



[BIOTREKKIES]

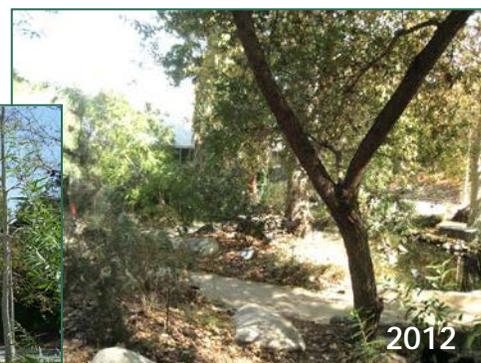


BIOTREK QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – FALL 2012
10 YR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

BIOTREK: HAPPY 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

Remembering the BioTrek Milestones

Ten years ago, BioTrek opened its doors to the community with a Grand Opening Ceremony in October 2002. The vision for BioTrek was formed in 1989 with a small collection of potted plants inside a laboratory prep room. With the



help of many dedicated individuals, a lot of hard work, and a million dollars in private donations, BioTrek is now a one-of-a-kind interpretive center.

BioTrek represents a multi-faceted educational program for dozens of Cal Poly Pomona classes each quarter, and for thousands that take part in our K-12 and community programs. BioTrek houses the **Rain Bird Rainforest Learning Center** with rainforest overlook and conservation museum, and the **Rain Bird Ethnobotany Learning Center** with the new palm oasis and meadow demonstration garden.

We are excited to share that BioTrek is expanding again with the new multi-disciplinary **BioTrek Mesozoic Garden Learning Center**, where Mesozoic-aged boulders provide opportunity to study geology and beautiful sandstone slabs provide seating for the outdoor classroom. This other-worldly landscape will include two plant



species that represent some of the most exciting plant discoveries during the last century. The remaining populations of the Wollemi Pine, discovered in Australia in 1996, and the Dawn Redwood, discovered in China in 1946, have been surviving on the earth since the Mesozoic Era. **In the Biology Department, this is our classroom!**

It is with many fond memories and a grateful heart that we, the staff at BioTrek, extend our thanks for all the support we have received over the last decade.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CURATOR

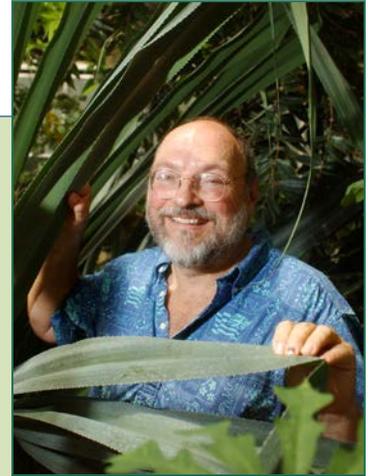
The Value of Environmental Education

As humans, it is important that we have opportunities to make connections with nature for our health, well-being and development. According to the philosopher Immanuel Kant, our knowledge and experience of the outside world depends on our modes of perception defined as touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight. BioTrek reaches all these senses through experiences with nature as we follow the Cal Poly Pomona motto: **Learn By Doing.**

Spring quarter 2012, a young lady on a fourth grade field trip was overheard saying, **"If this is science, I want to be a scientist."** A community service-learning biology student said, **"This course changed my life!"** As little as one revealing experience can have a profound impact on students of any age.

I have a passion to share nature with visitors of all ages. It is an honor to be a part of the team that developed and opened BioTrek a decade ago and continues to improve and develop BioTrek as a place to interpret the natural world.

–Michael Brown, BioTrek Curator



FABIO'S STORY:

How a Caiman Found a Home

Spectacled Caiman (*Caiman crocodiles*) are reptile relatives of crocodiles and alligators. They naturally enjoy the still waters of wetlands and rivers throughout Central and South America.

Our resident caiman at BioTrek, however, was navigating a neighborhood in Westminster when a call for help went out to an animal control unit. The caiman was then passed along to California State Fish and Game who brought him right to our doorstep. We can only wonder about the circumstances that led to the homeless caiman living in the streets of Westminster, but we are happy that he now has a home that provides the proper habitat and care.

