

# Boggs

QUARTERLY

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*Friends of Boggs Mountain*



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*Phantom orchid  
(Cephalanthera austiniæ)  
photographed near the  
junction of the Creek &  
Interpretive Trail (pre-Valley  
Fire) by Stephanie Pahwa*

*Dear Friends,*

*Growing up in a small town near the base of the Sierra, I would spend summers swimming in the Kings River that flowed about a quarter mile from my door, camping and backpacking in the High Sierra and savoring nearly every moment of my parole from the academic rigors of the small high school I attended. Those experiences instilled in me a love of the outdoors and particularly the majestic Sierra that rose from the valley floor.*

*Fifteen years ago when I moved to Lake County I found myself on a mission to find a place in which to revisit the joy I had experienced as a youth. On a Sunday afternoon I drove up Highway 175 and discovered and immediately fell in love with Cobb Mountain. When I drove up Entrance Road into Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest it sealed the deal. This was a place I could hike, run, or ride my bike and escape the everyday pressures of work and family life. A place I could go to contemplate the ethereal and the mundane. I had to live here.*

*Shortly after moving to Cobb I learned of an organization called Friends of Boggs Mountain whose mission was to help in maintaining the trails and enhance the experience of all visitors to Boggs. Now I could spend more time in the forest while giving back to the place I loved.*

*The landscape at Boggs has changed dramatically but FOBM's mission remains the same. The Valley Fire created a blank canvas and a unique opportunity to recreate the magical place Boggs was and will be again. It will be our privilege to watch the forest recover while playing a small part in the*

*the recovery. It will not happen overnight. While the wait to start the trail building is torturous it allows us the opportunity to thoughtfully plan a trail system and raise the money to do it right.*

*To do it right, we will need your help. Participation in the planning process by all user groups is the best way to ensure all needs are met. Additionally, your continued financial support is critical. Since FOBM is strictly a volunteer organization with no paid employees you can rest assured every dollar we collect goes right back into the forest.*

*Finally, I would like to thank Karen Rhoads for her splendid performance of "Firestorm" on Saturday morning, June 10. Karen personally composed this strikingly beautiful piece of music in the aftermath of the Valley Fire and shared the world premier at the amphitheater behind Cobb School. It turned out to be a delightfully brisk summer morning, and all attending, including some local wildlife, were spellbound by Karen's powerful performance.*

*Wishing you a safe, enjoyable summer,*

*David Thiessen  
President, FOBM*



# WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

FOBM is grateful to acknowledge the following new and renewing members:

ARO - Architecture  
Bay Area Orienteering Club  
Diane Bajada  
Joseph Floren  
Ralph Grant  
Claudia & Scott Hein  
Glenneth Lambert  
Peg Landini and Joe Fusek  
Donna and Joe Matthews  
William Provost  
JoAnn Saccato  
Valerie Schweifler  
Gary Sousa  
Evelyn Wachtel and John Wise  
Tim Williams  
Samantha Wood



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## ON THE COVER

Giant trees and boulders are hard to miss. But amateur naturalist and photographer, Stephanie Pahwa, loves hidden beauties like the **phantom orchid** taken before the Valley Fire. Stephanie submitted gorgeous photos for **FOBM's Facebook "Memory Mondays"** and wrote: *"There was so much to see at Boggs. Many people don't know it's right in front of them. For the phantom orchid, I used a cheap Canon point and shoot that had a macro feature. That was taken early July close to the Creekside/Interpretive merger. They love the microclimate near streams - lots of detritus on the forest floor and perfect humidity as they don't use photosynthesis. I pray they come back!"*

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FOBM would like to acknowledge Mark Bredt's expert advice for our newsletter cover. This newsletter was edited by Gigi Stahl. We apologize for unintended misspellings, errors, exclusions. Please send corrections and comments to [fobmtn@gmail.com](mailto:fobmtn@gmail.com).

# BIRD RESEARCH AT BOGGS

## Report & photos by Deb Bloomquist

Researchers from various disciplines have been hard at work at Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest (BMDSF). Stacy Stanish and Michael Baker are both Senior Environmental Scientists, Forest Practice Biologists who cover the entire state of California and provide fisheries and wildlife biological technical support to CAL FIRE for the State Forests and for the numerous CAL FIRE units.



Biologists Stacy Stanish, Senior Environmental Scientist and Michael Baker, Senior Environmental Scientist, installing an automated bird recorder at BMDSF.  
Photo: D. Bloomquist

In June, Stacy and Michael installed automated bird recorders in various areas of the forest to record bird sounds, songs and calls. The recordings would then be analyzed by an ornithologist who can identify birds by sound.

