



DIABLO

w a t c h

Save Mount Diablo

Preserving the Mountain Since 1971

Spring 2010 No. 49

Viera - North Peak

We're 90% there, need \$100,000

By Seth Adams

"Viera - North Peak is the best and most botanically rich property that Save Mount Diablo has purchased in years."

- Heath Bartosh, Botanist, Nomad Ecology

Save Mount Diablo's late co-founder Mary Bowerman's wish to preserve the Viera-North Peak property is coming to fruition. Save Mount Diablo's most important acquisition accomplishment last year was signing a purchase agreement for the property, 165 acres on the slopes of Mt. Diablo's North Peak.

We made initial payments on the property from a revolving land fund established in Bowerman's honor, and in March we made the final payment. We have been conducting our first capital campaign, of \$1 million, to raise the funds needed to complete the purchase and repay the loan. SMD received a pledge from an anonymous donor for a challenge grant of \$450,000. As of the printing of this newsletter, we have matched the grant and have raised \$900,000 in pledges and funds, many by individual donors, to complete the campaign. We are continuing to work on the remaining \$100,000 and are very close to our goal of preserving Viera-North Peak forever.

Viera-North Peak parcel is one of the highest in the East Bay with an elevation of 2,300 feet. The property is visible for over 200 miles and includes views of the Sierra, Half Dome and Mt. Whitney. Sharing a 2.5 mile border with Mount Diablo State Park and rising between the two peaks, Viera is the very heart of Mt. Diablo.



Scott Hein

165-acre Viera-North Peak is the very heart of Mount Diablo. SMD's capital campaign has raised \$900,000 and needs just \$100,000 more.

(continued on page 12)

Reassembling the Bettencourt Ranch

462 acres along Peacock Creek and Irish Canyon

By Seth Adams

Save Mount Diablo's 320-acre beautiful Irish Canyon property is almost hidden behind Keller Ridge, less than a mile from downtown Clayton. We signed the purchase agreement in spring 2006, raised funds and then in November 2007 we completed the acquisition with the help of the

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

All without ever taking the public or our members onto the property. We couldn't. The property has limited access and an intervening landowner, Eastern Associates, was opposed to allowing the public to cross their property, even on guided tours without ever leaving the fire road that follows Irish Creek east.

The access problem is about to be solved. Last

fall Eastern Associates agreed to sell their 462-acre property to East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) for \$2.76 million. It's sometimes known as the "Ang" property for one of its owners. About half of the funding will come from Park District bonds, and about half from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (Conservancy), a funding entity which preserves endangered species habitat. The purchase will be completed by September 1st.

Meanwhile SMD is working to transfer our Irish Canyon property to the Park District too, again using partial funding from the Conservancy. SMD generally acts as an intermediary, acquiring properties as they become available then transferring the land to a park agency for long term management. We often help the agency raise funds to reimburse us for our purchase costs, so that (continued on page 7)

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Founded in 1971, Save Mount Diablo has helped expand preserved natural lands on and around the mountain from 6,788 acres to more than 100,000 acres

Masthead Panorama:

Dragon Oaks 550, Stephen Joseph

Proud Member of



From the Executive Director
Preserve, Protect, Restore, Enjoy . . .

These are the things that we do in our continued effort to save Mount Diablo. This issue of *Diablo Watch* contains a variety of stories that exemplify the ways in which we “preserve,” “protect,” “restore” and “enjoy” Mount Diablo.

Preserve - We’re at the 90% mark on our million dollar capital campaign to acquire Viera - North Peak, one of our most exciting projects in many years.

Protect - Our efforts toward the reuse of the Concord Naval Weapons Station are going well even as we defend against attempts to break urban limit lines in Brentwood, San Ramon and, perhaps, Livermore.

Restore - Hundreds of volunteers are helping us with restoration projects at Marsh Creek-IV and in Irish Canyon.

Enjoy - Our Events calendar continues to grow as we find more ways to introduce our members and the public to the open space treasures located at the center of our community.

When Art Bonwell and Mary Bowerman founded Save Mount Diablo in 1971 they thought they could accomplish their vision of preserving the peaks of Mt. Diablo within 5 years. 39 years later, the challenges to accomplish Art and Mary’s dream are more complex than they could ever have imagined.

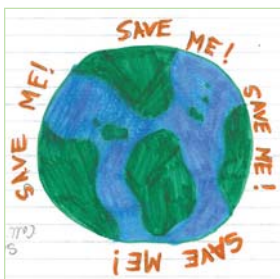
In 1971 Art and Mary could not have envisioned that Save Mount Diablo would one day need to be concerned about the ecological impacts of climate change. Nor could they have predicted that we would own hundreds of acres of land for many years - thereby requiring us to undertake stewardship and restoration programs.

When people hear our name, Save Mount Diablo, they often ask – “Save it from what? Isn’t it already saved?” We welcome these opportunities to explain the threats and to point out all of the privately owned natural lands that are still at risk. But even if we (and our allies) are successful in saving Mount Diablo through acquisitions, and easements as conditions of development, we know that our work is not done. The mountain will always need a “watchdog” – people who will ensure that the natural lands, habitat and wildlife will remain protected and that these protections will not be ignored or diluted when no one is looking.

Our ability to fulfill the vision that Art and Mary had in 1971 is dependent upon you. Saving and protecting the mountain will continue to take the time, effort and dedication of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and members. With your support we can preserve, protect, restore and enjoy Mount Diablo and its entire eco-system – not just for all of us but, equally important, for future generations.

