

Trails and Tales

News for VIP Volunteers in the Montane Sector

February 2013



Photo by Jason DeMendonca



VIPEVENTS

February 2nd -Hike and Hack
meet at 8:00 am

July 28th -MAU Benefit Ride

Please send up- coming
events information!



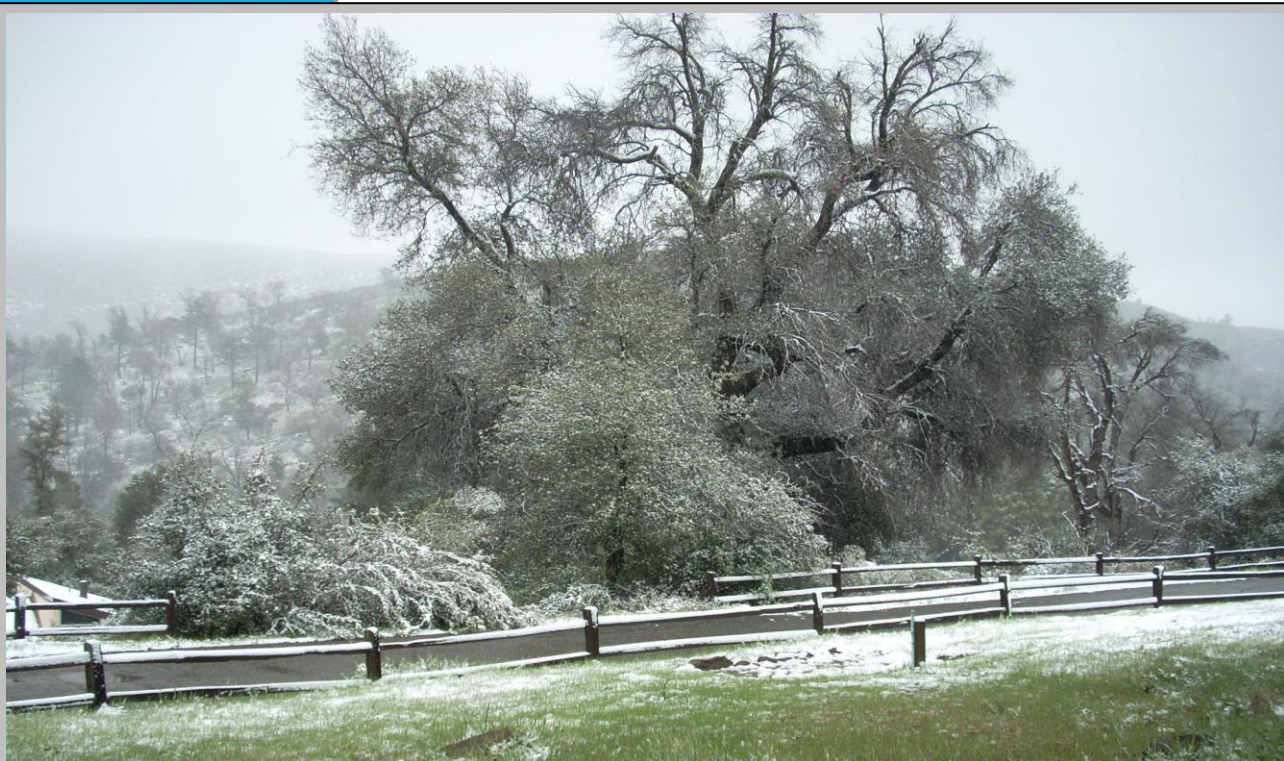
Photo by Michele Hernandez

MBAU Article & photos by Mike "Gumby" Bennett
LtCol USMC and
Christina Bennett, MBAU Volunteer



The Calm before the Storm

The Holiday season often proves to be a storm of activity for us. Usually we are travelling north by air or car to visit relatives who seem reluctant to brave Los Angeles traffic or airport terminals to come south. Last minute shopping merges with Christmas Eve spent with old friends and Christmas Day spent celebrating with family. The week between Christmas and New Year's slows a bit, at least at work, then New Year's Eve hits and the 1st day of the New Year is spent recovering and wondering where the holiday "break" went. It was fortunate, therefore, that we were assigned our last MBAU patrol for 2012 on December 22nd.



