



# Diablo Watch

Fall/Winter 2013  
No. 56

## *James Donlon Extension: A Land Owner's View*

The proposed James Donlon Boulevard Extension is a 1.71 mile roadway that would carve through the hillsides south of Pittsburg, filling in canyons, removing trees, placing streams in concrete culverts, interfering with grazing, blocking passage for wildlife, and altering the views of the rolling hillsides of eastern Contra Costa County.

One of the people who would be most affected by the proposed roadway is 24-year old William

Thomas whose family has raised cattle on the ranch since the 1860s. The road would split his ranch in half and make operations more difficult, even threatening the viability of the Thomas family business.

### Legacy in Land

"Our family has worked the land since about the Civil War time. And for me, it's been all of my life—24 years. My family has always been here, always worked here. My Dad, Wayne Thomas, died March 3rd, 2008. He was close to this land his whole life—and even the thought of losing his land, now all of our land, makes me shudder.

The worst part about the proposed project is that they want to blow the hills to the ground. In this steep territory, with all of its slumps and washouts, it is nothing short of dangerous. And, their project cuts off



**"Our family will stand up to the City"**

all my water at the back side, making 300-400 acres useless for our cattle.

We know we could sell the land, but for our family, it's not about the money. It's our life—our family's life—it's been our home for so long—the ranch belongs to each and every one of us."

### Business as Usual

"For the City of Pittsburg, the issue has always been about developing all of this

land that I refuse to sell. We have refused to sell it for as long as the City has been there. The City either wants to split our ranch into two, or condemn it for the roadway and sell the leftover for more houses.

The County has spent all of this money widening Highway 4, and now the Albert Seeno development companies just want to build more houses. All of these new houses will just clog Highway 4 again. This is business as usual in the City of Pittsburg.

But, our family will stand up to the City. This place, our ranch where we have lived so many years, is the greatest place in the world as far as I am concerned. I can't imagine living anywhere else."

You can contact Leigha Schmidt at the City of Pittsburg, [lschmidt@ci.pittsburg.ca.us](mailto:lschmidt@ci.pittsburg.ca.us), to voice your concerns.

by Nancy Woltering, Land Use Planning Consultant

Karen Perry



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#### Masthead Panorama:

Dragon Oaks 550, Stephen Joseph

FPO

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## From the Executive Director:



Dear Friend of the Mountain,

More than 1,800 acres were protected recently in what seemed like one fell swoop. The East Bay Regional Park District recently announced they reached an agreement to acquire Roddy Ranch and turn it into a regional preserve. But what may have seemed to some a quick deal to ensure the protection of these beautiful grasslands actually took many years.

For the past two decades, we and our allies, including Greenbelt Alliance, have watched, responded to, and staved off several development proposals for the area. We attended countless planning commission and city council meetings in the City of Antioch as well as meetings at the County Board of Supervisors. We reviewed and commented on Environmental Impact Reports and testified at numerous hearings. We took stakeholders out to the area to see for themselves why these foothills should be preserved as a wildlife and recreational trail corridor.

We spoke at these meetings and we were the voice for wildlife and for you.

In this issue, you will hear from some other voices: A rancher fighting off development to save his livelihood, a young cyclist using the mountain to exercise, a land owner with a deep love for her canyon, a naturalist who loves to teach others about the wildlife, an equestrian enjoying the trails in solitude, and artists using the mountain as their muse.

We may have different perspectives and a variety of connections to the mountain but we all share a common goal: to keep Mount Diablo and its foothills a natural living and working landscape – a protected wilderness for wildlife and people, now and for the future.

As the economy regains its strength and the number of development proposals increase, the need to speak up for protection of natural lands is more important than ever. And we will continue to be that voice for you – with your support.

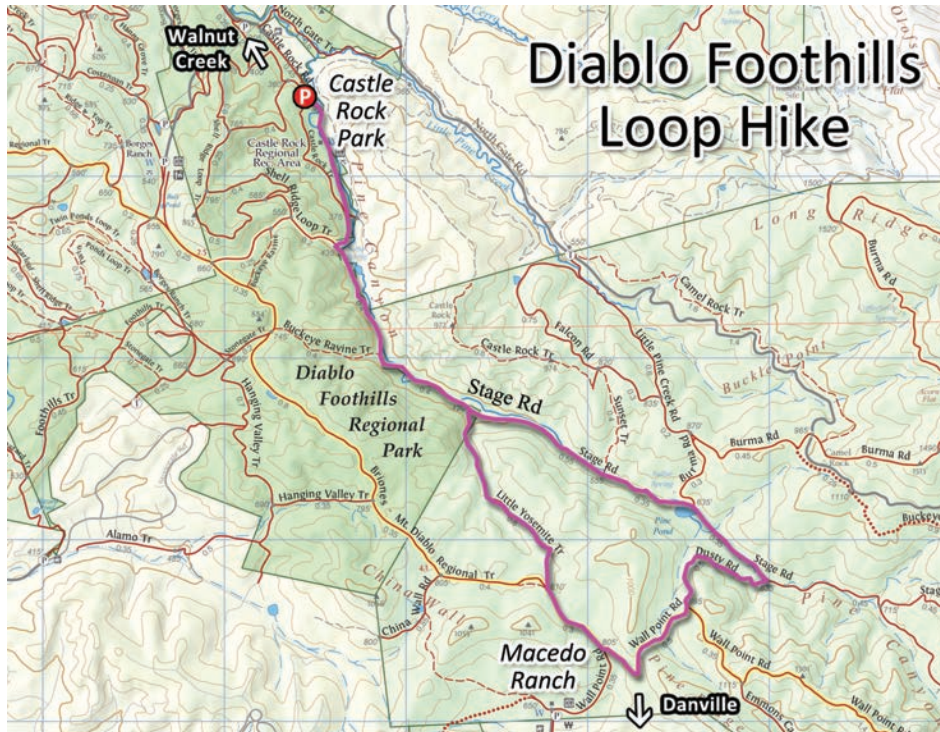
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## A Nearly Epic Hike



Left: Follow the “nearly epic” three hour loop hike beginning and ending at 1700 Castle Rock Road in Walnut Creek.

