



Green Footnotes

COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS www.GreenFoothills.org

Fall 2001



Velma Gentzsch

Working open space in the valley has important economic and environmental benefits -- including this recent harvest from a local farm.

Protecting open space by preserving working landscapes

by Denice Dade

The second in a series of articles addressing the loss of rural land. "Our Endangered Farmlands" appeared in Green Footnotes, Summer 2001.

Across America, we face a disturbing trend, the loss of working landscapes — our farmland, ranchland, and forestland — to development. Working landscapes preserve a sense of open space while providing important economic and environmental benefits.

Expansion of the nation's urban fringe

Over the past four decades, our nation experienced rapid expansion of urban and suburban areas. Much of this unplanned growth left rural lands fragmented, less productive, and in conflict with surrounding urban uses. In the last 40 years, urban areas more than

doubled, growing from 25.5 million acres in 1960 to 55.9 million acres in 1990; they were to reach 65 million in 2000.

As urban areas expand, farmers have more incentive to sell to developers. The economics are simple — urban use generates a higher return per acre than agricultural uses.

Once agricultural land conversion starts, a vicious cycle begins. Land speculators purchase large lots on the urban fringe and either lobby elected officials or run for election in order to weaken land use regulations and accelerate farmland development. Once development regulations are weakened, land values soar. Developers purchase large lots, subdivide, and build, and the urban fringe expands.

As the urban fringe approaches, farming becomes more costly

See WORKING, page 11



COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLS

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From the *Executive Director...*

During the last few months the world has changed in unimaginable ways. While we are all striving to make sense of the events taking place in this new world, there is a real need to stay focused on positive ways in which we can promote long-term health and well-being in our local communities. Trusting that the environmental legacy we forge here on the Peninsula will surely outlast the conflicts of this troubling time, we at the Committee for Green Foothills have redoubled our work to protect local open space, critical watersheds and natural habitat. Now, more than ever, we need those wild and open spaces for a measure of peace. It is in this spirit of strengthened resolve that I write to you of our recent activities.

In September, our Boards of Directors gathered for a one-day, strategic-planning "advance," an event made possible by a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. (With the protection of our environment at stake, we thought it inappropriate to call it a "retreat".)

The purpose of the advance was to answer the question "Where do we go from here?" Directors focused on selecting key initiatives that will bring the most benefit to the environment over the next three to five years. We discussed our connectedness with each other, our kinship with the environment, our organizational mission and goals, the tough decisions we must make about priorities, and what we can reasonably hope to accomplish. I am pleased to share our three to five-year initiatives for Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties with you.

Our Santa Clara County initiatives

- Enacting optimal County hillside, ranchland and agricultural land-use policies
- Strengthening ties with the Santa Clara Open Space Authority
- Working within local communities to elect environmentally-friendly local officials
- Providing a vision and scope for the County's Habitat Conservation Plan

- Monitoring Stanford's General Use Permit and Community Plan implementation
- Continuing to protect Coyote Valley

Our San Mateo County initiatives

- Implementing creek and critical watershed protections
- Investigating possibilities for a regional market and brand identity for Coastside agriculture
- Participating in the Local Coastal Program in review and revision process
- Strengthening regulations pertaining to timber harvest
- Opposing any and all attempts to drill for oil off-shore
- Monitoring expansion plans for San Francisco International Airport, especially those involving Bay fill

In both counties, we will continue our 40-year tradition of opposing projects that impact hillsides, agricultural lands, ranchlands and open space. The Committee's Legislative Advocates and directors will also seek ways to promote sensible growth within existing urban areas, since protecting open space complements sensible growth policies.

The challenges we now face are to find ways to implement our initiatives in partnership with other activist groups and foundations, and to capture opportunities for deepening ties to members, donors and local communities. We will need your help in the months and years to come as we continue to build the Committee's environmental legacy.

Please know that in these times of uncertainty and change, the Committee's work continues undiminished. Redoubling our efforts on behalf of local environmental protection is something positive that we can all participate in and feel good about. That, and holding on just a bit tighter to family and friends. On behalf of the Committee for Green Foothills, I wish you peace and offer many thanks for your enduring support. **CGF**





Courtesy Half Moon Bay Review

After years of controversy, this coastal bluff will be a new community park for the Mid-Coast.

Mirada Surf: Community park emerges from long battle

by Lennie Roberts

For 25 years, coastal activists have worked to protect a jewel known as the Mirada Surf property. Comprising 49 acres, this parcel reaches from the coastal bluffs just south of Surfer's Beach to a forested slope behind El Granada and Miramar, in the Mid-Coast area of San Mateo County. Residents and visitors alike have enjoyed walking along the bluffs, picnicking, or viewing the ocean as they drive by.

Back in 1978, the Mid-Coast Community Plan designated this site as a community park. The Mid-Coast has a deficiency of local parks, but until now, there haven't been the necessary ingredients to make this park a reality. Last December, in a rare moment of harmonic convergence, the landowners agreed with CGF's suggestion that they should cooperate with the County in seeing that this site be acquired as a park.