The 22nd was a quiet day in the park. It had rained a few days before so the trail was wet and tacky and the air temperature hovered in the low 40s as we began our ride. The winter sun's position on the golden hills made the park glow. During the five hours we spent completing a loop including East Mesa, Deer Park, and Pine Mountain, Lucky Five, La Cima, Soap Stone and Green Valley trails we did not cross paths with another horseback rider, hiker or cyclist. The beauty, peace and quiet of the park in winter and the rhythm of our tires on the dirt gave us the chance to slow down, reflect upon where we live and the people we work and play with and appreciate how truly fortunate we are.

Taking a day out of our too busy schedules to come to the park and commit to a long ride free of phone calls, texts, and e-mails was a most calming and therapeutic way to prepare for the storm otherwise known as the Holidays.



MOUNTED ASSISTANCE UNIT by BONNIE SLAGER



Photo by Michele Hernandez

"I've been cancelled" has been the common announcement for everyone scheduled for patrol this past month. I think patrols have only gone out once all month. Maybe we will be able to patrol during February.

With Bob leaving and Brent taking over some of his duties, Andrew has become our MAU ranger. I guess to really make him part of the unit we need to get him on a horse. We will work on that.

Believe it or not, it is time to start working on our MAU Benefit Ride. You need to be thinking about possible donors of raffle prizes or cash to support this event. It is on Sunday July 28 so mark your calendars now so you do not accidentally plan something else for that day. We need everyone to help. Joy Halliburton has agreed to help coordinate the donation effort by keeping track of donors and seeing that only one MAU member contacts a potential donor. In the past, some donors have been asked by several members and some have not been asked thinking another MAU member already asked them. I will be getting a list of past donors to Joy so she can ask you to talk to potential donors in your area. Please support Joy in this effort. We will have to pay for the campground this year which is \$2,200 so we really need to get donations and lots of guests at the event. The Advisory Committee voted to up the amount of the event this year to pay for the cost of the campground and the anticipated increase in food costs.

Suzie has sent out the information about our annual MAU campout June 20 through 23. Please respond as soon as you can so she can figure out if we have any corrals left for second horses, prior MAU members and guests. This is a more challenging job that it seems so please help by sending in your reservation now.

Some of us are behind on getting our horses re-qualified. I will be sending out the list but I think most of you know when your horse was last qualified. You can contact any trainer to get your horse re-qualified

and some of us are available during the week if that helps you. I know the bad weather has not helped us get our horses qualified but you need to get your horse re-qualified by April or get pulled off of patrol until it is re-qualified.

I have been sending you information on various safety and riding events in the area and there is one more you may be interested in. We are having a safety seminar in Norco on Sunday April 7. I will send out a flyer when it is available. Topics include how to select an appropriate horse, safe trailer loading and trailering as well and first aid information and the all-important one-rein stop.

The MAU will have some kind of training this coming fall, probably October. Instead of the sensory clinic we have had for the last 2 years some of the Advisory Committee members are looking at an alternate type of training. I will keep you posted as we know more.

Please call or email me if you have questions, enjoy the Park and ride safely.

