



GREEN FOOTNOTES

COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS www.GreenFoothills.org

SPRING 2004



Bill Murray

Looking north to Devil's Slide from Montara State Beach.

Expansion of Open Space District to Coast comes closer to reality

New coalition forms to support coastal protections

BY APRIL VARGAS

Committee for Green Foothills' highest priority in San Mateo County is supporting the proposed expansion of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) boundaries to the coast. As part of that effort, CGF has taken the lead in forming a new partnership among environmental organizations and coastal

activists to strengthen regional support for the preservation of coastal agriculture and open space.

Through the new Coastal Open Space Alliance (COSA), organizations and individuals are actively collaborating to preserve coastal open space in San Mateo County. In addition to Committee for Green Foothills, the founding member organizations of COSA are Half Moon Bay Open Space

Trust, Midcoast Park Lands, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save Our Shores, Sierra Club and Surfrider Foundation San Mateo County.

COSA volunteers have been busy with community outreach, providing information at key Coastsides locations and distributing buttons and bumperstickers to sup-

See MROSD, page 13



COMMITTEE FOR
GREEN FOOTHILLS

Committee for Green Foothills is a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to establish and maintain land use policies that protect the environment throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara County.

Founded in 1962, Committee for Green Foothills is leading the continuing effort to protect open space and the natural environment of the Peninsula and Coast. Through grassroots education, planning and legislative advocacy, CGF works to protect and preserve our local natural resources, views and open space.

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Change is in the air

By PETER LATOURRETTE, CGF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

One reason for Committee for Green Foothills' many successes over its 42-year history has been the organization's ability to keep pace with change — both in the surrounding environment and within its organization. The past few months have been no exception.

Last summer, when Zoe Kersteen-Tucker decided to step down from her nominally 75%-time position as Executive Director so that she could spend more time with her family, your Board of Directors made some decisions of its own. First and foremost, we decided that the responsibilities of our Executive Director had grown to the point that the position needed to be full-time. Second, we acknowledged that our administrative functions had become unduly burdensome.

We have now successfully addressed both of these concerns — with exceptional cooperation and support by members of the Board and the staff, and with generous financial aid by the INNW Fund.

The campaign to find our new Executive Director began with an update of the job description and the crafting of a detailed and thorough selection process, both facilitated by consultant Marge Sentous, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude.

That process has concluded with our exciting announcement that, as of March 1, Tom Cronin is the new Executive Director of Committee for Green Foothills. A long-time Peninsula resident, Tom is a dedicated public servant who has served on the Redwood City Planning Commission and the boards of several local environmental organizations. He comes to us with more than 20 years of management experience from a successful career at Hewlett-Packard as well as in the nonprofit world, and brings great enthusiasm for protecting our local open spaces.

I know I speak for our Board and staff when I say how extremely pleased we all are to have Tom at the helm of Committee for Green Foothills.

In order to address the issue of admin-

istrative burden, we have spent the last few months working to combine the Committee for Green Foothills with its sister nonprofit organization, the Green Foothills Foundation. The details of this change are complicated, but suffice it to say that these two groups are now a single 501(c)(3) corporation, the Committee for Green Foothills.

This change was possible due to revisions in IRS regulations, which significantly relaxed the limitations on lobbying for nonprofits. Careful analysis and time-keeping have proven that the Committee's work falls well within the allowable limits and that the two-organization structure is no longer necessary.

Combining the two organizations has eliminated a huge portion of our administrative and bookkeeping burden, and will allow us to direct more of our resources to the preservation of open space. This change also means that all of your contributions are tax-deductible, to the extent permitted by law.

We are grateful for the counsel and services of the law offices of Silk, Adler & Colvin in guiding us through this complicated process, and to the INNW Fund — again — for supporting this endeavor.

Despite all of this change, our programs have not missed a beat, as you will see in this issue of *Green Footnotes*. The entire Board of Directors, along with our staff, has shouldered an extra burden these past months, and to each of them we are grateful. And you, our members, have remained steadfast: our year-end fundraising appeal actually exceeded its goals, an incredible testament to your dedication to local open space.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you — staff, Board members, volunteers and our wonderful members — for your absolutely fantastic support. Together, we move forward with new leadership and vigor in our mission to protect that which makes our region so special.