Our caiman is often found basking on his heated rock landing, striking one pose or other. It was this behavior that gave birth to the name Fabio as the informal name used by staff. And it has stuck! It would be very embarrassing if Fabio turned out to be a female caiman instead, but to date no one has had the courage to check! In the meantime, Fabio is living a peaceful healthy life, with a couple of turtles for company, in the pond that mimics the still waters of the rainforests of his ancestors.



BioTrek is an education-based project that reaches out to K-12 and college students, government leaders, and other community members, emphasizing the need to share knowledge, values and behaviors that support biological sustainability on a finite Earth.

OUR VERY OWN CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT!

Home Sweet Home for Native Animals



BioTrek has an exciting announcement to make about our Rain Bird Ethnobotany Learning Center! Our native garden has been certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a **Wildlife Habitat!** This means we provide habitat with food, water, cover, and space for animals to raise young. Throughout the years we have seen visitors large and small, including coyotes, skunks, racoons, rabbits, hawks and numerous other bird species. We hope to continue to support that wildlife diversity for a long time to come.

STATUS CHECK:

The Gardens At BioTrek

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tongva Garden:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Palm Oasis:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meadow Garden:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Rainforest:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mesozoic Garden:
Inventory and labelling projects in the Ethnobotany Learning Center continue. The garden is now home to over 300 species of native plants, and this diversity is still growing!	As the California Fan palms are maturing, we are installing a wider diversity of palm oasis species – starting with a complement of Arrowweed and Wiregrass.	The meadow is now six months old and maturing rapidly! Over the next year, plants will continue to fill it in and it will soon look more like a lawn substitute, but with much higher diversity!	We have recently inventoried and mapped our extensive collection of tropical plant species in the Rainforest Learning Center. We are now at over 200 species and counting!	Adjacent construction has temporarily halted progress in the Mesozoic Garden, but development and planting will resume this Fall.

BEYOND BIOLOGY

Reaching diverse communities

BioTrek serves biology classes and other disciplines within our campus, ranging from anthropology to dance. BioTrek hosts departmental retreats and development visits for Cal Poly Pomona faculty and staff. But the interdisciplinary nature of our program also reaches beyond the campus community.

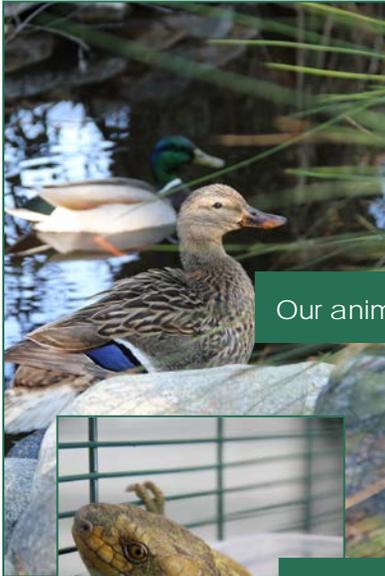
Our BioTrek K-12 Program has been teaching and interpreting nature, using California state curriculum standards, since the day of the grand opening. When we started BioTrek we had science in mind, but it turns out that students learning about ethnobotany also cover many social science and history standards. Other visitors from the community-at-large include scout groups, senior groups, gardening clubs, and other colleges and universities.

Through the chancellor's office, we have recently been awarded a Southern California Gas Company grant for energy education at BioTrek. Through efforts such as these, our environmental education goals continue to reach much further than we could ever have imagined!



CRITTER CHATTER

BioTrek Wild Animal Activity



Our animal residents go with the flow...



...and keep their cool!



they hang on tight...



Heat waves?
Earthquakes?
No problem!

On behalf of all of us at BioTrek, we would like to thank you for supporting our programs. From BioTrek's founding members, to the generosity of donors, commitment of our volunteers, dedication of student docents, and the love that many faculty, staff, and students have poured into this project, we are now 10 years strong!

