**Marsh Creek-II & III**

17 Acres and 35 Acres Protected

Save Mount Diablo has just protected two parcels on the eastern ridge of East Bay Regional Park District’s 1,030 acre Clayton Ranch land bank, at the mouth of Dark Canyon. 17 acre Marsh Creek-II was purchased at the end of May, and 35 acres of the 38-acre Marsh Creek-III property was protected with an easement in July with the help of Contra Costa County Supervisor Susan Bonilla.

Last Fall we announced a project called Marsh Creek-I, a nine-acre property crossed by Marsh Creek. Parcels along Marsh Creek are a priority because the creek is a unifying geographic feature east of Mt. Diablo, the longest, least developed creek in the county, passing through a region we’ve almost completely surrounded with preserved land. We’re piecing together parks, ridges and creeks in this “doughnut hole.”

Marsh Creek is also an important wildlife corridor, beginning in Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Mt. Diablo State Park and flowing to Round Valley Regional Preserve and Los Meganos (Cowell Ranch) State Park on its way to the Delta. Our hope in naming Marsh Creek-I was that we would protect and/or acquire additional parcels along the creek. Sometime in the future we’re looking forward to seeing steelhead runs re-established up the creek.

**Dark Canyon**

From the Town of Clayton, Marsh Creek Road skirts Mt. Diablo’s northern flank, rising over the “Divide” from the Mt Diablo creek watershed on the west and to its namesake creek on the east. The two creeks were probably once connected but as Mt. Diablo was forced higher by earthquakes and tectonic forces, they were divided and Marsh Creek doubled back on itself to drain east.

(continued on page 7)

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**November 4th, 2008**

**YES on Measure WW – Water, Parks & Wildlife**

Extending the East Bay Regional Park District’s Measure AA

http://www.yesforparks.org/

Voting Yes on Measure WW is the single most important thing you can do this November to benefit Mt. Diablo and our local environment. Save Mount Diablo is helping to lead the campaign for the proposed extension of East Bay Regional Park District’s 1988 Measure AA, which expires soon.

Over the past twenty years AA helped to acquire over 34,000 acres and a hundred miles of trail, and funded hundreds of capital park and recreation projects, including funding for every city in the East Bay. The extension requires a two-thirds vote, will not increase taxes (they would continue at the same level as under Measure AA) and would raise $500 million for new park acquisitions and projects.

Why is Measure WW important? It would protect another 30-35,000 acres. It’s no secret that Alameda and Contra Costa Counties have experienced intense development pressure since World War II – in fact, except for tiny San Francisco County, the two East Bay counties are in last place in the Bay Area in percentages of protected open space vs. developed areas, and also per capita (acres of open space vs. numbers of residents). Marin County has a much larger percentage of open space (53% vs. East Bay counties’ 22% and 24%, and 7-10 times as much per person). Even Santa Clara has twice as many protected acres as Alameda or Contra Costa.

Measure WW is the key to balancing projected growth and in protecting our last, best open spaces. More than $65 million is specifically allocated for parks around Mt. Diablo. In addition city park and recreation project funding (based on population) would include (continued on page 10)
From the Executive Director

The need to support the East Bay Regional Park District’s Measure WW

Despite being a relatively small organization, the successes of Save Mount Diablo’s land preservation efforts have had a dramatic impact on our community. Over the years we have developed knowledge and experience that have given our organization visibility and recognition in the community. We have become one of the “go-to” organizations for participation in local and regional land use planning, as well as in growth management and quality of life initiatives.

Mary Bowerman and Art Bonwell established Save Mount Diablo in 1971 as a vehicle for generating more support for the continued protection and expansion of Mt. Diablo. Those of you who have been tracking our growth and evolution over the past 37 years will recognize that much of our success is due to the relationships we have developed and the support we receive from our strategic partners. Our relationships are diverse - elected officials, unions, home builders, the business community, chambers of commerce, environmental organizations, hiking and garden clubs, and statewide and regional governmental agencies.

When Mary and Art created SMD, little did they realize that it would be an alliance with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) that would lead to some of our greatest successes. Together our two organizations’ shared vision and joint efforts have made dramatic impacts on protecting the natural lands that surround our community. The result: acquisition of new regional parks and preserves, creation of recreational and wildlife corridors linking Diablo’s state, regional and other parks and piecing together habitat for both rare and more common wildlife, and protection and restoration of streams and watersheds. Read more about this history in this newsletter.

A significant portion of these accomplishments has come as a result of EBRPD’s AA Bond measure that was passed in 1988. This property tax assessment has helped to preserve tens of thousands of acres of parklands and preserves throughout our region. However, Measure AA’s twenty year life is coming to an end. The Park District has been diligently developing a plan to extend this measure for another 20 years; the extension has just been titled “Measure WW.” If approved by at least two-thirds of the voters on November 4th, Measure WW will allow the EBRPD and SMD to continue our joint efforts in preserving thousands of additional acres—without raising taxes.

We urge you to join Save Mount Diablo and the East Bay Regional Park District in working for the passage of Measure WW. It will be one of dozens of candidates and bond measures on the November 4th ballot. We need to make sure that our friends, neighbors and business associates know about Measure WW and are encouraged to vote in favor. This measure is merely an extension of an existing minimal assessment (less than $10 per $100,000 of assessed value; less than your daily newspaper) that property owners have been paying for 20 years. This measure will NOT raise anyone’s taxes, but its passage will raise the quality of life in our community for future generations.

Save Mount Diablo is taking a major leadership role in the campaign for this measure and we invite you to join with us in this effort. Please contact me at the SMD office if you can make a financial contribution to the campaign and/or if you would like to become more involved by volunteering to work on the campaign. For more information about the projects that will be supported by Measure WW, read the article elsewhere in this issue of Diablo Watch or go to www.yesforparks.org.

Remember: On November 4th, Vote Yes for Parks – Vote Yes on Measure WW.

Buy a Tree, Save a Mountain

My family and I are long-time Save Mount Diablo members, volunteers, and supporters, so when I officially became a senior citizen this summer, my wife, Sandy, chose to mark the milestone by donating a Heritage Tree at Chaparral Spring, in my name. I felt honored.

SMD created the Heritage Tree program at Chaparral Spring in 1994 as a way to help pay for the property. To date, more than 150 people have participated, dedicating 76 trees and 36 groves. A list of the honorees and their donors is posted on a kiosk at the entrance to the property.

Walking through the property—down a canyon slope here, through an oak woodland there, disturbing a coyote looking for breakfast as we negotiated a creek bed—triggered a flurry of thoughts and emotions. I imagined our kids (Casey, 18, and Cooper, 11) bringing their kids here, wondered how different the land would look in 50, 100 years. I felt, if not immortal, at least long-lasting. It took two more trips to the property before I found it, a buckeye on the edge of a creek, below a pond. It was an adolescent, I guessed, 20 or 30 years old, its branches spreading up and out, esthetic, well-balanced, creating a perfect canopy.

You can be a donor too. It’s a unique gift and a special way to honor someone important in your life. Buy a tree (or a grove), and save a mountain. This program will be ending soon when we turn the property over to the East Bay Regional Park District. Call Julie at SMD, 947-3535 for more information or to set up a time to pick out your tree or grove.