Peter

A scar above Santa Clara County: **Quarry operations threatening foothills**

BY JITZE COUPERUS AND BRIAN SCHMIDT

When Committee For Green Foothills was formed more than 40 years ago, one of the primary motivations was to “keep the factories out of the foothills” and thus preserve those hills as a scenic backdrop for the residents of what later became Silicon Valley.

Today, these foothills still need our protection. Perhaps one of the most obvious examples is the huge scar of rock and dirt up in the hills behind Los Altos, Mountain View and Cupertino. This is not just a little grading, but a huge denuded gash that can be seen from as far away as Alviso and Milpitas. The scar has been expanding and becoming ever more visible for some years now — despite the view protections that we thought had been agreed upon between Santa Clara County and the owners of the land.

Sadly, this scar is evidence of just one of the

quarry's three large environmental violations — the scar, violation of a ridgeline easement, and landslides onto public property — all of which encroach on public views of the hillsides.

Waste material creates obvious scar

What is this scar, and who is responsible? The operation in question was for a long time known as the Kaiser Permanente Cement Plant. In 1987, the plant was purchased by Hanson, a British building materials company that currently works the 3,500 acres. Annually, Hanson mines around five million tons of rock, approximately one-third of which becomes cement, one third that becomes aggregate for use in concrete and a third of which is waste.

Over the years, development on this site has become all too apparent from the

valley below, in the form of a mile-long scar covering the ridgeline. Hanson is creating this scar largely through the deposition of waste rock (overburden) piled high on top of (and behind) the ridge at the northern end of the quarry. Quarried rock is trucked out of the lower parts of the quarry and dumped at the top in a series of tiers, somewhat like those on an elaborate wedding cake — made of many thousands of cubic yards of rock waste.

As seen from the valley below, the long horizontal scar has three components. The lower part is an area of scraped, bare dirt with little or no vegetation. Just above this an access road has been graded for dump trucks, and behind that rise the massive tiers of deposited waste rock. Hanson Cement informs us that this

See QUARRY, page 12



The Hanson Quarry (formerly known as the Kaiser Permanente Cement Plant) is working 3,500 acres in Cupertino, where a huge scar mars the hillside. CGF and neighbor activists are watching a number of other environmental problems with the quarry.

Budget cuts hit home

San Mateo County Supervisor Rich Gordon discusses local effects of State budget

BY RICH GORDON

Already reeling from previous budget cuts, parks, resource management and long range planning can expect further hits this year. All of us who care about these quality-of-life issues must hope that these are not knockout blows.

This June when the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopts a budget, there will be major changes in the way County government operates. The February 2004 projection is that there will be a gap of \$80 million between anticipated revenues and projected expenses. The Board must close that gap and, by law, adopt a balanced budget.

It may be instructive to understand how the \$80 million gap was created. The Governor's January 2004 budget cuts reduced the flow of state revenue to the County by \$49 million. The remaining \$31 million represents the increased cost of doing business, with negotiated salary and

benefits packages for employees and retirees accounting for most of the increase.

The most harmful of the Governor's budget reductions is his proposal to take property tax from the County to support the state's requirement to fund schools. Prior to 1993, the County was guaranteed 24 cents of every locally collected property tax dollar. In that year, in order to deal with a deficit in state government, the legislature and the governor reduced the county government's share of the local property tax to 14 cents of each dollar. The new proposal shifts an additional 3 cents, reducing the County share to only 11 cents of every property tax dollar.

County governments use property tax revenue as their primary mechanism for funding non-mandated programs. While the need to reduce expenses will impact all areas of County government, I fear for parks and recreation, resource management and long-range planning — discretionary



Courtesy Rich Gordon

San Mateo County Supervisor Rich Gordon

programs that are most heavily impacted by cuts made during the current economic downturn.

We have reduced ranger coverage and deferred maintenance of County parks. Without sufficient staff, we have had difficulty managing some of the park and water bond grants we have received. A lack of matching funds has kept us from being competitive for other grant programs. The

See BUDGET CUTS, next page

San Mateo County seeks new funding source for parks



BY LENNIE ROBERTS

Supporters of County Parks were thrilled to see Item 9.2 on the agenda for the January 27 meeting of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors: "Resolution to amend the 2003-04 Legislative Session Program to include a legislative proposal regarding the creation of a countywide special park district"—the result of 10 years of work by Committee for Green Foothills and many other parks supporters!

