



# Green Foothills

COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS [www.GreenFoothills.org](http://www.GreenFoothills.org)

Summer 2001



© Robert Buelteman, courtesy of POST

**POST was able to purchase** these coastal fields and this stunning skyline ridge thanks to the Committee's perseverance, and decades of work to prevent development.

## Rancho Corral de Tierra — A treasure protected at last!

by Lennie Roberts

**P**erseverance is one of the Committee for Green Foothills' watchwords. For nearly 40 years, we have stuck tenaciously to our mission of protecting the scenic natural landscapes of the Peninsula and Coastsides.

Our tenacity paid off recently in the announcement by Peninsula Open Space Trust of the acquisition of the Rancho Corral de Tierra property — 4,262 acres of bucolic coastal terrace farm fields, chaparral

clad foothills, and the dramatic skyline ridge behind Montara and Moss Beach.

Just 30 years ago, Deane and Deane (Westinghouse) owned some 8,000 acres around the City of Half Moon Bay and the Midcoast area, including the Corral de Tierra properties. They planned to develop these areas with homes, condos, shopping centers, hotels, and golf courses. The Devil's Slide Bypass Freeway was scheduled to be built to accommodate all this sprawling growth.

Enter the Committee for Green Foothills! Our small but effective organization joined the fray on many fronts. We rallied citizens to support State Senator Arlen Gregorio's bill, SB 1099, to acquire Montara State Beach, thwarting Deane and Deane's plans for the beach to become the private preserve for a Del Monte-style 400 unit lodge, plus some 1,600 units of condos and apartments surrounding a golf course. "Will North Montara Beach soon become a State Park...or will it be sacrificed to benefit private developers?" queried a 1972 CGF flyer urging members to write the State Senate to support SB 1099.

The bill passed and today, visitors enjoy

*See TIERRA, page 9*



COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS

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Committee for Green Foothills  
3921 E. Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, ca 94303

[info@GreenFoothills.org](mailto:info@GreenFoothills.org)  
[www.GreenFoothills.org](http://www.GreenFoothills.org)

#### Contributors

Denice Dade, Mary Davey, Ken Fisher,  
Velma Gentzsch, Mahlon Hubenthal,  
Yvonne Jacobson, Zoe Kersteen-Tucker,  
John Lynch, Lennie Roberts, Kathy Switky

#### Staff

Zoe Kersteen-Tucker executive director  
Denice Dade legislative advocate, santa  
clara county  
Lennie Roberts legislative advocate, san  
mateo county  
Kathy Switky director of education and  
outreach  
Velma Gentzsch office coordinator

#### CGF Board Members

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nominations  
Karen Kidwell vice president, membership  
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Chris Powell  
Cindy Rubin  
April Vargas

#### Newsletter Editor

Mahlon Hubenthal

#### Newsletter Layout

Bill Murray



## From the Executive Director..

It is with pleasure that I open this issue of **Green Footnotes** in my new role as the Executive Director of the Committee for Green Foothills and the Green Foothills Foundation. Little less than a year ago, our Boards of Directors set forth a challenge to raise two years of salary for our first-ever Executive Director — and here I am!

A wonderful challenge gift of \$30,000 from noted King's Mountain historian Kenneth Fisher launched our Executive Director Leadership Fund; this gift was quickly matched by renowned attorney and coastal protection advocate Joseph Cotchett. Many more members and friends have given generously to this fund during the last year with the understanding that their gifts help guarantee the long-term health of this vibrant organization. Indeed, your marvelous generosity also inspired our board to name Kathy Switky as the new Director of Education and Outreach. We are very fortunate to add such a talented and accomplished individual to our staff.

As Executive Director, I am eager to continue the work I began as Committee Board President two years ago. We will blaze new trails and follow in the footsteps of the wise ones who charted the first paths to local open space preservation. With your help, the Committee's banner staff and Board of Directors will strive to make this organization sustainable, nimble and effective for the decades to come.

As you know, the Committee is rooted in a venerable tradition of standing up and fighting for what we believe in — open space and natural resource conservation. With the organizational

changes made in the last year, the Committee and Green Foothills Foundation are now prepared to get tougher and to fight even harder to protect the last remaining open space on the Peninsula.

At the Committee's 25th anniversary celebration, founder Wallace Stegner wrote, *"...if you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are. Identity depends not on some intransigent independence and separateness, but upon membership in something — a community, region, tradition, place."*

*You should take great pride in what you have done; and you should brace yourself to do more. The opportunity will not vanish, or the threats (to the environment) disappear. A place is not a place until people have lived their way deeply into it and it exists in their minds and memories and emotions as surely as it does on the map. And one of the best ways to get that feeling for a place is to fight for it."*

My goal as Executive Director is to work with you, our staff and our Boards of Directors to ensure that this community — this collection of folks affectionately known as the "Green Feet" — continues to exist in our minds and memories. We will work, fight and stand strong together so that this region continues to offer a small corner of paradise to those lucky enough to call this place home. If Peninsula open space was not uniquely worth saving, the Committee for Green Foothills would not have lasted in our hearts and souls for the last 40 years.

Your support continues to strengthen our ability to act on behalf of our local environment. I invite you to take great pride in the Committee's accomplishments — you put us on the map! **CGF**



John Sullivan

Red-legged frog.

# First Test of New Stanford Community Plan

by Denise Dade and Kathy Switky

With the passage of Stanford's new Community Plan and General Use Permit after a hard-fought two-year struggle, it's easy to feel that it's time to relax. After all, the General Use Permit outlines protections for the foothills for the next 25 years.

But reality has set in quickly. The Carnegie Foundation's proposal to develop a 21,000-square foot building, parking lot, and road in the foothills is the first test of the new planning regulations. The Santa Clara County Planning Commission approved the project over the objections of the City of Palo Alto, Committee for Green Foothills, and other environmental groups.

The Committee filed an appeal to prevent the project from destroying open space in the foothills — including habitat for the imperiled California Tiger Salamander. In May, the Supervisors held a hearing on the appeal.