Twelve recorders were placed in the forest, set to record for 5 minutes a half hour before sunrise, five minutes at sunrise, and 5 minutes a half hour after sunrise.

The recorders were placed strategically in areas of various burn intensities, and in areas that were salvaged as well as not salvaged for timber. The biologists also considered areas with newly-planted seedlings, and how those areas were prepared.



One of the automated bird recorders installed at BMDSF.  
Photo: D. Bloomquist

In our last issue, we mentioned ongoing scientific research in areas that were managed after the Valley Fire vs. those left in their natural state. The automated bird recorders will be placed in both areas for this study.

Having the bird recorder data will provide valuable information on species currently occupying Boggs. It will also serve to provide insight into the changes in bird species over time.

Local naturalist Darlene Hecomovich, who writes about the common raven in this issue, hopes to contribute to any studies involving one of her many interests: birding.

“I have years of bird censusing data I’ve collected at BMDSF that I would like to compare to their research. I am particularly curious what their recordings would show on spring migrants,” she says.

How fortunate we are to have the technology to provide real time information on the forest’s inhabitants. It’s also encouraging to hear how the fire has elicited significant interest from the scientific community. We hope that once Boggs opens to the public, we will have a chance to learn what researchers have discovered or are continuing to study in a forest so dramatically transformed in the last two years. 🦉

## **TRAIL MAINTENANCE**

Trail work behind Cobb Elementary is **temporarily put on hold** due to continuing clearing activities. We will inform you of future trailwork opportunities behind the school by email and through local newspapers.



# THE AUDACIOUS COMMON RAVEN

By Darlene Hecomovich



Photo: D. Palmer

The common raven (*Corvus corax*), always a presence in Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest pre-fire, is one member of the bird family that survived the inferno well. Unlike other birds such as the California quail, mourning dove, and California thrasher whose populations were highly diminished by the fire, the common raven grew in number. I observed them soaring and circling over the scorched earth in acrobatic rolls and loops emitting their deep “krawk” croaking call.

Ravens consume a wide variety of animal matter including insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and whatever they discover in our garbage. They are also predators, hunting rodents in fields, and pulling eggs and nestlings out of nests. But one of their major food

sources is that of carrion, which was in great abundance after the fire, thus ramping up the number of ravens in the area – at least temporarily.

Although their numbers appeared stable in the spring of 2016, they seem to have decreased this past spring. It may be attributed to the destruction of their nesting sites after the fire, as well as diminished sources of carrion.

Preferring to build their large, stick nests either on cliffs along the coast or in tall conifers in the forest, their nesting sites in Cobb are now limited, which may have encouraged large numbers to move on to greener climes.



A common raven builds its nest  
Photo: F. Toller

Those that remain can still enchant. They are so bold, clever and playful that they are almost always doing something worth watching. The common raven is one of the most intelligent and highly developed of all birds, and has the reputation of being able to solve ever more complicated problems invented by ever more creative scientists.

They are a stately and rather sedate-looking bird, and their walk is graceful and seldom interrupted by hurried hops or jumps. In the air they excel in acrobatics, performing extraordinary feats such as somersaults and rolls.



Photo: D. Palmer

These sooty, majestic birds are entirely black, right down to their legs, eyes and prominent beak. They are as large as a red-tailed hawk, and are the largest perching bird in America, occurring over most of the northern hemisphere in nearly any habitat from hot desert to the icy tundra.



Photo: B. Barnwell

Over the years, I have followed a team of birders who faithfully participate in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in Pt. Barrow, Alaska. For most of us participating in the CBC, the big anticipation is how many species we will count. However, for the Pt. Barrow birders, it is not the number of species but rather the number of common ravens they will count. These are the only birds that are tough and hardy enough to brave the climate of this northernmost point of the United States. The average number of ravens they tally ranges from 50 to 70, but they hit the jackpot recently with 129!

Often confused with the American crow, the common raven is much larger with its massive bill projecting from a sloped forehead compared to the rounded head and smaller bill of a crow. The raven's tail is wedge-shaped and the crow's is rounded. Ravens *croak*; crows *caw*.

In flight, they are more graceful and agile and take advantage of soaring, whereas crows favor flapping. Preferring farm fields and urban areas to the mountains, crows though common in Lake County are rare on Cobb.

However, one common trait of these two species relate to how we seem to malign them when referencing their gatherings: an “unkindness or conspiracy of ravens”, and a “murder of crows”.

No wonder. The audacious, cunning and intensely mischievous raven is featured in myths and legends, and has a long-standing reputation of being a bird of ill omen that possesses magical properties.

