

# ELDORADO VISTAS

IN THIS ISSUE

ECIA News .....2-3  
In the Community .....4-5  
Squirrels.....6  
Rock Doves.....7

Monthly Newsletter of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association

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## Of Budgets and Assessments

Every two years, the ECIA Bylaws allow the Association to raise its assessment, and 2014 is such a year. In order to maintain its Community Center and other amenities as they age, and allow for inflation in operating expenses, it is extremely likely that the Association's assessment will be raised for 2014.

To keep such increases in context, it is useful to consider how the ECIA's annual assessment and amenities compare with some immediate neighbors in the south 285 corridor (see table below).

Eldorado's secret for offering outstanding amenities at reasonable cost is twofold: an active volunteer community that helps hold down operating costs, and county ownership and maintenance of Eldorado roads. Even with the likelihood of an increased assessment for 2014, Eldorado will continue to provide an outstanding community value.

The Board has requested additional time to review proposals for Community Center Landscape Renewal and Document Preservation. In order to incorporate budget decisions on these projects, the Finance Committee is continuing its review of the 2014 ECIA Operating Budget, including transfers to the Capital and Reserve/Replacement funds and allocation of 2014 maintenance expenditures. This will determine,

among other things, the 2014 assessment. Long-term maintenance needs, potential additional projects, and rising operating costs, will likely require a substantial assessment increase in 2014.

Here is the revised schedule of November and December budget meetings. Note that the Joint Board/Finance Committee meeting, budget availability, and Public Hearing have been rescheduled as follows:

**Wednesday, Nov. 13, 9:30 AM.** Finance Committee completes review of the tentative budget at its regular monthly meeting, and adopts a preliminary recommended budget. Venue: Conference Room.

**Monday, Nov. 18, 6:30 PM.** Joint meeting of the ECIA Board and Finance Committee, to present budget recommendations to the Board. Committee chairs and residents seeking budget information or to further explain their budget requests are welcome to attend. Venue: Conference Room.

**Tuesday, Dec. 3, 8 AM.** Proposed 2014 budget available at the office and on the website, [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org).

**Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 AM.** Public Hearing on the 2014 budget. Venue: Railroad Room.

**Thursday, Dec. 19, 7 PM.** Board adopts 2014 budget at its regular meeting. Venue: Classroom.

*ECIA Board Meeting, Community Center Railroad Bldg. Thurs., November 21, 7 pm.*

### ANNUAL FIGURES FOR 2013

Association	Community Center	Wilderness	Hike/Bike Trails	Pool	Playgrounds	Tennis Courts	Basketball Courts	Assessment
ECIA	Yes	4000 ac	12.5 mi	Yes	2	2	1-1/2	\$340
Alteza	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$650
Belicia	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$400
LaPaz	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$350
Tierra Colinas	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$325
The Ridges	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$550
Spirit Wind	No	0	0	No	0	0	0	\$625



# Thanks to Residents for Compliance

Share your comments with us!

For policy and deadline, see below

## Editorial Policy

Vistas invites ideas, stories, photos, and art from the community at large. Please include full name and contact information. The newsletter will not publish material deemed inflammatory, biased, or inappropriate. Submissions will be selected and edited at the discretion of the editor. Community announcements are welcome; accompanying photos are welcome, too.

**DEADLINE:** Newsletter deadline is the 3rd day of each month. Submissions can be dropped off or mailed to the ECIA office or e-mailed to [eciadiana@aol.com](mailto:eciadiana@aol.com). Please include "Attn: Vistas" in your message.

## Mission Statement

The mission of Vistas, the monthly newsletter of the ECIA, is to inform the Eldorado community about issues before the ECIA Board and the membership at large. By so doing, the publication seeks to foster increased neighborhood pride and community participation in the decision making process.