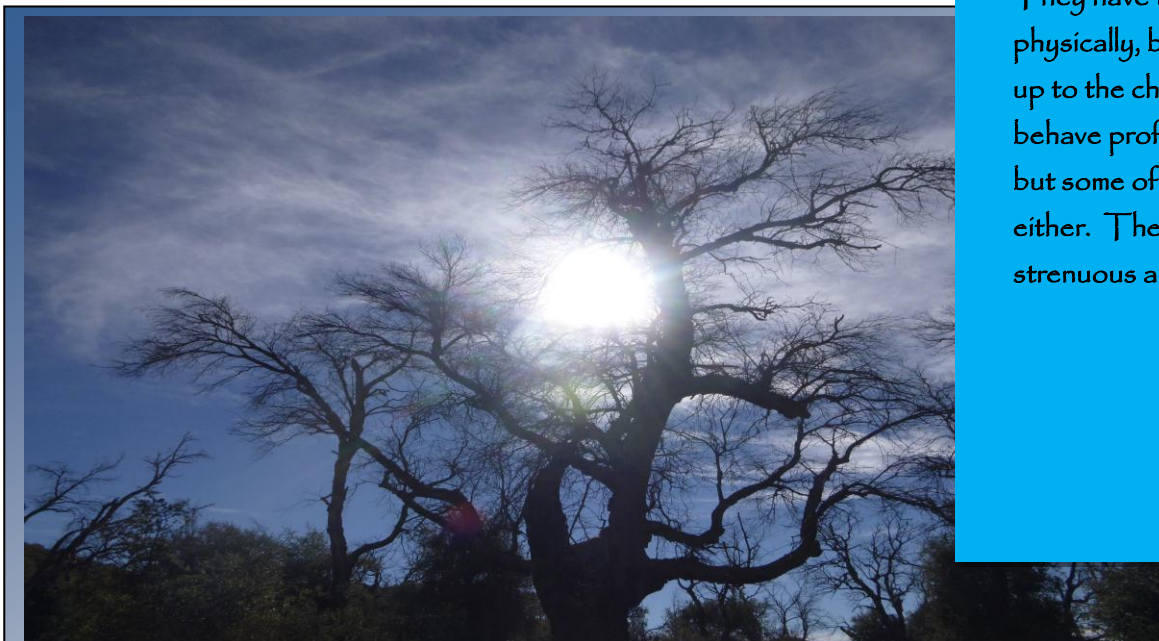


Getting ready to go on patrol by Darla Winland

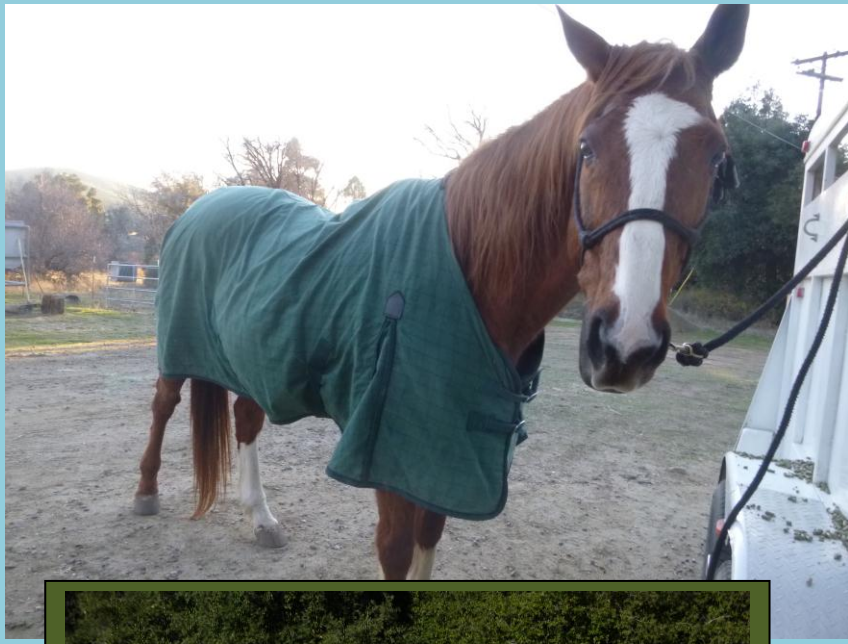
Below and on the next page are a few pictures from my last patrol. We were at Mickey James camp with Ronald and Joy Halliburton, Stewart and Janet Vilorio, and Janie Steinbach and I.

Pictures are of patrol horses both on and off duty. The patrol was Dec. 8-9. It was 26 degrees when I came out of my tent on Sunday morning. All of us stayed in camp Saturday night as most of us had a 2+ hour trip to get there. We had a great time sitting around the campfire and roasting chestnuts that Joy Halliburton brought for us to try.)

We actually did roast chestnuts on an open fire! We have a lot of fun on our patrols and in our camps. A lot of us do camp over as we have such a long drive because it is too far to run back and forth. Being a patrol horse is really hard work. They have to be able to hold up physically, but a lot of them are not up to the challenge. They have to behave professionally at all times, but some of them are not up to that either. The training is very strenuous and ongoing.