Here's how it happened. For several years, the land has been owned by a partnership that sought to develop the proper-

ty. The owners first proposed a large hotel and 86 homes, which they soon revised to a 263 unit RV park, tent-camping sites, and a driving range. Massive community opposition stopped the projects. Eventually, the owners proposed 35 houses on part of the property, but discovery of extensive wetlands on the site halted this plan as well.

Since any development proposal would require rezoning and changes to both the General Plan and Local Coastal Program designations, there was no guarantee that the owners would succeed in their plans. The owners also announced they would bring an inverse condemnation suit against the County — on the grounds that for 24 years the land had been designated as a park, and the owners had been deprived of the use of their land, since the County had failed to purchase it. Either way, it was clear that a long and difficult battle would lie ahead, and once the battle began, there would be little incentive to find middle ground.

Last December, one of the partners in

the project approached CGF and asked if we would support a reduced development proposal, plus dedication of the beach-front area to the County. We replied that this was a step in the right direction, but that the whole site should be purchased as a community park by the County, nothing less. We agreed that the County would need to have an independent appraisal, and that the County should pay fair market value based on that appraisal.

To our surprise, the owners were interested in this idea. We next approached Supervisors Rich Gordon and Mike Nevin, who were supportive of this positive solution. In August, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate to purchase the property.

Mirada Surf's significance to the community and the region cannot be underestimated. Its wide expanse of beach and bluff area west of Highway One could provide desperately needed parking and other amenities for the thousands of users of Surfer's Beach. The Coastal Trail is already informally in place, as many people walk through the area now. The meadow and wetland area east of the highway is large enough to allow for playing fields and passive recreation.

Particularly exciting is the potential for a connecting trail through the property to Quarry Park, also owned by the County, through the Corral de Tierra property (recently acquired by POST), and over Montara Mountain all the way to Pacifica. There is only one small connection missing, and the owners of this parcel have indicated an interest in donating this area as well. Once the additional parcel is acquired, only a planning process involving all the interested stakeholders would be needed to complete this marvelous new segment of the Coastal Trail.

Many people need to be thanked for this fortunate turn of events. The partnership that owns the land is at the top of this list. Right up there with the owners is the County Board of Supervisors, the County Manager, and the Parks and Recreation staff. Without their cooperation and enthusiasm, this land would remain a battleground for many years — and the ultimate outcome would be very different from what the community had been promised. The prospect of Mirada Surf at long last becoming a community park is tremendously exciting for Coastal activists and everyone who appreciates open space. **CGF**

Santa Clara County Open Space funding up to voters

by Kathy Switky

Peninsula residents are familiar with the long history of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), formed in 1972 to purchase public open space in parts of San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz Counties. Through property tax revenues, the District has purchased and manages 45,000 acres of foothill and bayland preserves.

Since 1993, South Bay residents have had a similar assessment district to preserve and maintain open space and recreation lands in southern Santa Clara County. The Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, includes the cities of Campbell, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara and San Jose, as well as unincorporated areas of Santa Clara County not within the Midpeninsula Open Space District.

Land acquisition supported by property tax assessment

Like MROSD, the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (OSA) is a special district funded by a property tax assessment. However, the new OSA is hamstrung by its low level of funding — the OSA now collects \$4.2 million annually, a pittance compared to the region's escalating land prices and increasing threats of development.

In its first years of existence, the Open Space Authority has done much with its small budget, preserving 8,500 acres of open space, parklands and natural wildlife areas in Santa Clara County. But

this is clearly not enough to keep pace with the great pressures on — and costs of — open space.

It's time to give the OSA real funding

If the OSA is to have real purchasing power, it needs the funds to compete in today's real estate market. The Authority has asked those within its jurisdiction to vote on a measure that would raise some \$8 million a year for open space — a sound investment in quality of life for current and future generations.

The ballot was mailed in mid-September to those who own property that lies within the jurisdiction of the Open Space Authority. If it receives majority approval, single-family homes would be assessed at \$20/year; owners of rental, commercial, and industrial properties will also be assessed.

The resulting property tax revenues will be pooled with other private and public resources to create a ten-year, \$150 million, open-space preservation program for Santa Clara County. The OSA plans to use these funds to:

“...preserve open space areas throughout Santa Clara County; protect and enhance the forests, natural lands and wildlife habitats that help to improve our air quality and quality of life; create additional recreation areas, trails and parks in urban and rural areas and to provide clean and safe water by protecting our watershed lands, rivers and streams.”

Committee for Green Foothills endorses this measure, and has urged our members in the OSA district to vote “yes” to increase funding for the Authority. Ballots on the measure are due November 8, just as we go to press. We hope that voters will choose to make the investment in open space for the future. **CGF**



Stanford plan update:

Work lags on hillside zoning and Sustainable Development Study

by Kathy Switky

Ten months have passed since Santa Clara County accepted Stanford's Community Plan and General Use Permit (CP/GUP) and granted Stanford University rights for up to five million square feet of development.

The CP/GUP were more than two years in the making and outlined the strongest County restrictions ever on University growth. The CP/GUP defined conservation measures, mitigations for impacts on the university's neighbors caused by the massive development, and County and Stanford responsibilities for meeting the provisions.

