

Hastings Reserve News

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January, 1989

January, usually a wet month, brought in 1.68 in. of rain. This brings our seasonal total to 8.03 in, which means that the relative drought is nowhere near broken. A light snow fell on the 7th. Frost was heavy most mornings (lows in the upper 20's). Daily high temperatures were in the often in the upper 60's.

Having a relatively dry spell meant the work on the laboratory could get underway. And Daniels and House, the contractors, literally flew through the construction. In about 3 weeks, the building had progressed to final finish work. By the first of February, the roof was on, the drywall hung and taped and the first layer of stucco was applied. The building will be ready for the cabinets and final plumbing in two weeks. Alice Landauer and I have had to deal with many very time consuming requirements of the Department of Facilities Management regarding the lab construction. To put it mildly, DOFM policy has not been helpful.

A variety of repair jobs were done by Suzanne. Three oak trees were cleared from the Arnold road, the electric clothes drier was repaired, culverts were cleaned out along the lane, the water pumper on the truck was repaired, and a new plywood lining was put in the truck. Of course, the routine work of trash collection, recycling, running mail, maintaining weather records, etc. continued. I repaired the fence that had fallen down along the county road near the Hallisey house. A variety of tools and implements were moved to the upper garage as that takes on more of the functions as the repair center. In a cooperative effort, Mark, Dave, Suzanne and I split a variety of wood and replenished various fuelwood piles.

Dr. Walt Koenig returned from England on January 8 along with our new MVZ Research Associate, Dr. Janis Dickinson. We missed their constant activity and were pleased to see them return. Dr. Koenig is offering a seminar at Berkeley each Tuesday on cooperative breeding in vertebrates.

Walt joined Jane Kidd in the field to continue the observations of Acorn Woodpeckers. Jane has maintained the woodpecker research, while keeping warm in the Bunkhouse burning up the scrap lumber from the lab construction across the parking lot. Mark Stanback, in the Red House, was often here, keeping up with his Acorn Woodpecker observations. Dave Ribble spent most of January here, persevering in the cold and sometimes wet weather while trapping deer mice. Dr. Christian Orrego spent a few days with Dave (Jan 13-14).

Mark Reynolds and Virginia Boucher moved out of Fanny's cabin. They now share the work as the Resident Managers of the Sagehen Field Station, a UC Berkeley Forestry facility near Truckee. We miss them and wish them all success. Work on the Robinson house continued. At Mrs. Arnold's request, I hired a tree trimming service to finish clearing the dead wood in the cypress trees near the house. Fanny also gave the go-ahead on installation of a large woodstove for heating and the construction of a redwood deck between the kitchen and the porch. I have made arrangements for these additions. Suzanne finished up the gutters on the house, several minor needs remain on the "to do" list. We would urge all MVZ faculty who would like to spend a weekend down here to get in touch, as the Robinson house is now very much livable once again. Dr. Martin Cody called and sent a student (Terry Farrell) out to scout the facilities. He and Dr. Roughgarden are planning to bring a group of students and colleagues and hold an informal ecology conference at the Robinson house March 17-19.

Dr. Griffin planted nearly 900 acorns in a large experiment. This is the "definitive" experiment to test the hypothesis that acorns without protection from gopher or other seed predators face certain doom. Literally hundreds of woven wire tubes were

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manufactured for planting acorns. Several habitats have replicate plantings. Seedling survivorship will be monitored over the next few months. Dr. Griffin was assisted in this project by Pam Muick who spent 2 days here on her oak seedling research. Dr. Griffin and Pam added aluminum flashing to the oak exclosures as rodents (deer mice, woodrats?) were climbing in and selecting choice young oaks. Ray Calloway (U.C. Santa Barbara) and his wife visited with Dr. Griffin on the 8th. Jim Ewing, a landscape consultant, met with Dr. Griffin on the 27th to review his plans for ecological restoration of the 400 ac. Holman Ranch in the Carmel Valley.

In addition to watching over the lab construction, I was able to revise a manuscript on the habitat use of Montezuma Quail for submission to the Condor. I revised the instructions on how to use transfer the data from the new weather station. I continue to debug the Omnidata weather station. The good news is that each month the 2-3 items I correct stay corrected. The bad news is that there are usually a couple of new and strange twists to the data acquisition. I returned the Morpho-Sys video image analysis equipment to MVZ after working out a hire of a work-study student to finish up the data entry. Dr. Pitelka and Alice Landauer are assisting in finding a good student who can work at MVZ to enter the remaining 21 years of daily air temperature data. I was asked to join a group of neighboring ranchers who are using "Holistic Resource Management" or the "Savory" grazing system. They meet each month. They toured Hastings the first weekend of January, and Dr. Griffin was kind enough to provide them with a tour of our native Stipa prairies. They were very impressed with Hastings and were pleased to know it was offering such a valuable reference area which has not been grazed. Most of the large neighboring ranches are represented in this group (Rana Creek, Mt. Toro, etc.).

Roger Samuelson arranged a tour of the reserve. He brought out a group including Earl Bolton, Dick Chaffee, Lee and Ruth Hiser and Ollie and Dede White. Dr. Frank Pitelka joined us on a very warm, sunny Friday the 27th. We had lunch at the Robinson house lawn and we were able to share the progress at the reserve with this very informative and helpful group. Roger, Earl Bolton and the Whites were most helpful in making progress on the negotiations involving use of the Martin Road by various interested parties. Roger brought lunch and we hope to see more of these supporters of NRS in the future. Many thanks to Roger. I appreciate your interest and assistance.

Our pig management program continues to put pressure on the pig population. We have had no problems and the volunteers have been especially active during January, being out here 25 user days during the month.