This month, rather than reminding everyone of the dos and don'ts of holiday lighting, I thought I would instead convey my thanks to Eldorado's many fine residents who work hard to respect our valuable Protective Covenants and Building Guidelines. Your respect of these covenants makes Eldorado a more friendly community and ensures that their intent is upheld so that we can all live peacefully in our beautiful setting. As the opening paragraph of our covenants says:

This Amended and Restated Declaration (hereafter "Restated Declaration") is made by the Eldorado Community Improvement Association, Inc., a New Mexico non-profit corporation, (hereafter "the Association" or "ECIA") for the express purposes of protecting the natural beauty and environment of the community of Eldorado at Santa Fe, providing an attractive rural

setting for residential neighborhoods and home sites and preserving property values.

The cooperation of our residents is demonstrated by the fact that as of September 30, 189 residents have submitted architectural plans to the ECIA for a variety of home projects, and as of this date, only 16 residents have had to be cited for initiating projects without first coming to the ECIA for approval.

I would also like to thank all of the members of the ECIA Architectural Committee for their hard work and dedication to the ECIA. Year to date, the committee has held 18 Architectural Committee meetings, in addition to the many site visits on lots. It is the committee's goal to review potential projects in a fair and non-biased manner and to work to ensure that all projects are in keeping with the intent of the Eldorado covenants and guidelines.

—Mark Young, Covenant Compliance Representative

## Recent Board Actions

The ECIA Board held its regular meeting on September 19, with Board members present: **Dag Ryen** (Acting President and Chair), **Todd Handy** (Treasurer), **Pam Henline**, and **Jan Pietrzak**. **Nolan Zisman** (Secretary) was absent, excused. The following formal actions were taken unanimously, unless otherwise noted, without the Chair voting:

- ▼ **Karen Mounsey** and **David Perlmutter** were appointed to fill vacant positions on the Board and were present to vote for the rest of the meeting.
- ▼ The Election Committee Charter, Election Committee Nomination Petition, and Election Policy and Procedures were approved
- ▼ All residents were invited to a Town Hall open forum at La Tienda on October 2.
- ▼ All Association members were invited to an open forum at La Tienda, 7 PM, on October 23 to discuss the process for upcoming Board elections.
- ▼ Treasurer Handy reported that over \$10,000 has been recovered from the perpetrators of the 2009 embezzlement.
- ▼ A Capital project for a concrete sidewalk from the Community Center middle parking lot to the inner parking lot was approved, NTE \$5,000.
- ▼ A Home Profession permit was granted for 4 Eldorado Circle for a construction business office.
- ▼ A Home Profession permit was granted for 57 Verano Loop for a web design office.

- ▼ A variance was granted for 4 Azul Drive for a 7-foot-high screening fence, where 6 feet is the Guideline height, because of lower lot elevation.
- ▼ A variance was granted for 15 Balsa Road for an existing fence in the 20-foot setback, used for screening a neighbor's trailer.
- ▼ A variance was granted for 2 Moya Place for a carport to be located 17 feet from the house, where the Guideline maximum distance is 15 feet, and without a connecting feature, because of an existing fence and vegetation.
- ▼ A variance was denied for 24 Monterrey Road for one partially constructed cement planter to remain 2 feet inside the required 20-foot side setback (2-1-2).
- ▼ A variance was approved for 24 Bonito Road to replace an existing cedar fence with a new coyote/stucco pilaster fence encroaching 8 feet into the 50-foot setback because of site characteristics.
- ▼ A variance was approved for 41 Azul Loop for a wall and gate 7 feet into the 20-foot side setback because of site characteristics.
- ▼ A variance was approved for 62 Avenida Compadres to allow a ground-based solar array of 48 panels located 180 feet from the house, where the Guideline maximum is 15 feet (3-0-2).
- ▼ A variance was approved for 4 Verano Lane to build an 8-foot-tall coyote fence to screen a pop-up trailer, where 6 feet is the Guideline maximum height, with the condition that the fence be removed or

Continued on p. 7

## Message from the ECIA Board

Everyone agrees that the debate in Eldorado over keeping backyard poultry has tested the patience, temper, and friendships of those involved. Fortunately, as the lawsuit over the matter moves into its final stages, there is hope that it can soon be resolved.