CGF and Stanford Open Space Alliance (SOSA) are monitoring the progress the County and Stanford are making as they implement conservation measures, provide mitigations, and carry out their responsibilities as outlined in the CP/GUP.

Five key environmental protection conditions

The plan includes five key conditions designed to protect open space and the environment:

- 1) Implementation of hillside zoning
- 2) Formation of a Community Resource Group
- 3) Creation of a Sustainable Development Study
- 4) Development of a Special Conservation Area Plan
- 5) Trail dedications

The Stanford/County report card

Together with SOSA, the Committee is leading the grassroots effort to monitor the implementation of the environmental protections in the CP/GUP. The groups recently released a report card detailing the progress on five elements of the plan. We worked closely with County Planning Staff and Supervisor Kniss's office to provide them with an opportunity to complete as much work as possible before the

report was released this August.

Good marks on three conditions

Work in three of the five areas is progressing in a timely and effective manner. The County has begun development of the Special Conservation Area Plan, is starting to identify potential recreational trails for dedication, and has formed the Community Resource Group, to which CGF Legislative Advocate Denice Dade has been appointed.

Poor marks on hillside zoning and Sustainable Development Study

However, the two most significant conservation-related conditions of the CP/GUP, hillside zoning and the Sustainable Development Study, received failing grades. The Community Plan and GUP require the establishment of protective zoning for the Stanford foothills, regulations that will be created through a long process of staff attention and public input. This process has not yet begun or been scheduled.

Further, Stanford is required to complete a Sustainable Development Study, which will direct future development and establish the maximum allowable build-out on Stanford lands. The Sustainable Development Study will be a large undertaking, and must be approved by the County before Stanford can gain approval for the second million square feet of academic development granted by the 2000 General Use Permit. Significantly, no

start date has been scheduled for this complex and long-term project. The County must approve the study before Stanford can begin its second phase of development.

Report generates public commitment by Supervisor Kniss

The release of the report card generated good publicity for our concerns, and immediate response from County

Supervisor Liz Kniss, in whose district Stanford falls. At a town hall

meeting held soon after the release of the

Report

Card,

Supervisor

Kniss com-

mitted to

moving the

Stanford

Sustainable

Development

Study forward, and promised to establish

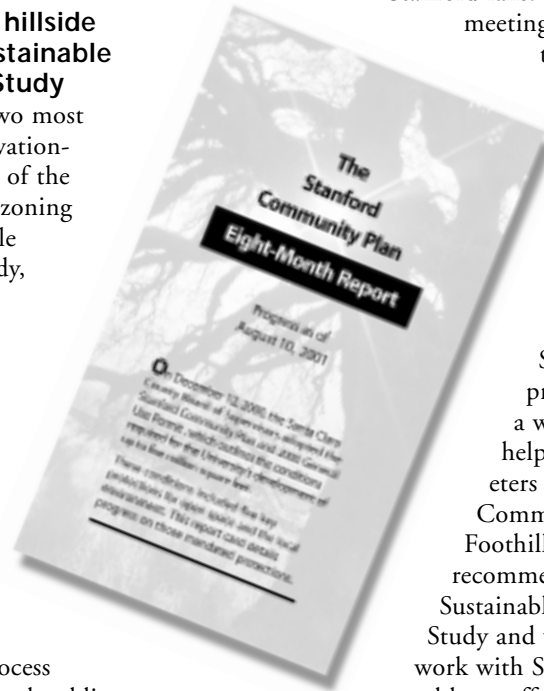
a working group to help define the parameters of this study.

Committee for Green Foothills is preparing its recommendations for the Sustainable Development Study and will continue to work with Supervisor Kniss and her staff on this issue.

CGF continues to watch...

Committee for Green Foothills and Stanford Open Space Alliance will continue our monitoring efforts. We plan to update the Report Card as a way to provide public reports on progress toward these important environmental protections.

The Community Plan report card is available from the Committee and is also available online at www.GreenFoothills.org/reportcard.html. **CGF**



The INNW Fund: Investing in the environment

by Zoe Kersteen-Tucker

With success of his money management firm, Value Monitoring, Inc., assured, Peninsula resident Robert Levenson turned his attention to the question, "What do you do once you win?" The result was the founding, along with his wife Susan Lang, of The INNW Fund, a nonprofit foundation. Appropriately, INNW is an acronym for "If not now, when?"

With an enduring commitment to environmental education and land stewardship, these innovative thinkers began to ponder new models of strategic philanthropy some 10 years ago. Levenson and Lang, along with Board member Howard Smith and Foundation Vice



President Joan Libman, have crafted a quiet and powerful local foundation that provides problem-solving, mentoring, and money to help nonprofits in challenging times. Backers of The INNW Fund seek ways to leverage their investments by providing technical assistance and building organizational capacity.

Unlike community foundations, The INNW Fund does not solicit or review grant proposals; rather, The Fund seeks out organizations with programs of regional significance, a history of success, and committed board and staff members.