## Bad news: Board supports project over Kniss' objection

Supervisor Liz Kniss presented a motion to grant the Committee's appeal and fully deny Carnegie's proposed development, but was unable to gain support. Instead, the Board passed a motion declaring their intent to approve the Use Permit and certify the Environmental Impact Report for the project — with the caveat that Carnegie's project must conform to the protections established in the Stanford Community Plan.

## Good news: Board backs Community Plan protections

The Supervisors asked Carnegie to revise their proposal so that it is consistent with the Community Plan. To comply, Carnegie must:

- Place all structures, roads and parking lots inside the Academic Growth Boundary (AGB)
- Use the existing access road or alternative road inside the AGB, and protect the Special Conservation Area from road construction
- Commit no development on the remaining 18.5 acres of the leased twenty-acre parcel

The existing access road, located inside the AGB, belongs to the Behavioral Sciences Center, and the center has so far refused to allow Carnegie to use the road. Before the



Mike Kahn

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors rejected CGF's appeal to protect this foothill site from development. We are now working to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the Stanford Community Plan.

project can be officially approved, Carnegie must return to the Board of Supervisors with their amended plan and an access road agreed on by all parties. We expect this to happen within the next few months.

## The Committee remains vigilant

Although Carnegie has produced a new site plan, moving their building even further inside the Academic Growth Boundary — the equivalent of a city's urban growth boundary — the Committee for Green Foothills will work to ensure that the project meets all the requirements of the Stanford Community Plan, including:

- Special Conservation Area — no physi-

cal improvements (not related to conservation) are to be allowed

■ **Academic Growth Boundary** — the County has the responsibility to survey and document the location of the AGB

■ **Revised Environmental Impact Report** — addressing inadequacies of the original report, and describing the revised proposal

■ **Conservation Easement for the California Tiger Salamander** — defining the baseline environmental conditions to be protected, the uses permitted within the easement, and the means for long-term enforcement

■ **Oak Tree Mitigation** — for any oak trees lost in the development, including any existing access road extensions. **CGF**

## WELCOME, VELMA!

CGF extends a warm welcome to CGF's new Office Coordinator, **Velma Gentzsch!** Born and raised in rural Missouri, Velma graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a degree in Environmental Policy. After graduation, she moved to California to be a Canvass Field Manager for CALPIRG. As our Office Coordinator, she is ably handling our membership records,



bookkeeping, and a myriad of other things to keep our office organized.

Velma's rural upbringing and environmental background provide a perspective for her in-depth look at our endangered farmlands in this issue of Green Footnotes.

A Mountain View resident, Velma also works part-time as a librarian for Acterra, just downstairs from the CGF office. In her free time, she enjoys swing dancing, photography and being outdoors.

We're thrilled to have Velma's attention to detail, ready smile, and commitment to the environment on our team. Welcome, Velma!

# South Bay foothills protected from precedent-setting development

by Kathy Switky

A proposed 35,500-square foot conference center complex in the eastern foothills of Santa Clara County has been soundly rejected by the Board of Supervisors, who recently took a strong stand to protect the foothills.

Committee for Green Foothills worked with neighborhood groups and concerned citizens to oppose the Amana Conference Center, proposed to include overnight accommodation for 256 people, bus and car parking, and a sewage treatment plant. The massive complex would have destroyed open space and viewshed in the fragile foothills east of San Jose, above Casa Madeira Lane and Clayton Road.

CGF Legislative Advocate Denise Dade applauded the Board of Supervisors — and the Planning Commission — for their unanimous vote to reject this development and uphold the General Plan. The Amana Center would have created a terrible precedent of allowing destruction of this region's scenic foothills.

Because the applicant had requested a reinterpretation of the County's policies to protect the foothills, approval of this project would have significantly weakened the County's hillside zoning designation and opened the door for further large-scale development in the tightly zoned hillside lands. The proposal also conflicted with the Santa Clara County General Plan.

The project would also have had immediate negative impacts. Planned for an exposed site at 1,400 feet in elevation, the project would have been visible from the valley floor as well as from portions of Silver Creek and surrounding neighborhoods throughout San Jose. In addition, the Center would have doubled traffic and increased the risk of fire in an already fire-prone area.

With the creation of Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) throughout Santa Clara County, cities are looking increasingly to the Board of Supervisors to protect the hills outside these UGBs from inappropriate development. This is the very responsibility for which the County's hillside zoning policy was designed.

The Board's action this May to deny the Amana project reinforces the San Jose Greenline, and reaffirms the Board's commitment to protection of the foothills, some of the region's most environmentally sensitive and scenic lands. **CGF**

## BOARD NOTES

With this issue of Green Footnotes, we bid farewell to two esteemed Committee board members, **Emily Renzel** and **John Lynch**. Both are moving on to other environmental endeavors in their communities. During her long tenure with the Committee, Emily Renzel served heroically as our Secretary for more than 10 years, and John Lynch served as one of the Committee's valued and vocal Coastside representatives. Happy Trails, John and Emily — we will miss you both!

We are happy to welcome to the board **Mary Davey**, an experienced environmental activist and long-time Green Foothills champion. We are thrilled to have her energy, nonprofit expertise, and commitment to the environment on our side.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Your volunteer time can help Committee for Green Foothills protect the foothills and open space.

We especially need volunteers to help with photography, letter-writing, press clippings, mailings, and office tasks.

Interested? Contact Velma at (650) 968-7243 or [Velma@GreenFoothills.org](mailto:Velma@GreenFoothills.org).

# Celebrating the Road to Gold!

Mary Davey, long-time CGF member, volunteer and current Green Foothills Foundation President, has been the heart and soul of the "Green Feet" since becoming involved with the Committee for Green Foothills in the 1960's. Mary and her husband Jack celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with nearly 200 fellow Green Feet, family members, and friends in Woodside this June.

