



Stu Weiss

Coyote Valley overlook.

## Coyote Valley debacle lurches onward

BY BRIAN SCHMIDT

The San Jose Mercury News recently published the Committee for Green Foothills' Op-Ed, "Best Coyote Valley Use Is Farmland — Now, Maybe Always," where we noted that the off-track Coyote Valley planning process continues to stumble onward. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that supposedly reviewed the environmental impacts overlooked many of them — especially the ones most important to open space and natural resource protection.

### DEIR Downplays the Impact on Wildlife Migration

Take, for example, the discussion of impacts to wildlife corridors. Coyote Valley has the best crossing point to get wildlife like elk, badgers, and mountain lions between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Mount Hamilton Range. In fact

it may be the only crossing point for some species (see related article, page 5).

The impact on wildlife corridors receives all of two paragraphs of discussion in the three-volume DEIR, and it is mostly dismissive and erroneous. It maintains that wildlife migration across the Greenbelt of southern Coyote Valley will be unaffected by the proposed development — as if being immediately adjacent to a city of 80,000 people will have no effect. Similarly, wildlife movement along Coyote Creek will supposedly be unaffected by the 80,000 people next door using the Creek Parkway as their primary recreation area.

According to the City's DEIR, even ball fields full of people and lit at night will not deter reclusive animals like badgers from strolling through — maybe they will even join a pick-up game before moving onwards. The DEIR does acknowledge that increased traffic and night lighting

from areas besides the ball fields will have a significant long-term impact on wildlife movement, but it does not estimate the degree of impact or identify the species that would be harmed by the impacts.

The DEIR provides only a single-sentence discussion of mitigations for the impact on wildlife migration, stating that where "possible," points where the wildlife cross, such as street culverts, could be improved to help movement. But the DEIR does not identify the crossing points that would be "possible" to improve, or define what "possible" means — does it mean that the project would be approved even if it was found that mitigations were not "possible"?

### No Protection / Mitigation for Loss of Farmland

Another example close to our mission of open-space protection concerns the loss of

See COYOTE, page 6



COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS

Committee for Green Foothills is a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to establish and maintain land use policies that protect the environment throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara County.

Founded in 1962, Committee for Green Foothills is leading the continuing effort to protect open space and the natural environment of the Peninsula and Coast. Through grassroots education, planning and legislative advocacy, CGF works to protect and preserve our local natural resources, views and open space.

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## From the *President(s)...*

*To more clearly communicate our goals and objectives to CGF members and supporters, we are sharing a summary of our strategic plan. This plan will serve as our guide as we continue to work strategically and effectively to protect the invaluable open space assets of our area.*

four decades since, we have proven our effectiveness time and time again.

They had a vision and a simple plan. Over the years, CGF's work has grown immensely in both geographic scope and complexity. This past year, CGF Board members and staff embarked on a strategic planning process to set a course for the next 5 years. Our new Strategic Plan will allow us to respond to the challenges we face today, while remaining true to our founding vision.

To more clearly communicate our goals and objectives to CGF members and supporters, we are sharing a summary of our strategic plan. This plan will serve as our guide as we continue to work strategically and effectively to protect the invaluable open space assets of our area. We value your continuing confidence in our work and your support for our endeavors. 

With this issue of Green Footnotes, we transition the leadership of the Board of Directors and are pleased to announce the completion of our strategic plan. As you know, for 45 years, Committee for Green Foothills (CGF) has worked on behalf of you, our members and supporters, to preserve open space in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Together with other dedicated groups and individuals, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that the natural areas of our foothills, bay and coast are preserved for present and future generations.

In 1962, in response to plans by Palo Alto to urbanize the city's western hills all the way to Skyline Boulevard, a group of 25 visionary citizens led by Pulitzer Prize winning author Wallace Stegner, Lois Crozier-Hogle and Ruth Spangenberg, banded together to defend the foothills. Gary Gerard suggested the name "Committee for Green Foothills" which reflected the positive stance of being "for" environmental protection — an important outlook that continues to guide our work today.

Our founders understood that our natural heritage would slowly be destroyed through carelessness, indifference and poor planning if no one spoke up for the intrinsic value of open space. Through the formation of CGF they created a mechanism to work with elected officials, planning agencies, neighborhood groups and others to preserve our wild areas for solace, respite, recreation and wildlife. In the

Chris Powell — Immediate Past  
President of the Board  
April Vargas — President of the Board

## *Which Way Redwood City:* **Restoration or Development?**


BY HOLLY VAN HOUTEN

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion about recreation and open space opportunities for a 1,400 acre parcel slated for development in Redwood City. The forum was hosted by Cargill/DMB, the team preparing development plans for this last remaining large parcel on the Peninsula's bayfront.

Although Cargill sold 15,000 acres of its South Bay holdings to state and federal wildlife agencies for wetlands restoration in 2003, it retained ownership of this site which it felt had the best opportunity to be developed. Cargill teamed up last year with luxury home/new town developer, DMB Associates, to begin a public outreach effort in the community in advance of preparing plans for the site. The site, at the foot of Seaport Boulevard, just east of Highway 101, is known either as the "Redwood City Industrial Saltworks" or "Seaport Wetlands," depending on one's views about what should happen there.