The Committee was first approached by The Fund with an offer of technical assistance in 1999. At that time, the Committee's infrastructure hadn't kept up with the organization's tremendous growth. We had survived years of shoe-string budgets and protracted David and Goliath land-use battles. Our (almost entirely) volunteer-run organization was exhausted. Our Board of Directors and single staff person, Denice Dade, were ready to make a serious commitment of time and energy to strengthen the Committee for future years. (Long-time CGF members may recall that Denice was then working half-time as our office coor-

dinator and half-time as Santa Clara County Legislative Advocate.)

Joan Libman, The INNW Fund's Vice President, called in consultants to help analyze our organizational infrastructure with an assessment of financials, job descriptions, bylaws, board committees, and technology. The INNW Fund and their consultants helped us create and implement a comprehensive action plan that included the following elements:

- The Fund provided a \$5,000 matching grant to overhaul the office computer system. At the time, the Committee was functioning (barely) on a single antiquated computer, a shared printer, and a 28k modem.
- The law firm Silk, Adler & Colvin was retained to assess and update Committee and Green Foothills Foundation bylaws and to create legal instruments to govern the sharing of funds and resources between the Committee and the Foundation.
- Tanya Slesnick, a CPA specializing in nonprofits, worked with Committee and Foundation treasurers and board members to implement state-of-the-art bookkeeping software and charts of accounts for both organizations. Full disclosure compilations were conducted for both organizations.
- Management consultant Marge Sentous was brought in to assist with updating our staff and volunteer job descriptions and board committees.
- Development consultant Andrea Zafer was employed to work with board members to create and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy starting with our year-end campaign in 1999. Andrea continues her development work with the Committee and Foundation.
- A plan was created and is being implemented to add key staff over time and as fundraising capacity develops.

With two years of hard work behind us, a partial list of our organizational accomplishments include the following:

- Paid staff was increased to include a first-ever, full-time Legislative Advocate for Santa Clara County, an Executive Director, and

We offer special thanks and acknowledgement to **Joan Libman** for her personal and professional commitment to our organization. Joan is The INNW Fund's Vice President and chief management consultant. In a recent interview, Joan shared the following thoughts:

"I look at a nonprofit organization like a potential donor. Donors want to know that their money is being used in the most productive and prudent manner possible. I ask myself, 'Would I want to give money to this organization? Do the board and staff feel a passion for carrying out this mission?' If the answer is 'yes,' then the next question is, 'is it possible to help this very fine program become self-sustaining?' I recognize that there is an element of creativity and passion in the nonprofit world that too often makes volunteers disinclined or too embarrassed to talk about money. However, I believe that organizational effectiveness coupled with sound fundraising practices makes a nonprofit more effective and better able to carry out their important mission."

Thank you, Joan!

Director of Education and Outreach.

- Office hardware and software computer systems were upgraded to include four new networked computers, a laser printer and high-speed Internet connections.
- Fundraising results were increased four-fold.
- A wage and fringe benefits analysis was conducted to ensure that the organization's job descriptions, salary structure and benefits reflect current industry standards.
- Foundation and Committee bylaws have both been updated.
- A comprehensive Personnel Handbook and Office Manual have been created.
- Financial and legal relationships between the Green Foothills Foundation and the Committee for Green Foothills have been strengthened so that we are able to maximize the community impact of this unique 501(c)(3)/501(c)(4) combination.

Fate of Coyote Valley still hanging in the balance

by Ernie Goitein

Since the San Jose City Council voted last year to approve Cisco's development in Coyote Valley, the new campus has taken a diminished urgency. Cisco recently announced that it has scaled back its plans significantly, reducing the proposed campus from 6.6 million square feet to 3 million square feet or less. The reduced campus size would accommodate 9,000 employees, rather than the 20,000 as originally envisioned.

Continuing to maintain that this fertile valley is an inappropriate place for sprawl, environmental groups are continuing to work to give voters a voice on this project, and to adequately mitigate for some of the impacts of this development, which would open one of the city's last remaining rural areas to sprawling development.

People for Livable and Affordable Neighborhoods (PLAN) is engaged in a legal battle to force the City of San Jose to let the voters decide whether the massive development project—the largest this region has seen in decades—should be approved. Hearings in the suit against the City of San Jose—which refused to place the group's referendum on the ballot—are scheduled for November 6. PLAN expects a decision before December 2001.

Several other suits, all focused on the inadequacy of the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR), have until recently prevented Cisco from moving forward. These three suits, filed by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, the County of Santa Cruz, the Sierra Club



Ernie Goitein

The rich agricultural lands of Coyote Valley are among the County's most valuable.

Loma Prieta Chapter and Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, have been merged into one. On Friday, October 19, a Superior Court judge rejected the suits, ruling that the EIR was adequate and did not require modification, as the environmental community had argued. As we go to press, the plaintiffs are considering appealing this decision.

The City of San Jose is still talking up the potential for massive development of the Coyote Valley Research Park, and still plans to invest large sums of public money to support the development, which would benefit private corporations — though it's no longer clear who the occupants will be.

PLAN believes that Cisco's plans to scale back their project underscores the short-sightedness of destroying the beautiful Coyote Valley. Cisco's own vacant office space in San Jose, along with its partially constructed buildings elsewhere in San Jose,

could easily accommodate nine thousand Cisco employees.