Below: Kathryn Vo loves the outdoors and was amazed by the many types of scenery she found on this hike.

last trail, Little Yosemite Trail, we were yet again hit with a new surrounding. This single-file trail was a rugged downhill route with minimum tree coverage as the trail followed along a creek. Little Yosemite Trail developed into an entirely charming new land, perfect for ending our around-the-world-in-3-hours loop.

In itself, the loop provides diverse landscapes, from rock formations to marshlands, and plant life, from ample tree coverage to blackberry bushes along the roadside. So if you’re looking for adventure but are short on time (you don’t have 15 years to battle off Trojans, Sirens, and a Cyclops) try this “nearly epic” hike. 🏔️

For free guided, self-guided and audible guided hikes visit our Hikes & Trails section at [SaveMountDiablo.org](http://SaveMountDiablo.org), courtesy of our Hike & Thrive partner Kaiser Permanente.

by Kathryn Vo, Volunteer

**V**olunteer and U.C. Davis student Kathryn Vo takes us on a looped hike through the Diablo foothills following Stage Road, Dusty Road, Wall Point Road, and Little Yosemite Trail:

I often wish that I could escape to another world, just sail away one day and come back the next day full of wonder and awe from my journey. But a journey of such magnitude could only be one of Odysseus, so I recently went on a hike that took me on a wild adventure, while only minutes from my home.

The hike loop began on Stage Road, which turned out to be a wide trail beginning with some awesome rock formations. My teenage sister created a small rock-climbing experience on the formations, without a strenuous elevation climb.

Soon, Stage Road became enveloped in beautiful leafy trees and plants. Along the trail I glimpsed some California quail hiding in the shrubbery. Creek crossings are abundant throughout the Stage Road trail. I crossed the creek about seven times but only four through some toe-deep waters. At the end of this trail, we turned right to begin a gentle climb onto Dusty Road. Dusty Road lived up to its name, it was a wide dusty—almost sandy—route that made it seem as if I had just entered a desert land, far away from the forest I had just come out of. There was little tree coverage on this trail but it was an easy trade off for the view of Castle Rock and the cities off in the distance. At the end of Dusty Road, we turned onto Wall Point Road. We had just entered a new world; all around the trail

were golden hills, ground squirrels, and birds.

As we finally started on the

## From rock formations to marshlands



Kathryn Vo



## ***“When That Mountain’s Gotcha, It’s Gotcha”***



Seth Adams

**A**drienne Galvin doesn’t like to talk about herself—she’d much prefer to talk about her beloved Salt Canyon home just east of Morgan Territory Road or about Rosie, her cattle dog and constant companion who just got bitten by a rattlesnake the other day for a second time. “This is the most beautiful place you could want to be. I can look out my window and see Mount Diablo, it changes every day, it’s always beautiful. I go down the road and see it, and I think how fortunate I am to enjoy that view every day. When that mountain’s gotcha, it’s gotcha.”

Adrienne’s late husband Benny Galvin’s family moved to Morgan Territory in the 1890s. She and Benny lived and worked in the Morgan Territory for over four decades. Benny passed away in 1999 and two years ago she decided that she wanted to sell her 112-acre Salt Canyon property to us for preservation. We were close to purchasing the property when we learned that the East Bay Regional Park District and the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy

had grant funds that needed to be expended or the grant would expire. So, we introduced Adrienne to the Park District staff and they acquired the property with a \$1.1 million grant from the Conservancy. Adrienne has a leaseback agreement with the Park District which allows her to live out her life at Salt Canyon. She keeps the property cleaner than any ranch we’ve ever seen.

### **A Work of Love**

“I moved to Morgan Territory in 1970. I was born in Los Angeles and raised in San Bernadino. I moved to the Bay Area in my twenties and then to Marsh Creek Road. When I was in my 30s, I decided to move up here. My husband Benny and I worked together and we worked hard to build this place from the ground up. He loved this area as much as I do. Ever since I was a child we lived more in a country atmosphere, I was always around animals, so coming here, I really enjoyed it.

“This is the most beautiful place you could want to be. It’s so peaceful, all the deer and the birds,


This Page - Left: Looking at Adrienne Galvin’s newly preserved “Salt Canyon” property. Below: The Conservancy’s Executive Director John Kopchik, our Ron Brown, Adrienne Galvin and the Park District’s General Manager Bob Doyle. Opposite Page: One of Mount Diablo’s “Gentle Giants”, a native tarantula.

the natural life. It’s unique. We’ve always called it Salt Canyon because a spring near the bottom has a little boron in it. When you put your finger in it, it tastes a little salty.”

### **Knowing What’s Important**

“I wanted to preserve my land because I see so much building. One day I drove up Aspara Drive and hadn’t been up there for years—my goodness it used to be little farms and now it’s houses everywhere. I didn’t want to see that happening to my beautiful valley. I wanted to preserve this so other people could bring their families and enjoy it.