Although Cargill/DMB claims that 80% of the respondents to its surveys want mixed-use development of the site, most of the 160 participants in the June 4<sup>th</sup> forum seemed decidedly in support of preserving the land for open space and wetlands restoration.

The next decision point in the project is Redwood City's update of its general plan. Currently, the general plan zones this property primarily as tidal floodplain with only a small portion zoned for industrial uses, immediately adjacent to Seaport Boulevard. CGF is pressing the City to retain this zoning as it adopts the new general plan later this year.

To get notices of future meetings about this property, you can sign up with DMB at their website: [www.rcsaltworks.com](http://www.rcsaltworks.com). Another good website is that of the Friends of Redwood City which first presented plans to restore this site to wetlands to the City Council — plans available at [www.forwc.org](http://www.forwc.org). We'll also keep residents of Redwood City up to date with CGF Action Alerts. 

## **Redwood City Baylands at Risk**

BY LENNIE ROBERTS

A new development/landowner team is now gauging public sentiment regarding the 1433 acre Cargill property, which stretches from Redwood City's Seaport Boulevard to Bayfront Park in Menlo Park. Through multiple mailings to Redwood City households, telephone surveys, public forums, and tours of the site, the "Redwood City Industrial Saltworks" consortium is testing the waters for a plan that will be unveiled sometime next year.

What is not being asked through the outreach process, however, is whether the public would support the environmentally superior choice — the restoration of this area.

The Redwood City Baylands were diked off from the rest of the bay in the 1940's for salt production. An aerial view shows the original network of slough drainage patterns and areas where salt crystallizer beds were located. All of the Redwood City Baylands could be restored to tidal action and, depending upon their depth, would become marshlands, shallow tidal areas, or upland habitat.

### **Benefits of restoration**

Other parts of the bay now being restored are seeing tremendous benefits from restoration, including: reduction of flooding

hazards, improvement to Bay water and air quality, reduction in need for dredging of navigable channels, increased habitat for hundreds of species, avoidance of huge costs to build and maintain levees, and moderation of temperature extremes.

### **Costs of development**


Development for commercial, residential and/or industrial uses would require building higher levees and filling in the old salt production ponds. The City's new initiatives for revitalization of the Downtown and El Camino areas could suffer if limited public funds are re-directed to the Cargill property and other baylands still being eyed for development, such as Pete's Harbor and the Peninsula Marina. Highway capacity in this area is at its limit. New development would cause gridlock conditions on 101 and Seaport Boulevard. Other public needs such as schools would be impacted. Increased risk of flooding as the Bay and ocean water levels rise will have dramatic economic consequences.

The public needs to fully understand the costs and benefits of the Redwood City Industrial Saltworks plan. While it is encouraging that the development consortium is consulting with the public early in the process, its information gathering is by nature selective, and conclusions could well

be self-serving. In the meantime, CGF and other environmental organizations will continue to educate the public about the natural value of the Bay.

### **A vision for Redwood City's shoreline**

San Francisco Bay is one of California's most treasured natural resources, and is one of the world's most recognized visual icons. The Bay and the watersheds that surround it are home to hundreds of species of fish and wildlife, as well as over 7 million human residents. Since the gold rush days, the Bay has lost over 85% of its historic wetlands and marshlands.

In 1991, Congress included Redwood City's baylands within the boundaries of the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, but they were not purchased with the other 16,000 acres of Cargill lands, due to exorbitant appraisals that assumed development. Since nearly all of the 1400 acres would have to be rezoned for development, and obtain approvals from myriad agencies, the assumptions of the appraisals have subsequently been deemed invalid. Is it too much to hope that these last remaining great open spaces along Redwood City's shoreline can be restored, with public access trails, compatible recreation such as sports fields, and wildlife habitat? 

# COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007–2012

Committee for Green Foothills is a widely acknowledged leader in protecting the environment from unwise sprawl development. Focused on San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, we advocate for strong policies and regulations that protect open space and promote sustainable land use planning. We lend our voice, expertise and knowledge to achieve our mission: to protect the open space, farmlands and natural resources of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties through advocacy, education and grassroots action.

**Recently surveyed members, former board members and donors told us they value Committee for Green Foothills for our ability to:**

- Vigilantly monitor emerging and ongoing local land use issues impacting the environment
- Move quickly and nimbly to address land use issues as they arise
- Take tough positions when necessary to protect our natural resources
- Provide high-quality, well-researched information to decision-makers, resulting in respect for our positions
- Deliver real environmental victories!