Particularly in these hard economic times, San Jose and the State of California should not squander taxpayer money on a project of questionable economic value that would cause tremendous — and irreversible — environmental damage.

Ernie Goitein is the Coordinator for PLAN (People for Livable, Affordable Neighborhoods), a grassroots group dedicated to the preservation of Coyote Valley and supported by a coalition of individuals and organizations including Committee for Green Foothills, CLEAN South Bay, Committee to Complete the Refuge, Community Homeless Advocacy Ministry, the Green Party of Santa Clara County, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter. CGF

The theme of our relationship with The INNW Fund has been that they provide funding, expertise, and guidance; the Committee makes the decisions and does the work. From the beginning, the goal of The Fund has been to build new expertise into the Committee's board and staff so that ultimately we become self-sufficient at a higher level of capacity. INNW does not seek seats on boards of directors of organizations they assist; rather they are committed to helping organizations be accountable to themselves and their supporters.

The Committee for Green Foothills is

profoundly grateful to The INNW Fund for their open-hearted, wise, and generous support of our work and our organization. They have offered their assistance in the spirit of partnership and with an ethic of trust and respect for the uniqueness of our organization. The model of philanthropy manifested by The INNW Fund is all about long-term investment. By building additional capacity into organizations devoted to regional environmental education and land stewardship, The INNW Fund is able to maximize their investment in an irreplaceable environmental legacy — the San Francisco Peninsula. CGF

More about The INNW Fund

The mission of The INNW Fund is to foster environmental awareness, through grants supporting education and land conservation.

Organizations they have helped include: Hidden Villa, Environmental Volunteers, Peninsula Open Space Trust, East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse, Center for Investigative Reporting. The INNW Fund also founded the Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks.

Sher's bill closes antiquated subdivision loopholes

Prevents landowners from inflating property values and passing along costs to taxpayers

by Lennie Roberts

There is a new twist on the very old game of making money by developing land. Traditionally, land speculators have reaped large windfall profits by subdividing property. Once the subdivision is granted, the owners can sell the land at a greatly increased price.

Today, developers must go through a rigorous process to subdivide land, involving Environmental Impact Reports, public hearings, conditions of approval to protect sensitive habitats, scenic areas, or other resources, and compliance with General Plan and Zoning requirements. Provision of access roads and other improvements are the financial responsibility of the subdivider; he either puts in the improvements prior to sale or guarantees their construction through a bond.

Up till now, most landowners wouldn't go through the onerous process of subdividing land when they plan to sell it for park and open space purposes. Recently, several high-profile cases have focused public attention on a new and lucrative use of two loopholes in state law. Creative speculators have used these loopholes to reap huge financial windfalls at the



Photo courtesy of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

The owner of more than 1,000 acres in Bear Creek Redwoods used Certificates of Compliance to increase the commercial value of this land before selling it to MROSD — and the cost of preserving it increased 25%.

expense of the public.

The Certificate of Compliance (COC) loophole

The practice of land subdivision has been regulated since 1893 in California by the State Subdivision Map Act. But many thousands of parcels were "created" prior to the Map Act. A provision in state law called Certificates of Compliance (COCs) allows landowners to dig up old property records that date back to ancient mining claims or federal patents in the 1850's and 60's and bypass the subdivision process entirely. In addition to old claims, early

practices of deeding land to heirs or new owners by simply recording the grant are generally recognized as "legal" under the COC process.

The problem with these antique parcels is that they often have no legal access, ignore such things as topographic or geologic constraints, and are out of compliance with current zoning requirements.

On the San Mateo coast, the County has identified as many as 500 of these antique "illegal" parcels. Unfortunately, under state law, the County has very few tools to ensure that parcels carrying COC's are in compliance with zoning

What is a parcel?

A parcel is an outlined piece of land that can be sold.

What is a Certificate of Compliance (COC)?

A COC is a mechanism for legalizing a parcel of land that was created without benefit of review and approval by a local government.

The current landowner must present evidence that the parcel would have complied with applicable laws at the time it was created. The local government (city or county) then issues a Certificate of Compliance. Often, parcels legalized by COCs do not meet today's zoning standards, and may not be buildable (can not be legally developed).

What is a Conditional Certificate of Compliance (CCOC)?

A CCOC is a mechanism used by local governments in limited circumstances to require changes in the parcel configuration or size to comply with current zoning. With the passage of SB 497, the

law will be clarified to make CCOCs applicable in more situations.

Often, COCs and CCOCs have been used to legalize parcels which don't really suit the needs of the landowner, or which may not even be developable, but accompanying Lot Line Adjustments (see below) can fix this problem.

What is a Lot Line Adjustment (LLA)?

A LLA is a mechanism for adjusting the common boundary lines between two or more adjoining parcels, provided that no new parcels are created.

LLAs are used in combination with COCs (and CCOCs) to create more buildable parcels — generally without public review and approval. Together they increase the risk of development in inappropriate locations, loss of open space, and strain on limited public services. SB 497 will now limit the use to LLAs to four parcels per ownership. Landowners who seek greater numbers of LLAs can use a "resubdivision" process, which has greater public review.

standards. Development on many would be problematic.