—David Ogden
Mt. Diablo State Park

Hike Morgan Ridge,
trails all have short steep sections but if you
verdant in a thousand shades of green. The
tail a beautiful tree-filled bowl which is
ded with dry brown leaves but they’re just dormant to save water.
You’ll loop counter clockwise to the ridge and
back. This time of year the slopes are colorful
with the pinks and reds of poison oak leaves
which will soon litter the ground. Even in the
dry season you can see the distinctive seed
pods of fritillary and fairy lanterns, and hear
birds rustling in dry leaves as you climb past
moss-covered tree trunks.

The trail head accesses three State Park trails
and split a beautiful tree-filled bowl which is
verdant in a thousand shades of green. The
trails all have short steep sections but if you
take them slowly you’re quickly rewarded with
amazing views. In evening it’s not uncommon to see
a bobcat, coyotes or feral pigs, and white-tailed kites
must nest nearby because they’re often around.

Take the center Morgan Creek Road. It’s a classic
Mt. Diablo stream canyon, fragrant oak-bay woodland
with scattered sycamores and big leaf maples, shaded
for much of its length. In summer buckeyes appear
dead with dry brown leaves

You must nest nearby because they’re often around.

The dust of the fire road is revealing in
summer and fall, dimpled and pilled—High-
land Ridge and its trees funnel fog toward
Altamont Pass and comb water droplets to
the earth. Stay left past the Crestview Road and
views down into another branch of
Riggs Canyon and you’ll rise to panoramas
of the crest of Highland Ridge to the south,
its upper elevations and west side a pastoral
Sound of Music grassland landscape. The
views back to Mt. Diablo are even more
impressive.

As you reach the trail junction with the
Morgan Ridge Road (go left onto it), you’ll
have a full view (red star on map) of the new
Schwartz property across the canyon and
Marsh Creek drainage to the east. (You can
also continue right, up Highland Ridge for
a longer hike or ride; in a few hundred feet
you’ll pass from the State Park into Morgan
Territory Regional Preserve).

Morgan Territory Road is out of site at
the canyon bottom, but is marked by large
vertical chaparral stands, rust colored in fall
from the seed pods of chamise, the habitat’s
dominant species. The Schwartz property
stretches from a graveled fire road on the
left, to a large grassland above the chapar-
rall, and right of what appears to be a small
jagged peak—the actual high point is a
grassland tabletop a little further east.

As you continue on the Morgan Ridge Road
back to the start you’ll get a good view of
the entire route you’ve taken. The trail will
get a little steep and slippery as it descends
through woodland back to the stream can-
yon, but you’ll be glad you’re not traveling
the loop in reverse.

See The New
Schwartz Property
Hike Morgan Ridge,
Mt. Diablo State Park
By Seth Adams

Trails: Morgan Creek Road to Highland Ridge Road to Morgan Ridge Road
Distance: 2.55 mile loop. Elevation Gain/Loss: 725’ Time: 90 minutes.
Start: Morgan Red Corral, on Morgan Territory Road, 4.5 miles south of Marsh Creek Road or 4.5 miles north of the Morgan Territory RP staging area where there are water & bathrooms.
Notes: Ideal for mountain bikes.

East Bay Regional Park District has op-
tioned the 153-acre Schwartz property as an addition to Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and must complete purchase by February. The property is not yet access-
sible but it’s easily viewed from the Morgan Ridge Trail or Highland Ridge, across the road in SMD’s Morgan Ranch addition to Mt. Diablo State Park.

The starting point is the Morgan Red Corral (red star on map) on Morgan Territory Road, which SMD acquired and transferred to Mt. Diablo State Park last year as a future staging area. The easy to find red corral is across the road from the Morgan Ranch, a nearly square 631-acres draped over Highland Ridge with a corner at Morgan Territory Road and another in Riggs Canyon at Tassajara Creek.

The trail head accesses three State Park trails
and may one day also access the Regional
Preserve. It’s a great place from which to
reach Riggs Canyon and the rocky rim of
the Morgan amphitheater. The trails edge
and split a beautiful tree-filled bowl which is
verdant in a thousand shades of green. The
trails all have short steep sections but if you
notice the oak seedlings that have begun ap-
ppearing since grazing was eliminated from the
property. As you climb from the stream can-
yon’s humidity into the breezes, the oak trunks
exchange their moss coverings for patterns of
grey lichen. The view opens up too, first to the
Morgan Ridge Trail at left, your return route,
then to Highland Ridge above. North Peak and
Windy Point come into the view north as you
reach golden grasslands.

Just before you reach the Highland Ridge Road
there’s a last, stupidly steep climb but it’s just
a few hundred feet. Clayton Ranch, Kreiger
Peak and Black Diamond Mines come into
view to the north.

Go left onto the Highland Ridge Road. (Al-
ternately you can head right into incredible
Riggs Canyon). The low slope at right (west) is
deceptively wooded; you can easily miss
that it’s the rocky rim of cliffs dropping several
hundred feet into the Morgan amphitheater. A

A few hundred feet down the Highland Ridge Road, a narrow trail goes up the slope and
doubles back to a wonderful overlook or
lunch spot (red star on map), with dramatic
views of the amphitheater, Riggs Canyon, Oyster Point, Cave Point, Windy Point and
the main Diablo peaks.

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Notes:

Schwartz property across the canyon and
Marsh Creek drainage to the east.

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with scattered sycamores and big leaf maples, shaded
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doubles back to a wonderful overlook or
lunch spot (red star on map), with dramatic
views of the amphitheater, Riggs Canyon, Oyster Point, Cave Point, Windy Point and
the main Diablo peaks.
Officer for the city, "Walnut Creek voted said Brad Rovanpera, Public Information
Creek had the foresight to protect this area.”

“What a gift that the people of Walnut
given tiny habitats and small numbers.
Both are critically and globally endangered
as new species by genetic and other testing.

Lime Ridge Navarretia has more than thirty other rare species.”

The plants, the Lime Ridge Navarretia
(Navarretia gowenii) and the Lime Ridge
Woollystar (Eriastrum sp. nov.) miraculously survived a hundred years of quarrying
and other activities until their habitat
was protected. Both have been confirmed
as new species by genetic and other testing.
Both are critically and globally endangered
given tiny habitats and small numbers.

“A Southern California native who moved
to the Bay Area in 1965, his life has been
categorized by succeeding obsessions cen-
tered on the outdoors. He collected snakes
as a kid, raised hawks and bird watched,
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tered on the outdoors. He collected snakes
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David Gowen is a retired carpenter who
lives in Oakland and spends much of his
life fishing, bird watching, and hiking.
His passion for botany stems from his
early years when he discovered the beauty
of nature while hiking with his parents.

Lightning has struck twice in Walnut Creek, CA, at Lime Ridge Open Space, a biodiversity
hot spot of just three square miles but
including roughly 35 rare species. David
Gowen, an amateur botanist associated with
the California Native Plant Society, has dis-
covered two new plant species never before
described by science. The discovery is start-
ling because the area is easily accessible and
it has been studied by botanists for 150
years. Conservation efforts are underway.

The discovery of the two new plants, two
pretty and related wildflowers in the phlox
family, which resemble star shaped flower-
studded pin cushions, was announced in
June by the California Native Plant Society
(CNPS), Save Mount Diablo (SMD), the
Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation
(WCOSF), the City of Walnut Creek, and
U.C. Berkeley’s Jepson Herbarium (Jepson).

“This isn’t in some foreign country or in the
boonies,” said David Gowen, both plants’
discoverer, “it’s the heart of an urbanized
environment where famous botanists have
worked. This same three square mile area
has more than thirty other rare species.”