“I appreciate what Save Mount Diablo is doing because I know they have an interest in the land and I know that this land will be preserved, kept in a park and not be developed. That is what’s important to me.

“I’ve been around to different places and countries and I come back here and I think that Mt. Diablo and all of this area, the weather, it’s all the best that you can find. You just can’t ask for more.” 

by Seth Adams, Director of Land Programs

**I wanted to preserve this so other people could bring their families and enjoy it**



Seth Adams

# A Wild Perspective: Sharing A Love of Nature



Ken-ichi Ueda

As a naturalist, I fell in love with Mount Diablo years ago. The various intriguing habitats offer a richness and fantastic diversity of plant and animal life. I am constantly learning new things every time I explore an area of the mountain.

I was fortunate to be born and raised at the base of Diablo. My first experience of snow was as an eight year old, my mother driving myself, my brother and friends up to Mount Diablo after one of those low elevation snow storms. I experienced cold snow and the worst case of poison oak I have ever had. Yes, you can catch poison oak in freezing weather from the leafless twigs of the plant.

## Natural Wonders


For as long as I can remember, I have lead hikes and interpretive talks because I've always enjoyed sharing my knowledge. I love showing people the wonders and mysteries of the marvelous plant and animal life in the Diablo wilderness. The great reward for me is seeing the amazement in peoples' eyes as they learn about the relationships between a local, harmless tarantula and its foe the tarantula "hawk", the first time a person sees a coyote in the wild, or a peregrine falcon flying overhead.

With Save Mount Diablo, I have been afforded the unbelievable chance to partake in the annual BioBlitz, a 24 hour survey of newly

acquired properties. Most of what we see and find is based on locale and terrain but this year I was excited to find a Marble-winged butterfly that I had not seen in the area in a number of years.

## Significance of Protection

Preserving and restoring Mount Diablo for its flora and fauna is of paramount importance and the efforts to date are quite impressive. For forty years, badgers had all but disappeared from the western foothills of the mountain but recent sightings near Save Mount Diablo's Mangini Ranch show why we need to protect and enhance our open spaces.

Save Mount Diablo has given me the opportunity to educate individuals, families and groups about the significance of our surrounding ecosystem – from the smallest microbe to an apex predator like a mountain lion. It's my hope that my passion for Mount Diablo will be passed along to future generations so our quilt of open space can continue to be restored and enjoyed. 

by Michael Marchiano, Wildlife Ambassador

## The Diablo Wilderness



**900 plants and animals**  
live in the Diablo wilderness



**180,000 acres**  
of Diablo's natural lands of which  
110,000 have been preserved



**439 species**  
were seen in 24 hours at BioBlitz



**Dozens at risk**  
many species are Rare, Endangered  
or Threatened

**14 endemic species**  
of plants and animals don't exist  
anywhere else





## The Sentinel of Time: Diablo 3D and Symphony



Stephen Joseph

The sky begins to darken and the clouds slowly surround Mount Diablo, casting shadows over the landscape. Local photographer Stephen Joseph is practically running towards the mountain, with his cameras slung over his shoulders.

### Capturing the Essence

“There is just something about the sky and the lighting as storms roll in towards Mount Diablo that creates and shows the true essence of the mountain.”

For the past two years, Stephen has been hiking around Mount Diablo to capture the life and breadth of the mountain through his camera lens, taking photographs that will be projected in 3D for the “Diablo 3D and Symphony”. Save Mount Diablo will be hosting the 3D slideshow at the Leshner Center for the Arts on November 6th. The images are accompanied by an original score of music performed by the Contra Costa Wind Symphony directed by Duane Carroll.

### Experiencing Diablo as Art

This is not Stephen’s first 3D show, as one was presented at our 30th anniversary celebration in 2001, however this is his first show in digital 3D. Stephen, reminiscing on how 3D has changed from film to digital: “Previously, each camera had to be perfectly aligned and I would have to run back and forth between cameras sometimes 10 or 50 feet apart to take the photo. I would have to look at one, adjust it a bit, run to the other to adjust and back and forth. Now, I still use two cameras but working in digital makes the process easier and the photographs will be higher quality and absolutely amazing.


“People are now used to seeing 3D movies but 3D slideshows are much less common. Seeing Diablo in 3D combined with the live symphony music will be unique.”

### The Sound of Wilderness

Composer Ron Paquette created an original score of music inspired by Stephen’s photographs as well

as his own experiences on Mount Diablo. “I take mountain bike rides almost every afternoon around the mountain. The music I am writing is what I feel for the great beauty of the mountain. It was not difficult to get inspired to write this piece.”

This is Ron’s first time creating a score for a slideshow. Each movement in the “Sentinel of Time” is highlighting a certain aspect of the mountain complimented by Stephen’s 3D images; the vast spectacle that is Diablo, its diverse and fascinating trees and woodlands, its romantic and intimate landscape, and its enduring presence through all kinds of weather, expressed through music.

We hope you will join us for a spectacular evening, filled with breathtaking images and music, bringing to life your backyard wilderness through art. The evening will include presentation of the Mountain Star Awards, honoring those helping to protect and connect these amazing natural lands. 

by Amanda Bucknam, Advancement Associate

**The music I am writing is what I feel for the great beauty of the mountain**

Diablo 3D and Symphony  
6:30 to 9 pm, Wednesday November 6th,  
\$55 each at [SaveMountDiablo.org](http://SaveMountDiablo.org)

# Through the Lens of the Next Generation



Opposite Page: The “Dragon Oak looking toward Long Ridge in Mt. Diablo State Park.  
This Page: The Grand Prize photo “Sunset City.”


this beautiful sunset. I was inspired to take my photo because it shows not only that Mount Diablo brings beauty to our valley but it provides us with some of the most stunning vistas in the Bay Area.”