At this special event, dubbed "The Road to Gold," Green Foothills Foundation Secretary April Vargas shared these words:

*"Thank you, Mary and Jack, for inviting us to join you on your very special day. As we gather together here this evening, we are surrounded by images of green feet, lucky horseshoes and metaphors about traveling and roads. These are meaningful and powerful symbols."*

*Seeing Mary and Jack together tonight reminds us that as we journey along this road of life, we move most effectively, most decisively and most effortlessly on our two feet. The power of the pair brings balance, stability, strength and grace to our every step. And so it is with this couple. After fifty years, Mary and Jack are still galloping along, side by side, kicking up their heels and spreading such joy, confidence and unparalleled enthusiasm for*



Kathy Switky

**Mary and Jack Davey** celebrated their 50th anniversary with friends and other Green Foothills members in June. They called it "a wonderful event with wonderful people! We have been blessed by our association with Green Foothills since 1962."

*life. We are inspired by you and we are eager to follow in your footsteps.*

*As your journey continues over the next fifty years, your footprints will remain, indelible, on the winding path of history that is shared by our region, our community and every person who knows and loves you. Thank you once again, Mary and Jack, for trekking with us to the highest peaks, strolling with us through the greenest meadows and dancing with us in celebration of it all."*

*We love you.*

Congratulations, Mary and Jack — you are an inspiration to us all!



Charles Webber, California Academy of Sciences

# Court ruling threatens Coastal Commission

by Kathy Switky

The California Coastal Commission, established by the voters in 1972 to protect our coastline, is under attack. One of the Commission's oldest antagonists has finally found an ally in Superior Court judge Charles Kobayashi, who ruled that because Commission members are appointed by both the Governor and the Legislature, the panel violates the state's separation-of-powers doctrine.

In the eyes of the judge, the Coastal Commission is not "accountable to" (under the direct control of) the Executive Branch because the Governor does not make the majority of the appointments. In fact, the Commission's accountability comes from this very structure. The agency is governed by three appointing authorities: four Commissioners are appointed by the Assembly Speaker, four by the Senate Rules Committee, and four by the Governor. It is precisely this separation of appointments that provides checks and balances. In addition, virtually all Commission decisions are subject to full judicial review.

The ruling came as part of a court case

filed by a Newport Beach resident who illegally dumped tires, plastic, concrete and other materials into the ocean, claiming that he sought to create artificial reefs — but without the coastal development permit required by the Coastal Commission. When the Commission filed a cease-and-desist order and ordered him to remove his garbage, he sued the Coastal Commission.

He hired as his attorney long-time Commission foe Ron Zumbrun of the Pacific Legal Foundation, which has been making the separation-of-powers argument against the Commission for more than a decade. This issue is not about the constitutionality of the Commission — it is the latest in the ongoing attempt to cripple the strongest environmental law in the state.

Anti-environmental forces — including former Governor Deukmejian — have tried for decades to eradicate or weaken the Commission. The judge making the April ruling was one of the last appointments Deukmejian made before he left office in 1991.

## What you can do

The state is appealing the case. Both the

Attorney General and the Coastal Commission, while they are confident that their arguments will prevail in a more deliberative court, are taking this very seriously, as should we.

**Write letters to the editor and op-ed pieces.** It's important to let fellow citizens know that the existing appointment structure is crucial to the independence of our Coastal Commission.

**Write to our state legislators.** Let the Governor, Attorney General, and State Senators and Assembly Members know that we will not tolerate any compromises of coastal protection. To find your legislators' names and addresses, visit <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>.

## Save the Coastal Commission!

Since its creation by a vote of the people in 1972, the Coastal Commission has been a strong guardian of our state's incomparable coastal resources.

We must let our legislators know that the Commission is a vital agency charged with the protection of one of our State's most valuable and valued resources. The stakes extend far beyond California's borders: the Commission is the only state agency empowered to review — and veto — off-shore oil drilling in federal waters. Under the Bush Administration, oil drilling is again a real possibility.

California needs a strong Coastal Commission now more than ever. The Commission must be preserved and strengthened, not destroyed! **CGF**



# Fight to save Coyote Valley continues

by Denise Dade

Since 1981, the Committee and other conservation groups have fought to protect Coyote Valley, some of the last rich agricultural lands in San Jose. This fight continues today. Many have joined the effort to protect the valley and the region from San Jose's planned sprawl, which threatens to exacerbate the region's traffic and housing woes.

## Despite slowdown, development moves ahead

The economic downturn is slowing — but not stopping — Cisco's development of Coyote Valley, and another development proposal is in the application stage.

In spite of an unresolved referendum and pending lawsuits, Cisco plans to break ground on the first phase of its new headquarters as early as this winter. As a result of Cisco's falling stock and recent layoff of 8,000 employees, the full build-out of their Coyote campus is now expected to take ten years instead of the planned five.

Sobrato Development Corporation recently submitted an application to develop 566,000 square feet of single-use office space in Coyote Valley adjacent to Cisco's site. Sobrato's proposal could further open Coyote Valley and the surrounding area to development, by generating enough jobs to trigger a second highway 101 interchange.

## PLAN moves to force a referendum

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 Cisco's Coyote Valley project, the largest development this region has seen in decades, should go forward. PLAN has launched an active anti-sprawl education campaign and is speaking to local leaders and community groups about alternatives.

## Organizations challenge Environmental Impact Report

The proposed development also faces legal challenges to its Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The Sierra Club, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the City of Salinas, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (representing 18 cities in three counties), and the County of Santa Cruz have



Mike Kahn

**The future of Coyote Valley** — some of the last rich agricultural lands in San Jose — is in our hands.

filed lawsuits challenging the EIR. In the lawsuits, scheduled to be heard in October, the organizations claim that the EIR fails to fully address regional environmental impacts — including housing, traffic, and open space.

## Threats to endangered species

Claiming that mitigation for significant impacts to endangered species is inadequate, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) threatened to stop Cisco's project along with several infrastructure improvements necessary for opening Coyote Valley. The USFWS asked for the purchase and restoration of 669 acres of prime habitat. Santa Clara County, the Valley Transportation Authority and Coyote Valley Research Park LLC have agreed to the USFWS requests, and the road improvements are poised to move forward.

## Why single-use development is a bad idea

Single-use development is easy and turns a quick profit, but it leaves a host of problems for local governments to solve in its wake. Cisco's conversion of some of the last remaining agricultural land into 6.6 million square feet of office space provides a perfect example

of sprawling single-use development.

