

DIANE WEST-BOURKE

NATURALIST/INSTRUCTOR

Diane West-Bourke is a biologist by training, a naturalist & educator by vocation, & a keen observer of nature by inclination. For over 30 years she has worked passionately to awaken in others an appreciation & understanding of the workings of the natural world, in the hope that we may all develop a deeper sense of connection to the Earth, & an abiding dedication to its preservation.

She traveled widely, & lived in many places — including Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, the Deep South, England, Asia, & Canada — before finally settling in California. Those early experiences gave her a deep appreciation of the amazing environmental & cultural diversity of our planet. "Deserts, mountains, jungles, savannahs... all fascinate me & compel me to explore more.... The world is full of wonder, but my heart belongs to the wild lands of the West."

During her long career as an educator & naturalist, Diane has taught many Biology & Natural History courses at the University of British Columbia, Foothill & De Anza Colleges, UCSC Ext., & UC Berkeley Ext. She has developed comprehensive docent training programs for Filoli & the Midpeninsula Open Space District, & trained docents for Environmental Volunteers, Friends of Edgewood, & other organizations. At Rancho del Oso in Big Basin State Park, Diane established a Nature Center & an extensive interpretive program for CA State Parks, & served as Resident Naturalist there for 14 years.

Known as a popular & masterful teacher, Diane's engaging, interactive teaching style, not only informs, but also invites participation, provokes curiosity & inspires wonder. According to one recent Filoli docent trainee, Diane "could lecture about drying paint, & make it interesting & exciting!"

In 2004, Diane founded *Nature Explorations*, a private nature education & consulting company, which offers a variety of local natural history field classes & eco-travel experiences. For more information about her popular *Nature Explorations* classes ("*Natural History of the SF Bay Area*") & trips (throughout California & the American West, as well as Africa, Australia, the Galapagos & more), visit her website at <[www.NatureExplorations.net](http://www.NatureExplorations.net)>.

#### **TESTIMONIALS:**

- "The way she conveys technical information is so engaging and understandable – if I could only remember 50% of her stories and 25% of her descriptions of technical interactions I would be dangerous!" (R. Boucher, Filoli docent)
- Your teaching style & knowledge was outstanding. Thanks for giving us a new pair of eyes & a new pair of ears! (R. & L. Wrigley, MROSD docents)

- "I'm truly amazed by your knowledge, wisdom, and teaching style. It's easy to see why you have such an avid following. I hope to continue with you for many years to come." (T. Wight)
- "Your training was the most enjoyable thing I've done since I was 12 & was given a horse! Totally loved it... I want to keep learning from you!" (N. J. Bodey, Filoli docent)
- "I learned so much & had such a great time to boot. Your enthusiasm, approach & content made it a great learning experience for me." (J. Wertzler, MROSD docent)
- "Diane's knowledge of nature and her ability to communicate that to her students on 'their level' is exciting to witness.... I've found few who had such a dynamic range of levels in teaching.... She delivers a strength of story and knowledge to a place that connects many in ways that shifts their perception about being there." (J. Domurat, State Park docent)
- "You infuse us all with grace, respect for the Earth, & wonder!" (R. Fitzsimons, MROSD Docent Coordinator)
- "I took your training in the Fall 2007 and was blown away by your approach for exploring nature. You made us think, rather than giving us facts. Your training was for me the best of the best!" (D. Davidson, EV Board)
- "Training with you has been one of the most enriching experiences of my life." (N. Moon, MROSD docent)
- "Thanks for opening my eyes to the beauty & complexity in the world around us, & for helping me realize that we are all part of something so much bigger. Every day is now filled with a new sense of wonder & magic, every walk is so much more exciting, thanks to you! Your teachings & enthusiasm will stay with me forever." (J. Bhojwani, MROSD docent)