At issue is not whether we humans can build significant attachments to docile, trusting hens. What is at stake is the credibility of the covenants that every homeowner in Eldorado at Santa Fe agreed to be bound by upon taking title to their residences. Those covenants run with the actual land, not with any particular owner, who may come and go.

In part due to the turmoil, the Eldorado Board of Directors has seen considerable turnover in the recent past. We are grateful that two new volunteers have stepped forward to give of their time and expertise to the complex issues facing our community.

**Karyn Mounsey** is a new Eldorado resident, having relocated from Los Angeles after more than 40

years as a legal secretary and researcher. She was born and raised in the Midwest and is a diehard Notre Dame fan! Her outside interests include photography (including darkroom), stained glass, and High Sierra backpacking (while living in southern California).

**Dave Perlmutter** is a retired attorney who came to Eldorado in 2009. He got his law degree from the University of Wisconsin and returned to New York to practice both civil and criminal law. Since retiring, he has been involved in building classical and acoustic guitars and participates in the Eldorado studio tour. He and his wife, Noreen, enjoy the weather and the landscape of Santa Fe and northern New Mexico.

Following the appointment of the new members, the Board of Directors has elected new officers: President, **Dag Ryen**; Vice-President, **Jan Pietrzak**; Treasurer, **Todd Handy**; and Secretary, **Karyn Mounsey**.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

—*The Board of Directors of the Eldorado Community Improvement Association*

## Hike/Bike Trail Maintenance

The Eldorado Community Improvement Association and Santa Fe County have reached an important agreement that will ensure the ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation of our 12.3 miles of hike/bike trails. After months of meetings and negotiations, the Santa Fe County Commission approved the agreement on September 23, setting the stage for extensive construction and maintenance activities next spring.

ECIA has for years had sole responsibility for maintaining the trails and will continue to do so in the future. The agreement recognizes, however, that multi-use trails such as ours have a finite use-life. They deteriorate after years of freeze-thaw cycles and usage to the point where maintenance is no longer cost effective. According to the terms of the new agreement, Santa Fe County will assume responsibility for the trails, which are county property, when they deteriorate to a point where further maintenance is not warranted.

Thanks to the efforts of our county commissioner, **Liz Stefanics**, some monies have already been set aside for this purpose. The county will reconstruct parts of our trail system next spring, beginning with segments near the school.

To assess the usefulness of our trails, the agreement relies on a common standard in the industry called the PASER system, which assigns grades between 1 and 10 to individual segments of trails. When a trail falls

below a grade of 4, the county will assume responsibility for it and begin to plan for its rehabilitation. Evaluation of the trails will be conducted by ECIA annually, and the entire trail system will be reviewed by the county and ECIA representatives every five years.

ECIA, for its part, will continue to devote its efforts to maintaining the trails at as high a standard as possible. Work is expected to begin on the long stretch of trail along Vista Grande even before snow flies. Contracts for maintenance on other segments will be let next year. Among the benefits of the agreement will be the ability for ECIA to tap into the expertise of Santa Fe County's public works engineers and staff to maximize the quality of our maintenance work.

For the immediate future, the focus will be on repaving failed trail segments. But the agreement envisions that ECIA representatives will be involved in the design of new trails when and if funding becomes available from the state or the county. The agreement does not preclude the possibility of using surfaces other than asphalt in the future.

Trail maintenance will continue to be a major expense for ECIA. However, previous surveys have shown that the trails are among our most popular and heavily used amenities. The new agreement with the county will help ensure our ability to keep a quality trail system of which not only Eldoradoans, but all of Santa Fe County can be proud.

