



Wild Life in the North Hills – the Website

by Kay Loughman

A year or two ago I was greatly influenced by a couple of books (“Bowling Alone” and “Better Together”) by a Harvard scholar named Robert D. Putnam. He makes the case that decreasing involvement in community life is bad for individuals and ultimately bad for the world—a

gross oversimplification on my part. But, as one who tends to sit at the computer by myself rather than do anything in the community, I knew Putnam’s message was aimed at people like me.

Building on an interest in birding along with an appreciation of Claremont Canyon, and bending to some friendly suggestions from Anne Seasons and Bill McClung, I started a website featuring illustrations of wildlife found in my neighborhood. Soon the website also contained recommendations for field guides and lists of bird species seen, and this year I expanded the website to include photo galleries.

A leap of faith inasmuch as I hadn’t willingly held a camera since I was about twelve years old! Time to re-think just what I wanted to accomplish with this website.

One of the things important to me is that the galleries be a cooperative venture. I want pictures taken by lots of different people. Pictures showing the unique perspective of the individual photographer enhance appreciation of the canyon for all of us. And while I admire great photographic skill, I don’t have it, and I don’t want any potential contributor to hold back for a lack of talent. So if we have pictures of Anna’s Hummingbirds from eight different people, some will be better than others; but we’ll know there are at least eight people in the neighborhood who have enjoyed watching a hummingbird, and then taken a picture to share.

The galleries have grown. At the beginning of October, the Wildlife Gallery has photos of 62 bird species, 31 butterfly and moth species, and lesser numbers of other invertebrates, mammals, and reptiles. The Plant Gallery, added in the early summer, has pictures of more than 90 plant species. More pictures are being added to each gallery every month. Later this fall, I’ll open a gallery for mosses, lichens, fungi, and perhaps another for other parts of the natural scene. Enhancements have been suggested, first among them being an index so that people who know a species name can use it to find the appropriate picture. The index will come soon. In time we may also include some descriptive text to accompany each photo. Meanwhile, I welcome more photographs.

A few nuts and bolts: Digital photos should be as they come from the camera – no adjusting without prior consultation. Physical prints and slides can be scanned, and the originals returned to the owner. All photos remain the property of



Kay discovered her first Monarch butterfly of the season on her neighbor’s Cape Honeysuckle on Gravatt Drive.

the photographer. (For more information and to make photo contributions, go to <http://www.geocities.com/kayloughman/WLITNH.htm> or email kayloughman@earthlink.net.)

This website will be as useful and attractive as we—cooperating—can make it.

Claremont Canyon is the largest relatively undeveloped canyon on the western slope of the Oakland/Berkeley Hills. Much of the canyon’s watershed is owned by the East Bay Regional Park District, the University of California, the East Bay Municipal Utility District and the City of Oakland, with about one-fifth in private hands.

The Claremont Canyon Conservancy promotes the long-term stewardship of the entire watershed, coordinated among the stakeholders to reduce wildfire hazards, preserve or restore a healthy native ecosystem, and promote education and research.

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The Claremont Canyon Conservancy News is edited by Marilyn Goldhaber, Martin Holden, and Joe Engbeck