Forming a park district is significant because it provides a dedicated source of funding for parks. San Mateo County is one of only two counties in the entire nine-county Bay Area without a dedicated source of funding for parks. To address this need, countywide parks districts have been formed by others, including San

Biologist David Luth (on left) and **Head Ranger Ricardo Trejo** discuss management of biodiversity at Edgewood Park and Preserve. Dwindling budgets for parks staff threaten ranger staffing and other critical

Stuart Weiss

See PARKS, next page

BUDGET CUTS, from previous page

list of pending or delayed long-range planning projects continues to grow — including important neighborhood rezoning studies, community design reviews and watershed corridor projects.

By exercising restraint, San Mateo County built up a reserve during the good economic times. That reserve, however, is in no way sufficient to pull us out of the present problem. A growing economy would help, but most importantly we need a structural reform in the way that local government is funded. County governments need a guaranteed source of income that we can control. Local property and sales taxes should be linked to local service needs.

While I am pessimistic about the possibility of making such structural reforms at the state level, I am very optimistic about one effort to secure a local funding source. I congratulate the Committee for Green Foothills and advocates for parks on the effort to create a countywide park district with a dedicated local funding source. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has endorsed legislation that would help make such a district a reality. There is a long way to go before this effort will bear fruit, but we must plant the seeds now to gain greater local control. I urge you to monitor these issues so that we can ensure that these essential services are not diminished. **CGF**

PARKS, from previous page

Diego, Santa Barbara, Napa, Marin, Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Sacramento counties.

Lacking dedicated sources of funds, San Mateo County Parks have seen budget reductions of 32% over the past two years, and will undoubtedly suffer more cuts as the state cascades its budget crisis back onto local government. (We've just learned that Environmental Services is being asked to cut its overall budget by 12%; it's virtually certain that parks will suffer an additional hit.) The parks department has identified some \$78 million in deferred or unfunded capital projects throughout the County Parks system, and it is operating the parks with \$7 million annually, when a good level of service would require \$11 million.

Chaired by Supervisors Jerry Hill and Mike Nevin, the County's committee investigating this problem determined that the most effective way to ensure funding for our parks is to create a countywide park district that could provide new sources of revenue for park agencies at both the city and county levels.

The proposed district would focus on traditional recreational uses (rather than the preservation of open space, like the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District) and would not replace city and county parks departments, but will have the ability to provide additional revenue as well as coordination of planning and services among all the park agencies.

There are still many details to be worked out by the County working in concert with city parks departments. The first step is authorization by the State Legislature, followed by approval of a countywide vote before the district would be created. The earliest that the district could be formed would be November 2005.

Until then, we can expect to see park closures at least seasonally, and only bare bones staffing, which is not a tenable situation for visitors or park resources. We're pleased to see that there might be an end in sight for this as San Mateo makes real progress towards funding of County Parks. **CGF**

The Committee is watching...



Peter LaFourrette

...use of fines from the 1998 Command tanker oil spill

off the San Mateo County Coast, including planning for the Coastal Trail at Mirada Surf, accessway improvements at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve and Half Moon Bay State Beaches, and controls for jays and ravens, which prey on threatened marbled murrelets.

...CGF founder, guiding light and environmental champion **Lois Crozier-Hogle**, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Shine on, Lois — you are a model for us all!

...the central California population of the **California tiger salamander**, which the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is considering for listing as endangered, thus providing protections under the federal Endangered Species Act.

...the **San Mateo County Farm Bureau**, which has endorsed the application by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to expand its boundaries to include 140,000 acres on the San Mateo County Coast and thus protect coastal open space and agricultural operations.

...**nonprofit management consultant Marge Sentous**, who led our board through a professional, exhaustive, and successful search for our new Executive Director.

...the **183 CGF members** who made special year-end gifts to support open space advocacy. Thank you!

...**volunteer videographers Kendy Dickman and Tom Daniell**, who taped our Environmental Forums last fall so the panelists' discussions could be rebroadcast on local public access cable.

...the **San Mateo County Planning Commission**, which continues to hold hearings on tasks relating to the update of the MidCoast Local Coastal Plan, an important document guiding protection of the coastal zone.

