



TAMALPAIS GUARDIAN

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President's Message

January 2017

In November, I attended a three day conference near Yosemite put on by Cal-IPC, enjoyably pronounced "Cal-Ipsy" but standing for California Invasive Plant Council.

This was their 25th year of trying to protect California open spaces from invasive species by sharing information.

There were some papers presented which showed significant success in eradicating invasive plants; studies from Yosemite Valley, and a study from the Salinas River watershed had in common detailed inventory and mapping of the species of interest to provide a baseline before work began. Eradication efforts were focused on those species that posed the greatest problems for the natural ecosystems. Continued monitoring is indefinite.

The pattern that seemed in these environments to work well was spraying with herbicides the first year, which wiped out a large portion of the plant populations targeted. (A cheerful note here: a study in SF found that reducing the concentration of glyphosate [Round Up] to 2.7%, 5.4% and 10.8% of the product were all as effective as the conventional 26.9% for control of French Broom, Jubata grass, and blue gum eucalyptus.)

In subsequent years, hand pulling or other mechanical treatments predominated. Each subsequent year has required fewer hours and fewer workers to keep reducing invasive species.

There was a very honest and interesting report from Janet Klein of MMWD, entitled "What are We Learning?" The Board of Directors in 2005 suspended use of all herbicides and has experimented over the

subsequent years with alternative control measures, including "goats, sheep, mulch, tarp, propane flamers, hot foam applicators, pressure washers, formulated organic herbicides and prescribed burns."

This was accompanied by a 150% increase in the MMWD budget for vegetation management (\$225,000 to \$565,000) and the result? Acres infested with French broom expanded by 140%, from 600 to over 1450 acres. Goat grass and yellow star thistle increased similarly.

The MMWD board acknowledges that weed control efforts have not been a success in this decade. Therefore, they have committed to large increases in the budget, scaling up to \$3,000,000 per year by 2022. They have ceased ineffective methods and will use hand pulling and containment mowing, and plan to use better mapping technology and more labor performed by trained professionals.

The saddest note of all was the last: "Staff are also adding a heavy dose of realism" by "explicitly delineating a 750 acre zone on Mt Tamalpais where weeds will go unmanaged for the foreseeable future." They plan to evaluate the success of this new approach at the end of five years.

I leave you to contemplate this.

Janice Barry, MD
President

Tamalpais Conservation Club

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The Tamalpais Guardian is published three times a year by the:

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MEETINGS:

Monthly: Board of Directors meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Tamalpais Conservation Club office at 7p.m. Members are welcome.

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**MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DISTRICT
 MOVES AHEAD WITH UPGRADES TO
 CASCADE CANYON (FAIRFAX) OPEN
 SPACE PRESERVE**

By Steven Schoonover

In a November 23, 2016 posting, the Marin County Open Space District announced that its proposal to construct two recreational multiuse bridges across San Anselmo Creek in the Cascade Canyon Open Space Preserve (OSP) was approved by the Board of Directors (otherwise known as the Marin County Board of Supervisors.) Construction of the two bridges will allow the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSED) to decommission the High-Water Trail, immediately adjacent to San Anselmo Creek. The High-Water Trail does not meet safety or environmental standards and has been a constant contributor of sediment into San Anselmo Creek.

The bridges will enable recreational users to avoid crossing into the waters of San Anselmo Creek when entering and exiting Cascade Canyon. By separating human activity from aquatic habitat, the entire project is expected to provide additional protection to known steelhead trout habitat in San Anselmo and Cascade Creeks. Steelhead trout are listed by the State of California as a threatened species. At one time, in the early 1960's, the Corte Madera Creek Watershed was teeming with Steelhead Trout, but have declined over the years due to ever-increasing human activity.

It is anticipated that construction of the Cascade Canyon bridges will begin in summer 2017. Cost estimates are not available at this time. The MCOSED notified the Town of Fairfax and the Cascade Canyon OSP neighbors of the proposal,

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Open Space

and all were provided with an opportunity to offer their comments on the project. One MCOSD Director reported that the Town's and the neighbors' concerns have been addressed to their satisfaction.