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**Katherine Mortimer**  
Conservation: **Jim Daniel & Cherry Payne**  
Election: **Kathie Graham**  
Facilities & Grounds:  
**David Lovro**  
Finance: **Dan Drobnis**  
Information: **Frank Schober**  
Neighborhood Watch:  
**Marilyn Walker**  
Roads: **Open**  
Stable: **Gretel Underwood**  
(Interim Chair)  
Sustainability, Planning, & Education: **Steve Rudnick**

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### COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Vista Grande Library  
466-READ  
Fire and Rescue  
466-1204  
eldoradofireescue.org  
County All Purpose  
820-CNTY (2689)

## Vistas Needs Writers!

With the departure of valued committee member **Don Dayton**, the Information Committee is short a writer or two. Monthly meetings are held on the Tuesday following the third Thursday of each month in the Community Center Conference Room at 7 PM, where writing assignments are planned. Interested? Contact **Frank Schober**, 310-8593, or come to the next Information Committee meeting on Nov. 26.

## Climate Cabaret

SERA is hosting a lively, family-friendly event on Sat., Nov. 3, at The Performance Space at La Tienda, 9:30 AM–noon: Climate Cabaret—A Community Cabaret Takes On A Changing World and Climate. Hosted by Sustainable Eldorado Residents Alliance (SERA). \$5 suggested donation at door.

## Reel New Mexico

On Wednesday, Nov. 3, Reel New Mexico screens “Elvis Has Left the Building,” an underrated and overlooked comedy, partially shot in New Mexico, including a few scenes in the El Dorado area and at Harry’s Roadhouse! La Tienda Performance Space, 7 PM; \$5 suggested donation at door. 466-1634.



Qigong class now at La Tienda.



A model railway based on a fictional location in the United States. Photo Graham Causer, Wombourne, UK.



## IN THE COMMUNITY

### Volunteers Needed for Wilderness Preserve Projects

Our amenities help to make Eldorado a unique and attractive place to live. Surveys show that most residents of Eldorado consider the Wilderness Preserve one of the top three amenities. The ECIA Conservation Committee is charged with managing the Preserve, most significantly maintaining the network of trails. Community members can help in the upkeep of these trails by participating in periodic volunteer workdays held by the committee.

This spring it became apparent that the southern portion of Trail 201 had severe erosion issues that could potentially lead to loss of portions of this trail. During three workdays, committee members worked to prevent further erosion of this area. This work was supervised by our consultant, **Jan Willem Jansens**, an established expert in erosion control. A small group of community volunteers used rocks to build erosion control structures to regulate the flow of water (see photo, back page). Dead logs and branches were used to indicate areas that hikers should avoid. Several more days will be required to complete this project.

We have noted a decline in community volunteers in the past few years. We could accomplish more if we had help from more of our residents. The work is varied, with tasks appropriate for any fitness level, requiring no particular expertise. We would like to build a mailing list of residents who might help when they have time. There is no obligation once your name is on the list, but you would receive an email regarding workdays and other activities. If interested, send your name and email address to Mark Young at [mark@eldoradosf.org](mailto:mark@eldoradosf.org). Your help will be greatly appreciated.

### Model Railroaders Open House

On November 9, two Eldorado-area model railroaders are taking part in a free Open House for National Model Railroad Month. **Bob Spude** and his family, at 2 Alcalde Road, and **Bob Hayden**, 7 South Hijo de Dios, invite Eldoradoans to see their trains between 1 and 4 PM on that date. The Spude trains are HO and N scale. Hayden’s layouts include HO, HO narrow gauge, and O-scale narrow gauge scenes with trains running to delight children of all ages. Other members of the Santa Fe Model Railroad Club hold open houses during the month; details are online at the Club website, [santafemodelrailroadclub.org](http://santafemodelrailroadclub.org).

## MOON PHASES FOR NOVEMBER 2013



This month’s Santa Fe Model Railroad Club meeting is Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 7 PM at the home of Bob Spude, 2 Alcalde Road, in Eldorado. SFMRRC invites anyone interested in model trains to attend this meeting as their guest, and learn more about “The World’s Greatest Hobby.”

