



PAW PRINTS

Volume 42, Number 4 Newsletter of the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates April 2024

PUBLIC CALENDAR

Park Hours:

March 1 - October 31, 2024

Gate Hours: 8 am-7:30 pm

Nature Center Hours: 10:30 am-7 pm
(Saturdays: 9 am-7 pm)

Gate & Nature Center are closed on Mondays

Contact: ECNC 626.398.5420

Docent-Led Family Nature Walk

Every Saturday at 9 am. Meet in front of the Nature Center. No dogs please.

Nature Tails Story Hour

Every Saturday at 10:30 am on the Outdoor Patio. Stories and activities for children.

Saturday Nature Center Discovery

Saturday mornings on the Outdoor Patio. Animal Ambassadors: 10 am and 12 pm. Nature Discovery Tables: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm

Conservation Group Work Day

Second Saturdays from 9 am-12 pm
Sign-up to receive notifications:
<https://tinyurl.com/eatoncanyonconservation>

Audubon Bird Walks

1st Sat. of the month - 8 am-10 am
Next one: March 2, 2024
Meet at the Outdoor Classroom

CNPS Plant Walks at Eaton - 3rd Sunday of the month 10-11:30 am

Meetings:

Pasadena Audubon Society

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium.

<https://www.pasadenaaudubon.org>

California Native Plant Society

Meetings are held in the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Auditorium, the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. <https://www.cnps-sgm.org>

Pasadena Group Sierra Club

Program meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month in the Nature Center Auditorium.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/angeles/pasadena>

Where to Put a Nest...

By Diane Lang

Hanging or hidden,

Or high in a tree,

Up on a cliff

Where nobody can see,

Inside a tree trunk

Or right on the ground,

Each nest is placed

Where it might not be found.

Fashioned from mud

Or atop a tall pole,

Woven from grass

With a small entry hole,

A cup made of twigs,

Nestled deep in a hedge,

At the end of a branch

Or perched on a ledge,

Deep in a cactus,

Afloat on a lake,

In river-bank tunnel

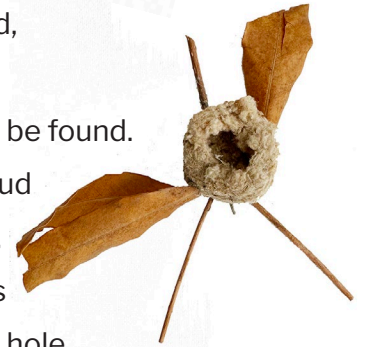
That Mom dug to make.

So many choices,

From treetops to sticks,

To place the right home

For those soon-to-hatch chicks.





Paw Prints is a monthly publication of the ECNCA. Articles and photographs are welcome on topics related to natural history and Nature Center activities. If you see something interesting in the canyon, please share it with us! The deadline for submissions to the May 2024 issue is April 15, 2024. Send submissions to Brenda Hurst eatonmember@gmail.com.

Contributors: Brenda Hurst, Diane Lang

Paw Prints Production

Content Editor: Brenda Hurst
Layout: Carole Scurlock
Copy Editor: Laura Joseph

DOCENT AND MEMBER CALENDAR

Bag Lunch-Mini-Inservice:

Wednesday, April 3, 12 noon in classroom 1: **Michele Zack** will provide an introduction to the film "**Eaton's Water**" based on her short story and will provide local historical context—about Judge Benjamin Eaton's efforts to channel water to Pasadena. We will view the film together, and Q/A and discussion will follow."

Eaton Canyon Gardening Group

Every Wednesday at 9:30 am and second Sundays of the month at 10 am. Current volunteers only. Meet by Nature Center garage door.

Guided School Tours

School tours are conducted from October to the end of the school season. For reservations call the office 626-398-5420.

ECNCA Board Meetings

The ECNCA board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm in the Nature Center. If you are interested in joining a meeting, please send an email to eatonmember@gmail.com, at least 2 days prior to the meeting.



