



VALLEY WILDS

VOLUME 33 | ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2024

January Ranger Programs

Discover the upcoming Ranger Programs provided by LARPD Ranger Staff, offering a variety of activities!

[View All Upcoming Ranger Programs](#)



Bird Walk

Saturday, Jan 6th
9 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
5049 Arroyo Road*

Meet Ranger Vickie for a short, easy stroll through Sycamore Grove to look for birds.

Some binoculars will be provided, but feel free to bring your own.

All ages and abilities are welcome to attend.

[REGISTER](#)

Bobcats!

Sunday, Jan 7th
2 pm

*Sycamore Grove Park
Ranger Station
5035 Arroyo Road*

Join Ranger Mae to learn all about bobcats—our small yet valiant bay lynx in the park.

We will pet real bobcat fur, learn how they differ from other wildcats, and figure out how to spot their footprint tracks in the dirt.

Why do you think it's called a bobcat

REGISTER



The Search For Garfunkel

Saturday, Jan 13th
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Something has been scurrying around Sycamore Grove Park, causing mischief and leaving visitors with little gifts.

Help Ranger Seth solve this mystery. The search will be a short hike in the park, looking for clues.

This is perfect for families and children ages four and older.

REGISTER



Mushroom Madness

Sunday, Jan 14th
10 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
Ranger Station
5035 Arroyo Road*

Join LARPD Rangers and the Bay Area Mycological Society for the return of our annual SGP mushroom hunt!

We will crawl under trees, wander through meadows, and look at rotting logs to see how many fungi we can find.

Please remember that you may take many photos, but mushrooms may NOT be removed from the park!

REGISTER



Squirrels!

Sunday, Jan 21st
10 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
5049 Arroyo Rd*

Come join Ranger Danny on national squirrel appreciation day to learn about why we should appreciate these critters and how to identify some of them.

We will take a hike along the creek to try and find some squirrels and see what importance they have to our ecosystem!

[REGISTER](#)

Nature Crafts

Saturday, Jan 27th
3 - 4 pm

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Drop by the Native Garden at the Wetmore Entrance and see Ranger Lauren for a hands-on nature-inspired crafting opportunity.

All supplies will be provided!

[REGISTER](#)

Golden Eagles by Ranger Danny



When people think about eagles, the Bald Eagle often comes first to mind. That bird, a national symbol, sparks strong associations. Bald Eagles can occasionally be seen locally and, when spotted, are indeed a special bird to witness. But when I think about eagles, I think of the kind that is more common in this area—the golden

eagle.

Golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are one of the northern hemisphere's more prominent and more well-known birds of prey. Like all eagles, they belong to the Accipitridae family. Their coloration appears dark brown overall, with golden-brown feathers on the back of the head and neck. These large birds have a wingspan of 5 to 7 feet and weigh 5 to 11 pounds, depending on gender and age. These characteristics, combined with powerful talons and beaks, make these birds formidable hunters and fearsome predators among critters in the grasslands.

[READ MORE](#)

Sycamore Science Camp: FIRE



We cook food with it, warm our homes with it, and tell stories about it – the next session of Sycamore Science Camp is all about fire. From starting fire safety to wildfires, we'll learn about this destructive and essential force of nature.

Sycamore Science Camp is an education-based program designed to engage your child, foster an appreciation for nature, and have FUN! The next session begins in mid-January.

Ages 4-5 | Tuesdays
Ages 6-7 | Wednesdays
Ages 8-9 | Wednesdays

2:30 - 3:30 pm
Sycamore Grove Park

[MORE
INFO](#)

Welcome to the team, Ranger Jay

We are excited to introduce our newest LARPD Park Ranger, **Jay Manning!**

He recently moved from his hometown of Boston, MA, packing up all his



belongings to drive 50 hours cross-country to our very own Livermore.

**MEET RANGER
JAY**

Ranger Riddles: Sycamore Simon

Sycamore Simon is our honorary Ground Squirrel Park Ranger at Sycamore Grove!

As one of the Rangers, Simon helps keep the park safe, clean, and fun for all the guests and wildlife.