Low-density, auto-dependent office buildings, surrounded by acres of parking spaces and situated 15 miles south of downtown San Jose, far from public transportation and housing, will generate significant traffic congestion, exacerbate the housing crisis and result in major environmental impacts.

## Time to "rethink" Coyote Valley development

Before approving additional development, the region needs time, as a recent *Mercury News* opinion stated, to "rethink" development of Coyote Valley.

Coyote Valley follows a familiar pattern of growth through single-use development. In San Jose, large-scale single-use developments sprawling ever farther from the core downtown have destroyed precious agricultural lands, polluted the air and water, and degraded the region's quality of life.

The lawsuits filed by its neighbors are a wake-up call for San Jose — promiscuous, poorly-planned development has angered its neighbors.

*See COYOTE VALLEY, page 8*

# Our endangered farmlands

by Velma Gentzsch

**S**pans of green fields, rolling ranchlands, hill-sides covered in vineyards and rows of fruit trees proclaim the rich agricultural heritage of our countryside. Unfortunately, this rural landscape is in danger of being paved over all over the country, especially here in the Bay Area. When farmland is replaced with single-use, low-density sprawling suburbs, habitat and open space are also lost forever.

Poorly planned, sprawling, auto-centered development has many negative consequences that degrade the quality of life for the people in urban areas. As taxpayers move out to the fringe suburbs, city cores crumble. Bay Area residents are familiar with the problems this exodus creates — traffic congestion, lack of affordable housing, and air and water pollution. These problems are a constant reminder that protecting farmland is key to preserving our quality of life.

More than 3.2 million acres of farmland in the United States is being lost each year — an area about five times the size of Yosemite National Park. California alone loses about 300,000 acres per year. Santa Clara County, once covered with orchards, has already lost much of its farmland to development. In 1940 there were 106,000 acres of fruits and nuts harvested in Santa Clara County. In 1998, just 4,500 acres remained.

What farmland the Bay Area has left is very productive. Unfortunately, it is desired for houses as well as crops. Prime farmland is gently sloping and well-drained, often situated along rivers and bodies of water, making it good for development as well as agriculture. As cities grow, it is precisely our best farmlands that are lost to development. This is especially true in California. The City of Los Angeles and Silicon Valley are



In 1936, these Santa Clara Valley orchard workers inspected the base of each tree for pests.

Burton Crandall, courtesy of Nancy Weston

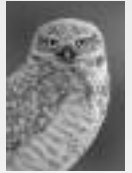
built upon the stumps of orange groves and fruit orchards.

Farmlands of our nation's food basket, the Great Central Valley, shrivel as towns such as Bakersfield, Fresno, Merced, Modesto, Stockton, and Redding spawn tract homes, shopping malls, and freeways. Locally, farms near Gilroy and Castroville, which produce most of the garlic and artichokes consumed in the U.S., lie dangerously close to expanding urban centers.

The protection of these farmlands is vital to our future, ensuring that farmers can continue to farm and that open space and livable communities will exist for future generations.

The Committee has long recognized this. In San Mateo County, our strong zoning laws and urban growth boundaries are due in large part to the Committee's work protecting the open space and farmland of the

## The Committee is watching...



*Committee for Green Foothills Legislative Advocates and volunteers juggle multiple projects to protect the environment in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. In addition to those projects described in this issue's articles, the Committee is watching:*

... **CalTrans**, anticipating the Record of Decision this fall on the Devil's Slide tunnel

... **Coastal land owners** who propose monster homes and overbuilding standard lots

... **County, State and Federal parklands**, where encroachments such as the recent illegal tree cutting in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area threaten public resources

... **Esther Clark Park** in Palo Alto, where the owners of the historic Juana Briones House propose to swap their developed land for parkland

... **Mission College** Board of Trustees, whom we've asked to protect the last few remaining burrowing owls on campus

... **Midcoast review** of the Local Coastal Plan in San Mateo County, to ensure coastal protections

... **Pilarcitos Creek**, where we're working with the City of Half Moon Bay to modify a proposed trail and bridges to protect riparian areas

... **Stanford University** and Santa Clara County, to ensure timely and effective implementation of environmental protections established by the Stanford Community Plan and General Use Permit

... **Vallemar Bluffs** in Moss Beach, where development proposals are threatening open space

... **Water rights** applications, to ensure that fishery resources are protected

... **Cellular antennae** site proposals, to minimize visual impacts in unincorporated San Mateo County

Burrowing owl photo by Peter LaTourrette

See **FARMLAND**, page 8

# New coastside group forms to elect environmentalists

by John Lynch, Co-Chair, League for Coastside Protection and former CGF Director


CGF members and other environmentalists from Half Moon Bay to Montara have formed a new organization to speak with a unified voice on coastal issues. Rather than continuing to fight battles one at a time, all the time, the new group is taking a long-term approach by supporting candidates for public office who will defend the San Mateo County coast.

The new League for Coastside Protection (LCP) is working to elect officials who will enforce Local Coastal Programs. Local Coastal Programs — under the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission — are the principal regulatory mechanism for controlling growth along the coast. It's no coincidence that the group's initials reiterate those of the important regulation.

Growth is certainly threatening. For some time, Half Moon Bay has been the fastest-growing city in the County, and the unincorporated midcoast is working hard to keep up. This November, at least 20 Coastside seats are up for election. Big-developer money stands at the ready to pack those seats with developers' friends — and the results could be long-term damage to coastal open space and quality of life.


Local Coastal Programs were developed after years of negotiation and planning, and can be good tools for open space protection — but only if local government officials demand enforcement. Endorsed by Committee for Green Foothills, the League will help elect people who respect these laws and will use them

to protect our communities and natural resources.

For more information, or to get involved, visit the League's website at <http://lcp.sanmateo.org>. 

## FARMLAND, continued from page 7

area. In Santa Clara County, we are working hard to protect Coyote Valley, some of the last prime farmland in the South Bay, and ranch lands along the hills to the south.

The battle to protect green space, of which farmland is a vital part, is a battle that the Committee has fought and will continue to fight to ensure that green fields — and our quality of life — are protected for future generations. 