### New Weekly Qigong Class

*Qigong* (pronounced “chee-gung”) can be a challenging concept to understand. Basically, one learns to cultivate through practice (or *gong*, pronounced “gung”) one’s own energy (or *qi*, pronounced “chee”) through simple, non-impact movements that circulate that energy in the body. This ancient Chinese art and science of gentle yet powerful movements is designed to improve overall vitality, strength, and balance, along with developing a sharper, calmer mind. Qigong builds energy without expending energy.

Classes are taught in such a way that everyone is able to immediately begin a practice; no prior experience is necessary. The practice is particularly beneficial for the elderly, because of the ease of the movements. Practitioners discover how they can regain a youthful vitality and increased mobility while preventing illness and injury. This improved energy flow washes toxins from the body. Life events and emotions become less intense as the body and its glands and organs find new balance.

Classes are held at the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet room at La Tienda each Tuesday morning from 7:30 until 8:45 AM. Dress in comfortable layers. Bring a yoga mat or blanket. Note that classes are scent-free and wheelchair accessible.

Teacher **Rose Allen** was introduced to the practice of Qigong in 2005 and relocated to Santa Fe in order to attend the MogaDao Institute. Her vision is to share this practice with as many people as possible. Contact Rose at [roseallenpromo@gmail.com](mailto:roseallenpromo@gmail.com) or 503-961-2242.

### News from Eldorado/285 Recycles

The Reuse Area at the Eldorado Transfer Station (ETS) is now open. Patrons using punch cards or bag stickers can leave usable or easily repairable items in the roofed Reuse Area adjacent to the recycling dumpsters, rather than in the Tipping Building, where everything is destined for the landfill. Other ETS patrons are free to take away any items in the Reuse Area that they can use. This is not a place for donations, and no tax credit can be given.

Eldorado/285 Recycles and the County Solid Waste and Recycling Division (which operates

**PROTECT OUR NIGHT SKIES:**



Lights left carelessly on may spoil the views of our night sky.

ETS) recommend that good items be donated to local charities. However, sometimes there are reasons (moving or vacating dates, for example) that may lead patrons to bring everything they want to get rid of to ETS. The Reuse Area is then the “last chance” to divert good items from the landfill. Items not “adopted” from the area after a limited time will be sent to the landfill.

Eldorado/285 Recycles held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in honor of the Reuse Area reopening on October 15. Speakers included County Commissioners **Kathy Holian** and **Liz Stefanics** whose adjacent districts are served by the ETS.

We have now added used rubberbands to the hard-to-recycle items we collect in the hallway of Building B of La Tienda. Our local newspaper carriers, at their own expense, pay for the rubberbands used in their daily deliveries. **Janet Eigner** got tired of collecting them and not knowing what to do with so many and persuaded Eldorado/285 to collect them. When enough are accumulated, we will return them to the carriers for reuse.

On Saturday, November 16, we will celebrate America Recycles Day from 10 AM to 2 PM at a table in front of the Eldorado Supermart. We will have handouts, a contest, and lots of information to share. There will be an added service of electric cord repair.

Eldorado/285 Recycles recently “adopted” Avenida Vista Grande from US 285 to Torreon for cleanup. To commemorate America Recycles Day, on November 15, members will do a trash pick-up in that area.

—Karen Sweeney  
Eldorado/285 Recycles

# November Events

## Left out? Help us compile a comprehensive events listing.

Email [eciamarilyn@aol.com](mailto:eciamarilyn@aol.com) with your meeting/event information, or bring it to the ECIA office by the 3rd of the month for publication in the following month's Vistas. Please include “Attn: Vistas” and be sure to indicate:



1. **Type of Event**
2. **Location**
3. **Date & Time**
4. **A Resource Person** (one who can answer questions both about the event and the sponsoring organization) and his/her telephone number.

Photographs (digital or snapshots) are encouraged!

