

ATTN: TRAIN LOVERS AND NATURE LOVERS

by Eva Gordon, Activities Director

What: Niles Canyon Railway Tour

When: Sunday, April 18, 2010, 12:00 noon

Where: Niles Canyon

Cost: \$15 per person

Do you love the untouched California landscape and wildflowers? Do you have a thing for trains? Then join your fellow members on the historic Niles Canyon Railway in April.

The history of trains in Niles Canyon dates back to the building of the original transcontinental railroad. The first Western Pacific Railroad Company (formed in 1862) started construction in San Jose towards Sacramento. It built twenty miles of track that reached into Alameda Creek canyon in 1866. In September 1869, the Central Pacific Railroad bought the Western Pacific and completed this segment of the transcontinental railroad, linking Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay, finishing the track through the canyon. The Central Pacific constructed a freight terminal at the west end of the canyon, and a town quickly sprang up around it named for Addison C. Niles, a prominent judge and former railroad attorney. The Central Pacific eventually became part of the Southern Pacific railroad system. Steam locomotives pulled trains through Niles Canyon for eighty years before diesels took over in the 1950's. In 1984, after twelve decades of railroading in the canyon, the Southern Pacific ceased operating trains on the right-of-way, pulled up the tracks, and deeded the land to Alameda County.

The Pacific Locomotive Association began rebuilding the rail line in 1987. Volunteers worked for over a year on the first part of the track between Sunol and Brightside. On May 21, 1988, almost 122 years after the first Western Pacific excursion, the Pacific Locomotive Association brought railroad passenger operations back to life in Niles Canyon. From 1912-1916 the Niles section of Fremont was the earliest home of California's motion picture industry. Charlie Chaplin filmed "The Tramp" here, and his Essanay studio was based here long before Hollywood had a sign on a hill. Today even Niles has a sign on a hill! Many Westerns were filmed in Niles; at one point the studio cranked out one film per week in this rural paradise.

We will be on one of the rare wildflower trains which only operate in the spring during the blooming season. Complimentary wine tasting from local wineries will be on board the train. Or if you wish, you can also plan to bring your own food and beverages to enjoy. Be at the Niles Canyon Station by 12:00 noon for the 12:30 p.m. departure and our two-hour scenic round-trip ride to Sunol and back. Niles is an enchanting town with little cafes, restaurants, and antique shops. Plan to spend a couple of hours walking around the town either before or after the train ride. Space is limited to the first 50 persons. Please sign up early as this is sure to sell out. Directions and times will be sent upon receipt of registration. Questions, please contact Eva Gordon at eva@well.com or (650) 834-2614.

NILES CANYON RAILWAY TOUR

Sunday, April 18, 2010

RESERVATION FORM

Name:

Address:

City/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

First Event: () Yes () No

____ persons @ \$15 ea. = \$____

Make checks payable to SFBA/MBCA and mail to:

Ann Bornstein

61 Devon Court

Watsonville, CA 95076

(831) 786-0782, annstitcher@charter.net

Reservation deadline April 1 or when limit is reached. For confirmation, enclose a SASE or email address above.