**CGF accomplishes these victories by:**

- Promoting sound land use policies and general plans that protect the environment
- Working to pass laws that protect open space, natural resources and agricultural lands
- Insisting that local governments uphold environmental regulations
- Monitoring development proposals and opposing those that are damaging to open space, natural resources and farmlands
- Promoting park and open space acquisitions and supporting adequate funding for maintenance and stewardship of public lands
- Collaborating with citizens, community groups and environmental colleagues to maximize our

effectiveness

- Supporting well-planned urban infill as an alternative to suburban sprawl development
- Providing environmental education through our publications and informational forums
- Taking strategic battles to the voters or to court when all else fails

## PROTECTING OPEN SPACE

Many aspects of CGF's work have changed since our founding in 1962. Evaluating our successes and failures helps inform our strategies, goals and objectives for the future. Today, although significant areas of our region's open space lands have been protected, we have lost much of our agricultural heritage as well as environmentally important bay lands in the continuing struggle to balance the need for economic development and environmental protection.

Our challenges for the future are great, perhaps greater, than ever. CGF was founded to defend a critically important area — the Palo Alto foothills. Today, we must maintain vigilance over previously hard-won battlegrounds, while expanding our area of interest to include regions threatened by suburban sprawl, such as Coyote Valley and southern Santa Clara County.

While continuing to advocate for sound land use decisions, as we have in the past, we are now also advocating for the protection

of natural resources — including wetlands, streams, riparian corridors, forests, watersheds, wildlife and endangered species habitats. Our professional staff has grown and we have added the technical expertise we need to meet these advocacy challenges.

As our region's population grows, housing shortages caused by the jobs-housing imbalance drive up housing prices, forcing people to commute to jobs from great distances and placing additional pressure on decision-makers to expand housing into the greenbelt. CGF will expand our advocacy efforts at the policy level to support the creation of sustainable, livable communities in existing urban areas by emphasizing compact, infill development over suburban sprawl and protecting open space on the urban edge and in unincorporated areas of the two counties.

Finally, while today's growing concern over global warming did not confront CGF's founders, it is, in many ways, a land use issue. Increasing the density of our downtown and existing urban areas makes public transit alternatives more feasible and reduces dependence on the automobile. Preserving open land adjacent to San Francisco Bay reduces the amount of land at risk of flooding from sea level rise. Reducing impervious paved surfaces in our watersheds supports groundwater recharge and preserves precious drinking water in face of water shortages. Creating a connected and permanently protected network of natural open spaces provides necessary wildlife habitat that becomes more critical as our local climate changes. Maintaining the viability of local agriculture allows us to feed ourselves when transportation of foodstuffs from afar becomes too costly. Faced with such uncertainty about the future needs of the planet, our work to stop suburban sprawl development from overtaking sensitive natural

areas and to preserve functioning natural systems may be our best local investment in the future.

## CORE STRATEGIES FOR 2007–2012

The following seven core strategies will implement Committee for Green Foothills' goals and objectives for the next five years:

1. Prevent suburban sprawl from impacting farmlands, scenic views, and natural habitats in Southern Santa Clara County
2. Protect prime agricultural lands on the San Mateo County Coast
3. Preserve significant remaining open space and natural habitat areas throughout the two counties
4. Promote the establishment of sustainable land use and natural resource policies and plans to support our vision and mission
5. Increase the visibility of Committee for Green Foothills in order for the broader community to better understand the issues and support our work
6. Diversify our funding base in order to improve our financial sustainability
7. Address the transition from a long-time volunteer Advocate to a paid Advocate position for San Mateo County

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### *Advocacy, Outreach and Education*

**Goal:** To focus our advocacy efforts where we can have greatest effect in protecting significant open space lands within San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties

### *Objectives*

- Reduce sprawl in San Jose and southern Santa Clara County
- Maintain and strengthen "triggers" in the City of San Jose's General Plan that will delay housing development within the 6,800-acre, largely agricultural Coyote Valley until most of the City's infill opportunities have been

# COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2012

exhausted and 5,000 jobs have been created within Coyote Valley

- Encourage San Jose to change zoning designations from housing to open space on remaining open space areas within its sphere of influence
- Protect the urban reserve established for Almaden Valley from unnecessary development
- Oppose development of the Sargent and Castro ranches, two landholdings totaling 13,000 acres near Gilroy and the Pajaro River
- Preserve prime farmland adjacent to Morgan Hill and Gilroy
- Maintain strong general plan provisions in the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County general plan updates that protect open space and reduce sprawl
- Support infill opportunities within the City of San Jose, such as on North First Street
- Work with the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo) to formulate and implement a strong agricultural mitigation policy in Santa Clara County
- Promote a strong Santa Clara County Habitat Conservation Plan to preserve ranchlands for potential habitat areas to mitigate for development
- Work with the agricultural community to better understand what is needed to maintain the viability of local farming, including conducting a Santa Clara County Farm Tour in 2008

### **Protect San Mateo Coast Farmlands**

- Work with the San Mateo Ag Futures Alliance and other groups to promote awareness of locally grown produce to help support and maintain the viability of local farming
- Support off-stream storage ponds that enable farmers to reduce their use of scarce stream water during the summer months
- Participate in collaborative planning efforts for the Pilarcitos Creek watershed