Eaton Canyon's Agnes Atkinson

By Brenda Hurst

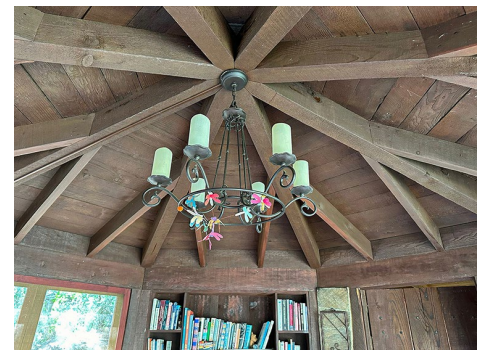
In the Sept/Oct issue of Paw Prints, I wrote a short article about Ringtails and discovered Agnes Akin Atkinson and her children's book, *Blinky: A Biography of a Ringtail* (published in 1935). I decided to do a little more research on Atkinson who lived on the edge of Eaton Canyon. She authored other children's books including: *Perkey: A Biography of a Skunk* (published in 1937) and *Skinny, The Gray Fox* (published in 1936), as well as *Crooktail A Young Raccoon* (published in 1940).



Agnes Atkinson's octagonal study on the edge of Eaton Canyon

Photos: Brenda Hurst

The February 1932 issue of *National Geographic*, contained an article by Atkinson about Eaton Canyon's wildlife, "Befriending Nature's Children: An Experiment with Some of California's Wild Folk." Because this article appeared in the widely circulated magazine, the Canyon gained international notice and led to the city of Pasadena designating the area as the Eaton Canyon Bird And Game Sanctuary in the 1930s. The article was based on the Atkinson family wanting to watch the wild animals that came out to eat only during the night at their home, so they created an outside feeding table.



Interior of the study

I found the following excerpts by an unknown author posted on the web in a 2014 blog entitled "Rocking Thru the World, The Wild Nights in California!," that refers to the *National Geographic* article. The quotes below with page numbers refer to the page where the quote is located in the magazine. The quotes without page numbers are from the author.

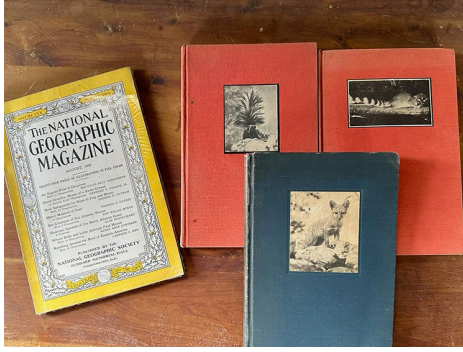
"The skunk and fox families were picky but the raccoons would eat any thing and everything. The animals must have spread word of the feast to their friends." "Many evenings we have eight or nine grown foxes at our table." (p. 214)

"All the animals except one learned to mostly tolerate the flash of the camera." "Our most interesting visitor was a beautiful coyote, sleek and careful, each movement sheer grace." (p. 214) "They were afraid the flash would scare him away forever. No other animals came when the coyote was present."

Wonderful photographs of these animal visitors were taken by Agnes' hus-

Agnes continued on page 3

Agnes continued from page 2
band, Spencer Atkinson, who photographed for all her books and articles.



Another Agnes Akin Atkinson article, "Where Birds and Little Animals Find Haven," appeared in the *National Geographic* magazine's August 1936 issue. I also found an original article, with a very long title: "Br'er Possum, Hermit of the Lowlands: North America's Only Pouched Mammal, Slow-Moving Survivor of an Ancient Order, Leads a Relaxed, Solitary Life," published by *National Geographic* magazine in 1953.

I had mentioned my new interest in this author to a friend of mine and found out that Atkinson's octagon shaped study was situated on my friend's property. I was thrilled to find out that it still exists and was fortunate enough to be invited to see it and take some photos which I was given permission to share. It's been changed a bit over the years but much of it is the same as when she used it so many years ago. I was also shown some old photos of the Atkinson home. An inscription on the back of one photograph mentions the octagon study. "The inscription over the door bears an Indian name "Ah-Nas-ta"—meaning "get your thoughts from the hills." ■



The notes on the back of this old photo include "A view of the Atkinson house taken from the Mt. Wilson Toll Road on the opposite side of the canyon. . . the octagon shaped structure in the left middle is Agnes A. Atkinson's study—built down the bank." Photo by Spencer Atkinson.

Our Eaton Canyon Conservation Group

Max Yasuda, our Conservation Group Chair, reported that on Sunday, March 10th, "we had around 20 volunteers spend the morning clearing invasive plants around the service yard. The western slope of the canyon has a ton of invasives growing on it, and the county boundary runs up to the crest, so we are taking on that slope. We probably removed 3 dozen large castor bean plants, and disposed of them in big black trash bags. We also planted 4 golden currants in the space we cleared. We found some endangered shoulderband snails living in the service yard under a pile of discarded stones."