Ron Brown

A Letter and \$200 donation from the Earth Club at Pleasant Hill Middle School:



Dear Save Mount Diablo,

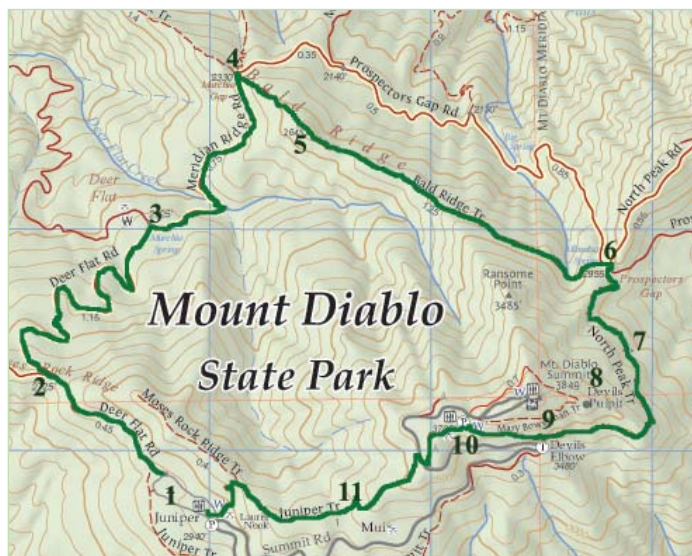
Thank you for buying property so that it won’t get developed or polluted. We sold Chico Bags as a fundraiser to raise money to Save Mount Diablo. Please find enclosed a check to be used towards the purchase of the Viera-North Peak property.

Keep up the good work we really appreciate what you are doing for the Earth.

Sincerely,

Pleasant Hill Middle School Earth Club

Ron Brown
Calli Nash
Ms. Kari
Raquel Lopez
Melissa Zuniga
Sharon Geraghty
Pepper Gundlach
Kristen Ayres Gundlach



The 6.8 mile trail is marked by the green line. Each number indicates a point of interest synched with information in Audible Mount Diablo.

Audible Mount Diablo: The Grand Loop Tour

Here is a creative and economical way to get outdoors or spend quality time with those close to you. Writer Joan Hamilton recently partnered with Save Mount Diablo and local organizations to create a wonderfully dynamic audio tour of the most interesting hikes on Mount Diablo and you can download it for free! It makes a perfect day filled with entertainment and education in the paradise that is Mount Diablo.

Audible Mount Diablo

Modeled after the best museum audio guides, Audible Mount Diablo combines lively interviews and music with the rush of wind and the chirps, howls, and growls of wildlife—all downloadable to a computer or an MP3 player for free. Background files on natural and human history provide an in-depth introduction to the mountain. These can be enjoyed at home or in the car before starting the hikes.

The most innovative aspect of Audible Mount Diablo is the information it offers on the trail. Instead of lugging field guides, you and your family can learn from a portable electronic device, with titles and subtitles keyed to stops along several routes.

Naturalists heighten your appreciation of the sights and sounds at each stop, tell tales of the mountain's past, and suggest what to look for around the next

bend. Photographs pop up to help identify plants and animals. It puts a naturalist in your pocket.

On the 6.8 mile "Grand Loop Tour", Seth Adams, SMD's Director of Land Programs, shares the stories he's gathered in 20 years of exploration. The Grand Loop Tour circumnavigates Diablo's main peak and traverses many of the mountain's geological and botanical features.

The Grand Loop Tour

The hike starts at Juniper Camp by picking up Deer Flat Road, Meridian Ridge Road and Bald Ridge Trail to reach Prospector's Gap. It then follows North Peak Trail around the summit to Devil's Elbow where then it follows Summit Trail to the lower parking lot. From here it returns to Juniper Camp via Juniper Trail.

Along the way you will have the opportunity to check out the snowy masses of the Sierra Nevada and Mount Lassen as they float along the eastern and northern horizons, while the watery realm of the Delta seems close enough to touch. On all sides you will observe a stunning view of the urbanization that surrounds the mountain.

The trails pass over Jurassic and Cretaceous deposits. Tectonic pressures have squeezed the rocks into such tortured shapes it is hard to imagine their origin on the flat Pacific Ocean floor. You will notice impressive red outcrops of radiolarian chert that dominate at Devil's Pulpit, slick green serpentinite along Deer Flat trail and greenish dome-shaped pillow basalts along Juniper Trail.

As you make your way around the summit you will notice the plant communities changing to reflect the myriad microclimates. Shrub species are surprisingly diverse, from scattered clumps of California sagebrush, creambrush and poison oak to dense tall tangles of scrub oak, silk tassel and buckbrush.

A common shrub in the chaparral on the peak's north side is the hop tree, a mildly allergenic relative of poison oak. Only a few riparian plants like big leaf maple have been able to grow along the steep creeks, which are virtual waterfalls in the spring, but are dry stony staircases for most of the year. The broadleaf-sclerophyll community occupies shady spots, but wind and shallow soil stunts the laurels and canyon live oaks into a dwarf forest. The deciduous oak-pine community occurs as scattered trees, with drought resistant pines and western juniper predominating over oaks.

Sparse grasslands on exposed ridges and unstable slopes feature many native wildflowers. Flower displays change from day to day. Baby blue eyes and goldfields are common in April, but a few weeks later bright patches of goldenbush, California Poppy and wiry bird's eye gilia will carpet sites. In summer, yellow sulfur buckwheat and scarlet hummingbird fuchsia bloom profusely despite infernal temperatures.

There is always the chance of seeing wildlife, from the California Thrasher to rarer creatures like the Alameda whipsnake. Coyotes abound and are frequently sighted long after they have noticed you.

A complete audio trail description along with a map can be downloaded at <http://www.SaveMountDiablo.org>.

Joan Hamilton, a former editor at *Sierra* magazine, is the producer and editor of the Audible Mount Diablo series; *The Grand Loop Tour* was funded by SMD and the California State Parks Foundation.



George Phillips

The Grand Loop looking east where the Delta, Sierra Nevada and Mount Lassen can be seen.



Participants in the 350.org event, a global climate crisis campaign, linked around the summit of Mount Diablo.

Balancing on the Head of a Peak

Mt. Diablo and Climate Change

by Seth Adams

Average global temperatures are getting warmer and climate is changing. You may not yet believe in climate change. Regardless, it will be the single most discussed environmental issue for the rest of your life. Its effects increase every day, not just on polar ice caps but everywhere, including on Mt. Diablo. There is a silver lining: The solutions are the same regardless of your beliefs: conserve more, pollute less, protect land, and plant things.

Mt. Diablo has rich biodiversity; it sits at an ecological crossroads between the Bay and the Central Valley with wet northwest influences and dry southwestern ones. Its complex geology and rugged exposures result in varied microclimates and microhabitats. The mountain includes almost 10% of California's native plant species and, in a region which gets about 20 inches of rain, the shift between woodland, grassland and desert is caused by just a few inches difference in rainfall or evaporation.