Simon has also been given the task of protecting the **Golden Acorn**.

Every month, Simon likes to hide the Golden Acorn in a new location around the park and will leave clues to its location for any visitors who enjoy a challenge.

Check for a new riddle each month from Sycamore Simon and see if you can complete the challenge!



SOLVE THE RIDDLE

Holiday Carnival at Sycamore Grove Park



Thanks to all who joined the Ho Ho Ho Holiday Carnival at Sycamore Grove Park! Special thanks to our volunteers for making it a success. Smiles and fun were in abundance, creating a festive atmosphere for everyone. Cheers to a joy-filled holiday season!

February Ranger Programs



Birding By Ear

**Saturday, Feb 3rd
9 am**

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

From tweets to trills and songs to calls, birds have an amazing language all their own.

In this unique bird listening hike, you'll learn how to utilize your sense



Bird Adaptations

**Saturday, Feb 3rd
2 pm**

*Sycamore Grove Park
Ranger Station
5035 Arroyo Road*

Come by Sycamore Grove Park and join Ranger Vickie as we explore bird adaptations.

Explore the different ways they eat

of hearing to experience and identify our local birds.

This will be an easy, flat hike.

and nest.

REGISTER

REGISTER



Bird Puppet

Saturday, Feb 10th
9 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Drop by the Native Garden at Sycamore Grove Park and see Ranger Lauren for a hands-on avian-inspired crafting opportunity.

All supplies will be provided.

REGISTER

Bird Walk for Seniors

Friday, Feb 16th
8:30 am - 10:30 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Join us on a morning walk to watch the birds at Sycamore Grove Park.

We'll also contribute to the Great Backyard Bird Count, a community science effort to gather data on birds worldwide during the spring migration.

We'll document the birds we see using Merlin Bird ID and eBird apps.

Having these apps for the event is unnecessary, but they are a great resource for birdwatching.

Bringing binoculars is highly encouraged for this event.

REGISTER



Great Backyard Bird Count Bioblitz

**Saturday, Feb 17th
8:30 am**

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Ready, set, bird!

Join us on a morning hike through Sycamore Grove Park during the Great Backyard Bird Count.

This count is a worldwide effort to help scientists better understand and protect birds by observing local species.

We will walk out in groups to document the birds we see using Merlin Bird ID and eBird apps.

Having these apps for the event is unnecessary, but they are a great resource for birdwatching.

This will be an easy hike along uneven trails, about 3 miles.

Bringing binoculars is highly encouraged; we will have limited binoculars to borrow.

REGISTER



Camouflage Critter

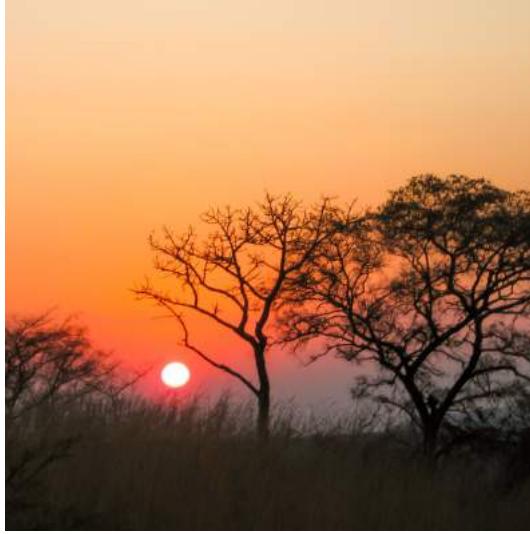
**Saturday, Feb 17th
12 pm**

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Woah! Did you see that?
Neither did we!

Sit down with Ranger Seth, and we will discuss all the amazing Camouflaged Critters nature offers.

REGISTER



Early Bird Hike!

Sunday, Feb 18th
7 am

*Sycamore Grove Park
1051 Wetmore Road*

Join Ranger Danny for an early morning hike through the park.

We will listen to some morning birds and see if we can spot any critters heading to bed or just waking up!