MAU Horses by
Darla Winland



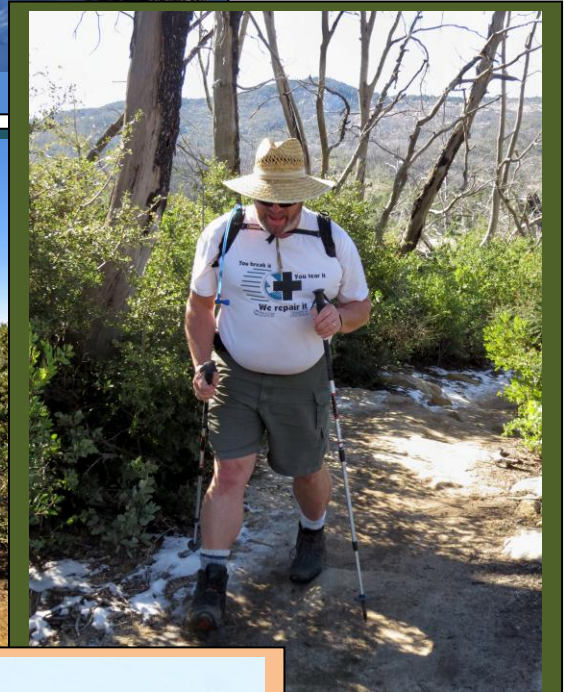
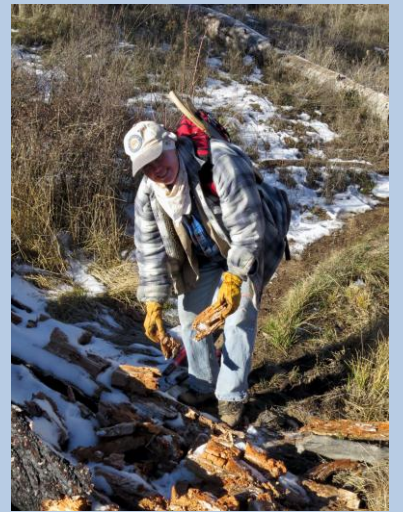
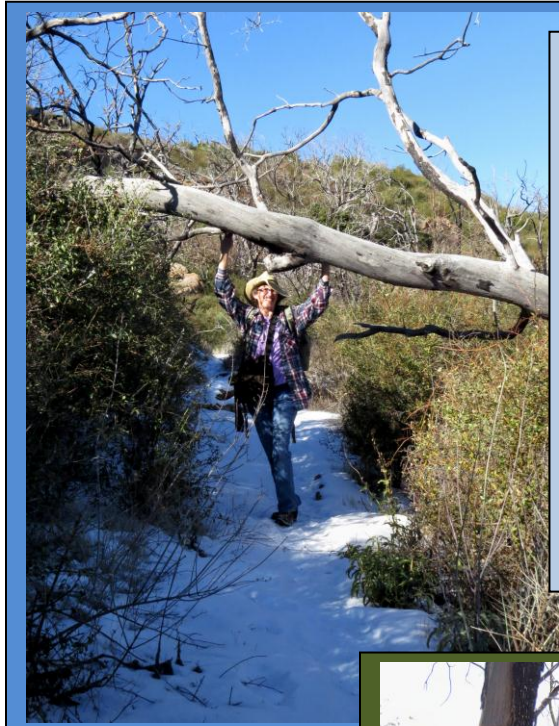
Cold Spring Reroute Continues

Photos by Steve Boland



Hike and Hack

Photos by Michele Hernandez



News from Palomar TMU by Rick Barclay and Ranger Jessica Murany

Cabin fever was rampant among Palomar's crack volunteer TMU this month. In spite of our best plans, the park has had to cancel its last four special events --- including two TMU work parties --- due to rain, snow and bad roads. But this doesn't mean it's dull at the park! I'll let Ranger Jessica Murany describe it in her own words:

"Well top of the food chain doesn't always mean me eating at the Christian Conference Center for lunch- at the beginning of the lunch line that is. I am delighted to say that we have a presence in the park that has actually been seen on four occasions this past month. In terms of nature, this creature is at the top of the food chain- the mountain lion (puma concolor). How many people out there can raise their hand and say they have seen one. Most people go with the notion; they are out there, those sneaky, stealthy creatures.