...**Caltrans**, which has funding and is now seeking permits for the construction of the Devil's Slide tunnels project on Highway 1; the agency believes it might break ground on the tunnels this year, and has finalized portal designs featuring natural-looking rock surfaces that will blend with the environment.

...**CGF Office Manager Andi Fray**, who will be on leave for two months caring for her new baby daughter and newest CGF member, Josette Marlow Fray.

...a recent **statewide non-partisan poll** by the Public Policy Institute of California, which found that a large majority of Californians want tougher environmental protections for coastal resources, and that the environment should be an important priority for our new governor.

...**Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger**, who can appoint one-third of the commissioners on the California Coastal Commission; nominations for the coveted spots were due at the end of February.

...the **250 visitors a day who find the CGF website**, www.GreenFoothills.org, a great resource for speaking up on open space issues, reading the latest news, reviewing CGF's victories and defeats and renewing their memberships online.

The way south of San Jose

BY BRIAN SCHMIDT

Santa Clara County is so large that people in the northern part of the County often forget that the County's southern border extends far beyond San Jose, beyond Morgan Hill, and even considerably south of Gilroy. The Committee for Green Foothills, however, has not forgotten; CGF is working to protect a number of areas south of San Jose, where some of the County's most gorgeous — and most threatened — open space can be found.

Coyote Valley

While this undeveloped valley is technically part of San Jose, it should be well south of concentrated urban development for San Jose. Unfortunately, the city continues to slate the area for massive development encompassing 50,000 jobs and 25,000 homes, despite the fact that the collapse of the dot-com economy completely halted economic development in Silicon Valley.

Before the collapse, the city appeared to say, "our fast-paced growth gives us no choice but to develop Coyote Valley to accommodate growth." Now their argument appears to be, "our anemic economic state gives us no choice but to develop Coyote Valley to stimulate our economy." With opposing facts used to justify the same conclusion, the city appears to favor development for its own sake. This is not smart growth.

San Jose appears to be taking one small step away from the "stupid growth" model in its 2001 General Plan by signaling that it no longer plans to separate residential and commercial development in Coyote Valley. The separation into two zones would have guaranteed maximum loss of open space in the valley, as it would have made it impossible to scale down developments to more manageable sizes. But even while taking this small positive step, the City acts inconsistently. It freely ignores the General Plan regarding how Coyote Valley should be developed, but fails to re-examine whether anything else has changed in Silicon Valley since 2001 — a change that should be sufficient to scale back or completely eliminate plans to

develop Coyote Valley.

Committee for Green Foothills continues to oppose plans to place a de facto city — one bigger than Morgan Hill and Gilroy combined — into the stunning agricultural lands of Coyote Valley. Should San Jose make the mistake of developing Coyote Valley, it should do so in a way that maximizes open space preservation and mitigates all loss of farmland. The Committee continues to monitor the proposed development and look for opportunities to encourage a reassessment of the whole bad idea.

Morgan Hill

Committee for Green Foothills has been involved in two issues in Morgan Hill: fighting the environmental impacts of an illegally-constructed golf course on



Carl Hunk

the east side of town (discussed in the Fall 2003 *Green Footnotes*) and participating in discussions regarding a greenbelt and/or expanded urban limit line for the city.

In the last few months, Morgan Hill has issued a Draft Environmental Impact Report to consider legalizing the golf course. Due to problems with the draft report, the city may face additional delays and possibly issue an illegal temporary permit — again — without completed environmental documentation. CGF is following this closely; stay tuned for further developments.

To study a potential greenbelt/urban line limit, the city has established an advisory committee, with heavy representation from landowners who would like to bring their property within new urban limits, creating massive increases in land value. While the idea of establishing a greenbelt may have some merit, depending on how

it could be funded, the newly-expanded urban limit line seems like an invitation to sprawl and to litigation from those left outside the limit. Committee for Green Foothills is attending meetings and contributing to discussions with the aim of forestalling mistaken growth policies.