## Prioritizing Protection

“What I love most about having all of these natural parks so close is that we can go for the day and feel like we are away from everything. Knowing that there are 70,000 acres of wild lands at risk scares me because my generation is not very nature friendly. And I worry that it won’t be high on our priority list of things to fix, when it actually is the most important.”

“I would tell people who have not witnessed the true beauty of what the parks have to offer, to go and explore and see what you can see, from hiking, to biking, to walking, to camping, and just being in the wilderness. Hopefully my photo will help show a little of that beauty and encourage others to go and see it for themselves.”

## Developing Connections

The hundreds of entries showcase both our local students’ talent and the next generation’s inspiration from our natural lands. The amazing student photographers’ work will help to show more people why the remaining lands should be protected and connected. 

by Beryl Anderson, Communications Manager

Mount Diablo has inspired people for centuries. But all too often one hears from someone living in the shadow of the mountain that they have never visited. Hoping to see how the next generation utilizes our amazing open spaces and why they feel we need to protect and connect the rest of the Diablo wilderness, we held our first Scholastic Photo Contest. It was a great success thanks to the immense volunteerism and support of Empire Realty Associates. Local renowned photographers Scott Hein, Hank Perry and John Finger poured over the 376 impressive entries and selected our Grand Prize winner, 15 year old Chandler Dunn.

## Falling in Love

“As a young boy my family and I would take fun day trips to Mount Diablo—our favorite place was Rock City. I was always fascinated with

the different rocks I could climb on and the different caves I could crawl into. When I was 13, my father gave me his old camera, thinking that I would get interested in photography. I instantly fell in love with being able to freeze a moment at any time and letting what I captured tell its own story. A picture is truly worth a thousand words.

“I have been doing photography for about a year and a half now, and hope to continue throughout my life. My sister found an article about Save Mount Diablo’s first Scholastic Photo Contest in a magazine and thought I would be interested.

“Early in the year, my Dad and I took our own “photography” tour on Mount Diablo. It was getting late in the day and we decided to make our way down and stopped at Rock City to watch the sunset. I took a daring climb with my camera into a cave. When I turned around I saw

# Knowing that there are 70,000 acres of wild lands at risk scares me

See the first Annual Scholastic Photo Contest entries at [SaveMountDiablo.org](http://SaveMountDiablo.org).



# Preserve

# Defend

## Diablo Trails Challenge, April 20, 2013

Over 1,200 people hit the trails with us for 5K, 10K, Half Marathon and 50K distances to explore the lovely spring green Diablo wilderness and support the protection of more park lands and trails to enjoy.



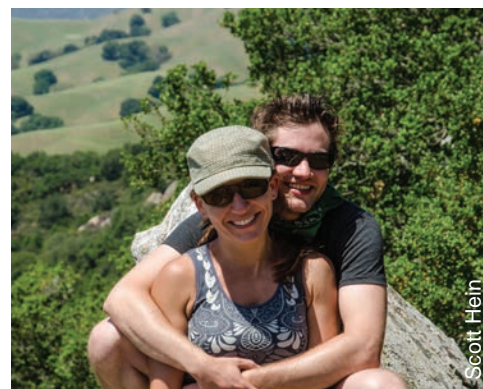
Aeyrah Suitos, Airene Suitos and Jennifer Reyes enjoy the sunshine on the mountain while running the 10K. Brett Rivers of Mill Valley on his way to taking second place in the 50K. Heidi Faria and the Under 9 Group third place winner Alana Faria proudly display their medals after completing the 5K.

*We enjoyed the challenge of Diablo's trails thanks to our sponsors and volunteers*



## Four Days Diablo, April 24-27, 2013

For four fabulous days, hikers and campers joined us for an adventure in our own backyard on some of Mount Diablo's least explored places, gourmet food cooked by local chefs and guided tours by expert naturalists.



Four Days Diablo participants leave Walnut Creek and head out on Fossil Hill on the first day of their trip. John Gallagher, Beverly Loomis, Bob Loomis and Patti Petromilli enjoy beverages before a lovely dinner by Forbes Mill Steakhouse prepared on site al fresco. Aimee Johnson and Ross McDonald enjoying the view overlooking the "Amphitheater" on the third day of the trek making their way to Morgan Territory Regional Preserve.

*We hiked on the Diablo Trail thanks to the support of our sponsors and volunteers*





# Restore

# Enjoy

## Earth Day Restoration, April 13, 2012

For our 4<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day event, over 25 volunteers joined us at the Marsh Creek 4 property. We enjoyed the sunshine while removing non-native invasive weeds and caring for native plants to restore the natural habitat.



Stewardship Committee Chair John Gallagher mows invasive weeds to prevent them from crowding out native plants. Boy Scouts from a local troop joined our volunteers to get hands-on experience restoring Marsh Creek habitat. A boy scout removes a non-native wild radish competing for water and light.

*We restored Marsh Creek habitat with the help of our sponsors and volunteers*



This project was supported by the Community Watershed Stewardship Grant Program of the Contra Costa Watershed Program, administered by the Watershed Project.