## BUY LOCAL!

There is one thing that you can do right now to help protect farmlands and our future — buy local! For farming to be feasible, farmers need to be supported, not only with law and lobbying, but also in the market. Going to the local farmer's market does more than guarantee that you have quality food; it is an investment in a quality life for years to come.

### For information on local farmers' markets visit:

<http://www.sfgate.com/eguide/food/farmersmarkets>  
[http://www.sallys-place.com/food/farmers\\_markets/sf\\_mkts.htm](http://www.sallys-place.com/food/farmers_markets/sf_mkts.htm)  
<http://www.seasonalchef.com/nocallistsummer.htm>  
[http://www.bayinsider.com/restaurants/food/reviews/farmers\\_markets\\_004.html](http://www.bayinsider.com/restaurants/food/reviews/farmers_markets_004.html)

## COYOTE VALLEY, continued from page 6

Bay Area cities are starting to realize that mixed land use, blending retail, commercial, and housing near public transit is an effective way to reduce traffic congestion and provide sufficient housing.

### An alternative vision: mixed use along public transit corridors

We have an opportunity to revitalize this region, by applying intelligent planning principles that include locating intensified development in urban centers and developing mixed-use along the new BART line from Fremont to San Jose.


Mixed-use planning principles create vibrant urban centers, protect working farms and orchards and preserve open space and seasonal wetlands. Mixed-use allows urban areas to grow without sacrificing the surrounding natural beauty and remaining rich agricultural lands.

### A call to action

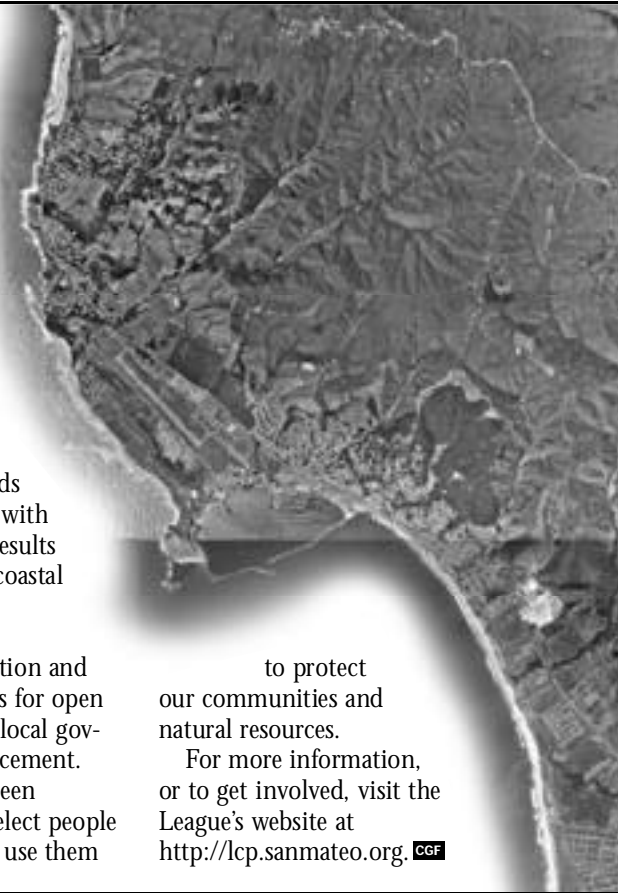
We must rethink the development of Coyote Valley, before the city grants additional, short-sighted, single-use development entitlements. The time to do this is now, while the economic slow-down and the opposition of nonprofit organizations and local and county governments have

stalled development.

Once development rights are secured, it will be too late to preserve Coyote Valley. San Jose's transformation into Los Angeles North will be complete.

To get involved with the efforts of CGF and PLAN to reshape the region, contact Denice Dade at [Denice@GreenFoothills.org](mailto:Denice@GreenFoothills.org). 

*PLAN is supported by a coalition of individuals and organizations including Committee for Green Foothills, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Community Homeless Advocacy Ministry, and the Green Party.*





## Green Feet profile: Meet Mike Kahn

by Kathy Switky

He's becoming known throughout the Peninsula both for his wonderful photographs and for being the creative and technical force behind several interesting media projects. He is photographer, webmaster, and environmentalist Michael Kahn, and Committee for Green Foothills is lucky to benefit from his hard work on our website and photo collection.

Mike came to us after a long journey that wound up changing the direction of his career. After working two years with Environmental Volunteers (just downstairs from the CGF office), Mike got the itch to travel.

An enthusiastic bicyclist, Mike spent last summer on a 105-day bike ride that took him the 5,135 miles from his hometown of Palo Alto to Bar Harbor, Maine. Mike equipped his bike with camping gear, a digital camera, and a solar-powered laptop, and used the trip to reach out to environmental organizations across the nation. People across the nation followed his "Coast to Coast Discovery Ride" via his ride website, <http://www.EVols.org/discover.htm>.

After taking more than 2,000 photos on his journey, Mike became an even more enthusiastic and skilled photographer. On his return, he was committed to sharing his web and photography skills with the environmental community.

This led to a number of consulting projects, including one to design and manage an interim website for Committee for Green Foothills. Mike's site has helped us get the word out about our advocacy projects while we await the launch of our new site (coming soon). In addition, his photographs of the foothills, Coyote Valley, and other threatened open space have become integral parts of CGF's publications and education work.

Michael's "portfolio career" includes a number of interesting community-building projects. He coordinates NeighborSpace, a website that builds local community through online conversation. He's the volunteer Executive Producer for the Peninsula's environmental talk show, Common Ground (in which CGF also participates). And he shoots and edits digital video for Community Journal, a news project of local cable channel MPAC.

"I'm so glad to be doing work that



Mike Kahn

**Mike celebrates** after biking 5,135 miles from Palo Alto to Bar Harbor, Maine.

feeds my heart. It's a pleasure to help bring attention to local environmental and community issues via the media. Ads aren't the only things people should be seeing on TV and online," Mike says with a ready grin.