The Lot Line Adjustment (LLA) loophole

And worse yet, through a second loophole in the law — Lot Line Adjustments (LLAs) — owners can move parcel boundaries to make properties more developable. Although LLAs were conceived as a way to correct minor problems between two properties — such as a house or driveway that was built slightly over the property line — some developers have used LLAs to move entire parcels to enhance their value.

A gold mine for developers financed by taxpayers

Does this all sound like a field of dreams?

Consider the following cases. The 7,000 acre Coast Dairies property in northern Santa Cruz County was bought by a Las Vegas real estate speculator for \$20 million. A year later, he sold it to Trust for Public Land for \$43 million. The key to the windfall was 139 COC's — no fuss, no muss with public review. The 1,065 acre Bear Creek Redwoods tract near Los Gatos recently purchased by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) with significant private contributions as well as public dollars, escalated in cost from \$20 million to \$25 million after the owner produced 23 COC's.

The latest highly controversial case involves the vast Hearst Ranch holdings in San Luis Obispo County. Hearst sought permits to develop some of its 80,000 acres; last year its proposal was denied by the Coastal Commission for the second time. Hearst then informed the Coastal Commission that it was creating 279 parcels through the COC process. Once the COC's were issued, Hearst will likely use LLAs to rearrange the parcels to maximize the land's development potential — ensuring that all parcels have ocean frontage, for example.

At least two national land conservation organizations are negotiating with Hearst to acquire conservation easements on the land, and of course, the value of these easements will reflect the entitlements that Hearst has on the property. Although entitlements present increasingly large problems for land preservation efforts throughout the state, the publicity Hearst, Coast Dairies, and Bear Creek Redwoods have received may provide a

... **Stanford's foothills**, where the Board of Supervisors just approved the construction of a new office complex for the Carnegie Foundation. We'll watch to ensure that environmental protections are implemented and that the County creates a strong conservation easement for the California Tiger Salamander.

...**the San Mateo County coast**, where the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is working to expand the District's boundaries to the continental edge.

...candidates for local city councils.

While CGF does not endorse candidates, our Legislative Advocate Denice Dade and her colleagues on the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters Board have endorsed environment-friendly candidates.

...**the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department**, which recently held a Strategic Planning session where CGF provided input for the creation and implementation of their new Strategic Plan.

...**Pescadero/Butano watershed**, where a battle is raging over developing solutions to the complex causes of sedimentation and resulting flooding in Pescadero.

...**the foothills east of San Jose**, where the Lion Development Company proposes development of a massive tiered cemetery, mausoleum, and terracing on exposed hill-sides.

The Committee is watching...



Peter LaTourrette

...**the Federal Highway Administration**, which is expected to issue a long-awaited Record of Decision for the Devil's Slide Tunnel.

...**the Los Altos History Museum**, whose "Heroes of Open Space" exhibit honored CGF founders and other Peninsula leaders.

... **the Trails Plan** Stanford submitted to the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department, to ensure that the recreational trails the University is required to create are safe, well-located, and pleasant.

...**Week's Creek**, a tributary to Pescadero Creek, where we're working with a green-house owner to get his illegal dam and silt pond moved,

thereby restoring free-flowing waters and restoring salmonid spawning habitat.

...**land use policies** throughout Santa Clara County. At the Board's recent Land Use Workshop, CGF and other environmental groups focused on key land use issues with county-wide implications for open space.

...**the Northern Section** of the California Chapter of the American Planning Association, which recently awarded its Outstanding Planning Project award to the Stanford University Community Plan and General Use Permit, documents CGF spent two years helping create.

For more information on what the Committee is watching, call (650) 968-7243 or visit www.GreenFoothills.org.

catalyst to achieve some long overdue reforms.

Closing the loopholes

Senator Byron Sher recently acted to close these loopholes, by crafting a set of revisions to the Certificate of Compliance and Lot Line Adjustment sections of the Subdivision Map Act. Sher's SB 497 squeaked through the legislature late this session, and the Governor signed the bill with just a day to spare.

There was tremendous pressure from real estate, development, and landowner interests on the Governor to veto the bill. Hearst Corporation even hired the Governor's chief fundraiser to lobby. What overcame the special interests was an out-

pouring of support from environmentalists all over the state, and a number of news stories and editorials.

Many thanks go to our local environmental hero, Senator Byron Sher, and to the organizing skills and persistent persuasion of the statewide organization League for Coastal Protection, for pulling this off.

Committee for Green Foothills urges you to thank Senator Sher for his persistence on this important issue. **CGF**

Send your letters of thanks to:

Senator Byron Sher
State Capitol, Room 2082
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax (916) 323-4529

Email senator.sher@sen.ca.gov

BOARD NOTES

In an enthusiastic, unanimous vote, CGF directors elected **Mary Davey** President of the Board at the August meeting. Possessing vision, experience, and enthusiasm in great measure, Mary will be a stellar guide during our 40th anniversary year. Thank you, Mary!

In addition, we are pleased to welcome four new volunteer directors to the CGF board, who are already adding their wonderful breadth and depth of experience to our organization.