Note: All meetings are at the Community Center, unless otherwise noted.

LR=Living Room, F=Foyer, CFR=Conference Room, CR=Class Room, RR=Railroad, K=Kitchen

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Preliminary Budget Review	Wed., Nov. 13, 9:30 am		CFR
Budget Recommendation	Mon., Nov 18, 6:30 pm		CFR
ECIA Office closed	Thurs-Fri, Nov. 28-29		

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Architectural Committee	Tues., Nov. 12, 7-9 pm	Mark Young	466-4248	Foyer
Architectural Committee	<del>Tues., Nov. 26, 7-9 pm</del>	Canceled	466-4248	Foyer
Board Work Study	Thurs., Nov. 7, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Board Work Study	Mon., Nov. 18, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	CFR
Conservation Committee	Tues., Nov. 5, 7-9 pm	Jim Daniel	609-941-4527	F
ECIA Board Meeting	Thurs., Nov. 21, 7-9 pm	ECIA	466-4248	RR
Facilities & Grounds	Wed., Nov. 6, 4-6 pm	Jeanne Calzada	466-1947	CFR
Finance Committee	Wed., Nov.13, 9:30-11:30	Dan Drobnis	466-4781	CFR
Information Committee	Tues., Nov. 26, 7-9 pm	Frank Schober	310-8593	CFR
Road Committee	Mon., Nov. 4, 6-8 pm		466-4248	CFR
Stable Committee	Wed., Nov. 27, 7-9 pm	Gretel Underwood	466-7825	CFR
SPE Committee	Thurs., Nov. 14, 7-9 pm	Steve Rudnick	466-1335	CFR

### MONTHLY / SEMI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

EAW&SD*	1st & 3rd Thurs, 7-9 pm	Anna Mondragon	466-1085	RR/CR
Eldorado Arts & Crafts	Last Thurs., of month	Barrie Brown	466-3035	CC
Eldorado Camera Club	4th Wednesday, 7-9	biordi@aol.com		La Tienda
La Canada Wireless	2nd & 4th Mon., 7-9 pm	lcwireless.org		
Library Book Group	2nd Saturday 9-10:30	Joan LaMarque	466-6000	CFR
Roadrunner RV	3rd Tues. of month	Pat Stewart	820-0303	
Search & Rescue	2nd Thurs, 5-9 pm	santafesar.org		CR

### WEEKLY MEETINGS

AA	Tues., 5:45-6:45 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Wed., 10:30-11:30 am			CFR/CR
AA	Thurs. 5:30-6:30 pm (Women Only)			CFR
AA	Fri., 6-7 pm			CFR/LR
AA	Sat., 10:45-11:45 am			CFR
AA	Sun., 5:15-6:15 pm			LR/CFR
Boy Scout Troop 414	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fritz Denny	466-4070	RR, CR, LR
Bridge	Every Fri., 1-4:30 pm	Jim Davidson	670-6949	LR
Bridge	Every Other Fri., 9-noon	Natalie Bernet	466-6118	LR
Community Church**	Sun., 9:00 & 10:30 am	David McPherson	466-2495	La Tienda
Eldorado Hikers	Tues., 8:30 am	Terry Gibbs	466-6914	CC
Fire & Rescue Training	Wed., 7-9 pm	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Fire & Rescue Work Duty	Sat., Call for time	Fire Station Office	466-1204	Station
Knitting Club	Tues., 10-12 noon	Joyce Hanmer	466-3018	LR
Life Drawing	Mon., 10-12 noon	Jack McCarthy	466-9601	RR
Mah Jongg	Fri., 1-4:30	Nancy Robbins	466-1780	CR
Overeaters Anon	Mon., 7-8 pm	Kate	216-5302	LR
Senior Lunch***	Mon.-Fri., 11:30-12:30 pm	Senior Center	466-1039	
Square Dancing	Fri., 6-9 pm	David Lovro	466-0540	RR

\* Eldorado Area Water and Sanitation District

\*\*For other religious/spiritual services, go to <http://santafe.areaconnect.com/churches.htm>

\*\*\* Reservations Required

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org)

## Squirrels and Trees

At a dinner party recently, friends wondered if there are squirrels in the neighborhood. “I’ve seen small rodents that look like prairie dogs, but I haven’t seen any squirrels,” said a guest. In fact, what that neighbor thinks was a prairie dog was probably a Spotted Ground Squirrel, common to Eldorado.