The two new species are annuals,” said Heath Bartosh, Chair of the Rare Plants
Committee of CNPS. “They flower, seed
and die each year then grow from seed the
next year. They’re only found in small areas.

“There’s no record of what grew there prior to mining; one can easily visual-
ize the Lime Ridge Navarretia and the Lime
Ridge Woollystar being tiny remnants of a
lone-adapted set of plants.”

David Gowen, Amateur Botanist
David Gowen is a retired carpenter who
lives in Oakland and spends much of his
time botanizing. Although he’s 62, you’d
never know it. About 6’, wiry and fit, he
smiles all the time and looks about 45 or
50—and hikes fast up steep slopes whether
there’s a trail or not. He is positive and
enthusiastic, and humble and shy.

A Southern California native who moved
to the Bay Area in 1965, his life has been
characterized by succeeding obsessions cen-
tered on the outdoors. He collected snakes
as a kid, raised hawks and bird watched,
which led to hang gliding, became a run-
ner and triathlete, then stumbled on botany,
works because ultimately it’s the ecosystem
that supports biodiversity.”

These discoveries may be just the tip of the
iceberg,” said Ron Brown, Executive Director
of SMD. “Mt. Diablo has one of the healthiest,
most important ecosystems in the Bay Area.
It’s the crown jewel of the East Bay. The dis-
covers underscore the need to preserve and
buffer the mountain’s biological richness. If
we can find two new species in a small area, it
makes you wonder what else is out there, what
other secrets does Mt. Diablo hold?”

“We need to conserve large, diverse areas,
including ones adjacent to urban areas,” said Laura Baker, Conservation Chair and board
member of CNPS, “to protect as-yet-undiscover-
ed species. Native plant species, especially
rare species, are not as well known to the pub-
ic. Sometimes they’re hiding in plain sight.
Identifying them is just the first step in protec-
tion. We need to know more about the role of
these species and how the overall ecosystem

(Continued on page 15)
The decades around the turn of the 19th century ushered in a new wave of urban planning, and a second wave of conservation began, extending through World War II, the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Around the country many municipal services had been provided by private companies, water, fire, and police services, for example. As cities grew larger—the East Bay had grown from about 100,000 residents in 1890 to 400,000 in 1920—and infrastructure projects (such as roads, power plants and bridges) more costly, private companies had trouble keeping up with demand.

New governmental entities were created to insure urban services were available at reasonable prices. Among the services being discussed were recreational areas and parks, often associated with reservoirs and water supply projects.

In the East Bay, water was provided by private companies which owned small reservoirs and surrounding lands. Water shortages had become common and a severe drought in 1923 led to formation of the East Bay Municipal Utility District, to provide public water.

EBMUD bought up local water companies and eventually built Sierra reservoirs on the Mokelumne River. Smaller local reservoirs’ uses changed from primary storage of local water to hold Sierra water as it was piped in.

In 1928 EBMUD completed the consolidation of the water supply by acquiring the East Bay Water Company including its large land holdings. It was decided that 10,000 acres along the ridgeline from Richmond to Hayward were no longer needed. They were declared surplus and plans made to sell them.

Local residents were alarmed. “Robert Sibley, Executive Manager of the University of California Alumni Association, was one of the prime catalysts. Hiking in the hills above Berkeley while recovering from an illness, he had grown to love those woods and streams. As his wife Carol recalled years later, ‘The day it was reported in the newspapers that the EBMUD was going to give up its holdings here in the hills, he went right down to city officials and said, “These valuable pieces of land ought to be preserved forever.”’”

East Bay Regional Park District

In 1928 Sibley and others including U.C. Berkeley’s Robert Gordon Sproul and Major Charles Tilden organized the East Bay Metropolitan Park Association, with the goal of creating a chain of parks along the East Bay hills. The Park Association was joined by the Contra Costa Hills Club, the Sierra Club, the East Bay Planning Association, the Oakland Park League, the Oakland Recreation Commission, and other civic organizations in petitioning EBMUD to retain the 10,000 acres as parklands. {Interesting aside: Sproul became president of the EBRPD and a member of its board from 1958 to 1967; Malcolm Sproul, his grandson, is the current president of Save Mount Diablo}. A number of the park groups were reorganized as the East Bay Regional Park Association.

Oakland’s Kahn Foundation helped fund a study by the Olmsted Brothers, a landscape architecture firm run by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., who designed New York’s Central Park. The firm had just completed a comprehensive survey for the new California State Park System.

The 1930 Olmsted-Hall Report, Proposed Park Reservations for East Bay Cities, was a 41-page feasibility study with maps and pictures, and emphasized preservation of easily accessible land for multiple uses. It urged EBMUD to preserve its surplus lands noting that the 150-square-mile area served by the Utility District, with a growing population of almost half a million, was deficient in parklands compared to other cities. It recommended a 10-11,000 acre park system extending 22 miles along the East Bay hills above nine Bay shoreline cities.

EBMUD rejected the request. The regional concept was new and untried. It was salt in the wound that a public that had been used to tramping in the hills also suddenly faced fences and “no trespassing” signs on the lands EBMUD owned.

In response, the fateful meeting was held on January 31, 1931. A petition campaign was organized and 14,000 signatures were collected to support AB 1114, state legislation authorizing establishment of a regional park district, a board to govern it, and a tax to finance it. It was the first law of its kind in the United States. Governor Rolph signed AB 1114 into law on August 3, 1933, to be (Continued on page 12)

Proposed Park Reservations

The Olmsted report proposed a string of parks along the Oakland Berkeley hills (EBRPD)
BioBlitz 24 hours at Mangini & Lime Ridge
575 Species, Several Rare

On an unusually hot May weekend in Concord, volunteer scientists and local residents gathered at Save Mount Diablo's BioBlitz 2008 to count wildlife species at our Mangini Ranch property and adjacent Lime Ridge Open Space, to discover the tremendous biodiversity in our own backyard.

SMD preserved 208-acre Mangini Ranch in January of 2007. We fenced sensitive areas to restore habitat; BioBlitz was an opportunity to record the results.

On Friday, our 25 scientists and experts set up camera traps; baited boards; placed small mammal and insect pit traps and black lights, used taped calls to draw in birds, spot lighted hillsides, etc. We took a moonlight hike and a few of the experts camped out, a few stayed up late recording species attracted to the lights, and one stayed up all night searching for spiders and scorpions. On Saturday about a hundred people wandered around. You should have seen all the kids catching tadpoles and frogs.

By event’s end, our volunteers had found 575 species, including several rare ones, reaffirming the Mount Diablo foothills as a hot spot for biodiversity. By contrast, last year’s Irish Canyon BioBlitz recorded 297 species.

Among rare species found were a California red-legged frog (a threatened species), three golden eagles, and tracks from both a mountain lion and an American badger (since we didn’t actually see those last two mammals, they’re not included in the count).

In total, we counted 57 bird species, seven kinds of reptiles, three amphibian species, four mammals, 159 different kinds of plants (including seven rare species) and 345 insects and other arthropods! One beetle found during the search confirms a new location for this recently described species.

Around the time of the BioBlitz, we got more exciting news: David Gowen discovered two new wildflower species in Lime Ridge Open Space (see related article). These finds remind us of the importance of our mission to preserve Mount Diablo.