Author, pianist, and teacher **Maureen McCarthy Draper** lives on Monte Bello Ridge in Cupertino. Maureen is Coordinator of the Music for Healing Program at Stanford Hospital. She holds an M.A. in Comparative Literature and Music from UC Berkeley, and recently published "The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound, and Healing." Summers in the Rockies and her long residence next to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District preserves have given her a sustaining love for the natural world.

Since 1969, **Paul Draper** has lived and worked on Monte Bello Ridge, where he is CEO/Winemaker at Ridge Vineyards. Paul, who holds a degree in philosophy from Stanford University, holds the Wine Spectator's Distinguished Service Award. His life as a vintner has deepened his strong connection to the environment; Paul, with his wife Maureen, is working to preserve additional open space in the Cupertino/Monte Bello Open Space Preserve area.

Retired electronics consultant **Peter LaTourrette** is an active and skilled



Peter LaTourrette



Stephanie Spang

CGF and Green Foothills Foundation board and staff members at our "advance" this August. Back row, from left: Velma Gentzsch, Paul Draper, Dave Perrone, Dorothy Bender, Brielle Johnck, Chris Powell, Karen Kidwell, Tom Jordan, Gael Erickson, Maureen Draper, Hertha Harrington. Middle row: Kathy Switky, Peter LaTourrette, Sue LaTourrette, Jane Gallagher, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Mary Davey, Lennie Roberts, Tanya Slesnick. Front row: Jessica Agramonte, Mahlon Hubenthal, Denice Dade, Cindy Rubin, April Vargas.

birder and photographer. A Los Altos resident, Peter has led and volunteered for a number of nonprofits, including Peninsula Open Space Trust, Santa Clara

Valley Audubon Society, Los Altos Community Foundation and Common Ground TV. A member of our Finance

Committee, Peter will be leading some special events as part of CGF's 40th anniversary celebration next year.

Together with her husband Peter, **Sue LaTourrette** has been a Committee for Green Foothills member since 1977, and as a long-time Bay Area resident brings a great knowledge of the local area and environment to her new role. Semi-retired from the travel business, Sue is an avid hiker, and is already involved in preparations for the Committee's 40th anniversary celebration.

CGF members vote to approve new bylaws for organization

It's official — in a nearly unanimous move, Committee for Green Foothills members recently voted to approve new bylaws for the organization. This is an important step to update our organization's operations. Thanks to all of you who voted!

Perhaps the most visible change in our new bylaws is the change to a non-voting

membership. Under our new bylaws, new directors will be elected by the current board, rather than by CGF members. While this will provide significant savings in both time and money for our organization, for most CGF members, the change will be invisible.

We will continue to be led by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Committee will, of

course, remain focused on you, our members — you are the strength of our organization. Our new bylaws continue to reflect our founders' spirit and intentions — to create a strong grassroots organization that speaks effectively for the Peninsula's environment.

Thanks to all of you, our members, for voting so promptly on this important issue. **CGF**

New website launches!

by Kathy Switky

We are proud to announce that www.GreenFoothills.org is up and running! Our new website, created in response to requests from our members, makes it easy for you to get up-to-date information and learn how to get involved in the Committee's campaigns.

The new site is the result of many months of work by a number of people. We started by conducting an on-line survey of current members to get an idea of the features you wanted to see. Next, thanks to funding from a generous individual and the Packard

Foundation, we hired professional web designer Mark Bult to develop the site. More than a dozen people contributed to the project over the past year, in a huge team effort ably led by board members Karen Kidwell and Dave Perrone.

Our goals for the new site were ambitious. We wanted to inform you about our efforts to protect open space, make it easy for you to get involved with our work, and allow you to renew your membership and make other gifts online. Our new site does this, and more. We invite you to pay it a visit.

Many thanks to the many people who contributed to this project. Lois Crozier-Hogle, Denise Dade, Gael Erickson, Brielle Johnck, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Karen Kidwell, Sally Mentzer, Dave Perrone, Emily Renzel, Lennie Roberts, and Kathy Switky, wrote and edited text. Jane Gallagher, Mike Kahn, and Peter LaTourrette all donated their art and photos. Congratulations, all! **CGF**



WORKING, continued from page 1

and less viable. When land speculation begins, land prices rise, and taxes on farmland increase. Economies of scale are lost because processing plants, supply centers, and agricultural support services leave the area for lower-cost locations. These additional costs get passed on to farmers, who must generate higher returns to offset increasing costs. Conflicts between farmers and suburbanites occur over farm odors, early morning noise, pesticide application, and slow equipment moving along rural roads. Farmers also face increased pressure from water and land use restrictions.

Santa Clara County farmland — It's worth saving

Reduced to only 23,000 acres from a peak of 123,000 acres in 1949, farmland is the most threatened working landscape in Santa Clara County. Less impacted by development, 320,000 acres of ranchlands — over a third of the county's 800,000 acres — remain. In spite of this loss, farmlands and ranchlands grossed \$300 million last year, according to the 2000 Santa Clara County Agricultural Crop Report.