The Spotted Ground Squirrel, one of the smallest ground squirrels in North America, is typically 7 to 10 inches long (including tail). In contrast, the Rock Squirrel, another ground squirrel common to Eldorado, is twice as big, measuring 17 to 20 inches long (including tail). In addition to the dissimilarity in size, the two can be differentiated by their tails (Spotted Ground Squirrel tails are flatter and about half the length of the body; Rock Squirrel tails are bushy and almost as long as the body) and their ears (Spotted Ground Squirrel ears are smaller and lay almost flat; Rock Squirrel ears are much larger and upright).



Rock Squirrel having a nibble.

Both squirrels are fast runners and good climbers. They dig burrows for shelter and safety, and they tend to stay close to home. Squirrels’ eyes, set high on their heads, allow for good visibility when looking out of the burrow. Squirrels are active during the day, feeding primarily on plants and insects, and in turn they are prey to hawks, snakes, coyotes, and badgers. The young are born, in nests in the home burrows, without hair and with their eyes closed. The average squirrel lifespan is 3 to 4 years.

Similar to prairie dogs (for whom they are often mistaken), Spotted Ground Squirrels have an especially sophisticated communication system, with seven or so alarm calls and signals—the most common being foot stomping. Like other rodents, squirrels can be destructive—digging and eating vegetation—and they can carry fleas and other parasites. But, like all native animals, they serve a useful natural purpose, including propagating seeds from plants and trees.

Squirrels, like a number of other animals, hibernate in winter by lowering their metabolism so that they require little or no food. But how do trees, which rely in part on their symbiotic relationship with squirrels, survive the winter?

Because deciduous trees contain water in their leaf cells, which would be damaged by freezing, they have evolved a cycle of hormones to drop their leaves in the fall and grow new leaves in the spring. In autumn, the green chlorophyll—one of the chemicals in the cells

that convert light energy (photons) into food (glucose)—die, thus allowing the other chlorophylls to show. This gives us the beautiful fall display of red-orange-gold colors.

Evergreens are aided in winter survival by the waxy-like substance on their needles which helps them resist freezing. Sap, which is temperature sensitive, also slows its flow in the colder months. Sap, which occurs in both deciduous and evergreen trees, is the thick fluid that carries water and nutrients from the roots up the tree to the glucose-manufacturing plants in the leaves or needles. Sap also carries water and glucose down to the roots.

References for this article are available on request.

Founded as a subset of Neighborhood Watch, the Flora and Fauna group’s mission is to encourage and educate residents on respectfully coexisting with local plants and wildlife, including preservation of native flora and fauna in light of our changing climate.

We encourage you to contact us! Flora and Fauna members are **Bonnie Mahlum** (President), **Ann Wood**, **Cliff Wood**, and **Julia Kinney**. We can be reached at [EldoradoFloraFauna@yahoo.com](mailto:EldoradoFloraFauna@yahoo.com).

—Flora and Fauna Working Group



Another view of the Spotted Ground Squirrel.



Spotted Ground Squirrel in a common pose.



Rock Squirrel stashing seed in cheek pouches to take to burrow for winter. All photos © Ann V. Wood.