Other highlights were three golden eagles, Coopers and sharp-shinned hawks, and two kinds of owls; a coyote with a ground squirrel in his mouth; unusual birds like a Say’s phoebe; a rattlesnake, a king snake, a western horned lizard—its coloration was chalky grey like the area’s lime soils; two kinds of scorpions. A king bird nested in a huge valley oak which was home to a bee hive.

SMD invited the public to join experts at BioBlitz, which was generously sponsored by REI. Participants searched for species and took guided walks. The event was fun for the whole family with children’s activities by Lindsay Wildlife Museum and SMD volunteers. REI representatives were on site with their PEAK (Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids) program. Plan on attending BioBlitz 2009 next year.

Schwartz Property Optioned
153 acres for Morgan Territory

Another stretch of upper Marsh Creek, and slopes rising above, is to be preserved under a deal approved on August 5th by the East Bay Regional Park District’s Board of Directors. The District has optioned the 153 acre Schwartz Property for $803,800, with a $25,000 option payment and final payment of the balance by February 2009.

Schwartz is part of the southwest quarter of a large unnamed peak (2139’) on Morgan Territory Ridge. The quadrant is almost completely surrounded by SMD’s Morgan Ranch and Morgan Red Corral additions to Mt. Diablo State Park, by Morgan Territory Regional Preserve (the southeast quarter) and by the Seeno Morgan Territory Ranch (the northwest quarter), which SMD and the Dept. of Fish & Game preserved in 2001.

The property rises from Morgan Territory Road and Marsh Creek onto the slopes of the peak, and includes a significant stretch of the creek. From above it looks like the splayed fingers of a pianist’s hand, fingertips resting at the creek, steep wooded drainages between the fingers. Oak woodland, grassland and oak savannah are striped across the “hand” with large patches of chaparral.

Owned by the Schwartz family for more than 130 years, the parcel is sure to support California red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, Mt. Diablo globe lily and Diablo sunflower, and includes views of Mt. Diablo to the north and Mt. Hamilton to the south. The down payment was from small amounts of remaining Measure AA funding and it is hoped that the balance needed to complete the transaction will be developed in partnership with the East Contra Costa Habitat Conservancy. Measure WW, the Park District’s proposed extension of Measure AA on the November ballot, could also provide funds if approved by the voters.

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In total, we counted 57 bird species, seven kinds of reptiles, three amphibian species, four mammals, 159 different kinds of plants (including seven rare species) and 345 insects and other arthropods! One beetle found during the search confirms a new location for this recently described species.

Around the time of the BioBlitz, we got more exciting news: David Gowen discovered two new wildflower species in Lime Ridge Open Space (see related article). These finds remind us of the importance of our mission to preserve Mount Diablo.

Other highlights were three golden eagles, Coopers and sharp-shinned hawks, and two kinds of owls; a coyote with a ground squirrel in his mouth; unusual birds like a Say’s phoebe; a rattlesnake, a king snake, a western horned lizard—its coloration was chalky grey like the area’s lime soils; two kinds of scorpions. A king bird nested in a huge valley oak which was home to a bee hive.

SMD invited the public to join experts at BioBlitz, which was generously sponsored by REI. Participants searched for species and took guided walks. The event was fun for the whole family with children’s activities by Lindsay Wildlife Museum and SMD volunteers. REI representatives were on site with their PEAK (Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids) program. Plan on attending BioBlitz 2009 next year.
first ever equestrian trail ride event. The Diablo Trail Endurance Ride, took place on June 21 and offered riders a 30-mile limited distance and 50-mile endurance ride starting and finishing at Castle Rock Park in Walnut Creek.

Despite triple-digit temperatures, over 100 riders came out to Castle Rock to participate. After checking in and vetting their horses, riders, their crew members, friends and family enjoyed a barbeque dinner, provided by Cuz’ns BBQ, and live bluegrass music. The next morning, the riders headed out on the course at 5:30 a.m.

Our capable ride management kept all horses and riders safe in the hot weather conditions, and many riders commented on what a great experience they had. As one rider put it, “I had a wonderful time riding the Diablo Trail Endurance Ride. The food was good, the people friendly and the course was fun and challenging.”

Save Mount Diablo is very grateful to Bay Area Barns and Trails, Mancini’s Sleepworld and all of our other generous sponsors and supporters for helping to make this ride possible. For several years, Save Mount Diablo has offered biking, running, and hiking events for Mount Diablo enthusiasts. We were excited to have this wonderful opportunity to connect with a new community of people who love Mount Diablo and engage them in our work to protect the beautiful natural lands that we all treasure.

Save Mount Diablo’s First Equestrian Trail Ride

This summer, SMD added another recreational opportunity to our event program with the Diablo Trail Endurance Ride, our

Marsh Creek-II rises from the creek up a canyon (Scott Hein)

Marsh Creek II & III (cont. from page 1)
The road passes between Mt. Diablo State Park and SMD’s Chaparral Spring property as it descends to Morgan Territory Road, then reaches the Park District’s Clayton Ranch, a two mile long north trending canyon, marked by several road side ponds, along the north side of the road.

The eastern ridge of Clayton Ranch ends abruptly above Marsh Creek and the road as they enter the narrowest stretch of the creek’s middle reaches—Dark Canyon—then Morgan Territory Ridge continues south. Clearly the creek eroded through the ridge as it was forced upward, much like the Colorado River created the Grand Canyon on a much larger scale. Marsh Creek-II and III wrap around the toe of the Clayton Ranch half of the ridge.

Marsh Creek-II …
… was once owned by Clayton co-founder Charles Rhine, who had a General Merchandise Store on the spot now occupied by Skipoloni’s Pizza in downtown Clayton. Local legend is that Rhine and the town’s namesake, Joel Clayton, flipped a coin and Clayton won the toss or it would have been “Rhinesville.”

A reverse “L” shaped property, Marsh Creek-II includes grassland slopes above the road and creek, and higher elevations rising up a blue oak woodland canyon and onto a knoll. Its biological resources are modest—large and beautiful oaks and a seven foot tall cattle culvert at the bottom of the canyon that can be used as a wildlife undercrossing to the creek. Its real value is as a puzzle piece in the Marsh Creek corridor.

Aesthetically, it’s a different story. The property is highly visible with incredible views of Mt. Diablo to the west and of Dark Canyon to the east—and therein was both the threat and the opportunity. The previous owners had created a large development pad for a house that would have been equally visible.

The property was placed on the market, we made an offer, three weeks later we reached agreement and three weeks after that, just before Memorial Day, we took ownership. The purchase price was $320,000—twice as many less remote acres as Marsh Creek-I, six months earlier, for nearly the same price.

Marsh Creek-III

That same east ridge of Clayton Ranch is crossed by Bragdon Way, stretching to several large parcels. Marsh Creek-III is one of them, and is above and partly adjacent to Marsh Creek-II at one corner and Clayton Ranch at another. Four years ago its owners applied for three 5-acre lots in addition to an existing house on their 38 acre property. Both Save Mount Diablo and the East Bay Regional Park District were concerned for a variety of reasons and given adjacent public lands, and part of the property was supposed to have been preserved previously but hadn’t been.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Susan Bonilla facilitated meetings between SMD, the Park District and the applicants and ultimately agreement was reached. The project was decreased to two new units within 1 acre building envelopes, a 1.5 acre envelope was placed around the existing house, and a conservation easement was required over the remaining 35 acres. A long list of other development conditions was also required. On July 2 the County Board of Supervisors approved the compromise.