For example, chaparral tends to grow on south or western slopes because the exposure to the sun makes it hotter and dryer, and fire is more frequent. A few hundred feet away across a ridge top, the northeast facing slopes are more lush, and covered in blue oak woodland—because there's less exposure to the sun. At the bottom of the slope,

stream canyons may be crowded with sycamores, alders and willow, their roots extending into the ground water table. If it drops below the roots for too long, they die.

As the climate warms, heat sensitive wildlife species move up mountain slopes, if

they can, into smaller and smaller areas, until they can't rise any further. Competing species or insects that were limited by cold may become more common. Mt. Diablo's ecosystems are rich and diverse, but they're easily affected; they're balanced on the head of a pin.



Streams like this one along Falls Trail may be reduced or halt all together.

Climate Change Confirmed

Every major scientific body in the world has confirmed climate change. All fifteen of the warmest years on record have taken place in the past twenty years. Glaciers, polar ice caps and mountain snow pack are melting and vanishing, and less ice and snow also means even less sunlight reflected. Meanwhile, sea level is rising. Oceans are getting warmer, killing coral reefs, and more acidic, threatening many organisms.

The confusing part is that since the industrial revolution we've added greenhouse gases to the atmosphere but much of the effect has been masked. The ocean has absorbed tremendous amounts of carbon, organic matter is trapped in peat and permafrost, while pollution and water vapor can shade the earth and provide some cooling even as more heat is trapped.

Tipping Points

At certain tipping points the buffering mechanisms reverse and begin adding to the problem. Permafrost melts, for example, and thousands of years of stored organic matter begins to rot, releasing carbon dioxide and methane as a new and accelerating source of greenhouse gases. Oceans absorb carbon and heat, and moderate temperatures but warmer waters begin liberating stored carbon and spawn more hurricanes to redistribute increased amounts of water vapor and heat.

Climate is not the same as weather. Heavy rains and flooding one week don't always mean we'll have a wet year. Unusual snow storms don't mean average temperatures aren't still rising. Weather is what happens over a several week period, climate is the long term average of all the weather events. You can't judge change based on any one area; the U.S. is less than 2% of the earth's surface, for example. The poles show changes fastest. As the earth warms, it attempts to find equilibrium by redistributing heat and water vapor in air and ocean currents. Small average changes globally can mean extreme weather events locally.

We're in the beginning of the shift and, with changes accelerating, it will be chaotic. Wildlife lives within the averages but is limited by the extremes, and seasonal weather timing is vitally important. California's Mediterranean climate is already balanced on a dry-wet season extreme, with two or three wet years and four or five dry ones in a ten year period.

Expect More Extremes

We may see both more extreme dry years, with more fires, and more extreme wet ones with more flooding and erosion. The rare Pallid manzanita



Federally listed California red-legged frog



Knobcone Pine Forest; every tree sequesters carbon and produces oxygen.

Scott Hein

in the Oakland hills and yerba mansa on Mt. Diablo both prosper in dry years and suffer from mildew in wet ones. Too much rain and they both may vanish. As water sources become less reliable, frogs and salamanders may disappear and other wildlife decrease in population. Fewer cold years to limit insect populations may increase impacts on native plants.

California's cold offshore currents are changing, too, and becoming less predictable. They're the engine that pulls cold nutrient-rich water to the surface, feeding marine life and generating dry season fog cycles. When the currents change, even in timing, marine life starves. If they change too much and decrease summer fogs, coastal redwoods will die. If the fogs increase, "sudden oak death," a fungal disease that seems to do better in the fog belt, may move inland to Mt. Diablo. It's possible that both will take place. The extremes will become more extreme, battering wildlife species with less time for recovery or adaptation.

Bay Area Could Look Like Barstow

Average temperatures worldwide have risen by about 1.3 degrees over the past century. We can't stop these changes any time soon but the more they increase, the greater the impacts. If we continue with business as usual, we can expect a 10.5 degree increase over the next century. If we're successful in eliminating fossil fuels we may limit increases to 3 degrees. Imagine for example, the effect of a hot season that starts three weeks earlier and ends three weeks later, on us and our local landscapes, on snow pack which provides our water, on the fire season. The Bay

Area could lose its woodland and look like Barstow or Baja.

In rich nations, some areas will be worth saving and protective measures will be funded. In poorer countries large numbers of environmental refugees will be created. The scary part is that the changes are accelerating.

Land Conversion vs. Preservation

Carbon "sequestration" means to store carbon. Woody plants like trees store carbon over their lifetimes and some is stored longer as downed wood and as organic matter in the soil. When you burn or consume the plants the carbon is liberated. It's estimated that 50% of the increased carbon in the air is from land conversion from open space to developed areas and agriculture. About one fifth of each year's additional carbon is from converted land. Fifteen months ago East Bay Regional



Scott Hein

350.org necklace medallion showing the need to get CO2 levels below the 350 parts per million standard considered to be safe for humans.

Park District did a carbon audit of its nearly 100,000 acres (Mt. Diablo is surrounded by a similar number of preserved acres). Those 100,000 undeveloped acres include approximately 2.8 million metric tons of stored carbon. Each year another 91,000 tons of carbon are stored by those 100,000 acres, the equivalent of removing 16,317 passenger cars and sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) from the road annually, saving approximately 10.4 million gallons of gasoline. These parklands also produce approximately 66,000 metric tons of oxygen (O₂) annually, the equivalent of the amount of oxygen consumed by the city of Piedmont in one year.

Preserving land in its natural state avoids future emissions from land cover conversion and subsequent emissions from a developed landscape.

We Are the Solution

In the past many climate changes took

place over thousands or tens of thousands of years and wildlife could adapt or migrate. They'll be hard pressed to keep up with changes over decades or a few hundred years. Species will be driven extinct at an increasing rate while other opportunistic ones—insects carrying disease such as malaria for example—may spread.

The flip side is that large, interconnected open spaces will better buffer these changes. Alameda whipsnakes are found both at Lime Ridge and on Mt. Diablo. Imagine that a fire at Lime Ridge kills the whipsnakes there. If the two parks remain connected, the whipsnakes at Mt. Diablo can re-colonize the chaparral at Lime Ridge.

We'll all play an increasing role in conservation. Below are some ways you can help.

