

Hastings Reserve News

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February was relatively dry. Our seasonal precipitation total is now only 10.15", and for the third year in a row, suggests a very dry summer. Total precipitation for the month was 2.0", with snow on the 5th, 8th and 9th. We had lows with freezing on 10 nights. We had the representative from Omnidata out to recalibrate the tipping rain gauge. We also replaced a defective probe for the soil temperature. With these glitches taken care of, we are officially going to switch over to the automatic weather station, but will continue to take rainfall data from the buckets. I made 2 trips to Berkeley and coordinated with James Keating, a work study student who is computerizing our daily air temperature records (25 years worth) on a video image analysis system at MVZ.

Maintenance work involved a lot of broken pipes. The cold snap broke the main Arnold spring water line over Finch creek, along with a variety of pipe risers, etc. Suzanne worked at keeping the pump going at proper times to fill the storage tank, as the Arnold spring was producing only 300-500 gallons a day. A small earthquake may have broken a pipe on the main line sometime near the 20th. Broken pipes were repaired. Suzanne repaired a culvert that had caved in near the offices. Suzanne removed a lot of willow which had been growing over the roadway to the Robinson house. The fire pumper was repaired and progress on the annex porch was made. The schoolhouse kitchen clothes drier broke down again, and we are considering purchase of a coin operated drier which we expect will pay for itself in short order. Suzanne was still able to diagnose and repair it - a broken bearing this time. I rebuilt the fence along the county road from the Hallisey house to Martin Road. Patrol, trash runs and other routine maintenance duties were carried out.

Walt Koenig and Jan Dickinson commuted to Berkeley to continue conducting their seminar. Dr. Koenig and Dr. Dickinson continue preparation of manuscripts and conducting field work.

Mark Stanback worked on a scrub jay manuscript, made acorn counts at granaries, ambushed unbanded Acorn Woodpeckers, interviewed and hired 1989 field assistants and most of all, got his Museum lunch lecture ready to go. Dave Ribble was hard at work in the field capturing and handling the deermice. Dave was very tolerant (Thanks, Dave) as a variety of heavy equipment variously ripped up the access to the Hasting cabin where the road passes near the new lab. What little rain we had made that quite a mess. Jane Kidd worked hard at gathering data on the Acorn Woodpeckers, the insect monitoring program, among other projects. We expect 4 new field assistants and Jane Kidd will stay on as the senior assistant.

Jim Griffin reports that his ongoing projects are keeping him more than busy. Jim gave an oak regeneration seminar at Cal Poly. Pam Muick was out (the 17th) to fully implement her exclosures. No further mice were trapped inside the exclosures. A field assistant volunteered to work with Jim this summer (fellow from Stanford). Don Pine (Fish and Game) came by on the 22nd to visit Jim about general plant questions. Jim Griffin and I are taking on a little side project to rebuild the screens on the Ranch House. Material was delivered.

Jeff Kennedy (NRS) and Art McKee (Andrew's Experimental Forest-LTER) visited on the 28th. They toured the site and we discussed the pros and cons of automatic weather recording systems, and it was helpful to learn of the problems they have as well. We had volunteers for the feral pig management program for 16 person/nights.

Progress on the lab was significant. The stucco is now complete, the interior is finished and the building is painted. Final inspection has been scheduled by DOFM for the general contractor. Final installation of the windows, doors and minor trim went smoothly. The stucco crew covered an outside electrical box we need for the heater, however. DOFM approved the supplier of the cabinetwork, Hansen Lab Furniture. Cabinets are on order and are expected from

April 1-10. Installation will only take one day, as a crew from southern California arrives to do that work.

We also had a lot of progress at the Robinson House. Fanny Arnold made all this possible. Smith Tree trimming service removed the dead and broken limbs from the adjacent row of Monterey Cypress. A new Regency wood stove, with fan and capable of 18" fuel, was installed by the Damper Door from Salinas. Troy Hussey is moving into the adjacent cabin, and in return is installing 8 windows. The old windows all leaked and I had to caulk them shut to prevent more water damage to the interior. Troy will also be doing minor carpentry work in the cabin as well as at the Robinson house. Roger Sherman installed a redwood deck between the porch and kitchen. Bill Lambert graded the road, repaired the culvert where it was washing out, put on crushed rock for a roadbase and had the excess soil around the deck removed and covered with gravel. Bill also prepared a pad for a new steel water tank up on the hill behind the Robinson house. Jim Griffin, Walt and I moved in as much furniture and living supplies as we could (much of it just waiting around for use at the Robinson house). Earlier, I took a load of junk (mostly metal) to the dump from the Robinson site. Fanny donated 2 newly cleaned rugs (Walt picked them up in Palo Alto- thanks Walt). Tony Rossi, a mason who does chimneys with Damper Door, inspected the chimneys on the Ranch House and the Schoolhouse. It was his professional opinion that the chimneys posed no threat, they should continue to be watched and that simply putting in some new mortar at this point was not needed.

I was able to submit a paper on Montezuma Quail habitat use patterns to Condor and revise a paper on nectar selection by Black-chinned hummingbirds. I met with the Bradleys- Susan and Richard, regarding controversy on the fence boundary on the south west edge of the reserve. Jeff Krebs, an engineer from Monterey, volunteered to survey the west and north edges with Oak Ridge's Tim Curran. This will probably occur in March, with fence building to follow (by Oak Ridge Ranch). I met with Jim Kirk regarding a potential land trade and the use of his land by the Bluebird researchers. Mr. Kirk requested that some bluebird boxes be removed from near his house. Pat Stadille, of the Carmel Middle School, is taking the lead on getting the NSF to fund production of a field guide to the central coastal herps. He and I met to write a proposal to NSF to use the Hastings/MVZ resources to get the booklet to the local community through the middle or high school science teachers. I submitted comments to the Monterey Planning Commission on a proposed airstrip on an ranch 4 mile down the valley, and attended the monthly workshop by local ranch managers using the Savory grazing methodology.