Acquisition & Land Use

These two adjacent properties protect blue oak woodland from the creek to Clayton Ranch, and represent two very different strengths of SMD. At Marsh Creek-III, we watch dogged nearby land use proposals for almost twenty years. We protected parts of nearby slopes as a condition of a subdivision in the early 1990s, worked for over a decade to protect Clayton Ranch, then participated in the proposed development application for four years, meanwhile purchasing the Marsh Creek-II property just before agreement on the development was reached.

At Marsh Creek-II we reacted quickly, had funds ready from our donors, and closed a deal in just three weeks. Our hope is that SMD will be able to assemble other parcels in the vicinity of Clayton Ranch and along the creek, and Marsh Creek-II & III will become part of a larger park and stream corridor.
Artists joined SMD at Wright Canyon to use their talents to bring attention to the local landscape. The paintings are exhibited at the Jewish Community Center in Walnut Creek. Paul Kratter and Julie Seelen; John Finger, Linda Darsow Sutton; and Mary Lou Correia panting various scenes from the Wright property.

Participants hike 10 miles a day for four days, from campsite to campsite, while their gear is shuttled between camps and local restaurants chefs prepare their meals. (Clockwise left to right) participants at Macedo Ranch enjoying the view; Indian Cave; Nancy Klein and Judy Gamble; reflections in Bobs Pond; John Gallagher, Patti Petromili, and Bob Loomis playing blue grass music; Giselle Jurkanin, Allison Hill, Tom Krakow, Ann Walker, and Peter Frazier at dinner. Bob Lowitz, Diane Grace, and Jeff Smith warming by the fire; group photo of participants ready to go on the four day hike.

Artists for Action - The Wright Property
August 19, 2008

Artists joined SMD at Wright Canyon to use their talents to bring attention to the local landscape. The paintings are exhibited at the Jewish Community Center in Walnut Creek. Paul Kratter and Julie Seelen; John Finger; Linda Darsow Sutton; and Mary Lou Correia panting various scenes from the Wright property.
Diablo Celebrated

Mangini Ranch & Lime Ridge BioBlitz
May 16-17, 2008

During 24-hours in May, biologists, novices, and the public counted and catalogued species at Mangini Ranch and Lime Ridge. This BioBlitz was generously funded by REI. See page 6.

Diablo Trail Endurance Ride 25/50
June 21, 2008

SMD’s first annual Diablo Trail Endurance Ride offered a 25 mile limited distance and 50 mile endurance ride. The ride started and finished at EBRPD’s Castle Rock Park in Walnut Creek. Course traveled through Diablo Foothills, Shell Ridge Open Space and Mt. Diablo State Park. The Endurance Ride had over 100 riders and was a huge success.
$60 million in Measure WW funds would benefit Diablo parks

Measure WW (continued from page 1)

$48 million for Contra Costa cities and $70 million for Alameda County cities. We’ll detail some of the accomplishments (below) of Measure AA around Mt. Diablo, and benefits of proposed Measure WW, but keep in mind that both Measures included/other park projects throughout the East Bay.

Measure AA, 1988

By 1988, with increased urbanization in the East Bay and skyrocketing land prices, East Bay Regional Park District was struggling to keep pace with the growing population. Given limited resources, we were lucky to see a few new land acquisitions each year.

Community leaders at the Park District and among its allies including SMD helped to turn the situation around with the proposal for Measure AA – a $225 million bond measure. We had participated in Prop. 70, a State bond passed in June 1988 (it provided $4 million for Mt. Diablo). State bonds require majority approval. East Bay vote totals for Prop. 70 were high enough that it was thought possible to also pass a local measure, even though local bonds require a two-thirds approval. A project “wish list” was developed and two months later Measure AA was placed on the ballot. In November 1988 Measure AA was approved.

Passage of AA allowed the acquisition and preservation of 34,000 acres over the past twenty years—53 square miles—of some of the most beautiful East Bay land, starting at a time (like now) when a recession had resulted in a rare drop in land values. AA saved the center of Black Diamond Mines, acquired Clayton Ranch, helped to protect the Mt. Diablo Gateway property, tripled the size of Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and connected it with Mt. Diablo State Park, and saved Round Valley. Funds allocated to cities were used for a variety of city projects, such as preservation of Newhall North & South as an addition to Walnut Creek’s Lime Ridge Open Space.

Not only did the Measure save 53 square miles, staving off ill-conceived development and its impacts in many cases, it strategically helped direct growth control efforts like the creation of urban limit lines and to advance smart growth efforts.

Since 1988 EBRPD has doubled the public’s investment by leveraging money to secure $159 million of “matching” funds from other agencies and donors at no cost to taxpayers.

With 25 percent of Measure AA funds allocated to local park projects, EBRPD funded close to $60 million worth of recreational needs for every city in its jurisdiction, including restoring swimming pools, sports fields, playgrounds, and community and senior centers.

Local Measure AA Projects

Although Measure AA funded projects throughout the East Bay, around Mt. Diablo a large number of regional parks, visitor centers, trails, and recreation areas also benefited – through land acquisition or capital improvements.

Parks that were expanded or benefitted include Black Diamond Mines, Bishop Ranch, Clayton Ranch, Contra Loma, Diablo Foothills, Las Trampas, Morgan Territory, Round Valley, Sycamore Valley, Dublin Hills, Pleasanton Ridge, Vasco Caves. Visitor Center funding benefitted the Greathouse Visitor Center at Black Diamond Mines (the mining museum).

Measure WW, 2008

EBRPD has successfully used all funds provided by Measure AA. The EBRPD Board of Directors voted in July to place Measure WW, a new bond measure, on the November ballot that would extend Measure AA by providing new funding for Regional Park land acquisition, new park and trail development, habitat and urban creek restoration and rehabilitation of aging park facilities as well as funding for city parks and recreation departments and special park districts to meet local needs.

Because this is an extension of Measure AA, if approved by the voters, it would not cause a tax rate increase. Because of increased land values and population the extension would result in more funding than AA, but given increased land prices, the benefits are expected to be similar.

Quick Facts:

• $500 million bond extension must be approved by two-thirds of voters in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.
• This extension will not increase the current tax rate, a maximum of $10 per year per $100,000 of assessed valuation.
• $375 million (75%) of revenue will fund District acquisitions and capital projects.
• $125 million (25%) of proceeds will go to cities, special park and recreation districts, county service areas, and the Oakland Zoo for local projects. (Livermore area voters are not part of this extension tax as the area was not within the Park District’s jurisdiction in 1988 when the initial bond measure was passed. EBRPD continues to serve this area with new acquisitions of parksland using other funding sources.)
• The Park Advisory Committee provides citizens’ oversight to monitor expenditures.

Measure WW Project Summary:

67 current and future parks, trails, and shoreline projects will benefit from this measure. High priority projects include:

• Acquiring and restoring urban creeks.
• Developing new Parks at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, at Doolan Canyon in the Tassajara Hills, at Deer Valley near Antioch, and at Byron Vernal Pools.
• Expanding and developing the Bay Trail, Delta Trail, and Ridge Trail.
• Opening Clayton Ranch to public access, and expanding access to the Delta.
• Acquiring sensitive property around Mt. Diablo to expand Black Diamond Mines, Diablo Foothills, Morgan Territory, Round Valley and Vasco Caves Regional Parks.
• The measure will provide matching funds for the East County Habitat Conservation Plan and other agency funding. Given the current recession, EBRPD has already started optioning key parcels at low prices; if the measure does not pass, some of these parcels may be lost.