## Rock Dove (RD), Part 1

**D**o you know the Rock Dove? This is a more official name for a Rock Pigeon or just plain pigeon. However, these birds really are not so plain and have culture and history associated with them. The RD is larger and fatter than a mourning dove, with a medium-length tail, small head, short (usually) pink legs, and light or reddish eyes. They are about 13 inches long, with a wingspan of 21 to 25 inches. Males and females can be very colorful. The most predominant color scheme includes much gray, with a gray body, darker gray wings, and an overall mottled or spotted appearance. But don't stop there. Some RDs have an all-over lovely shade of rusty brown. Another attractive brown RD has a white back and tail but the rest of the body includes shades of rusty red. A very dark blackish variety shows some purple tints. Another pattern comprises a gray tail, brown wings, iridescent purple and green feathers on the neck, and a greenish head. Another gray variety has two large black wing stripes and purple and green iridescent neck feathers. And there is also an all-white RD—plus other similar combinations and mixes! But even with all these variations, most of us can recognize an RD immediately by its shape, flight, and the fact that they frequent public places in large flocks and have little fear of people. RDs do not migrate and can be found throughout North and South America (excluding much of Canada) and also in many places around the world.

Pigeons are easy to observe, so you may have seen their mating behavior. The female watches as a male circles her, cooing, expanding his chest, bobbing his head, and raising his wings. Pigeons are monogamous and mate for life. Nests are a messy clump of twigs and may be reused many times. As the nest accumulates feces, which the adults do not remove, the nest becomes a large, glued structure. The male chooses the nest site on a ledge or similar site. A popular

roosting and nesting site is under bridges. One to three eggs hatch in 18 days, and helpless young develop slowly compared with smaller birds such as sparrows, and fledge in 30 days. Depending on climate, RDs can have multiple broods per year. Both parents feed the young, especially at the beginning, with crop milk (sometimes termed “pigeon’s milk”), a liquid secreted in their throats (crop). Their diet consists of seeds and fruits. RDs have become adapted to eating almost any type of food left by humans, foraging on the ground and around trashcans. They also forage for leftovers around farm buildings and fields. Unlike many birds, RDs keep their head lowered when drinking, sucking water into their throat and swallowing without lifting the head.

RDs are considered a pest in many places, and people are prohibited from feeding them. A large number of RDs perched in a tree above your car can produce a mess and perhaps damage the car paint. Two well-known places where there are many unwelcome RDs are Trafalgar Square in London, England, and Saint Mark’s Square in Venice, Italy. In these popular tourist areas, tour guides use open umbrellas in all weather as protection against bird droppings.

—Pam Henline

*Thanks to Dale Stahlecker for Eldorado observations and Cornell for bird histories*



Photo by Alan D. Wilson  
www.naturespiconline.com  
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## Board Actions, *continued*

moved or brought into compliance when/if the home is sold.

Since the meeting, the resignation of Secretary Nolan Zisman has been received.

Regular Board meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 7 PM at the Community Center and are open to the public. An open forum, community announcements, and reports from ECIA committees are normally included. Complete minutes and meeting agendas are available at the ECIA office or website: <http://eldoradosf.org>.



Leucistic Rock Pigeon.  
Photo by Howard Cheng, Wikimedia Commons  
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## Wilderness Preserve Needs Volunteers!



Jim Daniel in front of newly constructed rock dams used to slow water flow. Want to help? See story on p. 4.

Additional photos of the ongoing work can be found online: [www.eldoradosf.org](http://www.eldoradosf.org).

## OPEN HOUSE AT THE STABLES

The entire Eldorado community is invited to a stable open house on Saturday, November 30, from 10 am to 1 pm. Come join in the pony rides, photo ops (the grandkids on a pony for your holiday cards perhaps?), and refreshments provided by the ECIA.

This is a great opportunity to bring the whole family for an outing over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. For those who plan to ride, please wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. In the event of rain, the open house will be postponed until the following Saturday, December 7, from 10 AM to 1 PM.

For more information, contact **Pat Donahue** (phone) 310-9757; email: [donahuemail@gmail.com](mailto:donahuemail@gmail.com).

**Sarah Bond on her horse Indy.**