Gilroy and points south

Many issues bear watching in Gilroy, and the Committee is constantly reevaluating which require the most attention. A "Super" Wal-Mart is planned for the town outskirts, a continuation of the big box retail development that has sapped Gilroy's agricultural base. A plan to annex 660 acres of farmland for development remains on hold, and we are hopeful that it ends up in the recycling bin. A plan to develop more than 1,000 homes in the Glen Loma area bears watching. A proposed "agricultural mitigation policy" for the City is a welcome development (if it has real teeth). Also potentially encouraging is some interest in expanding the Santa Clara Open Space Authority to encompass Gilroy, which could result in increased support and funding for open space preservation.

South of Gilroy, Sargent Ranch and Castro Ranch are constantly on our radar screen, and Castro Ranch landowners are jockeying to adjust their lot lines in a way that might facilitate development. The Pajaro River watershed that Santa Clara County shares with adjoining counties is both threatened by development and targeted by conservation groups for land acquisition, making it a prime area for us to watch. Directly across the county line, San Benito County is considering a historic initiative for growth control, one that could stop that County from terrible sprawl that jeopardizes Santa Clara County land.

In addition to our work defending against South County environmental threats, Committee for Green Foothills serves on the Environmental Advisory Committee for the Santa Clara Valley Water District and engages with County staff and supervisors daily on issues affecting South County. Through our work on South County land use issues we see the need for institutional reforms in land use regulations that could benefit the entire County. We hope to have more news on that front soon. **CGF**

Between a rock and a hard place

County Planner Tim Heffington watches over Stanford GUP

County's Planning Office staff planner Tim Heffington sits between environmentalists carefully watching Santa Clara County's oversight of Stanford University and Stanford's jealously guarding its autonomy. CGF Legislative Advocate Brian Schmidt recently met with Tim to discuss his work and the Stanford issues that are now before the County.

Q&A

Brian Schmidt: *Tim, your job is different from anyone else's in the County Planning Office. Is your job title different? And how would you describe your position?*

Tim Heffington: My job title is simply Planner, but my work focuses on ensuring Stanford University implementation of conditions that the university agreed to in the December 2000 General Use Permit (also called "post-approval monitoring"). I also work with Stanford staff on implementation of land use policies contained within the Stanford Community Plan. Within the County's unincorporated jurisdiction, Stanford is unique because campus development is similar to urban development of cities outside the County's unincorporated jurisdiction. Stanford's permission to develop its property over the lifetime of the permit included hundreds of conditions of approval and numerous environmental mitigation measures. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a monitoring program to track compliance with these mitigation measures. I work with Stanford, the community, local jurisdictions and regulatory agencies to monitor Stanford's compliance.

Brian: *You work full-time on Stanford issues, right?*

Tim: Yes. There is plenty of work to be done by both Stanford and the County for imple-



Tim Heffington works daily with the stacks of documents governing the implementation of Stanford's General Use Permit and Community Plan.

menting the conditions and monitoring compliance with the permit. The Community Plan policies and General Use Permit conditions have to be implemented. Both documents call for developing sophisticated plans for managing various environmental issues, and there's a lot of work that goes on long after the approval of the plans and permits.

Brian: *Your work also involves the Community Resource Group. Can you explain to our readers what the CRG is and does? (Schmidt is one of the members of the CRG, which includes 8-12 individuals. - Ed.)*

Tim: The CRG brings together groups like yours with Stanford staff and members of the community in order to review implementation of the policies that the County adopted with respect to Stanford. A prior version of the CRG functioned before December 2000 to help develop the policies, and now the current CRG provides feedback on policy implementation. I coordinate CRG meetings and facilitate its work.

Brian: *Let's turn to the work that is going on right now. Stanford committed to dedicating trails in return for its permission to develop. Isn't Stanford lagging on its commitments?*

Tim: No. Stanford presented a signed agreement identifying proposed trail dedications within a year of receiving its permit, as it was required to do. The County does not consider Stanford to be out of compliance with this General Use Permit requirement.

Brian: *But the permit says an agreement on trails will be reached within a year (from the signing of the GUP in December 2000 - Ed.), not that Stanford will just present whatever it feels like presenting.*

Tim: The County Board of Supervisors continued consideration of the trails so as to allow consideration of variations that were not included within Stanford's original proposal, and environmental groups — including yours — had supported doing that.