The complete project list can be found on the District’s Web site at www.ebparks.org.

Creek preservation and restoration would benefit
Kim Bratton: Development Associate

Kim recently became SMD’s new Development Associate. “Growing up in San Diego I learned to appreciate the importance of land and ocean conservation.” Kim grew up riding her horse in the foothills, swimming at Mission Beach and camping. “It’s an honor to be part of SMD’s team, I love coming to work each day.” Kim is looking forward to the various events SMD hosts. “I’m impressed with the wonderful volunteers and board members that graciously give their time to a great cause.”

Kim previously worked for Kaiser Permanente in Human Resources. She graduated from San Jose State University where she studied Psychology and Communications. On her off time, Kim is busy with her two son’s Alex and Kevin. One of their favorite things to do is hike Mount Diablo. “It’s important to me that my children appreciate nature and the role they play in preserving it. Hiking is a fun way to do this. The best part is when they remember the name of a plant I’ve pointed out or they get excited about a blue bellied lizard or jack rabbit that crosses our path. That’s when you know you’ve captured their heart and passed on the passion!”

Bay Area License Plate: Nature Within Reach

An exciting new plan is under way that will generate long-term funding to protect wildlife habitat, parks, and farmland and provide trails and public recreation to the Bay Area. You can invest in your community’s future by signing up for a new Bay Area license plate. With your help, the Bay Area License Plate will be issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles in late 2009. The goal is to raise $1 million per year from the sale of the plate. Funds generated by the license plate campaign will be administered by the State Coastal Conservancy, one of SMD’s closest allies.

For more information call 1-877-4SF-BAY1 or visit www.bayarealicenseplate.org

John Wilcox
A Pedestrian Bridge at Mangini Ranch

Save Mount Diablo has been building trails at our Mangini Ranch property. One of them crosses a steep section of Galindo Creek. We were pleased when John Wilcox asked whether there was a potential Eagle Scout project on one on our properties.

John and his parents, who are structural engineers, designed a pedestrian bridge to cross the creek and he raised $1,800 to build it. The bridge was pre-constructed then, in June, John, his friends and family got together to install the bridge. Thanks to John and the Vogt-Wilcox for the project, to SMD volunteer Dick Heron for oversight, and to SMD president Malcolm Sproul, of LSA Associates, for pro bono Dept. of Fish and Game creek permitting.

Estate Planning... Remember Save Mount Diablo

A bequest to Save Mount Diablo can be accomplished with a simple statement in your will, or in a codicil to an existing will, or a revocable/living trust.

For example, you may make a specific bequest: “I give and bequeath to Save Mount Diablo, Walnut Creek, California, the sum of $____ to be used for the general purposes of the organization.”

OR a residual bequest: “I give and bequeath to Save Mount Diablo, Walnut Creek, California, ____% of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate for general purposes of the organization.”

Do you have a used car that you would like to donate?

If so, call Car Donation Services at 925-229-5444 and tell them that you want to donate your vehicle - for the benefit of Save Mount Diablo. All paperwork and vehicle pick-up will be taken care of quickly and professionally. After liquidation of the vehicle, Save Mount Diablo will receive a cash donation that will count towards your membership and help to preserve our mountain.

Save Mount Diablo Diablo Trail Endurance Ride 25/50 June 21, 2008 Thank You to Our Sponsors

Thank you to our participants, volunteers, park rangers, HAM radio, Leap of Faith Stables, vets and donors for making this event a great success.
Not a Single Picnic Table

In 1939 the Bay Bridge and the Caldecott Tunnel opened. World War II slowed development and park expansion then growth skyrocketed, with development replacing farms and orchards. By the District’s 20th anniversary in 1954, it included 5,400 acres and 2.7 million visitors annually. In just twenty years Alameda County grew from 513,000 residents in 1940 to 908,000 in 1960, and Contra Costa from 100,000 to 409,000. The Park District grew slowly but it wasn’t keeping pace with development.

Mott’s ‘Idea a Minute’ & the District’s Quantum Leap Forward

In 1962, at Sproul’s urging, the Park District hired William Penn Mott, Jr. as its new General Manager. He had started his career as a landscape architect with the National Park Service and then became Superintendent of Oakland Parks. Though he was with the District for just six years, Mott sparked a huge expansion—it was said he had ‘an idea a minute’—reorganizing the District into departments, hiring new staff, involving citizens and expanding fundraising, and annexing new areas into the District.

In Contra Costa, where the population had quadrupled in twenty years, citizens and organizations such as the Contra Costa Park Council urged the County to create a new county-wide park system, on the ballot as Measure A.

Hulet Hornbeck was a Martinez resident who had become an activist after being diagnosed with cancer and told that he had five years to live. President of the Park Council, he became a leader in the effort. According to Hornbeck, “He was a bond issue to buy parks, put on the ballot by the Board of Supervisors. But we had no real support but a handful of park people.” In June 1962 County Measure A failed.

Enter Bill Mott. “Mott had called me up,” said Hornbeck. “I agreed to have him come talk to the {Park Council} Board about annexing Contra Costa County to the East Bay Regional Park District. I’d never met Bill Mott. He walked in the room about half way through our board meeting. We stopped the meeting, I walked in the room about half way through our board meeting. We stopped the meeting, I introduced him and he narrated what his goals were with the Park District. What his ideas about open space and parks and trails were, and then he just said, ‘that’s it, I guess I’ll go now,’ and off he went.”

“His goals were the creation of a super park system connected by trails to get the public into these lands. He came in on the subject of why not annex the EBRPD and the Contra Costa County. We had a vote and I had one of my first experiences with real dissent… ‘were we turning ourselves over to that gang in Berkeley and the other side of the ridge?’ But we voted to continue.”

Hornbeck, District Attorney John Nejedly, horseman George Cardinet and other activists organized Citizens for Regional Parks NOW! around the plan to annex Contra Costa to the Park District, 1964’s Measure B. Hornbeck was chairman of the central county committee. Mott and Dick Trudeau, District Chief of Public Relations, tirelessly promoted the measure. Mott told Trudeau, “You don’t even have to show up at the office. Just get the situation organized.”

The slogan was “Not a single picnic table available in Contra Costa County.” Despite strong opposition, on June 2, 1964 Measure B was passed with a vote of 54% to 46% and most of Contra Costa was added to the District. “The citizen groups who got behind us made the difference,” said Mott.

Mott hired Hornbeck as the newly created Chief of Land Acquisition. He also began to shift the focus of the District to include not just ridgeline parks but shoreline ones, and regional trails to “bring the people to the parks.” Shoreline efforts dove-tailed with work to save San Francisco Bay, which had almost no public access at the time. The Pleasanton area was added in 1966. Sunol, Las Trampas, Coyote Hills, and Briones became parks, aided by a 1964 state bond issue, and Crown Beach in Alameda was turned over to the District to manage. By the end of the 1960s Dick Trudeau had taken over as General Manager.

The Third Wave of Conservation

The late 60’s and early 70’s ushered in a third wave of conservation, punctuated by 1970’s Earth Day and a rise in environmental consciousness. Citizen activism increased dramatically. Save Mount Diablo was formed in 1971, for example, including a Concord teenager, Bob Doyle, as a founding member. Even as he progressed through the ranks of the Park District, to become Asst. General Manager for Acquisition and Advanced Planning, Doyle would cement an already close relationship between SMD and the District.