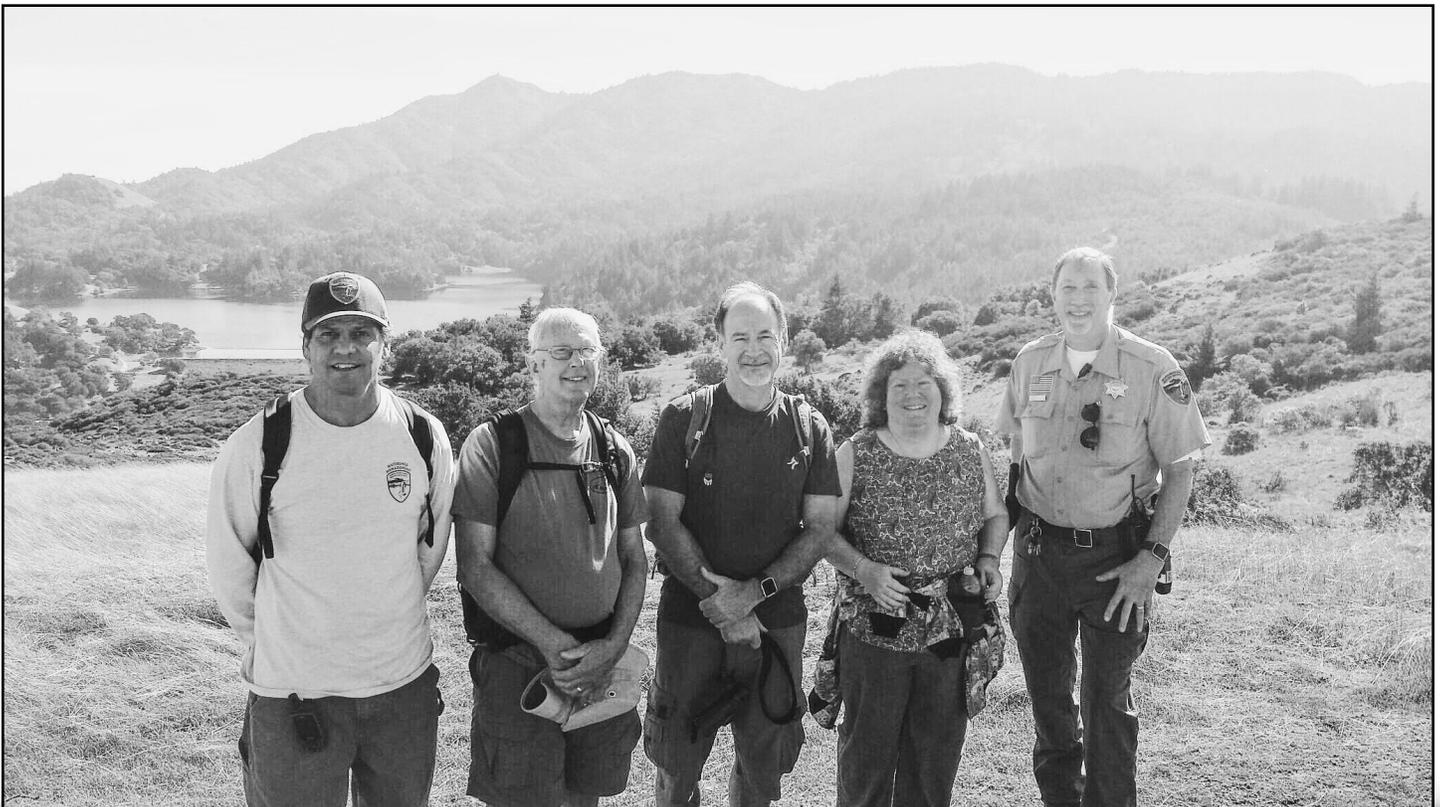
A proposal, to decommission the Happersberger Trail, a non-system Cascade Canyon OSP hiking route, was delayed for study. This single-track trail climbs out of the canyon floor and eventually terminates on Marin Municipal Water District land near Pine Mountain. In the meantime, it remains undesignated and, as such, is closed to bicycling, horses, and dogs, although it is apparently used by a substantial number of hikers and others, regardless of its designation.

Bill Stevens

April 6, 1932 to November 8, 2016

Tribute by Perry Cole

Bill Stevens passed away in November succumbing to ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Bill was an active member of TCC and served on the Board of Directors. His passion for Mt Tamalpais was reflected in his volunteering for trail maintenance in the water district and state park. In addition, he served on the Board of M.T.I.A. (now Friends of Mt. Tamalpais) and led hikes. As a role model for young people, he assisted on field trips for his grandchildren's school and introduced his grandchildren to the many mountain trails. Bonnie, his wife, always accompanied Bill to the many mountain annual meetings of TCC, and she provided support for his outdoor endeavors. Thank you, Bill, for your years of unselfish support.



Carl Sanders, Perry Cole, Jim Rodgers, Kathy Hyde Sennello, Don Wick atop Azalea Hill.

Photo by Cliff Sennello

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Bob Middaugh Trail Opened to Mountain Bikes

By Steven Schoonover

The Alto Bowl Open Space Preserve is situated between Highway 101 and Camino Alto to the west, in Mill Valley. On the eastern edge of the preserve is Horse Hill and equestrian stables. Saddle animals and hikers have for years used the Bob Middaugh Trail to access the Blithedale Summit Open Space Preserve to the west, and points beyond.

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) recently decided to allow mountain bikes to use the Bob Middaugh Trail, indicating that “a majority of public comments” favored the proposal. The MCOSD provided no polling figures to support the statement.

Middaugh Trail hikers and equestrians will now have to contend with mountain bikes, but, according to the MCOSD, not until unspecified design modifications are made, presumably to widen the single-track trail to (hopefully) make it safe for all users. It was not announced how the MCOSD plans to persuade hikers and equestrians to embrace this change in use, or how it plans to objectively monitor future use to determine the success of their experiment. Work is to commence in spring, 2017.

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