Brian: *I'm not sure that gets Stanford off the hook when it failed to present adequate trails, but we don't need to settle this issue here. What exactly is happening with trails now?*

Tim: For the S1 Trail, near Page Mill Road, we hope to have a Draft Supplemental

See HEFFINGTON, page 9

An intriguing mystery in Pescadero Marsh

BY LENNIE ROBERTS

Pescadero Marsh, like most coastal estuaries, changes from saltwater to fresh or brackish conditions during the summer and fall months, due to the buildup of a sand bar at the mouth. The sand bar closes off the marsh from the ocean, creating a large shallow basin that is slowly filled by the reduced summer flows in Butano and Pescadero Creeks. Without a connection to the ocean that lets salt water enter the marsh at high tide, the water chemistry gradually changes to a nearly freshwater lagoon, with stagnant or brackish water in some locations.

After the first significant winter rains in November or December, the sand bar opens, and tidal action is restored to the marsh. The summer's backed-up water drains into the ocean in one dramatic rush, as the first big tide goes out. It's this "first flush" draining action that appears to be stirring up some muddy trouble for resident steelhead and other fish.

For the last few winters, within a few hours of the opening of the sand bar, a significant number of fish have been killed in the portion of Butano Marsh that lies between Pescadero Creek Road and Butano Creek. Scientists are just beginning to suspect the reasons for these fish kills.

Local fishermen, with careful field observations and water quality sampling, theorize that as the sand bar opens, the outgoing rush of water causes turbulence such as that you'd see after removing a plug in a bathtub. In the case of the marsh, fine sediments, mud and decayed vegetation on the bottom are stirred up and mix with the cleaner layers of water above. A distinctive smelly plume of "muck" is mobilized, releasing oxygen-deficient water and hydrogen sulfide, suffocating fish and other gill species. This year, observers counted some 350 dead fish — mostly juvenile steelhead. It's likely that many more than this number were killed.

The Pescadero Marsh is managed today as a Natural Preserve by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. However, the marsh's natural conditions have been greatly altered by human activities over the past 150 years. A persistent and provocative question is, "what is the natural condition?"

Historically, farmers have diked off and drained extensive areas of the marsh for farming. Old photographs from the 1920's clearly



Local fishermen John Fowler (left) and Steve Simms are spearheading local efforts to solve the mystery of the fish dieoffs at Pescadero Marsh.

Lennie Roberts

show large fields of hay and other crops that have now reverted back to wetland vegetation, as some of the old levees were opened up to restore the area to a more "natural" condition. A legacy of clear-cut logging in the upper watershed, with no regard to stream and slope protection, has created excessive doses of sediment in the creeks that have reduced the capacity of Butano Creek to carry flood waters. Even today, there is a large quantity of sediment waiting in the upper watershed to be transported downstream.

Efforts a decade ago to restore the marsh's hydrology to a more "natural condition" by opening levees may only have encouraged more sediment to be deposited in the area where the fish kills are occurring. As winter waters spread out onto the marsh's flood plain, the accompanying sediment may have raised the elevation of the wetlands to encourage such plants as tules and cattails. When the water level rises in late summer, the older leaves die and begin to decay quietly on the bottom, thus setting up the unintended surprise for the steelhead. The "natural" condition of this complex ecosystem is not functioning in a "normal" way, or at least the way that is best for some of the fish.

The challenge now is to see whether the area can be managed to improve conditions for the fish without having negative consequences on other marsh inhabitants. The

marsh is home to multiple species of concern, including steelhead trout, tidewater goby (a small fish), California red-legged frog, San Francisco garter snake, and the brackish water snail. Some have conflicting habitat requirements, so any alterations to the marsh will need to consider these species, and be approached from an ecological perspective.

Recently a group of scientists, agency representatives, fishermen and interested citizens gathered in Pescadero to discuss what is known, and not known, about the fish kills. Efforts are now underway to monitor several key water quality indicators and use this information to develop appropriate strategies for short-term and long-term management of the area or at least to know what should not be changed by humans.

It's been encouraging to imagine the possibility of a new consensus forming over restoring the marsh. Actions such as removing dams built by the non-native beavers have already helped increase the stream flows in Butano Creek. But as with everything else in this complex ecosystem, it will take a concerted effort on the part of many people with diverse viewpoints to craft solutions that can restore the area to a more functional hydrological and ecological condition and ensure the persistence of the marsh as a natural resource. **CGF**

Remembering Jane Gallagher

BY LENNIE ROBERTS

Devoted CGF Board member and celebrated artist Jane Gallagher died suddenly in January. As someone who greatly admired both her artistic talent and unswerving dedication to preservation of our natural open spaces, I am still not sure she's really gone.