Trail Etiquette Essentials



Ella Magtoto

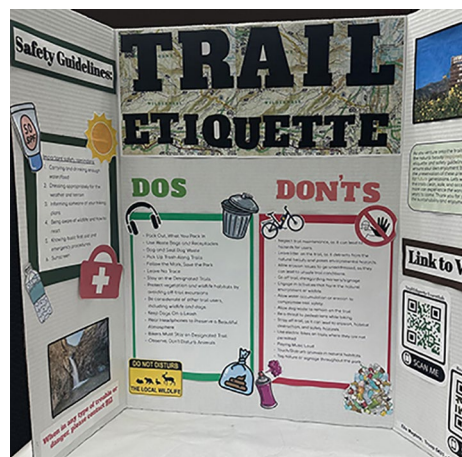
Eaton Canyon Nature Center was lucky to have Ella Magtoto contact us to ask if she could add two trail etiquette videos she made to our nature center indoor museum digital display monitor. Of course we said yes.

She created the videos as part of working on her Girl Scout Gold Award. She is with Troop 5431. The videos show her partner, Conner McLurkin, explaining the key importance of simple dos and don'ts on the trail. This includes waste disposal, bike safety, managing dogs, etc. Her goal is to address proper trail conduct, with a focus on prompting responsible and sustainable trail use. She has also provided us with a beautiful fold out

poster for our Saturday Morning Discovery Table. To view her videos from home go to:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IULKlzpPnaWjznlx5Hx7D0GWpP5wgxqS/view?usp=drive_web

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FPUX_7iriD5gFkGjzCgK8GILK0339W7M/view?usp=drive_web



Ella's poster



Kenia Estrella, Ella, Lorraine Lazarus




LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Parks & Recreation
Life. Enjoyed.



EARTH DAY

at Eaton Canyon

 1750 North Altadena Dr. Pasadena, CA 91107

 (626) 398-5420

Join us April 20th, 2024
9:00am-1:00pm
to celebrate Earth Day!



**Download Agents of Discovery app
and complete our missions
to collect prizes**



Earth Day Crafts & Games



And so much more!

Partnering with:



Hilda L. Solis

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR

Holly J. Mitchell

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR

Lindsey Horvath

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR

Janice Hahn

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR

Kathryn Barger

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR



Photo: Carole Scurlock

ECNCA BOARD MEMBERS

President: Brenda Hurst
Vice-President: Diane Marcussen
Recording Secretary: Sarah Richart
Corresponding Secretary: Mary Veselich
Treasurer: Terry Ginsberg

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Bus Grants Co-Chairs: Mary Foltyn, Judy Jenkins
Conservation Group Chair: Max Yasuda
Docent Training Chair: Diane Lang
Gardening Group Chair: Marilyn Hildebrandt
Gift Shop Chairs: Pam Edwards, Karen Mateer

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Nature-in-a-Box Chair: Laura Nicholson
Park Stewards Chair: Susan Hopkins
School Tour Docent Chair: David Kristoff
Weekend Docent Chair: Ramie Case
Members-at-Large: Judy Jenkins, Rose Haig

Nature Center Director: Lorraine Lazarus
NCA President: Laura Nicholson
NCA Representative: Terry Ginsberg

Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates (ECNCA) is a chapter of the Nature Center Associates (NCA), a non-profit support group of the natural area park system of Los Angeles County. Founded for educational and scientific purposes, its primary mission is to develop in children and adults an appreciation of the natural world and to preserve Eaton Canyon as a natural area for future generations.

The Eaton Canyon Nature Center and Natural Area Park are located within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County in the Supervisorial district of Kathryn Barger. The Natural Area and Nature Center are operated by the County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates.

Become A Member of the ECNCA (Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates)

Membership benefits include the ECNCA newsletter, program announcements and a 10% discount at the gift shop. To join the Eaton Canyon Nature Center Associates, fill out the form below and mail with your check, payable to the ECNCA, 1750 North Altadena Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please check appropriate box and mark return envelope "Membership"

- Individual \$30 Family \$45 Senior \$15 Senior Family \$30 Student \$15
- Friend of the Canyon \$75 Sage Saver \$100 Chaparral Contributor \$250 Riparian Guardian \$500
- Oak Woodlands Protector \$750 Wildlands Angel \$1000 NEW RENEWAL

Enclosed is my MEMBERSHIP in the amount of \$_____ Enclosed is my additional DONATION of \$_____

Please make checks payable to the ECNCA. All contributions are tax deductible.

You may also join and/or donate online at www.ecnca.org.