### **Preserve Significant Open Space and Natural Habitat Lands**

- Fight development plans for building on large remaining bay land properties and support their restoration
- Promote preservation of natural open spaces by local land trust and land management agencies
- Ensure Devils Slide surplus lands are protected for recreational uses
- Promote well-managed public access to preserved lands and parks
- Continue working with the Santa Clara Valley Water District to ensure strong protections of streams and water bodies
- Work to preserve the historic public access to the open lands of Stanford University and protect Stanford open space lands from additional campus development

### **Advocate Sustainable Land Use Policies, Plans, and Ordinances**

- Defend land use policies that limit subdivision and lot line adjustments in Santa Clara County
- Review commercial timber harvest plans and work with reviewing agencies (i.e., California Department of Forestry, Department of Fish and Game, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board) to ensure watersheds and sensitive species habitats are protected
- Support enactment of a strong watershed protection ordinance in San Mateo County
- Work to enact limits on impervious surfaces within watersheds as part of the regional water quality waste discharge program
- Support policies that promote attractive, affordable, livable housing in downtown areas and along transportation corridors
- Continue to monitor and take action to ensure Stanford University's compliance with its General Use Permit

### **Litigation**

- Pursue existing litigation related to Stanford's General Use Permit and the location of the required public access trails
- Establish a litigation fund of \$50,000 to allow us to respond quickly when litigation is necessary to protect significant open space resources or uphold important environmental regulations

### **Outreach and Education**

- Provide 2–3 educational programs, annually, for members and the general public on topics related to our advocacy to build greater public awareness of our work
- Use our website, newsletter, action alerts, brochures, and other materials as educational tools to inform our members and increase support on critical issues
- Communicate and clarify our value to the community to attract new members and to differentiate ourselves from other environmental organizations
- Reach out to minority communities to find common interests in land use and related environmental issues
- Use action alerts as a tool to mobilize volunteers and create more community involvement

### **Financial, Administrative, and Governance**

Goal: To increase our financial sustainability, expand staffing resources in response to a future staff transition, and develop and maintain an effective, active, and informed Board of Directors whose governance and fundraising roles help to achieve our mission.

### **Objectives:**

- Stabilize and grow our donor base by prioritizing renewal of lapsed donors, and recruiting new members, upgrading gifts of mid-level donors, and more contact with major donors
- Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Lennie Roberts

serving as our San Mateo Advocate with a party in 2008

- Prepare for a future transition to a paid San Mateo County Advocate position by raising \$150,000 to support two years of costs while retaining our volunteer San Mateo County Advocate in Emeritus status
- Consider advocacy needs in Santa Clara County and determine whether an additional position is needed to conduct community outreach in that area and/or consider ways to realign staff responsibilities to better fit the needs of the organization
- Increase board diversity by recruiting new board members from underrepresented communities
- Maintain a balance of members from San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, while recruiting new members from southern Santa Clara County

Our intention is for this Plan to be a living document that will be reviewed by our staff and Board annually to ensure we are making progress in achieving our core strategies, goals and objectives.

Committee for Green Foothills' 2007–2012 Strategic Plan is the result of much hard work by many people. We express our thanks to everyone who participated in this process. This includes our Board of Directors and staff; the members of our Strategic Planning Committee — especially Chris Powell, Elena Pernas-Gis, and Holly Van Houten; former board members and stakeholders interviewed; members who participated in our December online survey; and JR Yeager of CompassPoint who helped point us in the right direction.

*A full copy of the Strategic Plan is available on our website at [www.GreenFoothills.org](http://www.GreenFoothills.org).*

## Coyote Valley Development

# Result could be new endangered species listings in the Santa Cruz Mountains

BY BRIAN SCHMIDT

At a recent forum on wildlife migration corridors cosponsored by Committee for Green Foothills (see related article on page 1) biologist Grey Hayes pointed out that a practice of isolating portions of animal habitat could have drastic consequences under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA is rightly concerned with preserving the biodiversity not just of entire species, but also of subspecies and genetically distinct population segments within a species. Preserving these groups protects species against extinction by preserving genetic variety.

So what happens if a reasonably-sized population segment of a species becomes artificially isolated, something that may happen to badgers and mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains if Coyote Valley development cuts off animal movement from the Mount Hamilton Range? A Santa Cruz Mountain population that isn't already genetically distinct, due to local conditions, will become distinct as its genes diverge from the much larger and now-separate Mount Hamilton population. In other words, a population that is isolated either starts off as a distinct

segment, or becomes one in a few generations.

The ESA applies protection to distinct population segments, labeled "species" under the ESA's terminology, as much as any larger group. If an ESA "species" is threatened with disappearance, it can be listed for protection against any act that harms the animal or its habitat. While the Santa Cruz Mountains may be large enough to have distinct populations of badgers and lions, they likely are not large enough to keep those populations safe from extinction if they are cut off from the Mount Hamilton Range.

The result of Coyote Valley development may be to force ESA listing and protection of badgers and mountain lions in the Santa Cruz Mountains, something that would significantly affect Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz Counties. Indeed, just the fact that badgers and lions could disappear from this significant part of their range could be enough to justify listing them as "threatened" under the ESA, regardless of whether they constitute a distinct population segment.