What You Can Do

- **Acquire and Protect Land**

Help decrease and buffer climate change instead of making it worse.

- **Join the Diablo Restoration Team**

Plant Trees around Mt. Diablo and in your yard. Leafy trees provide summer shade. Each year, the average yard tree cleans 330 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and absorbs ten pounds of pollutants from the air.

- **Support Legislation** to decrease climate change. AB32, California's landmark greenhouse gas law will be under attack on the November ballot.

- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

Use less energy, especially from fossil fuels, and conserve resources. Use less hot water, convert to CFL bulbs, use less heating and cooling. Consume fewer resources. Take local vacations.

- **Buy Local and Eat Less Meat**

Food from distant locations uses tremendous amounts of fossil fuels. Animal factory farms are a leading source of potent greenhouse gases like methane.

- **Get Diablo Watch Online**

Email your request to receive Diablo Watch through email only to smdinfo@SaveMountDiablo.org



Bob Walker

The golden hills of the Tassajara Valley.

Land Use Issues

by Troy Bristol

In addition to preserving open spaces through land acquisition, Save Mount Diablo plays an active role in land use advocacy to help protect some of the area's most sensitive resources.

Here are a few updates on some of the larger projects that we have been working on.

Tassajara Valley Under Attack

The Tassajara Valley is an incredibly sensitive area of Contra Costa County. Beautiful sloping grasslands dotted with trees drop down to Tassajara Creek as it meanders along the bottom of the valley. A variety of biological resources and sensitive habitats are present, offering food, shelter, and movement corridors for a number of rare wildlife species. Cattle grazing is the primary land use in the valley but farming has begun to expand since the area was excluded from the Urban Limit Line in 2000. Unfortunately, this beautiful valley is the target of development pressure, both from Contra Costa County and the City of San Ramon.

Contra Costa County is currently considering an application for the "New Farm" project, which would spread 186 million-dollar homes across 771 acres of the Tassajara Valley. Simultaneously, San Ramon is considering an update of their General Plan which includes an expansion of their Urban Growth Boundary in November to include 1,624 acres of the valley.

Save Mount Diablo is opposed to both of these proposals and any other that

would have impacts on the resources found in the Tassajara Valley. We have submitted comments to the county and the city expressing our concerns, we have started working with allies to address the development threats, and we are leading hikes to educate the public about this important resource.

Concord Naval Weapons Station

The City of Concord is planning for the reuse of the 5,100-acre Concord Naval Weapons Station – the largest development project in the East Bay. As a member of the Community Coalition for a Sustainable Concord, Save Mount Diablo has been a leader in advocating for a more compact development footprint, we hope to achieve a greater amount of the preserved open space in a new regional park as part of the Concord Naval Weapons Station Reuse Plan. SMD also helped to create a Regional Stakeholders Group that has advocated for project components that would ensure economic vitality through an equitable balance of jobs, housing, education and quality of life facilities and services.

On February 23rd of this year, the Concord City Council approved the Clustered Villages land use alternative which includes more than 3,000 acres of parks and open space – 65% of the property – including protection of the ridgeline between Central and Eastern Contra Costa County and of Mount Diablo Creek. At that meeting Save Mount Diablo successfully advocated for a decrease in the amount of low density residential in the plan in favor of a greater amount of open space.

Without public participation we would not have been able to accomplish what we have so far. Soon the city will begin the next step in the process: they will amend their General Plan to adopt the Naval Weapons Station Reuse Plan. This is our opportunity to encourage the city to adopt more finely tuned policies such as granting open space areas to East Bay Regional Park District and preparing comprehensive mitigation and restoration strategies.

BART to Livermore

Save Mount Diablo has increased our activity and our focus in eastern Alameda County and the Altamont

hills. Preservation of open space in this area is critical in creating a recreational and wildlife corridor between Mount Diablo and the rest of the Diablo Range to the south. Unfortunately, as Eastern Alameda and Contra Costa Counties and Western San Joaquin County continue to develop, open spaces and wildlife movement corridors are becoming increasingly cut off from one another. Thankfully, the City of Livermore has adopted an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to prevent urban development from spreading east into these important open spaces.

However, BART has proposed a plan to extend its service from Dublin eastward to Livermore that could potentially increase development pressure in these sensitive areas and undermine the UGB. Nine different alternatives for the extension are currently under review by BART, five of which have stations on the eastern edges of Livermore at Greenville Road and Vasco Road. The Greenville Road Station is partially outside of the UGB and the Vasco Road station is in close proximity to the line. Both stations would encourage growth and increase pressure on the UGB, threatening to encroach into the open spaces to the east.

Save Mount Diablo has submitted comments opposing any alternative which includes either of these stations and encouraging plans with a station in downtown Livermore – promoting transit oriented development while discouraging new sprawl development in open spaces.

To learn more about these issues and others that Save Mount Diablo is working on, visit our website at www.SaveMountDiablo.org or call the office at (925) 947-3535.



Scott Hein

Concord Naval Weapons Station.



The 462 acre "Ang" or Eastern Associates property extends from the fire road onto the slopes of Kreiger Peak.

David Ogden

Reassembling (continued from page 1)

we can recycle the funds for the next purchase.

Both our property and Eastern Associates' are part of the hundred year old Bettencourt Ranch, which was subdivided into large parcels and sold in the 1980's to investors speculating that Oakhurst was just the first in a series of developments. The county urban limit line was created in 1990 and speculation died down. Now, with the two adjacent properties assured protection, we've literally reassembled the Bettencourt Ranch.

Irish Canyon

SMD's 320-acre Irish Canyon purchase was a stretch in two ways. We appropriated the name; our parcel is actually at the center of the canyon. The canyon mouth is on the Eastern Associates property. Our parcel is also an island, a half mile to a mile from four different public parks: Black Diamond Mines, City of Clayton Oakhurst Open Space, Mt. Diablo State Park, and our Chaparral Spring property to the east, which we transferred to the Park District in December 2008.

Without additional purchases our property would have been land locked. The Eastern Associates acquisition now links SMD's Irish Canyon parcels firmly to the Clayton Open Space including two big stretches of the canyon, and is connected at a corner and with the public trail to Black Diamond Mines.

