join us for a walk in Sycamore Grove to discuss these wonderful creatures. We'll learn about some of the different types around the world and learn which are considered dangerous. There will be a few live specimens for us to look at and learn about.

Ranger Dawn Soles

*Sycamore Grove Park
Arroyo Road Entrance*

Solar Eclipse!

Sunday, May 20th

5:30 p.m.



This evening the moon will pass between the Earth and the Sun, obscuring part of the solar disc. We all know you should never stare at the sun, even when it is eclipsed, but this evening we will have a solar telescope so we

can view the eclipse safely. You can also make pinhole viewers and find some other clever ways to experience the eclipse. Astronomer Gabe Prochter will join us to explain this phenomenon. We will be taking a short walk (less than one mile round-trip) to a good place to view this partial eclipse and enjoy this special evening.

Ranger Amy Wolitzer

*Sycamore Grove Park
Wetmore Road Entrance*

Summer tour dates for Brushy Peak

Join a LARPD ranger for an adventure to Brushy Peak! The trip includes a moderately strenuous hike to the peak (four miles round trip with approximately 800 feet elevation gain).

Sunday	6/17	9 am – 2 pm	\$30
Sunday	8/26	9 am – 2 pm	\$30

Register by calling (925) 373 5700.

Tales From Long Ago

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whether or not Coyote came with him. This gave Coyote the courage he needed to jump in the water and swim with all his might, as he never wanted to be alone again. To his surprise Coyote was a natural swimmer, and he made it all the way to the other peak.



Coyote and Eagle spent many more happy days on the other peak until Eagle got restless again and wanted more friends. As there were no other peaks for them explore, Eagle and Coyote decided to create the first Yokut people of Mount Diablo, so they would always have plenty of friends. In order to make room for their new Yokut friends, Coyote and Eagle made the water recede to where it is today.

To this day the Yokut people believe that they are blessed, like their creators with the courage and sharp eyes of the Eagle and the fine voice, swift feet, and swimming ability of the Coyote. Although most California Indian tribes have their own variations of myths and stories that they tell, they all have one thing in common: they describe the unknown and perplexing questions of the world around them and have united families and tribes for centuries.



Visit Camp Shelly



Camp Shelly opens June 15th!

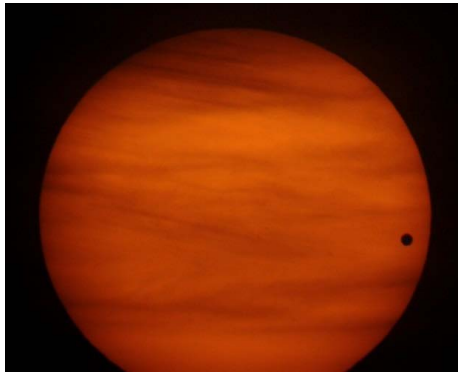
Escape the heat of the valley this summer by taking a quick escape to Camp Shelly in beautiful South Lake Tahoe. Weekends fill up fast; make your reservation now by calling (925) 373 5700.

For more information, visit:

http://www.larpd.dst.ca.us/camp_shelly/info.html

The Transit of Venus

This June you will have an opportunity to witness a once in a lifetime astronomical event! On June 5th (in the western hemisphere) the planet



Venus will pass directly between the Earth and the sun. While this will not be as obviously apparent as a solar eclipse by the moon, it is much rarer and more scientifically interesting. When an event like this occurs it is called a “transit of Venus”. Due to the different orbits of Venus and Earth, transits occur in pairs as part of a 243 year cycle. The next transit will not occur until December 10th, 2117.

Transits of Venus have played an important role in the history of astronomy. Early astronomers were able to observe and predict the motions of planets and sun, but they had no way of determining the actual size of the solar system. German astronomer Johannes Kepler, using his laws of planetary motion, established that it was possible to determine the distance from the sun of any planet in the solar system if an accurate distance of the Earth from the sun were known.

To measure distances in the solar system a technique called parallax is used. By observing an object from distant points on the earth it is possible to measure the change in its apparent position against a more distant background. You can observe this effect for yourself right now by holding your pointer finger about a foot in front of you and focusing on it. Now close one eye at a time and notice how your finger changes position relative to the background. This technique works well but requires very accurate measurement of the difference in position and of how far apart the observation sites are located. As early as 200 BCE Greek astronomers were able to use parallax to measure the distance of the moon from the Earth, but were unable to accurately measure the

By Ranger Glen Florey

distance from the Earth to the sun.

In 1663 Scottish mathematician James Gregory calculated that by observing a transit of Venus or Mercury from distant points on earth, the distance between the Earth and the sun could be determined. Astronomer Edmund Hailey travelled to the island of St. Helena in the south Atlantic to observe the 1676 transit, but unfortunately was the only one to do so. His results led to a worldwide effort to observe the next pair of transits in 1761 and 1769. Observations from the Cape of Good Hope in 1761 and James Cooke’s observations from Tahiti in 1769 calculated the distance to the sun with less than 1% error.

Today we are able to measure the distance to the sun with satellites and radar far more accurately than with parallax, but that doesn’t mean we don’t still have a lot to learn from transits. Measurements of the drop in brightness of the sun during the 2004 transit allowed scientists to determine that it was possible to discover planets around stars other than our own by watching for transits of exoplanets. In March of 2009, NASA launched the Kepler observatory into space to constantly monitor the brightness of 145,000 stars watching for the dimming caused by a transit.

So now are you excited about transits of Venus and want to observe the one this June? You won’t be able to see it by just looking at the sun. In fact doing so is dangerous and can damage your vision. To observe the transit you will need a telescope either with a special filter to block most of the sun’s light or by projecting the sun’s light from the eye piece of the telescope onto a white surface. Join us on June 5th at Sycamore Grove Park to try both these methods!

**Observe the transit of Venus at
Sycamore Grove Park!**

With Ranger Glen Florey

Tuesday, June 5th 3:00 p.m.

More information will appear in the
June Valley Wilds.