Coyote Valley development will clearly have environmental, social, and economic consequences for the region if it isn't stopped or mitigated. **CGF**

### COYOTE, from Page 1

farmland. The DEIR seems to acknowledge that 2,400 acres of prime farmland will be lost (itself a possible undercount) and seems to indicate that loss is significant, which normally would require mitigation — if mitigation is feasible. However, tucked away in a footnote is a reference to an old memo from the City, and half-way through that memo is a declaration that only the prime farmland considered economically viable under something called "LESA analysis" would be eligible for mitigation. Digging through all this reveals that less than 2,400 acres will even be eligible for mitigation.

The DEIR also states that preserving existing adjacent farmland to mitigate for loss of farmland "is not considered by the City of San Jose as adequate mitigation under CEQA." This seems to mean that the City was rejecting protection of existing farmland as a feasible mitigation. This reading was reinforced by the explanation in the DEIR that preservation was supposedly inadequate "because the net result of such actions would still be a loss of farmland acreage." The City used a virtually-identical explanation to justify doing no farmland mitigation at all for the Coyote

Valley Research Park proposed in 2000.

Yet City staff says it doesn't mean what it appears to mean, and that farmland preservation is in fact a feasible mitigation for the loss of agricultural land, and the reference to preservation as not being adequate only meant that preservation, by itself, would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level. Confusing? More reason why the DEIR is inadequate.

### Inadequate Housing for New Jobs

One last example — San Jose considered developing northern Coyote Valley in 2000 with a project that provided 20,000 jobs but no housing. The EIR that the City wrote for that project acknowledged an environmentally-significant impact on housing elsewhere in the region. The current project expects 55,000 jobs and 26,000 homes. The DEIR's own figures on page 399 show that between 1.3 and 1.6 employed residents live in San Jose households. The math shows that 26,000 residences isn't enough — there will be increased housing demand, and therefore unplanned sprawl elsewhere. The DEIR's conclusion? No significant impact — the ratio of jobs and housing "would not displace substantial numbers of people or

housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere." Clearly in the DEIR, San Jose is contradicting its own math and its own previous environmental documents.

### Next Steps

Opponents of environmental protection describe environmental review as a game where agencies have to jump through hoops rigged in favor of progress-fighting environmentalists. What these examples show is how the heart of the process is really about disclosure, about clearly indicating what the project's impacts will be and what, if anything, the agency intends to do about those impacts. San Jose failed to do that with this DEIR.

We plan to point out in our comments why we feel that the language in the DEIR and the City staff's response to our questions are both inadequate. We will not rest until the statements in the DEIR are accurate and complete. Virtually all of the flaws we describe constitute violations to the California Environmental Quality Act, although proving that in a legal procedure designed to be biased against plaintiffs would be difficult and expensive. Still, the DEIR has so many problems that a challenge might be necessary if San Jose doesn't relent and redo the analysis. **CGF**

# Wildlife in Coyote Valley?

On Sunday May 6th, Committee for Green Foothills, with Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance, Santa Clara Valley Audubon and the Silicon Valley Lands Conservancy, sponsored a community forum to educate the public about the importance of Coyote Valley for wildlife.

The forum followed the recent release of the City of San Jose's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and Specific Plan for developing Coyote Valley, the largely agricultural area between San Jose and Morgan Hill, into a new satellite town of 80,000, similar in size to Mountain View (see related story, Coyote Valley debacle lurches onward). Because the DEIR and the Plan largely ignore Coyote Valley's crucial role as a wildlife corridor and habitat for endangered species, the forum was held to set the record straight.

## A Wildlife Corridor for Migrating Animals

Our first speaker of the afternoon was Dr. Grey Hayes of the Elkhorn Slough Foundation, a leader in the effort to bring scientists and policy makers together to protect Coyote Valley as an important wildlife corridor. Santa Teresa and Tulare Hill, just south of San Jose's Blossom Hill neighborhood, is the narrowest and least developed crossing of the otherwise populated valley providing a link for wildlife traveling between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Mt. Hamilton range.

You might find yourself asking, "How does wildlife get across Highway 101?" Tanya Diamond, a graduate student at San Jose State University, spoke about her research (conducted with a group of students from DeAnza College) documenting wildlife presence on Tulare Hill and in Coyote Valley. Over twenty culverts cross under Highway 101, large enough for mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, badgers, and other species to reach the other side and Tanya showed video evidence of the use of these culverts for wildlife passage.


## Habitat for the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly

Dr. Stuart Weiss, of Creekside Center for Earth Observation, spoke about his efforts to track the impact of increased auto use along Highway 101 on the declining population of the Bay Checkerspot Butterfly. Thanks to his research, he was able to convince regulators that new development should mitigate for this impact by purchasing land on Coyote Ridge to help restore butterfly habitat. Many of you may have joined us on our annual hikes up to see the wildflowers and butterflies over the years.