Appreciative? Inspired? We sure are. Committee for Green Foothills is proud to have Mike on our team, and thanks him for all his good work on behalf of the environmental community. **CGF**

### *TIERRA, continued from page 1*

this spectacular beach due to public pressure overcoming a powerful development lobby. Deane and Deane argued that if the State purchased the property, the site would be paved over for a 1,000-car parking lot.

Now, after thirty years, the northern portion of the Corral de Tierra property completes the protection of the watershed of Martini Creek and the agricultural fields of Ocean View Farms located just east of Highway One at Montara State Beach.

A critical component of Deane and Deane's development plans was the notorious Devil's Slide Freeway Bypass project. Caltrans, working closely with the landowners and local Chambers of Commerce, designed the ultimate "access" project — seven miles of freeway that would have destroyed the quiet communities of Montara and Moss Beach, in addition to devastating Montara Mountain and despoil-

ing seven separate watersheds.

In 1972, Committee for Green Foothills and other environmental groups went to court and won an early key decision that highway projects came under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and were required to file Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). The outcome of this legal and political battle is the Devil's Slide Tunnel, which is close to becoming a reality.

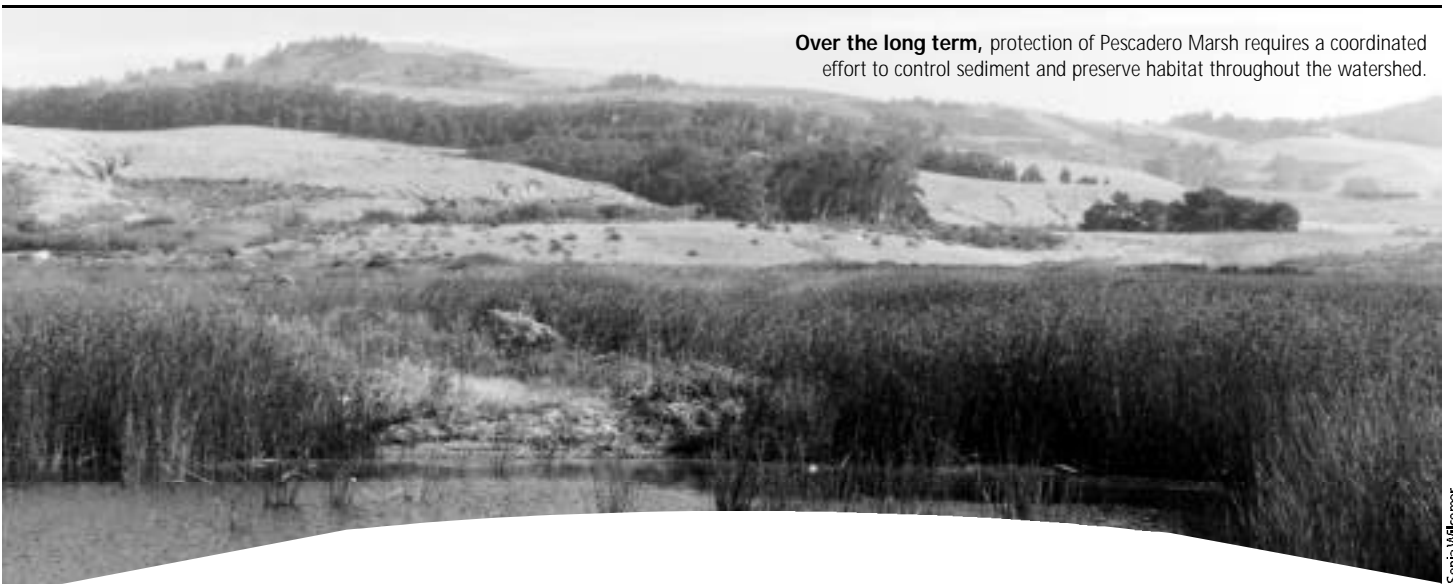
By the late 1970's, Deane and Deane had sold their land holdings to Half Moon Bay Properties, who objected bitterly to the County's designation of their lands in the Local Coastal Program as agriculture or open space. Half Moon Bay Properties' lawyers wrote to the Board of Supervisors, "The only effect (of the proposed zoning) will be to artificially depress land values and maintain open space at the expense of private landowners." The County went forward with very low density zoning on the rural lands, but that bold stroke didn't deter

new attempts at development.

Over the years, CGF has had to weigh in against various proposals on Rancho Corral de Tierra. In 1986, when an environmentally hostile Board of Supervisors was ready to unravel the Local Coastal Plan (LCP) protections of rural areas such as these parcels, CGF sponsored a countywide initiative to make any weakening amendments to the LCP subject to a vote of the citizens. However, despite the resounding success of Measure A, in accordance with State law, annexation of land to Half Moon Bay would not be subject to voter approval.

Today, with this critical acquisition, much of the rural side of the urban/rural boundary around Half Moon Bay is permanently protected, not just through zoning and voter control, but by acquisition. Without CGF, the land would not have been in its natural state today, but without POST, who knows what the future could hold? **CGF**

Over the long term, protection of Pescadero Marsh requires a coordinated effort to control sediment and preserve habitat throughout the watershed.



Sonia Wilkner

## Pescadero/Butano Watershed — A challenge

by Lennie Roberts

The Pescadero Marsh is a wonderful natural preserve, under the stewardship of California State Parks. Like many coastal estuaries, the marsh is undergoing rapid change, as land use practices over the past 150 years have accelerated deposition of sediment in the marsh and its two streams, Butano and Pescadero Creeks.

Early settlers believed they could reap the benefits of the creeks and marsh and the adjacent uplands with impunity. They fished, hunted, farmed, and logged the huge redwoods and Douglas firs in the upper watershed. During the early 1920's, land owners built levees along the creeks, creating artificial impediments to the natural hydrology, restricting the flooding that had occurred historically over the wide valley and marsh.

Today, because of the levees, creek and marsh sedimentation has accelerated, causing more frequent flooding in Pescadero and along Butano Creek. Some residents of the area are calling for drastic measures in the name of flood control and habitat enhancement—dredging Butano Creek, cutting the riparian vegetation along the

banks and eradicating the non-native beavers.