How we lost our County farmland

In Santa Clara County, massive land speculation started in the late 1950's. San Jose, led by City Manager Dutch Hammond, annexed vast expanses of rich agricultural land, extending its boundaries like tentacles squeezing against neighboring cities. Hammond was once quoted as saying he

wanted to make San Jose the Los Angeles of the north. Today, San Jose has 918,800 people, compared to San Francisco's 801,377; yet San Jose covers roughly four times the land mass of San Francisco.

Threats to County farmland

As a result of San Jose's land grab, more than 3,100 acres of rich agricultural land in Coyote Valley — more than 10 miles from downtown San Jose — are threatened by development. In addition, Gilroy plans to expand its urban boundary, threatening to annex 664 acres of prime farmland.

In areas where growth controls do not exist, freeway expansion and infrastructure improvements spur growth and carve into farmlands. Plans to widen the Highway 101 corridor between San Jose and Morgan Hill and a proposed freeway linking Highway 101 and Highway 156, will accelerate the growth of the urban fringe to the south and east beyond Hollister.

How can we protect farmland?

Important methods for protecting farmland include urban growth boundaries, acquisition, conservation easements, and community support.

Urban growth boundaries that keep farmlands permanently outside the growth boundary control sprawl, while encouraging compact, urban development. Effective UGBs draw tight lines around urban areas. Unfortunately, many UGBs in Santa Clara County are too large, and allow farmland lying inside the boundaries to be developed.

Acquisition is the most effective way to protect agricultural land. The City of Livermore taxes development in its urban core and uses the revenue to acquire farmlands. The City of Davis set up a mitigation bank requiring an acre of farmland to be preserved for every acre developed, and it is now considering changing it to a two-to-one ratio. Such programs — and purchases by land trusts — protect farmland from development.

Conservation easements allow farmers to continue to own and work their farms and gain from the sale of development rights to conservation organizations. Peninsula Open Space Trust, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and Santa Clara County Open Space Authority have purchased conservation easements on thousands of acres of farmland, permanently protecting it from development.

Community support of local farmers, by buying their produce, ensures their economic survival and helps preserve local farms. Regional farmers' markets, where local farmers can sell their produce directly to the public, are one way communities can provide this economic support.

In conclusion

The working landscape that sustains us lies in the path of urban expansion. When urban areas expand, we lose open space, wildlife habitat, scenic country roads, and local sustainable agriculture. Yet we have the means to protect our working landscape by controlling growth, acquiring lands and revitalizing local agriculture. **CGF**

Thanks to you!

September marked the finale of our hugely successful Executive Director Leadership Fund. In little more than one year, our friends contributed a record \$200,000 to Committee for Green Foothills and the Green Foothills Foundation to enable us to hire our first Executive Director and Director of Education and Outreach.

Many members and friends gave generously to this special campaign, and we are grateful to each and every one of you for your wonderful votes of confidence. Every day, you affirm the vital importance of our work. Thank you!

Anonymous
Midori Aogaichi and Richard Mamelock
Norman Arslan
Margaret Rose Badger
Robert Batinovich
Jeffrey and Lovinda Beal Blohm
Robert F. Beaulieu
Atsuko and Keith Bennett
Ruth Bioletti
Richard Bode
Allan and Marilyn Brown
Robert V. and Patricia M. Brown
Joanne E. Bruggemann
Gail and Robert Buschini
R.E. Cameron
David Chu
Compton Foundation
Jim and Pat Compton
Joe and Victoria Cotchett
Lois Crozier-Hogle
Daniel Davies
Larry J. Doyle
Francesca Eastman
Linda and Jerry Elkind
Donald Ewing
Tony M. Fadell
Nancy Federspiel
Leslie and James Fish
Kenneth and Sherrilyn Fisher
Alexander L. Florence

Elaine French
Mr. and Mrs. James Goesser
Joan and Dan Gray
George and Jean Gryc
Maureen E. Hartman
Grace and Robert Hasbrook
Walter and Katherine Hays
Albert and Hertha Hemel
Karen Herrel
Mark Hollar
Chuck and Christy Holloway
Anne Houghteling
Betty Hunt
Catherine and Franklin Johnson
Tom Jordan
Suzi King
J. Burke Knapp
Supervisor Liz Kniss
Ambassador Bill and Mrs. Jean Lane
Susan Lang and Robert Levenson
Helen Leppert
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Ann and Keith Mangold
Marshall B. McDonald
Mr. and Mrs. Bob McIntyre
Pat Millar
Barbara Millin
Mrs. Albert Moorman
Mary Nicholson Goldworth

Peninsula Community Foundation
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Sue Prichard
Roderick Rowell
Cindy Rubin and Brian Rosenthal
Jean and Jay Rusmore
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Marcie Singhaus
Lydia Sloan
Ann J. Sonnenberg
Judy and Hans Steiner
Beth and Phil Sunshine
David M. Swartz
Lina Swisher and Dan Rubin
Kathy and Andy Switky
Jim and Emily Thurber
Sam Valenti
K. Christie Vogel
Louis S. Wall
Mariquita West
Lyn Wyman and Dennis Dow
Carol Young-Holt and David Sandage
Alex and Leah Zaffaroni



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