Upstream from our property is another mile and half of Irish Canyon on private land, then a final stretch on the Park District's Chaparral Spring and Clayton Ranch properties. The canyon

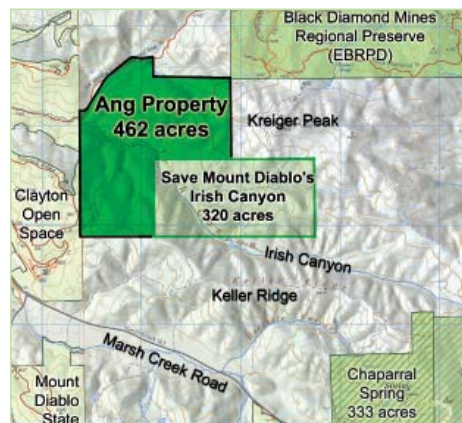
and fire road crest there, then the road drops north and east into Oil Canyon and Briones Valley.

Peacock Creek

The Eastern Associates property is part of a bowl of canyons and ridges

between Oakhurst on the west, Keller Ridge on the south stretching east, and the lower slopes of Kreiger Peak to the northeast. It rises from 640' to 1300'.

The north boundary is marked by Black Diamond Trail and Peacock Creek. The creek drops from near Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve and an old namesake abandoned mine to the Oakhurst golf course, then joins Mt. Diablo creek.



The Ang property will connect SMD's Irish Canyon property to other preserves.

Most of the property is grassland. From the air (or Google Earth) you can see a gap where blue oak woodland once covered the northeast slope of Keller Ridge. Homesteaders and ranchers cut many of the oaks until most of the remaining ones are along the steep banks of creek tributaries—leaving ideal areas for woodland restoration. Other oak species—valley oaks and live oaks—are scattered across the remainder of the property and along the main creek branches. In total eight natural land-cover types have been mapped: annual grassland, oak savannah, oak woodland, seasonal wetlands, riparian, alkali wetlands, wetlands, and several stock ponds.

The property provides suitable habitat for a number of the Conservancy's target species: San Joaquin kit fox, Alameda whipsnake, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, western pond turtle, western burrowing owl, golden eagle, big tarplant, Brewer's dwarf flax, Diablo sunflower, and Mount Diablo globe lily.

Four or five main corridors cross the property. As you follow the public trail from Clayton Road, the trail passes between the country club and golf course following Peacock Creek, which was fenced and restored as a condition of Oakhurst, thick with riparian vegetation. Woodland dominates the walk and you quickly trade Clayton Road and the busy downtown for bird songs and scurrying ground squirrels.

Keller Ridge

When the lush creek vegetation ends, you've reached the Eastern property—a modified grazing regime or fencing should take pressure off the creek and allow restoration. After a half mile, the second corridor branches off—Irish Canyon and another fire road leading east across a bridge. The oak woodland curves east on this northern face of Keller Ridge but the view opens up to expanses of grassland rising north, rumbled with slumps and landslides.

The Irish Canyon fire road continues along the creek to SMD's property, but a side road up to the old Bettencourt ranch house is framed by two narrower canyon corridors rising to Keller Ridge. The ranch house is a small 1950's era structure near two barns. Keller Ridge, stretching across the property from Clayton Open Space to SMD's property, is the fifth corridor.

Projects like this one don't happen by accident—they're a lot of work—and this particular landowner, as we understand it, was challenging. Realtor Jim Gwerder was able to bridge the gap between private interests and public ones. Thanks to East Bay Regional Park District and the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy for undertaking this important acquisition. Special thanks to Nancy Wenninger

(continued on page 12)

Diablo C

Mount Diablo Challenge October 4, 2009

Each year over 1,000 cyclists set out to conquer the steep slopes of Mount Diablo with athleticism, will and their choice of human powered cycles.



(Clockwise) A group of bicyclists leading the pack; Riding up Mt. Diablo can be a family affair; Frontrunners ascending to the summit; Cheerful volunteers stopping for a quick photo; A more "laid back" style of bicycle but the slopes are just as tough; A cyclist proudly displaying his "One Hour" t-shirt for completing the challenge in under 60 minutes; Michael Vettereli and Kenny Rakestraw, 1st and 2nd place Men's Cyclists; Diablo Multisport Connection team eager to begin.

Mount Diablo Trails Challenge March 20, 2010

This year we incorporated a Half Marathon, 10k and 5k along with our 50k. The result was a wonderful turnout of enthusiastic trail runners of all levels.



(clockwise) Half Marathon runners taking off; Randy Wenger and volunteers barbecued delicious meals, thumbs up; Tim Long crossing the 50k finish line in a record 5 hours and 5 seconds; Save Mount Diablo booth and team members Beryl Anderson, Monica Oei and Charla Gabert; Trail runners in the home stretch; Search and Rescue volunteers enjoying the event and keeping us safe; Carol Chen laughing her way uphill; Diablo Multisport Connection team members making a splash.

celebrated

Mount Diablo Trail Adventure November 8, 2009

Families, runners, hikers and nature lovers came together seeking their own style of outdoor adventure at one fabulous event. The parks were enjoyed by all.



(Clockwise from left) Jenny McGregor rounding a bend; Friends enjoying a hike; Julie Seelen and George Phillips ensuring a safe and fun event; A group of runners fresh out of the gate; Participants getting started along a tree lined path; Three young girls adventuring in the great outdoors; Save Mount Diablo's house band, Grab Bag, entertaining with a musical interlude; Interested youngsters embarking on a guided walk to learn more about their natural surroundings.

Marsh Creek IV Restoration Fall 2009 - Spring 2010

Our Diablo Restoration Team, DiRT, has been planting and weeding to restore Marsh Creek IV and expand its creekside and woodland.



(clockwise left to right) SMD's George Phillips and botanist Heath Bartosh; Family making their quality time count; A father-daughter team removing non-native plants; A mother and her daughters checking plant growth; REI Earth Day volunteers; Patting down the dirt around native plants; Smiling and weeding; Digging holes to plant trees.

Photos on these pages by: Pete Beck, Troy Bristol, David Dolder, Scott Hein, Chris Hovey, Chihping Fu, David Ogden and George Phillips.