## Beacon Lift Off, June 11, 2013

Local Pearl Harbor Survivors joined us to watch the “Eye of Diablo”, Mount Diablo’s historic aviation Beacon, lifted off its perch to undergo restoration so it can shine this December 7<sup>th</sup> in honor of all who served at Pearl Harbor.



Pearl Harbor Survivors Micky Ganitch and Chuck Kohler share a laugh in celebration of the beginning of the repairs to the Beacon. Beacon Team Co-Chairs John Gallagher and Dick Heron (both left) oversee securing the Beacon for transportation. Our Executive Director Ron Brown and Beacon Volunteer Burt Bogardus symbolically accept the Beacon's current bulb from Diablo Vista District Superintendent Danita Rodriguez.

*We are restoring the historic Beacon thanks to our partners, volunteers and donors*





## Mounted on the Mountain



Courtesy of Brenda Benkly

**B**renda Benkly has enjoyed riding horses on Mount Diablo for decades. Another avid equestrian describes her as “riding the mountain more often and consistently than anyone else I know.” Brenda thinks “people don’t know what is on Mount Diablo: the trails, flowers, views, wildlife.” For her, a good ride is from 17 to 20 miles with her Arabian mare, Remy, two or three times a week. “If we didn’t have open space like Mount Diablo we would lose our true sense of well being. It is a wonderful place to escape to, getting away from all the hustle and bustle of what we call life!”

### Fortunate Locations

Brenda and her husband, Steve, are fortunate to live at the base of the mountain. Their property is adjacent to Mount Diablo State Park and the Concord Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association property. Riding on the mountain is conditioning for endurance competitions which Brenda does about once a month. “My favorite thing about Mount Diablo is that I can ride for an hour or all day. The trails are endless.”

Brenda grew up in Concord

and she realized that she was meant for horses at about the age of three. “Since I grew up on the north side of Diablo, I have a great passion for the single track trails here, like Back Creek (George Cardinet) trail, Middle trail and Bruce Lee Spring trails.” Later she lived on Pine Hollow Road, a few houses from George Cardinet, a founder of the Trail Ride Association. George led Brenda and many others all over the mountain.

### Growing Up with George


“I was very fortunate to have been a neighbor of George’s as a kid growing up. He let me accompany him on many rides on Diablo. Some of it was still privately owned, like Mitchell Canyon. He was friends with the owners and had permission to ride through to get to Mount Diablo from our ranches. If I had only known then that he was responsible for developing so many trails on Mount Diablo via horseback.

Thanks to George’s influence in trail blazing, as a youngster, I would ride on Diablo by myself to the summit. Get there in the late afternoon, borrow a dime and call

This Page - Left: Brenda Benkly and her horse Remy love riding the same trails Brenda enjoyed growing up. Opposite Page - Right: Many cyclists, like these at our 2012 road cycling event Mount Diablo Challenge, also enjoy connecting with the mountain by biking its trails. Below: Carina Bilodeau has developed a stronger appreciation for the mountain where she practices with the San Ramon Valley High School Mountain Bike Team and volunteers her time so others can enjoy it too.

my parents to see if they could come get me. They said no of course, so I would arrive home in the late evening after dark. I would never see anyone else out on the trail. It was my mountain that day!”

### Mounted Monitors

“To help monitor the north side of Diablo, more and more equestrians are getting certified to become Mounted Patrol volunteers. I have one more ride to become certified and some of my friends are already patrolling for Mt. Diablo State Park. We have at least four new riders patrolling this side of the mountain. It is really needed to make sure that everyone is properly and safely using the park and trails.” 

by Bob Cooper, Equestrian and Volunteer

### Don't Horse Around

Equestrian Encounter Safety Tips from Tilden-Wildcat Horsemen's Association

- Speak to the rider – the sound of a human voice will reassure the horse.
- Step aside – try to step off the trail in a place where the horse can clearly see you (don't disappear into the bushes).
- Get all members of your party on the same side of the trail.
- Keep small children away from the horse unless the rider says it is okay to approach.



# Wheeling with the Devil: Two Wheels, Two Ways



Scott Hein

The call of the Diablo wilderness beckons many people to find an escape on its trails. As our communities expand, so do our trail users – from hikers and equestrians to ultra trail runners and cyclists. Road cyclists have long been attracted to Diablo but mountain biking is a particularly fast growing group of outdoor recreators seeking the physical satisfaction of climbing the mountain's elevations. Carina Bilodeau found that her dedication to saving our natural lands has grown with her love of mountain biking.

## Escape the Everyday

"Mount Diablo has been my cycling retreat for three years since I joined San Ramon Valley High School's Mountain Bike Team. I receive great pleasure from exploring the many trails that wind across the mountain's beautiful terrain and I have come to rely on the scenery, fresh air, and exercise as an escape from my everyday stresses."

## Benefits of a Challenge

"For a cyclist, Mount Diablo represents one of the greatest challenges in the Bay Area. As a teen bike racer, I am constantly asked why our team has such strong climbers. My answer is the tough

trails, technical rocky sections, and constant, arduous climbs of our home mountain. I'm always proud to describe our mountain's soft appearance and tough inner strength. The amount of effort we put out to get to the top of those climbs makes the stunning views even better upon arrival.

"One of my favorite sights is the rugged rocks jutting out of bright green hills around the mountain. Only those who have witnessed these views, especially after a long ride or hike, can truly understand what the mountain gives to a person."