A 1971 sales tax created funding for parkland acquisition, development and operation and new parks such as Point Pinole. Contra Loma, Black Diamond Mines, Diablo Foothills and Morgan Territory Parks were created even as a Master Plan process was established in 1974. In 1981 eastern Contra
Costa was annexed but Prop. 13, passed in 1978, had begun to erode District finances.

Growth continued largely unchecked, though the epicenter had moved eastward. At the time of the District’s founding in 1934 the East Bay included about 584,000 people; in 1990 it would measure 2.1 million. By 1988, when Hornbeck retired, the District led by General Manager Pat O’Brien included 65,000 acres but the acquisition program, under the creative leadership of Doyle and largely dependent on state funding, threatened to slow.

1988’s Measure AA
Janet Cobb, the Park District’s Community Affairs Director; Acquisitions Director Bob Doyle (who was then president of SMD); Greenbelt Alliance activist Mark Evanoff; photographer Bob Walker, who was also a member of the Board of SMD; and other activists, saved the day.

In June 1988, state Prop. 70, a citizen qualified funding initiative known as CALPaW (California Parks & Wildlife) was approved by more than two thirds. Given local vote totals Cobb, Doyle, Evanoff and Walker convinced the Park District’s Board to sponsor Measure AA, including $225 million, much of it for acquisition.

Imagine that the measures to create the District, to annex Contra Costa, and to pass Prop. 70 had all taken two or more years. There were just two months to design Measure AA in time to place it on the ballot, let alone to negotiate with cities and counties, opponents and other interest groups. The Park District Board of Directors, including Contra Costa Directors Ted Radke and Kay Peterson, was strongly supportive but timing and other issues were significant.

Passage was not a sure thing. Some of the Directors were up for re-election, and monumental efforts would be needed, some of them quite controversial. When Board president Mary Jefferds balked, for example, Cobb threatened to resign her staff position and to run for election against Jefferds. Polling indicated that the public would support a tax rate that would generate $225 million and Doyle and others organized a projects list to equal that figure literally overnight.

On November 6, 1988, Measure AA was approved with more than two-thirds voting yes. Parks were created such as Pleasanton Ridge, Round Valley and Vasco Caves or dramatically expanded as in the case of Black Diamond Mines and Morgan Territory.

In 1992, the Livermore area’s addition completed the District to include all of both East Bay counties. A 1993 trails assessment provided a local source of revenue for operation and maintenance of the extensive trail system. By 2008, with the help of Measure AA, O’Brien and Doyle had expanded the East Bay Regional Park District to include 100,000 acres. Yet, from 584,000 East Bay residents when the District was founded in 1934, at present the East Bay includes 2.6 million, an increase of half a million in just the past twenty years.

2008’s Measure WW
Measure AA has been spent. Unless additional funding is found the District acquisition program will dramatically slow, even as development pressures continue. In 2008, the East Bay includes 2.6 million residents; it is projected to measure 3.9 million in 2050, an increase of 50%. From 2000 to 2050 the San Francisco Bay Area is expected to grow 52% from 6.8 million to 10.3 million residents and California from 34 million to 60 million (76%).

We have a rare lull in growth, with lower land prices, but neither will last. Measure AA is exhausted. As a result, the District has placed Measure WW on the November 2008 ballot, to extend the provisions of Measure AA, without raising taxes. The existing tax rate would simply be extended another 20 years. If Measure WW is approved, another 30-35,000 acres will be acquired. But as during the Great Depression, as during the 1964 annexation, as during Measure AA, times are uncertain, and hurdles such as the needed two-thirds vote are large.

The Measure WW campaign committee includes all of the EBRPD Directors, including local directors Ted Radke and Beverly Lane; SMD’s Ron Brown and Seth Adams; and others.

Hulet Hornbeck, who led 1964’s Measure B campaign to annex Contra Costa County to the Regional Park District despite being told he had five years to live; who was hired in 1965 by Bill Mott to create the Park District’s new acquisition department; who trained his successor Bob Doyle and created most of Contra Costa’s regional parks before his retirement in 1979; is also an enthusiastic member of the committee. He will be 89 in October, a few weeks before the vote.

A Fourth Wave of Conservation?
The conservation movement has matured, withstood the backlash of monied interests, and with climate change threats, is poised to become a truly global effort. But even as we “think globally” we must “act locally.” We must be as far sighted as the thousand East Bay residents who got together in 1931, during the Great Depression, to form the East Bay Regional Park District. On Nov. 4, Please Vote Yes on Measure WW.

Much of the history of the District from its founding through 1984, and quotes from that period are from or paraphrased from Mimi Stein’s A Vision Achieved: Fifty Years of East Bay Regional Park District. 1984. Much is from the personal knowledge of the author and from oral histories by him especially of Hulet Hornbeck. Population figures: ABAG and the Cal. Dept. of Finance.
We deeply appreciate and thank all of our members. Your generous support makes it possible for our small organization to meet the many demands that come with increasing population and development pressures in the area. We are lucky to have so many members, too numerous to list in our newsletter. As of January of 2008, we acknowledge all members in our Annual Report. If you have not yet received it, please give us a call at 925-947-3535 and we will be happy to mail you one. We appreciate hearing from you.

**In Memory of**

Keith & Joan (Rusty) McNeil
Russ & Cynthia Harrison
Andrew DuBois
George Callas
Ruth Banen
Andrea Foley
Terrance Carroll & Linda Dardarian
Victoria De Goff
Benraz Ali
Sally Dalton

Herbert & Delores Moore
John & Jo Ann Ridley
Theodore & Janice Schultz
Bill & Mary Sander
Bill & Evelyn Thomburg
Mardi Duffield
Kristine Caratan
Anna Louise Ferri, on the 10th anniversary of her death
Lawrence Ferri
Judy Gilmore
Woodruff & Mary Ogden
Linda Greb's Mother
Robert & Carol Lowitz
Richard "Dick" Hackenbracht
Dorene Walters
Harvey & Louise Wall
Jeffrey & Charlotte Keeler
Sari Kulberg
Gail Cooper
Joyce Sattler
Oscar & Annamarie Bradfute
Don Harris
Robert & Carol Lowitz
Thorne Holmes
Virginia Holmes
Andrew W. Imbrie
Barbara Imbrie
Betty Kunkel
Greg Page
Alan Kunz
J.H. & M.D. Acorn
Joan Hedges
George & Sally Thomas
Elizabeth Lathrop
Philip Lathrop & Roberta Davis
Beverly Levine
Norma Alexander
John Lowenberg of Ames IA
Ann Holzhuetter
John M. Luther
David & Juanita Luther
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Sasha Mackin
Richard Lee Mark
Valerie A. Mark
Brad Lee McWilliams
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Aileen & William McNutt
Jerry & Margaret Ricker
Kevin & Nancy Reidy
Victor & Suzanne Stephens
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Janet Montes
Terry & Glenn Gonzalez
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June Wall
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Theodore & Claire Holmsen
Fred & Georgine Sullivan
Richard "Dick" Ricker
Joan Allen
Sophie & Krista Taff-Rice
Anita Taff-Rice
Robert & Mildred (Kitty) Trevorrow
Steven Raymond
Laura Wilke
Harvey & Louise Wall

**Heritage Tree**

In Memory of
William Morrison

Clark & Amara Morrison

In memory of Bruce Smith

Kathleen Smith

**In Honor of**

Seth Adams
Michael O'Donahue
Lisa Chang & Douglas Mason
Ana Baer Fien
Jean Grant
Bill Benson
Bob & Sue Benson
Paul Bettelheim
Happy Valley Garden Club
Marcheta Bowdle

**Membership Matters**

Sara Manning
Bruce Mairhead, for a Christmas Gift
Nancy & Bud Sasser
Russ Nishikawa
Stephanie Ann Jurich & Mark Van Loon
Park Rangers
Jax Kneppes Associates, Inc.
Ellen Peterson
Grover & Jane Peterson
Bud Rotermund
Janine Senior

**Corporate Match**

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Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Oracle Corporation Matching Gifts Program
The Rockefeller Group
Tri-Valley Community Foundation
United Way California Capital Region

All contributions were made from January 1 - June 30, 2008

Indian paintbrush (Scott Hein)
New Plant Species

“Plants were just another reason to be outside wandering around looking at things,” said Gowen. He went on his first CNPS hike, at Mt. Diablo around 1990. “I had never been to Mt. Diablo. It was so rich and so close.”