Heritage Tree Program Adopt A Part of Mangini Ranch and Save the Mountain's Natural Lands

by David Ogden

What better way to honor the memory of a loved one, or celebrate a special person in your life, than by dedicating a living tree or a grove on a beautiful piece of land in the shadow of Mount Diablo?

Save Mount Diablo's Heritage Tree Program focuses on Mangini Ranch, a 208-acre parcel on the north side of the mountain. Mangini Ranch is home to sensuous blue oak groves, sprawling valley oaks, and spectacular buck-eye groves. SMD acquired the land from the Mangini family in 2006 and will eventually turn it over to the park system. Meanwhile, SMD supporters can help preserve this and other land around the mountain by adopting a tree, a grove, or even a pond on Mangini Ranch.

Scott Hein



A grove of oaks available to be dedicated as Heritage Trees in Mangini Ranch along lush hills looking from Lime Ridge toward Mount Diablo.

ate information will be sent to those being honored. Your gift is fully tax deductible.

Visiting Mangini to Make a Selection

The trips to pick out a tree or grove serve several purposes. They may be an emotional time of closure, and they're fun, bringing together families from across the country to honor someone or something they love. Previous Heritage Tree selections have included: a valley oak chosen by a mother whose daughter passed away seven years earlier: "Her birthday is coming up in June, and I always try to think of something to keep her memory alive." A young couple wanted a place to bring their 2 1/2-year-old daughter and chose an oak with a branch that dips low to the ground,

history, biology and geography much like Galindo Creek, the green-lined, blue thread whose headwaters spring up there. The Mangini Ranch represents most of the gap between Lime Ridge Open Space and Mt. Diablo State Park.

The property survived Spanish settlers, Mexican ranchers, American homesteaders, miners, railroads and suburbs. Many developers showed interest in the Mangini Ranch, but in 1990 the citizens of Contra Costa County voted to create an urban limit line. The Mangini Ranch wound up outside of the line. Still, over the next thirteen years, one developer or realtor after another floated plans for Mangini. Instead, the Mangini family

began negotiations with Save Mount Diablo and now their property has been preserved for all time (the property, however, is open only by guided tour until it passes to a public agency).

Save a tree by sending an email to smdinfo@SaveMountDiablo.org requesting to receive Diablo Watch only through email.



How does it work?

How does the program work? There are a number of ways you can participate. You can visit the property with a Save Mount Diablo representative to choose your tree or grove. Or, Save Mount Diablo can make the selection for you. After the selection is made, a small marker is placed at the base of the tree. If you have faraway family members, all of you can even use Google Earth to choose a tree right from your computer.

When you make your gift, you'll receive information, including a description, a photo, and the GPS coordinates of the tree or grove that you have chosen, and a certificate of appreciation. Notification and appropri-

so she can sit on the limb. A large grove was adopted in honor of the work of the Boy Scouts. Sometimes a tree or grove is chosen as a great place to picnic. Others are chosen for the view or because they're visible from a hiking trail.

Should you wish to participate in the Heritage Tree Program, please call Julie Seelen at (925) 947-3535 or email smdinfo@savemountdiablo.org for complete information about the program. Check our online hike schedule for the next hike on Mangini and join us.

About Mangini Ranch:

Mangini Ranch's 208 acres swirl with importance. It winds sinuously through

Heritage Tree Program Donation Schedule

Heritage Tree

to 10 inch diameter	- \$ 250
to 15 inch diameter	- \$ 500
to 20 inch diameter	- \$ 750
over 20 inch diameter	- \$ 1,000

Commemorative Grove of Trees

1 acre grove	- \$ 2,500
2 acre grove	- \$ 5,000
5 acre grove	- \$ 10,000
10 acre grove	- \$ 20,000
Desert Olive Grove	- \$25,000

Grassland and Chaparral

1/4 acre	- \$ 500
1/2 acre	- \$ 1,000
1 acre	- \$ 2,500

Pond - \$ 25,000

Brentwood's Measure F Fails the Test Developer's Measure Threatens Brentwood's Urban Limit Line

by Troy Bristol

Views of Mount Diablo from Brentwood are spectacular. Rugged twin peaks rise above parallel ridges, descending through oak-spotted slopes to flat valley bottom farms. Those majestic views and an agricultural heritage contribute to Brentwood's charm. Now the beautiful lands west of Brentwood are at risk.

On June 8th, Brentwood residents will determine the fate of this land when they cast their vote on developer-sponsored Measure F.

The proponents – primarily out-of-town development companies that control most of the affected land – have placed Measure F on the ballot to break and expand Brentwood's voter-approved Urban Limit Line (ULL) to include

740 more acres south of Balfour Road and east of Deer Valley Road.

Measure F would allow for development of up to 1,300 homes and 35 acres of retail in this area and increases Brentwood's population by over 4,000 people.

Save Mount Diablo is working with local citizens organized as "Brentwood Residents Opposed to Developer Measure F" to oppose the measure.

Once a small farming town, Brentwood has grown rapidly with its population more than doubling in the past decade. Growth has brought increased traffic, overcrowded schools, decreased

property values, and has stressed vital natural resources like water, agricultural lands and open spaces. With dozens of other housing projects approved but not yet built, Brentwood's rural character hangs in the balance.

If recent election history is any indication of how Brentwood residents will vote on Measure F, the proponents are hopefully wasting their time. In two different elections over the past five years Brentwood voters have opposed development in this area and created an Urban Limit Line to stop it.

History of the Urban Limit Line

Here's the short story of Urban Limit Lines in Contra Costa: Voters created a

Claims of Measure F

Proponents of Measure F placed it on the June ballot, betting that residents would only have a few weeks to get educated about the measure. They'll spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to confuse and trick the voters.

For example, they're suggesting that Brentwood needs its "own" Urban Limit Line (although it already has one). Measure F would not only expand the existing ULL, it also includes a "Development Agreement" which would lock in their project's unit numbers so that future councils and the public can't change them.

Head consultant Tom Koch – who is also behind the "New Farm" project in the Tassajara Valley on the November ballot – is running a campaign full of mostly empty promises with few guarantees.

They claim that developer fees will relieve traffic by improving overburdened Balfour Road and American Avenue, even though the development's new traffic will overwhelm any improvements;

create funds for crime prevention tools for Brentwood police even though crime is down and the funds are a token; and provide resources for investment into new job opportunities, although Brentwood has more than a million square feet of approved but not yet built commercial and retail space.