## Sharing Appreciation

"Despite our enjoyment, I know of the tension between the different trail users. I understand hikers' and equestrians' fear of unruly bikers riding too fast and being unaware of their surroundings. I believe that no one should have to fear for their safety when trying to have an adventure of their own out on the mountain. We each share a deep love for Mount Diablo. We all make it our home. We should be able to share equally and safely in our appreciation of this wonderful, unique place."

## Responsible Recreation

While planning our first mountain biking event, the upcoming Devil Dirt Ride, an opportunity arose to discuss solutions to challenges posed by multiple types of recreators sharing the mountain's trails. In addition to volunteering at our annual Mount Diablo Challenge road cycling event, Carina represents cyclists by participating in these discussions. We hope these forums, bringing together cyclists, hikers and equestrians, will raise awareness of safe trail practices when encountering one another on our beloved trails.

## Riding the Devil Mountain

This year's Mount Diablo Challenge, on November 6th, will feature for the first time the "Junction Wave" which finishes at the Junction! Visit [SaveMountDiablo.org](http://SaveMountDiablo.org) for more info on our cycling events. 🏔️

by Beryl Anderson, Communications Manager



Courtesy of Carina Bilodeau

## Meet the Real Mountain: Hiking the Diablo Trail



Scott Hein

For me, it was all of that, and more. I heard about Four Days Diablo years ago from my neighbor, Jennifer. Jen knows that I hike Diablo most weekends, and that I take a yearly trip with friends to hike

Hiking may be the most frequent type of recreation on the mountain but there is one experience that most have never had. Four Days Diablo is a “gently roughing it” hiking trip that guides campers along the Diablo Trail, story by story and delicious meal by delicious meal. First time Diablo Trail trekker Christine Banducci learned some of the many secrets of our backyard wilderness.

### An Indescribable Experience

“How can I best describe Four Days Diablo? A beautiful, challenging hike in my underexplored backyard? A calorie neutral gastronomical adventure? Science camp? Time to build and strengthen friendships? An experience that left me better than when I began? A call to action?

the High Sierras. She knew that given my love of hiking, food, wine, and um, well... luxury, that this trip was designed for me. Of course, she was right.”

### The Real Mountain

“Prior to the trip, I had the notion that the Clayton side of Mount Diablo was the ‘real mountain’. I love the steep, rugged beauty of this face, and its constancy as the backdrop of my hometown. With plenty of beautiful, challenging hikes starting a couple miles from home, I did not consider that I might be taking its presence for granted.

“Four Days Diablo helped me meet the whole mountain, and wake up to understand that Mount Diablo and the surrounding open spaces are not there by happenstance. In four

days, and more than 40 miles, every step was a new discovery. I saw the beauty and majesty of previously unfamiliar terrain. I learned about the flora, fauna, geology, human history, and land preservation strategies from passionate experts. I experienced the acreage intimately, learning along the way that the presence of this wild open space is not a fortunate accident. I learned that many are working tirelessly to preserve, defend and restore the lands that I had enjoyed. During these four days, the mission of Save Mount Diablo and the story of the mountain itself came alive through the voices and experience of passionate experts. What an exciting way to learn!”

### Diablo's Gifts

“‘In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks’, said John Muir. Although this is so true of my Four Day Diablo experience, I am only beginning to understand the depth and breadth of what I received. As I get involved in the work of Save Mount Diablo, I imagine I am sure to find out.”

Don't miss the best adventure in your backyard! Register for Four Days Diablo at [SaveMountDiablo.org](http://SaveMountDiablo.org).

by Beryl Anderson, Communications Manager

### Four Times Four Days

Jennifer Jay

“I've been on the Four Days Diablo trip for the past four years because each year is different and I can't think of a better way to kick off my birthday. It was extra special this year as I was able to share this experience with Christine, my next door neighbor for the past 16

years. The Diablo wilderness is like a painter's palette. Depending on the rainfall, different wildflowers, plants and grasses color the landscape. Why deal with airports and time for distant travel? Instead I can spend the time hiking with a small group of amazing people with similar interests, enjoy great food and wine prepared by the area's top chefs, sleep outdoors under the

moonlight surrounded by peaceful serenity and scenery.

“As a tri-athlete—riding in the Mount Diablo Challenge and running at Diablo Trails Challenge—Four Days Diablo showed me that protecting and connecting open space benefits all of us by maintaining our air and water quality and increasing areas where we can get out and enjoy the land.”



## Restoring History: The Beacon Restoration Project



Scott Hein

The 85 year old “Eye of Diablo” has an intriguing history linking it to famous aviator Charles Lindbergh and World War II. The man that has kept its light operating for decades is retired Mt. Diablo State Park Ranger Burt Bogardus, who continues his work with the Beacon Restoration Team:

“I transferred to Mount Diablo State Park in 1975. The tradition of lighting the Beacon to commemorate Pearl Harbor Day started in 1964. The ‘closing’ or night shift ranger on December 7th would be responsible for meeting the veterans and turning on the light at the appropriate time. In the early days, I did this most of the time because I had some degree of technical competence.”

### Let There Be Light

“Several times the light did not work. The wiring was very unreliable, the sockets were corroded, the drive belts and pulleys slipped, and even though I had checked it out beforehand, sometimes it either wouldn’t light

up or revolve at the appropriate time. Needless to say, this would be very disappointing for the veterans and embarrassing for me.

“At least once, I expected the light was ready and at the critical moment it turned on but didn’t revolve. The set screws on the drive pulley were loose so I had to drive to the park service area and hunt for the right sized wrench to tighten them. By then the ceremony was over, but I got the light going.