This will be about a mile-long walk on some single track.

REGISTER

Turtle vs. Tortoise

Sunday, Feb 18th
2 pm

*Sycamore Grove Park
Ranger Station
5035 Arroyo Road*

Join Ranger Mae and our new live pet tortoise to observe the differences between turtles and tortoises.

You will get to hold a real tortoise while learning all about turtles.

How are they similar? How large and old do they get?

Let's find out together!

This event will happen rain or shine.

REGISTER

Gardening for the Birds

Saturday, Feb 24th
10 am - 11 am

*Sycamore Grove Park Amphitheater
1051 Wetmore Road*

Love birds and want to attract more to



your own backyard, patio, or community space?

Join a ranger to learn how to do so by gardening with birds in mind.

We'll talk about native plants, the types of birds they support, the considerations and consequences of using a bird feeder, and recommended local species you can plant this season.

[REGISTER](#)

Great Blue Heron by Ranger Vickie



Herons are large birds with long legs, long necks, and a sharply pointed bill. The great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) is the largest of all the North American herons. These birds are large, measuring 36–54 inches long, have a wingspan of 66–79 inches, a height of 45–54 inches, and can weigh between 4–7 pounds.

Herons are blueish-gray in color with red-brown thighs and a dark stripe along the side. Their face is white with two dark plumes from the eye area to the back of the head. They also have a large yellow bill with shaggy feathers on the lower neck. Found throughout most of North America, this bird is a common and delightful sight all year round.

[READ MORE](#)

Volunteer at Sycamore Grove Park

Every 3rd Saturday of the month, join us for a volunteer work day at Sycamore Grove Park.

Projects include removing invasive plants, litter pick-ups, and trail maintenance.

Volunteers help maintain the park as a beautiful and healthy place for visitors and wildlife.

Upcoming Dates:
Jan. 20, Feb 17, Mar 16

**MORE
INFO**



Sycamore Grove Park 2024 Parking Passes



2024 Parking Passes are available to purchase at Sycamore Grove Park and the Robert Livermore Community Center located at 4444 East Ave.

Invest in an Annual Pass for Sycamore Grove Park and experience savings and convenience!

Parking Passes are versatile hang-tags used in multiple vehicles, making your park visits hassle-free and economical.

**MORE
INFO**

Park Update: Creek Trail Is Now Open



Tell a friend! Creek Trail at Sycamore Grove Park is officially open!

True to its name, Creek Trail follows the seasonal Arroyo del Valle and is a hotspot for feathered friends.

Keep your eyes peeled for owls, keep your ears keen for killdeer, and keep yourself from going off trail.

Field Trip With Livermore Public Library



Open Spaces are for all, but not all can get to our open spaces. LARPD partnered with the Livermore Public Library this month to host a field trip to Sycamore Grove Park. This free and accessible event was made possible by generous funding provided by the **LARPD Foundation** and **Friends of the Livermore Public Library** which provided free transportation and light refreshments for attendees.

Letter from the Editor

Hi y'all,

Happy New Year!

One goal of mine for the upcoming year is to be more attentive when cleaning garbage out of the park. Although most cases of littering may be unintentional, even the smallest pieces of trash cause permanent negative impacts on our wildlife, who call this park their only home.

For example, some litter with adhesive material may accidentally stick to snake scales, causing them immobility, pain, and hunger.

I don't know about y'all, but snakes are just too adorable to see hurting, so let's aim to protect all the cute critters throughout our park.

Not to mention, garbage debris also distracts from the beautiful scenery that we are so fortunate to explore and admire.

I'd like to encourage all staff and visitors to be



extra mindful not to leave anything in the park, including compostable waste, such as food scraps, peels, pits, cores, etc.

In 2024, let's continue building a clean and radiant vision to sustain the naturally beautiful environment within our beloved Sycamore Grove Park.

Thanks for reading!

With gratitude,
Mae Bailey
LARPD Park Ranger
Editor of the Valley Wilds



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Livermore Area Recreation and Park District | 4444 East Avenue, Livermore, CA 94550

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