Meanwhile, none of their campaign materials mention the fact that Measure F includes 1,300 new houses.

Why You Should Vote No

In reality, Measure F will clog Brentwood roads with thousands of additional cars, further decrease property values by overstocking the



Scott Hein

Part of the 740 acres of Brentwood's western hills, outside of the existing Urban Limit Line, that are at risk of major urban development if Measure F passes.

County ULL in 1990 but it didn't affect cities. In 2000 the county tightened the line. A few years later a transportation sales tax measure passed, requiring cities to also adopt voter-approved ULLs if they wish to qualify for transportation funding. In 2005 Brentwood voters rejected a proposed, more expansive city line (Measure L) that would have included the Measure F area and some other parcels around the city. In 2006 the county and all of Contra Costa's cities that didn't already have urban limit lines voted again – and every city, including Brentwood, approved a new ULL. That's the ULL the developers are trying to replace, once again with a more expansive one.

continued on page 12



Seth Adams

A roadrunner residing in the open space that Measure F would develop.

Measure F (continued from page 11)

housing market, pack more students into overcrowded schools, and deplete scarce natural resources.

In addition to the direct affects of building 1,300 houses, Measure F undermines the voice of Brentwood voters in the 2005 and 2006 elections and turns good planning upside down. The purpose of the ULL is to protect lands for agriculture, habitat, and recreation, not to allow more development.

SMD is working with residents to spread the word about Measure F and inform voters about its impacts. We need all the volunteers we can find.

We hope that once Brentwood residents know the truth about how their community will be impacted, Measure F will be defeated.

What You Can Do:

- Brentwood residents, vote NO on Measure F on June 8th.
- For more information about Measure F visit: <http://www.savemountdiablo.org/Brentwood/DontChangeUrbanLimitLine.htm>
- To get involved contact George at gphillips@SaveMountDiablo.org
- Join our Facebook Page - People Opposed to Developer Measure F in Brentwood, CA



Hikers enjoying a tour of the lush wildlife packed slopes of Viera-North Peak.

Viera North Peak (continued from page 1)

A hot spot for biodiversity, the property contains diverse soil types supporting hundreds of plant species. From Mary Bowerman's first studies of the unusual flora, the area has long been known to be incredibly rich in plant life and botanists have now confirmed this richness. Over 56 rare plants have been identified onsite, some of which are globally rare such as the endemic Mt. Diablo jewel flower and Mt. Diablo fairy lantern. The acreage encompasses varied habitats necessary to sustain unique animal life as well, including the threatened Alameda whipsnake.

If you want to be a part of preserving Viera, call Julie Seelen at (925) 947-3535.



David Ogden (to the left and right)

Leaves and blossoms of a valley oak.

Reassembling (continued from page 7) at the District, John Kopchik at the Conservancy, and Gwerder representing the landowner.

We hope to lead public hikes on both properties this fall. Until then, please respect that the Eastern property is closed to the public. You can see both properties from the public Mt. Diablo-Black Diamond Regional Trail or from Peacock Creek Dr.

Save Mount Diablo's Wish List

We would be grateful to receive the following new or used equipment:

- phone system
- fire-proof file cabinet
- document safe



Save Mount Diablo Honored by State Parks Foundation

California's state parks faced many challenges in 2009 with the threat of park closures across the state due to California's budget crisis. Save Mount Diablo was a part of the Save Our State Parks Campaign and successfully advocated to keep our parks open. On March 8th of this year the California State Parks Foundation presented Save Mount Diablo with a "State Parks Grassroots Champion Award" at its Eighth Annual Park Advocacy Day for our commitment in these efforts. In November the coalition is sponsoring an initiative to solve the budget problems for state parks.

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.



George Phillips

Volunteers having fun and making a difference.

Diablo Restoration Team

by George Phillips

"I have a gardener at home. Being outside with a bunch of friends while restoring a creek is much more fun than working in my own yard."

Digging, pulling, dragging and planting, volunteers have braved the elements all winter to help restore Marsh Creek. In the past four months, the Save Mount Diablo Stewardship Committee and our new Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT) have volunteered almost a thousand hours restoring creek habitat at SMD's Marsh Creek-IV property.

Marsh Creek IV

SMD purchased MC-IV in 2008 for three reasons; an 800 foot section of creek, its connection to our Marsh Creek II property through a cattle tunnel under Marsh Creek Road, and its strategic location in the center of the high priority Marsh Creek-Morgan Territory acquisition area. The now vacant property is a great opportunity to restore creek side woodland habitat to its natural state.

Human settlement in the Marsh Creek watershed (the area draining into Marsh Creek, from Mt. Diablo's east side to Oakley's Big Break) dates back thousands of years to the Volvon tribes who inhabited the area. Native Americans managed wild areas and at times set fires to clear overgrown brush—an important cycle in the health of Mount Diablo's plant life but their impacts were minor compared to those of the past two hundred years.

Cinnabar mining on Diablo's slopes has deposited mercury; disturbance

has encouraged non-native weeds, and stock ponds and wells have altered stream channels and flows; paving of Morgan Territory and Marsh Creek roads has narrowed and relocated the creek in places. Rural development and residents, with their various impacts, have affected water quality and fragmented riparian woodland. Despite all this, Marsh Creek is the second longest and most natural major creek in Contra Costa County.

Low rainfall, hot dry summers, and sandy stream channels mean that Marsh Creek has very little surface water during the summer but, where dense vegetation remains, it's a refuge for hundreds of species. Even altered or damaged, creeks are excellent wildlife corridors and their seasonal and subsurface water makes restoration much easier. With a little help the natives can crowd out the weeds.

Three acres in size, Marsh Creek-IV was a weedy, flat flood plain crossed by a beautiful section of creek. The Contra Costa County Fish & Wildlife Committee, REI and Patagonia, each approved grants to assist with a creek restoration project. Heath Bartosh of Nomad Ecology designed a plan. Two main objectives were the widening of the creek side woodland and the removal of non-native invasive weeds.

DiRT

Our newly formed Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT) took the reins on the project. First, they cleared a 400 foot long stretch of non-native hemlock flanking the creek, making space for planting areas as we waited for the first rains.