## How You Can Help Protect Coyote Valley for Wildlife

The scientists who spoke confirmed what we had already guessed — developing Coyote Valley would cut off an important wildlife corridor and have drastic impacts on wildlife in the area. This could result in future declines in the health of these species and also potentially trigger a listing under the Endangered Species Act. We also learned of a direct impact of increased auto traffic on nearby hillsides, leading to the decline of sensitive plant and butterfly species. Were these issues, however, adequately addressed in the City's DEIR? Not according to our review of the document.

This fall, the City of San Jose will hold additional hearings on the proposal to develop Coyote Valley. If you care about wildlife and the other issues associated with this development, now is the time to speak up!

Many thanks to Pacific Gas and Electric Company who provided a grant to CGF to support this year's educational forums. Also thanks to Cupertino's House of Music which loaned us the sound equipment needed for this event! 



# THANK YOU!

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These generous major donors of \$1000 or more in the past fiscal year have made an extraordinary commitment to local open space protection. We are pleased to recognize them as members of the Foothills Millennium Fund.

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# Logging Trucks in Butano Park?

By LENNIE ROBERTS

Picture yourself on a fine autumn day hiking along the Butano Fire Trail high up in Butano State Park near Pescadero. As you climb the ridge, you enjoy sweeping views of coast and forested valleys, appreciate the shade of towering old growth redwoods and savor the vast silence broken only by the wind.

Suddenly, your reverie is rudely interrupted. A huge lumber truck, loaded with logs, looms into view from around the bend. You jump out of harm's way just in time. The truck groans by, leaving in its wake a shattered sense of peace and sanctuary.

"Wait a minute! There is something wrong with this picture," you mutter. "I'm in a State Park. Where did these logs come from, and how can these enormous trucks be using a park road?"

The unsatisfactory answer lies in an arcane little known provision of State law. California State Parks must allow "access" through a park if there is no "reasonable" alternative access through adjacent properties. Typically, this provision applies to a homeowner that has no access except through a park, but unfortunately this provision is so broad it even allows commercial operations such as hauling logs from timber operations.

## Ainsley Timber Harvest

Recently California Division of Forestry (now called CalFire) approved a timber harvest plan for a 171-acre harvest on a portion of the 960-acre Ainsley Forest LLC land in the headwaters of Gazos Creek. The plan allows hauling logs on the unimproved narrow Butano Fire Trail through Butano State Park. Although hauling is only allowed after September 15 to avoid the nesting season for marbled murrelets, the commercial use of the Fire Trail will still impact other park resources as well as the enjoyment of hikers, bicyclists, and horse riders.

CGF objected to the use of the Butano

Fallen shed and ancient trees along Butano Fire Trail

See BUTANO, next page

# An environmental fresh start for the San Jose general plan

By BRIAN SCHMIDT

Like all California cities and counties, San Jose has a General Plan that provides overall guidelines for city governance that, under state law, must be updated every 15 years. The last major revision occurred in 1994, so the city needs to start now in order to finish by 2009.

The General Plan revision represents an opportunity to tighten and extend environmental protections to wildlife habitats and other areas threatened by development. San Jose has policies protecting streamside riparian habitats with 100-foot buffers, but the developers evade it through the use of loopholes. The General Plan revision can fix that problem, as well as similar problems with wildlife protection.

Even more broadly, over ten thousand acres of San Jose jurisdiction extend up into the hills near Calero and Anderson Reservoirs,

far away from any existing or planned city infrastructure. It's long past time to end this 1960's imitation of Los Angeles-style planned sprawl, and rezone that undeveloped land to open space.

Unincorporated Almaden Valley represents another decision point. Agriculture still survives in this area, but it has long been targeted by San Jose for a sprawl-type subdivision. That proposal should be removed from the General Plan in order to avoid repeating the current train wreck that constitutes the Coyote Valley development process.

An updated General Plan can help fix Coyote Valley as well. Most importantly, we believe there's growing recognition that no final decision on the Coyote Valley Specific Plan should be done until it's placed in the context of a revised General Plan. Building on that recognition can help fix the mistaken proposal for Coyote Valley development, all in the context of a much-improved San Jose General Plan. **CGF**

*BUTANO, from previous page*

Fire Trail for hauling the logs, but CalFire overruled our objections. There are alternatives to using this rustic road. One is to take the Butano Fire Trail east into Santa Cruz County instead of west into the heart of the park. Another alternative is to helicopter the logs out of the harvest area to an area where trucks can be loaded outside the park entirely. CGF is still working to convince State Parks and CalFire to adopt one of these alternatives, especially since it is likely the owners of the Ainsley property will want to log other areas of their property in the future.

## History of Butano Fire Trail

I became curious as to whether Butano Fire Trail was ever declared a "public road," and whether Ainsley had any easements or rights of access through the park beyond the state law providing access to landlocked property owners. Archival records at the San Mateo County Public Works Department indicates the road, known historically as the "Pescadero and Big Basin Road" was never declared a public road.