“In the early 1980’s, I saw a large electric relay at a garage sale. I immediately thought, ‘That would make a good remote control for the Beacon’ and bought it for a dollar. I built the remote control so that the veterans could turn on the light themselves, rather than yell up to the ranger, ‘OK, turn it on!’ Although it ‘doesn’t meet code,’ I can say that it’s worked reliably for thirty years or more without a failure.”

### Bonds with the Beacon

“In 1993, I retired from the Parks Department but have continued to make sure that the Beacon is

in working condition. Now that a serious restoration effort is underway, I feel confident that the light will continue to shine every December 7th. There are just a few of the local Survivors left so it is important to keep the ‘Eye of Diablo’ lit in honor of all who served at Pearl Harbor. We have a good team of very knowledgeable, competent and dedicated volunteers working on the project.”

### Funds

On June 11th the Beacon “Lift Off” took place, removing it from the summit building. The delicate task of retrieving the Beacon was handled expertly thanks to Shell and Maxim Crane who volunteered a crane and rigging crew for the project. Donations from many individuals, services donated by businesses and a grant from the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation have helped us reach the project’s \$100,000 goal. Any remaining funds will be used for future maintenance to ensure the Beacon shines each December 7th.

### The Next Steps

Beacon Restoration Team member John Stuart shares the project’s next steps: “The Beacon was lifted off and carefully lowered five stories to a trailer mounted transport. It was then towed to a shop in Concord where it is being stripped of lead-paint, mechanically repaired, and repainted. Electrical wiring and controls will also be replaced prior to the Beacon’s return this fall.”

by Beryl Anderson, Communications Manager

Opposite Page: Four time Four Days Diablo veteran Jennifer Jay and neighbor Christine Banducci on this year’s Four Days Diablo hiking trip.

This Page: Thanks to services donated by Shell Refinery in Martinez and Maxim Crane, the historic Beacon was lifted off the summit building.

## Growing in Order to Grow Open Space: Meet Save Mount Diablo's New Team Members



**Meredith Hendricks**  
Senior Land Programs  
Manager

**M**eredith leads our stewardship program and land use engagement, while deepening connections with our communities.

Her passion for

preserving our wild places comes from a childhood spent exploring the state. As the Director of Policy and Stewardship for the S.F. Parks Alliance and the Executive Director of the Neighborhood Parks Council, she spearheaded improvements to San Francisco's city parks. Meredith holds a B.S. in Wildlife Conservation Biology from UC Davis and a M.A. in Environmental Business Relations from S.F. State. She lives in Emeryville with her husband, two cats and an abundant container garden.



**Ashley Rose**  
Communications  
Assistant

**A**shley joined our Advancement Department as the Communications Assistant in June. She is helping with the creation and delivery of all

communications and materials from our e-newsletter and social media platforms to our event invitations while Beryl Anderson is on family leave. Growing up in Pleasant Hill, she developed a deep sense of appreciation for Mount Diablo and the outdoors which she honed in college. Ashley attended Saint Mary's College in Moraga where she received a B.A. in Environmental Studies. Ashley lives in Oakland. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, rock climbing, identifying wildflowers and cycling.



**Nicole Murphy**  
Senior Administrative  
Assistant

**N**icole came aboard in April as a Senior Administrative Assistant to work with our Executive Director, Ron Brown. Her experience and background are in

the travel, tourism and fitness industries. She is passionate about helping others be healthy and fit by teaching group exercise classes. A native Canadian, Nicole has also enjoyed residing in the UK, Australia, Florida and now here with her husband and new daughter. They love overlooking the hills of the East Bay and the waters of Suisun Bay. As a family, they enjoy camping, hiking, working in the garden, and looking after the environment for our future generations.



**Kristen Noe**  
Administrative Assistant

**A**fter volunteering much needed data entry assistance beginning in March 2012, Kristen joined us as a part time Administrative Assistant this April. Growing up in Pleasant

Hill, she has enjoyed living in view of Mount Diablo all her life with the exception of her time studying English at the University of Oregon. Loving to add to her skills, Kristen has also taken classes at Diablo Valley College, shared her technical expertise at Radio Shack, interned with the Kensington Police Department and is certified as an Administrative Assistant. When she isn't online, she enjoys reading, watching movies, baking, and spending time with family.



# Tributes

Thank you to all of our supporters. Tribute gifts, donations in honor or memory of loved ones, made between January 1st and June 30th, 2013 are listed below. Your generosity preserves, defends and restores the mountain for all of us to enjoy!