Meanwhile, 500 native plants were grown

by the Watershed Nursery from local seeds and cuttings including Fremont cottonwood, toyon, California blackberry, California rose, blue elderberry, mulefat, sycamore, valley oak, coyote brush, California grape, and California bay.

The first weekend of December, 75 DiRT members completed Phase I of the planting project by planting 500 natives on about half of the property. The other half and areas between the plants are mowed or weed whacked about once a month to keep the weeds from seeding.

Monthly, DiRT volunteers return to Marsh Creek IV to check the progress of the plantings and to weed the plant sites. The DiRT and SMD Stewardship committee have made the first two steps of the project a success—a barren flood plain overgrown with non-native weeds is transforming into a beautiful cross section of natural habitat.

As summer approaches, an even more important stage begins. Every three weeks, we'll water the plants for the first two dry seasons, to increase their survival rate.

Other Projects

We've also recently completed planting 150 oaks and buckeyes at our Irish Canyon property, and are in the planning stages of a restoration project at our Joseph Galvin Ranch property. On other properties we're fencing wild tree seedlings to protect them from cattle, browsing deer and rodents.

Join the fun, become a part of DiRT!

Join the Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT)



Take part in our restoration projects. DiRT weeds and waters about once a month. For more information, contact George at (925) 947-3535 or gphillips@savemountdiablo.org.

Spotlight on Staff & Sponsors



**Emily Seidel-
Event and
Volunteer
Coordinator**

Emily Seidel, our new Event and Volunteer Coordinator, brings with her excellent event and non-profit expertise. After graduating with a B.A. from U.C. Davis, Emily got her start in events at art galleries in Davis and San Francisco. Realizing her passion for non-profit work through volunteering with various non-profits in the area, she became the Event Coordinator with the American Red Cross.

There she garnered new sponsorships, a skill that Emily is excited to expand. Most of all, she looks forward to working with our volunteers, "I feel privileged to work with our volunteers who I consider the life blood of our organization. I draw strength everyday from their great efforts."

Emily and her fiancé are planning their wedding and when news of this opportunity with SMD arose, they changed their date to fit with her new event schedule! Having only moved to the Bay Area five years ago, she is just beginning her love affair with Mount Diablo.



**Christine
Chestnut-
Grant Writer**

Christine Chestnut, our Grant Writer, hails to us with well rounded law and environmental experience. She studied environmental science at U.C. Santa Barbara, and fell in love with the beauty of the coast and the passion and dedication of the environmental activists fighting to protect it.

After receiving her B.S. in Environmental Studies from U.C.S.B. and a J.D. from U.C. Hastings in 2004, she worked for the California Coastal Commission, where she partnered with environmental organizations and landowners to remedy Coastal Act violations and restore native habitat. Most recently, she worked at the Contra Costa County Counsel's Office.

She feels very lucky to be at SMD, "I am grateful to have work and colleagues that are incredibly inspiring. Being able to focus on a local cause and hike around the area I am helping to protect increases the connection and sense of place. Driving over the hill from Oakland and seeing the majestic mountain is reaffirming and reinvigorating every time." We are very lucky to have Christine on our team.



**Beryl Anderson-
Marketing and
Publications
Coordinator**

Beryl Anderson, Marketing and Publications Coordinator, joins us with a diverse marketing and communications background. She graduated with honors and a B.A. in Communication from Humboldt State University in 2004 where she successfully competed in national intercollegiate debate.

Beryl began with events and promotions for a local radio station and quickly became the Director of Marketing and Promotions when the company launched a new station, 92.1 FM KKDV in Walnut Creek. Later she worked at Eldercare Services as the Marketing Coordinator where she handled every aspect of marketing and public relations.

A long time Livermore resident, Beryl enjoys hiking and rock climbing on Mount Diablo. She is excited to be focusing her efforts on environmental preservation, "I am already impressed with the level of dedication and good heartedness of every individual connected with Save Mount Diablo. I am proud to be a part of it!"

Save Mount Diablo Thanks Its Sponsors

Mount Diablo Challenge 2009



Trail Adventure 2009



Presenting Sponsor



Safeway



Diablo Trails Challenge 2010





Scott Hein

Tilden view across Siesta Valley to Diablo.

In Memory of

Stan Abernathy
 Scott & Claudia Hein
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 Sally Dalton
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 Shirley White
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Scott Hein

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In Honor of

Seth Adams
 Cindy Spring & Charles Garfield
 Andy Adler & Jo Cohen's Wedding
 Ron & Sharon Brown
 The Blick Family: Andy, Marilyn, Susan & Alison
 Joseph & Holly Eiden

Tribute Giving

We lost a dear friend on November 2, 2009: **Elizabeth "Bess" Girgich**. Bess was raised on the Griffin family farm in the Alhambra Valley just outside of Martinez. She loved Cal, playing bridge, travelling with her husband Ivan and the open space and natural beauty of Mount Diablo. She generously supported Save Mount Diablo both during her lifetime and by including us in her estate. Bess and Ivan joined us for the Rossmoor Open House and slideshow in October. We were grateful to have been able to show her a slideshow of Viera- North Peak, one of the properties her generosity is helping to preserve forever. We will miss her.

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 Marjorie Caniglia
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 and Dorothy Kappeler
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Moonlight on the Mountain
August 28, 2010

Moonlight on the Mountain is an elegant catered dinner with silent and live auctions and live entertainment in a spectacular mountain side setting under the light of the moon. The evening includes a presentation of the *Mountain Star* awards to individuals and organizations that have been significant in preserving, interpreting and restoring Mount Diablo. Proceeds benefit Save Mount Diablo's land conservation efforts.

For more information visit www.SaveMountDiablo.org

Save Mount Diablo's Partner Sponsors



Partner Sponsors are proud to support SMD's land preservation programs and receive recognition and admission at all of SMD's events for one year.

Our 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.

What We Do **Preserve** natural lands through acquisition & cooperative efforts.
Protect Mt. Diablo and its foothills from threats of development through land use planning & public education.
Restore habitat prior to transfer to a public agency for permanent preservation and public use.
Enjoy Diablo's parks through events & 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 80,000 acres, is privately owned and still threatened by development. That means risking the loss of wildlife corridors, ecosystems and recreational opportunities.