For some apparent reason, this past month people have been seeing a mountain lion. We are all describing probably the same cat: large 7-8 foot in length, very muscular build, long thick tail, and dark tannish color. I actually got to see one of these creatures in motion on Christmas morning. Effortless and powerful are the best descriptive words for the way these creatures move. I observed a large lion leap onto the road about 75 yards up in front of my patrol truck. It made three long strides going up the road, it covered quite a distance in just three strides. Then the cat leaped over a stump on the opposite side of the road and was outta site in a millisecond. I was so impressed by the cat's strong build and effortless ability to move. I'd have to admit that that was one of the best Christmas gifts ever to see the elusive mountain lion.

What not to do.....two female hikers were on the Cedar Trail near the Scott's cabin intersection. One of the ladies saw a mountain lion and turned and ran. The other lady was left dumbfounded at the scene because she did not see the cat but thought she should follow her friend. When she got up to her friend, who was panting, the friend gasped, "Didn't you see the mountain lion?"

This was reported to the Ranger Station shortly after with a follow up lesson on what not to do when you encounter a mountain lion.....don't behave like their favorite prey-deer.

Palomar Mountain State Park finally has a park mascot, Ellie- The Elusive Mountain Lion. Why do we think she's a she? About two months ago, a local down State Park road approximately 1 mile from the park saw three mountain lion cubs on their property. "

We don't see these animals often, if ever, while we're doing trail work -- - we're usually making plenty of noise and moving in large groups. But it's good to remember that these lions are out there and to be vigilant if we strike out alone from the group, whether to scope things out up the trail or to return to base before quitting time --- and particularly this time of year when food is less plentiful and they're emboldened to feed their little ones!

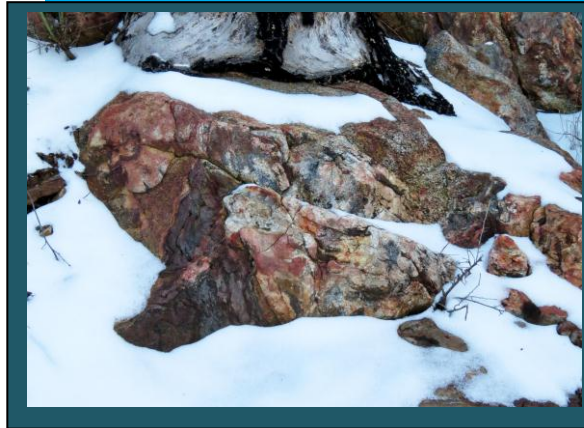
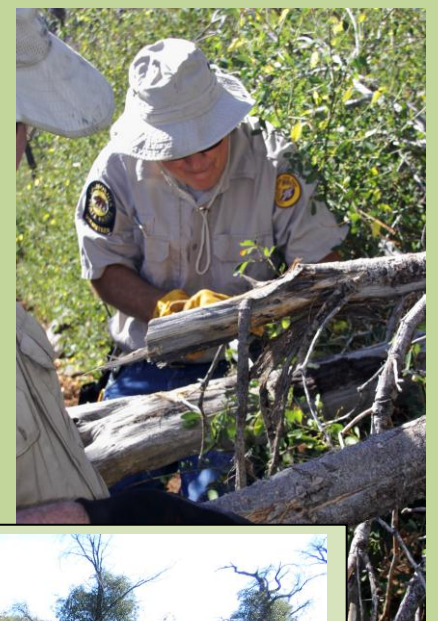


Photo by Michele Hernandez

Photos by Michele Hernandez, Darla Winland and Jason DeMendonca

Volunteers doing what they love...



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Paso Picacho Kiosk (for weekends) -- 760-765-3023

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Send articles and photos

(please, include photographer's name) for next month between the 24th and the 30th to- Susan Russo-nebulae3sma@hotmail.com



Photo by Jason DeMendonca