Original plans for the road began in 1901, when a number of property owners petitioned the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to "view, survey, lay out,

construct, and maintain" a new public road from what is now Cloverdale Road to the Santa Cruz County line near Big Basin State Park. The reason for the road was the need to transport produce from Pescadero into Santa Cruz County.

San Mateo County government was responsive! Within a month, three "viewers" were appointed to survey and establish the route, which had no more than a 7% grade, but consequently, the route had many sharp twists and turns. In the fall of 1902, W. B. Gilbert, the acting County Surveyor, and Viewers George P. Ellis and J.L.M. Moore, presented a report with a detailed survey map to the Board of Supervisors.

The surveyor's report concluded that in addition to providing new markets for Pescadero's produce, the road would make it cheaper and easier for Santa Cruz County to market lumber products in San Mateo County. Big Basin State Park — the state's first — had just been established, so the road was also seen as a way of "bringing a great many visitors and tourists to our County on their way to that great California attraction."

Although the report concluded the road was "an absolute necessity," nothing more happened until 1916 when the Board of Supervisors pushed the State Engineer to adopt the route, offering \$10,000 to help construct the road, and

also offering to maintain it. Apparently the State had other priorities for highway funds and by 1924, the San Mateo leaders found themselves fighting a losing battle. The final blow came when the Trustees of Redwood Park (which Big Basin was called at the time) preferred another route in Santa Cruz County, and without their support, San Mateo's legislators were powerless to change the routing.

## The Butano Fire Trail Today

The detailed records at the San Mateo Public Works Department end with this impasse. Yet sometime, somehow, the road was built, but only as an unpaved, narrow private fire road, and not for the glorious trade route originally envisioned. Today, there is a patchwork of public and private owners that use the road for access. The gate at Cloverdale Road has 18 different padlocks. Public use of the road is limited to hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. Private owners have no legal documents confirming their rights, but as with many back-country roads, there are informal reciprocal agreements among owners who cross each others property.

So this fall, if you are planning a hike or ride through the area, watch out for loaded logging trucks — unless we are able to prevail in our efforts to keep the trucks out of Butano. **CGF**

## Book Review:

# The Country in the City: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area

Written by Richard Walker  
Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books

I read *The Country in the City* after learning author Richard Walker had interviewed many local environmental activists, including CGF's Lennie Roberts and Mary Davey. I also wanted to learn more about Silicon Valley, where I have spent my life. I have seen the Bay area population almost double, two freeways reach completion, several bust and boom cycles, and still I am surrounded by hills that are largely undeveloped, a bay and ocean that are largely accessible to everyone and clean enough to swim in. Natural, accessible open space is not available in most metropolitan areas and I wanted to know how these natural resources became public resources.

I found many answers in this well-researched book. It is clear Mr. Walker spent a lot of time researching records and interviewing many people to find out who started the organizations that

created so many different methods to save open space and restore the bay and foothills. I learned that environmental organizations founded by local activists applied grassroots pressure and put voter propositions on the ballot to establish special districts and land trusts to ensure this area stays beautiful and open. I was also left with a sense of how large the conservation goals of the last 100 years have been and how hard our activists have worked to attain even a portion of those goals.

I do wish that there were more interviews in the book. I was left wondering why these people had chosen to give their time and energy to open space and saving the bay. There are so many worthwhile causes to give time and energy to — so what motivated them towards open space preservation?

"The Country in the City" was an interesting read that left me feeling very lucky to live in a place where people were planning to keep it beautiful long before it was the world-famous Silicon Valley.

— Wendee Crofoot

## Event:

# Celebrating Lois's Life and Legacy

On Friday May 18<sup>th</sup>, friends and family of Lois Crozier-Hogle, Committee for Green Foothills' co-founder, gathered at the Wildcat Knoll in Rancho San Antonio to dedicate a memorial bench in her honor and celebrate her life and legacy. Lois passed away in December, 2005, after a long life dedicated to preserving open space on the Peninsula. Her work was inspirational to us all.

Lois' bench was made from recycled 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> growth local redwood, built by Peter Garratt of Summit Springs Design. Thanks to everyone who helped make the bench possible, especially the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.



MROSD's Craig Britton addresses the gathered crowd.

## BOARD NOTES

**April Vargas** The Board of Directors held its annual meeting in April and elected officers for the coming year. The Board unanimously elected April Vargas to the position of Board President for 2007-2008. April, a resident of Montara, first joined the Board of Directors in 1999. She became a staff member in 2003, helping to lead efforts to review the MidCoast Local Coastal Plan and to expand the boundaries of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District over to the coast.

With those campaigns successfully completed, she dropped off the staff and returned to the Board in 2005. In addition to serving on CGF's Board of Directors, April is also an alternate to the Coastal Commission and is the conservation appointment to the San Mateo Agriculture Advisory Committee. When she is not volunteering, April has an active interior design business and works on union organizing campaigns for SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West. Committee for Green Foothills will be well served by her leadership this coming year.

**Chris Powell** Also in April, the Board wished a fond farewell to Chris Powell who ably served us as Board President in 2006-2007. She plans to step off the board for a year, but continues to volunteer time helping with our Nature's Inspirations event and with our outreach and communications efforts.