This watershed has experienced a drastic decline in populations of native fish and other aquatic species, as have many coastal creeks. Six species are listed as threatened or endangered in Pescadero Marsh: steelhead trout, Coho salmon, California red-legged frog, San Francisco garter snake, tidewater goby, and brackish water snail. The fact that so many species dependent upon our coastal streams are now listed as threatened or endangered is a clear indicator of crisis.

Endangered species that inhabit the two creeks and the Pescadero Marsh where the creeks join have unique and sometimes conflicting habitat requirements. The agencies responsible for the survival and recovery of these species must proceed carefully, because they are mandated to avoid harming one species to benefit another.

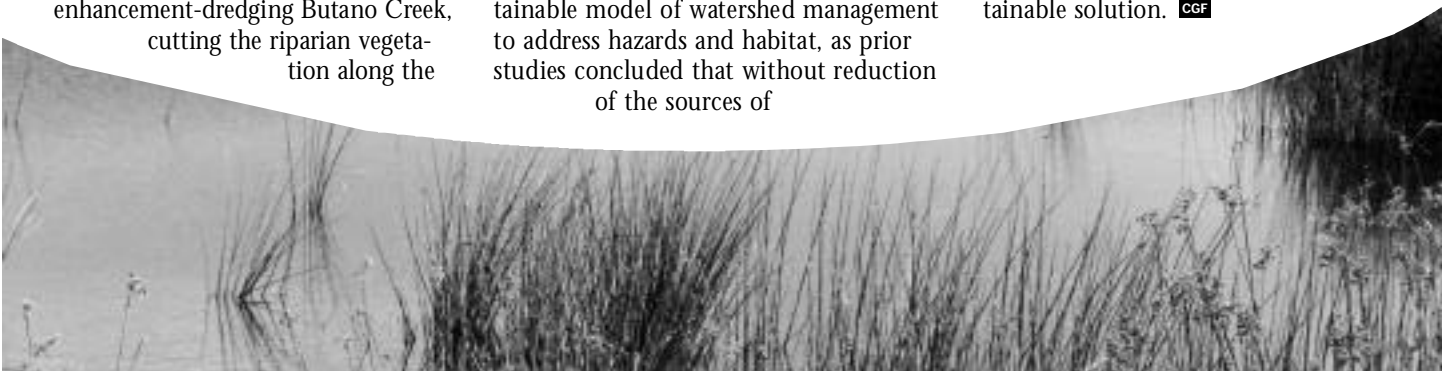
A watershed-wide assessment, beginning this summer, will address the watershed's sources of sediment, which contribute both to flooding and loss of habitat. It is very important for a more sustainable model of watershed management to address hazards and habitat, as prior studies concluded that without reduction of the sources of

sediment, dredging the creeks or building more levees would quickly be overcome by new sediment doses.

Unfortunately, a year ago, the one entity that attempted to bring all groups to the table, the Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) group for the Pescadero watershed, was disbanded due to lack of trust and respect among the participating individuals and groups.

It will take a renewed commitment from everyone interested in achieving solutions to facilitate an inclusive process. Only if all parties are involved in looking at the entirety of the watershed, and devising strategies to provide sustainable solutions over the long term, will this effort succeed. This is not an easy challenge and will require devising a plan that meets multiple goals, has a good scientific basis, avoids unintended consequences, is effective, and conserves public monies.

The Committee for Green Foothills remains strongly committed to preservation of this complex ecosystem, and we will continue to work with the parties involved for a comprehensive and sustainable solution. **CGF**



# Santa Clara County victory protects ranchlands

By Denice Dade

The Committee for Green Foothills, along with other conservation groups, successfully lobbied the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to stop development of two golf courses and 137 luxury estate homes on the 5,000-acre Sargeant Ranch, south of Gilroy.

Wayne Pierce, luxury home/golf course developer and owner of Sargeant Ranch, submitted a General Plan amendment proposal to rezone his property from "Ranchlands" to "Hillside," eliminating some of the obstacles to development. As required for such a development in Hillside zoning, Pierce would have set aside 90% of the land as "open space." However, both golf courses — one in federally-listed red-legged frog habitat — were included in Pierce's "open space" designation.

As the impact of the development became widely known, concerted opposition mounted. The Committee for Green Foothills, Greenbelt Alliance and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the City of San Jose, County Planning Staff, and the *San Jose Mercury News* joined in opposing this project. As pressure on the Board of Supervisors increased, Pierce withdrew his proposed General Plan amendment, saving Sargeant Ranch from the bulldozers — at least, for now.

## Why rezoning Ranchlands is a bad idea

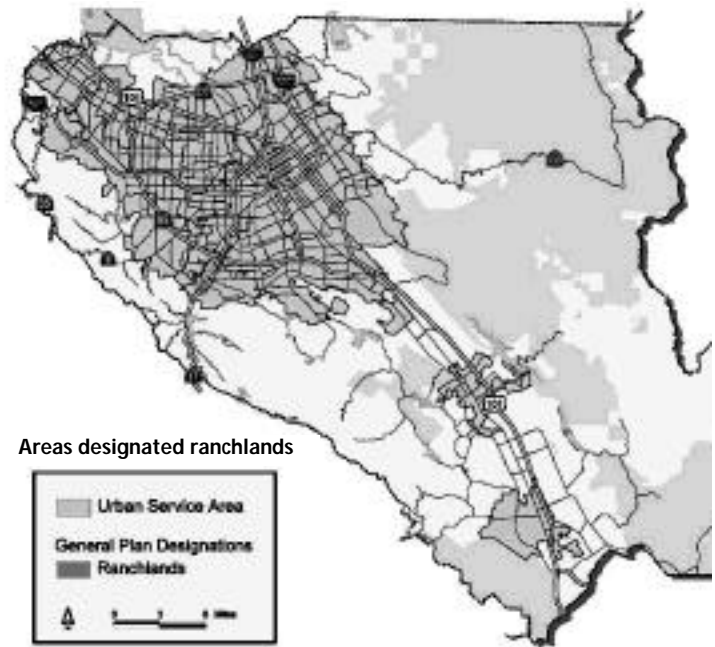
Allowing a zoning change for Sargeant Ranch would establish a precedent and open the floodgates for similar General Plan amendment applications by other ranch owners wanting to cash in. With a Sargeant Ranch precedent, it would be difficult for the County to deny these requests.