Several examples include the foreboding of Edgar Allan Poe's poem of the same name. The legend of the ravens at the Tower of London portends that if they should ever leave, the British Empire would crumble. For Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest, the raven holds a prominent role in their mythology.

A Scottish legend warns that a sighting of just one raven in flight brings bad luck; but if you see two or more, good things will befall. Thus whenever you see just one raven, it would be wise to call out “*Raven, seek they brother!*” 🦅



Photo: F. Toller

# THE INSPIRATION BEHIND “*FIRESTORM*”

Interview with Karen Rhoads by Peg Landini

On the morning of June 10, 2017, at the Cobb Mountain Elementary School amphitheater, piano music of a fierce and sometimes somber nature could be heard through the trees. A group of about forty people gathered to listen to Karen Rhoads perform ‘*Firestorm*,’ her composition inspired by the Valley Fire of 2015.

During the performance, ravens soared overhead and a jack rabbit romped through dense foliage of the forest floor, reminders of the vitality that still exists. Tears welled in many faces as the music evoked memories of that devastating day.

Karen graciously fielded some questions following the performance and agreed to an interview for those who were unable to attend. The following interview took place on Saturday, June 17 at Karen’s home. 🍂



Peg Landini and Karen Rhoads at the event.  
Photo: T. Slaight



Photo: T. Slaight

Q: Do you recall the moment when the inspiration to compose this piece came to you?

A: I was at a friend’s house – she welcomed me into her gorgeous cabin in Clearlake Riviera where I stayed for two weeks after the fire. At night I slept in the living room looking out over the deck and at the lake in the distance and a sky full of stars. I remember lying there, and the theme started going through my head, “*la da da da da da dum.*”

*“Karen: I thought the music was beautiful. You really could experience the firestorm and calm. I look forward to buying the CD for Friends of Boggs.”*

*– Mitchell*

Q: A composer is surrounded by sounds. Did the sounds of fire influence you in creating this piece?

A: Yes. The day of the fire I tried to come back home here on Cobb and couldn't get back. I drove through areas that were actively burning. When I started doing the opener to 'Firestorm,' it came to me very quickly. It was that rumble, building.

You drive through it and it gets more intense and grows and sounds like thunder or a tornado. But 'Firestorm' was also influenced by what I saw after returning to the area. It was still burning. There were places where you would see bits of smoke curling up. Some of the simple music in the second movement is those tendrils of smoke quietly rising.



Photo: T. Slaight

*“Thanks, Karen. Beautiful piece of music. Inspirational spirit of community and restoration.”*

*– Jen*

*“Thank you for bringing this to our community! This was a beautiful way to reflect, heal, and share our experience of the fire.”*

Q: You were out of town when the fire struck and unable to get back to your home. Did you base some of your piece on other peoples' experiences?

A: I think mostly I observed how people appeared to feel and how the fire affected my friends. Almost all my friends lost their homes. Observing how others felt fed the music. For instance, I think people assume that if a community experiences something together, they will then not be lonely. But friends I spoke with felt very lonely and isolated, even though they were surrounded by other people going through very similar experiences. 'Firestorm' reflects that loneliness in places.

*“A huge thank you to Karen for her beautiful, moving performance. I’m grateful for Friends of Boggs and their continued efforts at communicating and working towards bringing back such a valued resource in our community.”*  
– David Leonard

Q: How can people access *Firestorm*?

A: The **YouTube video** is posted now - [https://youtu.be/SMmUV9tCD\\_8](https://youtu.be/SMmUV9tCD_8). It can also be accessed by doing a YouTube search for the key words, "Valley Fire, Firestorm, Karen Rhoads". I will also record a CD soon. I'm trying to arrange access to a recording studio in July. I'll keep FOBM posted.

Q: At some point did the piece take on a “life of its own,” much like the Valley Fire did?

A: (Long pause) Mmmm... I don't think so, actually. I think it was in here (pointing to her head) in one piece and it was just a matter of me listening and having the time between work and other obligations to sit down and play it on the piano and then write the sheet music. It was pretty much in one piece. I don't establish anything in my brain, the music just does itself. But there are always things you have to do. It might come out in one piece and not really be listenable. As humans, when we listen to music we expect structure. You can do abstract music that is very successful but I think you still have to be aware that people are going to be listening to it. So, you have to do whatever editing, cutting, tweaking, that kind of stuff, that is needed. Oh, I guess, yeah, the music did evolve. 🐾

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### Editor's Note:

As I listened and took in the surroundings – bird calls, leaves rustling, the jack rabbit Peg mentioned earlier – allowing the music to do what music does to body and mind, the word “grateful” fell from my lips. The loneliness that Karen spoke of in this interview and wove in parts of her sonata was so profound for me and family members. I felt immense gratitude that Karen addressed this condition in *Firestorm*. And with that said, I also am grateful to others in our community who, through artistic expression, have offered us ways to experience sorrow, reconciliation, and hope outside of our usual daily interactions while we “build new trails” so to speak, in our recovery. On behalf of the FOBM Board, sincere thanks to all who were able to attend this wonderful event! – Gigi Stahl



A memory of Boggs. Former Boy Scout Troop 315 Scoutmaster, Roy Stahl, greeted by furry friends at Ridge Camp in Boggs, Nov. 2010. Visit our [Facebook page](#) to submit “Memory Mondays” photos.  
Photo: M. Ioli

## PLEASE HELP US REBUILD TRAILS

Friends of Boggs Mountain was established in 2002 with a mission to “enhance the visitors experience” when visiting Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest. Apart from maintaining trails, we have sponsored educational events on subjects ranging from local history to nature studies. We have provided trail maps, and financed and built a large covered kiosk with current forest information. With financial help from Calpine we built a flush toilet in the parking area, replacing an odoriferous 1960’s vintage outhouse.

On September 12, 2015 our mission expanded to helping inform the community of forest management's post-Valley Fire activities and plans. We also anticipate greater involvement with CAL FIRE in their efforts to rehabilitate/rebuild trails.

Thus we are formulating plans and working closely with CAL FIRE to inform the public on the progress in restoration of the forest to hit the ground running once the forest is reopened.

The forest is a fundamental part of life and the economy of southern Lake County. The rebuilding of homes and businesses in the area will be greatly enhanced by the reopening of the forest. A study done in 2005 indicated over 11,000 people a year visited Boggs, pumping money into the local economy and providing jobs. Since 2005 those numbers had increased exponentially.

Friends of Boggs Mountain is a 501(c)3 non-profit, so all donations tax deductible. Because we have no paid employees, every penny donated goes right back into supporting the Forest. So please consider donating with the knowledge that whatever amount you feel appropriate will create a return on investment that far exceeds its face amount in terms of practical improvements to the forest and to the enjoyment of visitors like you. We also offer business memberships for a minimum donation of \$35 to \$1000, which entitles you to free advertisement in our kiosk at Boggs as well as in our quarterly newsletter and website. See page 13 for details. 

Please join us in restoring Boggs’ trail system with a tax-deductible donation (Tax ID: 56-2309457). Click on the “Donate” button to the right, or mail your check to:  
FOBM, PO Box 735, Cobb, CA 95426.

*Thank you for your generosity!*





# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

[Click here to join !](#)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### My interests at Boggs when it re-opens

hiking/jogging    dog walking    birding    hunting    target shooting    horseback riding  
 mountain biking    camping   other \_\_\_\_\_

**I plan to visit Boggs (cite frequency)** \_\_\_\_\_

**I will usually stay (cite duration)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggestions / ideas** \_\_\_\_\_

### I'd like to volunteer in

trail maintenance    interpretive activities    organizing events   other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please write your check to "Friends of Boggs Mountain"**

### REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

\$20 Individual    \$35 Family/Supporting    \$100 Patron    \$500 Lifetime

### BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

Business members receive a free ad on the Friends of Boggs Mountain website, newsletter, and main kiosk when the forest reopens. Historically, over 10,000 visitors come to Boggs each year, and at least three-quarters reside in Lake County and the Bay Area.

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Main Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Business Membership Levels

\$35 Bronze    \$60 Silver    \$100 Gold    \$200 Platinum

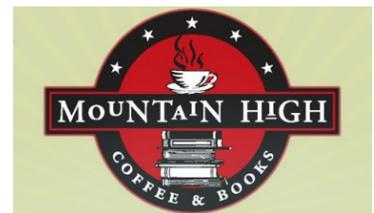
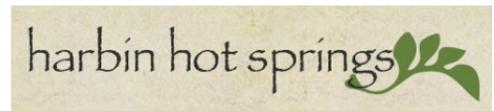
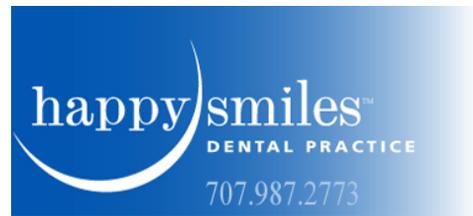
**\$1000 Lifetime business sponsor** includes a permanent plaque mounted on wood

FOBM reserves the right to reject any advertisement.

*The Friends of Boggs Mountain is a non-profit corporation formed to enhance the visitor's experience through recreational, interpretive and educational activities at Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest.*

# WE APPRECIATE OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

Please support fellow members when possible. Thank You!



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