The Search

A plant thought extinct, the Mt. Diablo buckwheat, Eriogonum truncatum, led Gowen to Lime Ridge. In 1998 when he took his first trip to Lime Ridge, the buckwheat hadn’t been seen in 62 years. Although Gowen searched for over a decade, it was rediscovered in 2005 by Michael Park, a graduate student at U.C. Berkeley, on land preserved by SMD.

According to Gowen, “I began looking for the buckwheat after a lecture Barbara Ertter gave, challenging botanists to find it. The concept was that it lived near chapparal. Lime Ridge was near a historical site, I’d never been there, and it was public and accessible. In 1998 on my first visit I found the Navarretia. At this point I’ve probably been to Lime Ridge thirty or forty times.”

The Discovery of Navarretia gowenii

“I took home a piece of the plant that first trip to identify later and never came up with a satisfactory identification,” said Gowen. “Periodically I would mention it to someone; no one had an answer. It was a group of plants not too many people knew.”

“A couple of years went by and I slowly learned a little more. I assumed that there would be an answer from an expert if you found the right one. In 2004 I sent Leigh Johnson at Brigham Young University photographs and with my suggestions and what my confusion was. His comment back was that the Lime Ridge plant wasn’t in any current flora—it wasn’t ‘in the book.’”

Establishing a New Species

At the time Johnson was working on the treatment for Navarretia for several publications, so he was the current expert on the genus. Together Gowen, the amateur botanist, and Johnson began researching the plant. Said Gowen, “Initially Leigh thought it was the same as an undescribed species from southern California; he decided it was different, partly because of differences that I suggested.”

The new species, Navarretia gowenii, was published in the December 3, 2007 issue of Novon, a respected botanical journal of the Missouri Botanical Garden. The local announcement was delayed until the plant bloomed and good photos could be taken.

Navarretia

“The genus Navarretia has about 34 species,” said Johnson. “Some are quite common. The center of diversity is in the western U.S.; 90% of the species are in California. Lime Ridge has six species of Navarretia; that number in such a small area is remarkable.”

“It’s spiny like other Navarretias—you don’t want to pick them. It’s about 6-8 inches tall. It grows in open sun. They live in four small spots, each with 50-100 plants. In other parts of the state there might be acres and acres of Navarretias, here in the worst year there might be 150 plants total and in the best year there are fewer than a thousand.”

“It’s customary to name a newly discovered species after the person who found it, or after the place where it was discovered. The genus Navarretia is named after Francisco Fernandez de Navarrete, an 18th century Spanish physician. Johnson named the new species Navarretia gowenii, after Gowen, but he calls it the “Lime Ridge Navarretia.”

The “Lime Ridge Woollystar”

“About the same time that I was visiting the site of the Navarretia,” said Gowen, “I found an Eriastrum [Woollystar] and after going to several other sites, I realized I didn’t know what this one was either. It was mentioned in the supplement of Ertter & Bowerman’s Mt. Diablo flora [book] with the comment that it was a dried specimen and was unidentifiable.”

“That sparked my interest to figure out what it was,” said Gowen. The new Eriastrum species, which is referred to as Eriastrum sp. nov. until it is published, has not yet been named officially, but Gowen refers to it as the “Lime Ridge Woollystar.”

Threats

“We don’t know what the plants need, we don’t exactly know their preferred habitat, they might prefer more open space, less competition, or they might prefer disturbance, we just don’t know,” said Gowen. “Sometimes disturbance helps, sometimes it favors exotic that crowd out the plant. We don’t know whether fire is good or bad.”

“Navarretias have preferred niches, often soil types in combination with other factors—they don’t grow under other plants,” said Gowen. “Potential threats might be misused vegetation management, cutting everything down like goat grazing, but it’s unknown. We need to be cautious.”

Conservation

The Lime Ridge Navarretia is known from two locations, Lime Ridge and one location in Stanislaus County, about 70 miles southeast. Given small populations and limited distribution it is assumed to be critically endangered unless other populations are located. The Lime Ridge Woollystar, from just Lime Ridge, is even rarer.

Despite protected locations, it was realized that park management could harm them. CNPS, SMD and WCOSF formed the “Lime Ridge Rare Plants Working Group” to consider management with the city.

The Working Group has developed interim protocols for management activities while we learn more. Management of the two new species could also benefit 28 other rare plant species found at Lime Ridge as well as several rare animal species.

The Working Group has collected seeds for offsite propagation, and will work to survey similar locations to see if other populations can be found. Efforts are being made to not harm existing populations of the two plants while learning more about their needs.
Save Mount Diablo’s Mission ...

To preserve Mt. Diablo’s peaks, surrounding foothills, and watersheds through land acquisition and preservation strategies designed to protect the mountain’s natural beauty, biological diversity, and historic and agricultural heritage; enhance our area’s quality of life; and provide recreational opportunities consistent with the protection of natural resources.

In support of our mission, Save Mount Diablo:

- Protects natural lands through purchases, gifts, and cooperative efforts with public and private entities.
- Educates the public regarding threats to the mountain’s flora, fauna, and rugged beauty, and to the history and heritage of the mountain and its surrounding foothills.
- Works with landowners to preserve their property and to ensure that they receive fair value in any transaction aimed at preserving natural lands.
- Works in partnership with Mt. Diablo State Park, East Bay Regional Park District, and other public and private entities to increase and manage natural lands and to identify mitigation opportunities.
- Participates in the land use planning process for projects that could impact Mt. Diablo and its surrounding foothills.
- Aids in the restoration of habitat and the preservation of rare species.
- Offers technical advice to community and neighborhood groups regarding preservation of natural lands.
- Sponsors events to build public awareness and to raise funds to carry out our programs.
- Temporarily owns and responsibly manages lands prior to their transfer to a public agency for permanent preservation.
- Encourages recreation and public enjoyment of Mt. Diablo’s parklands consistent with the protection of their natural resources.

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Partner Sponsors are proud to support SMD’s mission. In acknowledgement of their generous support they receive recognition and admission at all of SMD’s events for one year. If you would like to become a partner sponsor, please call Ron or Julie at 947-3535.

YES on Measure WW – Water, Parks & Wildlife
Extending the East Bay Regional Park District’s Measure AA

Voting Yes on Measure WW is the single most important thing you can do this November to benefit Mt. Diablo and our local environment. Save Mount Diablo is helping to lead the campaign for the proposed extension of East Bay Regional Park District’s 1988 Measure AA, which expires soon.

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