## In Memory of

*Linda Andersson*  
Bruce Fogel  
*Millicent R. Armer*  
Rollin Armer  
*Scarlett Bell*  
Gary & Jo Ann Yates  
*Art Bonwell*  
Paul & Vivian Larson  
*L. W. Bothell*  
Rex Bothell  
*Dolly Brown*  
Janet Preston  
*Denton Croft*  
Joan S. Croft  
*Mabel Doss*  
Mildred Snelson  
*Scott Dowd*  
Jane A. Dubitzky  
*Mardi Duffield*  
Kristine L. Caratan  
*Helen Dulik Benes*  
Helen Benes Kaiser  
*Dwayne Eskridge*  
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Anonymous  
Farley Technical Services  
Robert & Patricia Rezak  
Karen Stepper  
*Bill & Vi Ferreira*  
Ginny A. Ferreira  
*Anna Louise Ferri*  
Lawrence E. Ferri  
*Bill Fortner*  
Gerald Origlia & Diane  
Sibley-Origlia  
*William Fortner*  
Stephen & Lisa Newton  
*Marian Fraser*  
Bruce & Ellen Fraser  
*Rudy Gallowich*  
Barbara A. Baxter  
*Ken Gordon*  
Charles Vercelli  
*Byron K. Haevernick*  
Jean L. Christie  
*George Hammond*  
Gary & Diana Pitchford  
*Chester W. Hatch Jr.*  
Katherine P. Hatch  
*William Marlow Hicks*  
Mary Hicks  
*Thorne W. Holmes*  
Virginia M. Holmes  
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Robert & Carol Lowitz  
*Barbara Johnson*  
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Alice Jordan  
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*John Randisi*  
Nellwyn Randisi  
*John A. Raventos*  
Patricia Donegan  
& Children  
*Charles P. Rickenbacher*  
Charles & Linda A.  
Rickenbacher  
*Barney Robles*  
Ginny A. Ferreira  
*Ann Ryan & Gus Haro*  
Joe & Susan Ryan  
*Robert Sangston*  
Diana P. Sangston

*Pearl Harbor Survivors*  
*Past & Present*  
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*Bernard "Bing" Walenter*  
Eileen Farley  
Martinez Adult Education  
Kathleen Yates  
Sandra Kerr & Larry  
Barton  
*Clayton Waller*  
Cheryl L. Reese  
*Pearl Harbor Survivors*  
*Walnut Creek, CA Chapter*  
John E. Antczak

*William Burton*  
Carole Engler  
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*Russell Casey*  
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David & Sandra Anderson  
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*Tracey Telles*  
Clemens Grosskinsky  
*Jeanne Thomas*  
Paul & Joan L. Armstrong  
Roger & Emily Ehm  
Donald & Ann Jones  
Douglas M. Jones  
*Mary Ulrich*  
Scott & Claudia Hein



Kristin McCleery

A prairie falcon flew over the Thomas Ranch properties during our 2013 BioBlitz in May.

*Janet Montes*  
Terry & Glenn Gonzalez  
*Patty Morris-Lind*  
Greg Di Loreto  
*Chad Newhouse*  
John & Susan Simmonds  
*Lou Nobbe*  
Gary & Betsy Willcuts  
*Dr. Thomas Ohlson*  
Gloria Ohlson  
*Nancy Pelletreau*  
Ann Jordan-Talley  
*Grover (Pete) Peterson*  
Richard G. Stephenson  
*Virgil A. Place, M.D.*  
Nicola Place & Chris  
Beeson

*Genevieve Sattler*  
Walter & Jennie  
Lessmann  
*John W. "Jack" Schneider*  
Kathy McNichols  
*In Memory of my Sister*  
Jeanne Belknap  
*Mark J. Sorem*  
Martha E. Riley  
*George Bennett Spencer*  
Steve B. Spencer  
*Donnie Fitzsimmons*  
& Stan Hubbell  
James & Letitia  
Fitzsimmons  
*Walter Stanke*  
Suzanne & Conrad Figueroa

*Marilyn Westphal*  
Vivian Boyd  
*Jack White*  
Beverly & Tom Gorman  
*David Zuckerman*  
Jill & Bruce Dresser  
*Frank Zwolinski*  
Donna & Paul Madeira

## In Honor of

*Richard D. Anderegg*  
Deborah A Kwan  
*The Animals of Mt. Diablo*  
Betts Sanderson  
*Marcie Buck*  
Charla Gabert





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## Experience the Mountain Your Way



### Mount Diablo Challenge

A thousand cyclists compete in this timed ride, climbing 3,249 feet in elevation in just 11.2 miles to the summit. In addition to coveted shirts for cyclists finishing under an hour, prizes are awarded at the summit with refreshments for all.

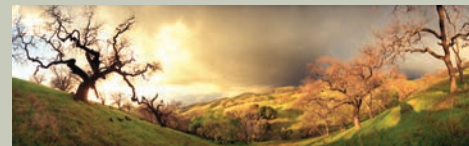
Sunday, October 6, 2013



### Trail Adventure

Find your adventure! Presented by Chevron, this event offers a distance for everyone with a Half-Marathon, 5K, 10K and Family Hike on Diablo's slopes. Runners and hikers receive medals and shirts at the expo after the race.

Sunday, November 3, 2013



### Diablo 3D and Symphony

Experience the Diablo wilderness through Stephen Joseph's exclusive 3D photos accompanied by an original score performed by the Contra Costa Wind Symphony as well as presentation of our Mountain Star Awards.

Wednesday, November 6, 2013

## Save Mount Diablo's Partner Sponsors



Partner Sponsors support our land preservation programs and receive recognition at all events for one year. Call Emily for info at (925) 947-3535.

## Our Mission

To preserve Mount 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.

## What We Do

**Preserve** natural lands through acquisition and cooperative efforts.

**Defend** Mount Diablo and its foothills from threats of development through land use planning and public education.

**Restore** habitat prior to transfer to a public agency for permanent preservation and public use.

**Enjoy** Diablo's parks through events and recreational opportunities.

## Why We Care

This is our home. Preserving natural land forever means safeguarding our quality of life, including our air, water, and views. Only half of Mount Diablo has been preserved. The other half of the mountain, over 70,000 acres, is privately owned and still threatened by development. That means risking the loss of wildlife corridors, ecosystems and recreational opportunities.