



Coast Range Chronicles 7: “Turd Inspectors”

by

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I often take my young sons hiking. They’re solid hikers. They maintain a decent pace and enjoy the outdoors. I teach them about plants, wildlife, and geology and this information is usually greeted with something ranging from moderate interest to indifference to outright scorn. But one thing that always provokes excitement is the various species of turd lurking along the trail: deer, coyote, dog, horse, rabbit. For some reason this is fascinating to them.

For me, not so much.

And the boys’ interest often results in numerous queries and pontifications and musings which invariably lead to an overwhelming desire to touch said turds and examine them. This keeps me alert playing germ-defense and admonishing them to “move along.” Yet the questions continue, most of which I can’t answer. Turds have not

been part of my life's work. They're no doubt ecologically diagnostic but I'll leave it to others to sift through them and relay their findings in the scientific literature.

So the boys and I will keep hiking and I'll impart information about redwood and Douglas-fir along the trail and rounded cobbles in the creek and red-tailed hawks soaring above and coyotes trotting in the distance and this will grudgingly satisfy their intellectual curiosity until the next turd comes along.

And that's when they'll really get stoked.