Chris, a resident of El Granada, first joined the board in 2001. She was an incredible strategist for us during our coastal campaigns and thanks to her extensive experience serving on nonprofit boards, helped to steer CGF through some key organizational transitions. During the past year as the Board President, she helped to recruit and hire Holly Van Houten to join us as our new Executive Director and then led the effort to complete CGF's first Strategic Plan in many years. We will all miss her common sense wisdom on the board and look forward to her continuing as an "emeritus" board member in other capacities.



**Alex Kennett** Our newest addition to the Board is Alex Kennett, resident of Morgan Hill. Alex is a businessman, running a company called Solutions, which coaches and mentors businesses. He is a member of the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce and serves on the board of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network. He is an elected member of the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority and sees himself as "a bridge between business and the environment." We are pleased to have Alex aboard!

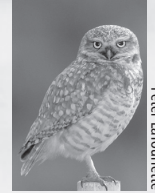
## STAFF NOTES



**Holly Van Houten** We are pleased to announce that Holly Van Houten and her husband, Patrick Laprocina, joyfully welcomed their daughter into the world on June 27th. All are doing well. Holly plans to be off for four months as she and Victoria Ann get to know each other, returning in late October to her position as Executive Director. We wish the new family all the best!

**Corrina Marshall** CGF will be well served during Holly's absence by Corrina Marshall, who joined as our Acting Executive Director in mid-June. Corrina brings many years of nonprofit leadership and fundraising experience. She previously served as Executive Director at the Stern Grove Festival, where she helped to renovate the facility and create a dynamic summer concert schedule. She was also the Interim Executive Director for a period at the Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education. Corrina will work three days a week and help to keep Committee for Green Foothills on track this summer and fall. You can reach Corrina at [corrina@greenfoothills.org](mailto:corrina@greenfoothills.org). 650-968-7243 x360.

## The Committee is watching...



Peter LaTourrette

**The San Jose Draft Environmental Impact Report for Coyote Valley** — that identifies many significant impacts yet fails to note others. Available to the public at [www.sanjoseca.gov/coyotevalley/publications\\_DEIR.htm](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/coyotevalley/publications_DEIR.htm)

**The Castro Valley Ranch in South Santa Clara County** — where an 8,000-acre subdivision of the ranch significantly increases the threat of future development.

**The Sixth District Court of Appeals** — as it reviews our appeal to allow a lower court to consider the merits of our case against Santa Clara County and Stanford University for replacing a promised trail with an environmentally damaging sidewalk, without doing environmental review.

**Half Moon Bay** — where the City Council is considering selling the 21 acre Pilarcitos Park at the gateway to the city, which it purchased two years ago for a community park.

**The Horse Park in Woodside** — that has yet to implement critical restoration and landscaping requirements under its Use Permit, now under review for renewal.

## The Committee Applauds ...

**Lennie Roberts and the Honorable Jackie Speier** — who received Community Leadership and Citizen of the Year awards, respectively, at the Peninsula Coalition's annual dinner in May.

**CGF former Board President Mary Davey and former Board Member Kirke Comstock** — who received "Tall Tree" awards from Avenidas in Palo Alto in May.

**The Devil's Slide Tunnel** — that will mark the beginning of the actual boring of the tunnel with a celebration in September.

**The California Department of Fish and Game** — for its comprehensive and critical comments on the permits filed by the San Jose Water Company and San Francisco YMCA for perpetual logging rights in redwood forests in the Los Gatos watershed and in Jones Gulch Camp near La Honda, respectively.

**The City of San Jose** — for its decision to postpone massive development in the Evergreen District until the City's outdated General Plan has been revised.

**The Santa Clara County Open Space Authority** — for its purchase of the 702 acre Doan and Nielsen Ranches east of Gilroy.

**The Santa Clara Valley Water District** — for considering new policies to protect watersheds from erosion and impervious surface runoff.

# Nature's Inspirations

CELEBRATING THE ARTS



For information about the event, including sponsorship opportunities, call **Committee for Green Foothills** at (650) 968-7243 or visit [www.GreenFoothills.org/Art](http://www.GreenFoothills.org/Art)

SAVE THE DATE!

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007**  
4 – 6:30PM  
HOME OF JAN AND BOB FENWICK  
LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA

Plan to join us for a spectacular afternoon in the Santa Teresa foothills where we'll enjoy beautiful art, delectable foods and wines, good company, and more:

- A **juried exhibition** of artwork and photography by invited Bay Area artists
- The presentation of the **Jane Gallagher Award** to an artist whose work inspires environmental protection
- Opportunities to **purchase art**, with the proceeds supporting **local open space protection**

LOOK FOR YOUR INVITATION THIS FALL!

*This year's event will be held in the foothills overlooking open space lands of Palo Alto and Stanford — some of the very same lands that Committee for Green Foothills was formed to protect from development ... forty-five years ago!*



**COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS**

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Palo Alto, ca 94303

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