When Ranchlands are rezoned as Hillside, their value skyrockets. Golf courses, country clubs, retreat centers, subdivisions, and RV parks can be built on lands zoned as Hillside. Piecemeal Ranchlands-to-Hillside rezoning would chew into the County's 320,000 acres of agricultural land, putting the County's long tradition of ranching at risk.

When Ranchlands are rezoned to allow development, their value increases astronomically — placing them far beyond the reach of conservation groups interested in acquiring private lands and converting them to public open space. The Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust for Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority cannot afford to purchase land at the escalated value of estate homes and golf courses. As a result, far less land is available to meet the public open space needs of a rapidly expanding community.

## The value of Ranchlands

Ranchlands provide valuable open space. Lands free from development, to a large degree, are made up of the ranches that were established in the days of early California. Many of the broad vistas that have been converted to public open space were at one time ranches. Working ranches serve to sustain us and to provide that connection



Map courtesy of Santa Clara County

**Much of Santa Clara** County's 320,000 acres of agricultural lands are zoned "Ranchlands." Our recent victory with Sargeant Ranch is a step to protect all of this working open space.

with the land that we need as a people. Ranchlands properties provide an important source for new open space. Their importance increases as we develop with greater intensity.

## County protections for ranches

The County has strong ranching roots, and much of the land to the south remains as large ranches. To preserve this tradition, the County created specific Ranchlands protections in the General Plan. County ranches cannot be significantly subdivided and intense development is not allowed.

Santa Clara County has a long history of keeping urban development in cities, because it makes good economic sense. Remote development in the hills is expensive. When development is concentrated in cities, it's easier to provide fire protection, police patrols, and nearby schools. Remote developments cost taxpayers a fortune. Allowing piecemeal development of Ranchlands would break from the County's wise tradition.

## Upholding the integrity of the General Plan

The strong opposition to the project convinced the Board to uphold the integrity of the County's General Plan and protect Ranchlands from intensified development. Knowing the project did not have the support of the Board, Pierce withdrew his application before the Board could publicly reject it.

It is quite possible that the Board may see a revised proposal sometime in the future. Until then, this is a great victory for open space and ranching in Santa Clara County. **CGF**

## Our apologies...

We would like to recognize Committee for Green Foothills member **Judith Kleinberg**, whose name was inadvertently omitted from the list of our supporters in the Spring 2001 issue of Footnotes.

# Upcoming Events

## Hike into the rugged redwoods of Virginia Mill!

History buff and CGF member Ken Fisher will be leading another special hike for Green Feet this summer. Following the rave reviews from his historical hike at our members' meeting, Ken has graciously offered to lead a second hike. This time he'll take us into the rugged remains of a 100-year-old lumber mill.

**What?** A hike to Virginia Mill, led by Ken Fisher

**When?** Sunday, August 26; 8:45 am to 4:00 pm.

**Who?** Aggressive hikers only. Flatlanders beware!

**Where?** We'll meet at MROSD's El Corte De Madera (gate CM08) and carpool to the trailhead. (Be sure to sign up with the CGF office so we don't leave anyone behind!)

To gate CM08: Take Skyline Blvd to Tunitas Creek Road. Go west to

Star Hill Road (your first left turn). Go past Swett Road to the junction with Native Sons Road. Gate CM08 will be on your left.

**Why?** See some of San Mateo County's most rugged redwood country, including the remains of a 1900-1906 lumber mill, an abandoned steam donkey-driven rail line, copious debris of all forms, and a huge wood dam from a log pond.

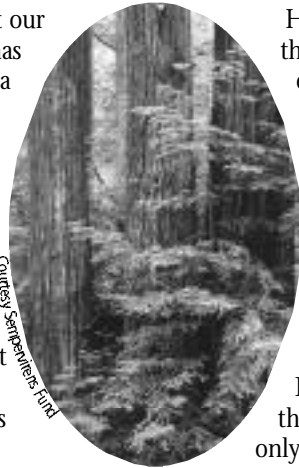
Hear the mill's saga as told through the persona of an old man who lived there as a child with his father, the mill foreman.

**How?** Off trail, on foot, on butt, both arms, climbing, sliding, slipping, hot, cold, dirty, sweaty, wet, muddy. Close interactions with flying insects.

It doesn't get any better than this. Hearty hikers only!

**Bring and wear?** Legs that don't quit. Non-slip boots, all limbs covered, in layers from hot to cold, gloves, hat. Bring a sack lunch — and a friend.

**Space is limited!** To reserve your spot, contact the CGF office at (650) 968-7243 or [hike@GreenFoothills.org](mailto:hike@GreenFoothills.org).



## CGF Members' Meeting 2001

On a sunny day in mid-May, some 50 dedicated CGF members took their green feet to the King's Mountain Community Center on Skyline Boulevard for our Annual Members' Meeting.

In keeping with tradition, we started the morning with a hike. This year, King's Mountain resident, history expert, and CGF member Ken Fisher led us along the trails of Purisima Creek Redwoods. Playing (and playing up) the role of mountain bachelor, recluse and logger George Harkins, Ken led us on a journey into 1880's mountain civilization and culture filled with detail and intrigue.

After a delectable potluck lunch, the program commenced. Vice President Dave Perrone provided a look back at the year's many accomplishments, and introduced the CGF Board of Directors. Executive Director Zoe Kersteen-Tucker described the year's highlight from San Mateo County, while Legislative Advocate Denice Dade highlighted our work in Santa Clara County.

While the past year has been busy and successful, we then turned our attention to the many future challenges to open space. Board member Chris Powell led us in a dynamic and invigorating brainstorm that generated great discussion and a number of great ideas for CGF's work in the coming year.

Many thanks to Ken, and to all the members who shared their energy and ideas! We have much to protect — and are grateful for each and every member whose support makes this possible.



COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS

3921 E. Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, ca 94303

Nonprofit Organization  
u.s. Postage Paid  
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