Jane's gentle and gracious manner belied her strong determination and outspoken nature when it came to her principles. She had a wonderful sense of humor, and the sparkle in her eyes engaged everyone in her causes. She was a determined ambassador for Committee for Green Foothills. Her myriad friends found it impossible to resist her efforts to enlist them as CGF members and supporters.

Jane's own words most eloquently describe her passion — and mission — for protection of open space here on the Peninsula.

In the Artist's Statement in her book,

California in Solitude and Silence, Jane wrote:

"I feel blessed to be able to make my living doing something I love so much.

"I purposely omit all signs of civilization in my paintings. This is not a one-woman crusade to obliterate the inexorable encroachment of man. It is just that the quiet untouched lands are what appeal to me and what I want to capture and share. I hope it will make people aware of how fast these spaces are disappearing, act as a wakeup call, and make them realize that now is the time to save these lands for future generations."

Jane's artwork did indeed help fulfill her mission, for she generously donated her watercolor paintings to serve as special gifts for the Committee's Foothills Millennium Fund donors.

All of us will greatly miss Jane's wisdom and guidance. Through her art and her inspiration to others, she lives on in our hearts and in the open space of the Peninsula. **CGF**



Jane Gallagher, 1930-2004

HEFFINGTON, from page 7

Environmental Impact Report available for public review in June. The County Board of Supervisors directed us to work first on the S1 Trail and later on the C1 Trail, so we will develop a timeline for the C1 Trail when we get further along in S1 Trail process.

Brian: *Okay, what about the Special Conservation Areas in the Stanford Foothills? What is happening with them?*

Tim: The Special Conservation Areas include land with natural resource constraints and habitat for special status species. Both the Community Plan and the GUP required Stanford to submit a Special Conservation Area Plan for those areas. Stanford submitted the Draft Special Conservation Area Plan concurrently with other GUP-required plans (Wetlands, Water Conservation, Special Events Traffic, and others). Based on County review and outside reviewer comments, the County worked with Stanford to revise the other plans first because they required less revision. Those plans are now completed.

(Tim points to a stack of documents on a table.) After June, when the Draft Trail SEIR has been reviewed by the public and we have completed the Stanford Annual Report, we plan to initiate the process for revision of the Special Conservation Area Plan and adoption of the zoning ordinance amendment before the end of 2004.

Brian: *And in the meantime, are the Special Conservation Areas protected?*

Tim: Yes. The Stanford Community Plan established land use policies that protect the Special Conservation Areas.

Brian: *Has Stanford proposed any development for the Special Conservation Areas?*

Tim: Stanford has not proposed any new development within the Special Conservation Areas. However, Stanford did apply for and receive approval for a golf course reconfiguration within the County. This reconfiguration involves golf course turf that is technically within the existing Special Conservation Area (within County jurisdiction) as part of a large-

er Sand Hill Road widening project.

Brian: *We'll keep watching the Special Conservation Area issue. Are you involved with monitoring the Carnegie Foundation building project?*

Tim: Carnegie, not Stanford, is the official sponsor of that project, although Stanford as the landowner is also involved. I know that biological monitoring has been implemented there, but you'll have to go to our other staff people for the details on Carnegie.

Brian: *It sounds like you have plenty to do with everything else regarding Stanford. What do you do when you're not stuck here at work?*

Tim: I live in Santa Cruz with my wife and dogs, and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors whenever I can, including bicycling, skiing and occasionally getting out on whitewater. And I enjoy hiking on trails.

Brian: *Using trails sounds great — we'll look forward to doing some of that here. Thank you, Tim. **CGF***

Defending the Coast — again and again

School district eyes agricultural property owned by POST

BY LENNIE ROBERTS

When the bountiful fields of the 862-acre Johnston Ranch were acquired by Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) in 1998, environmentalists breathed an enormous sigh of relief. Committee for Green Foothills had defended this prime agricultural property from sprawling development several times over the past 25 years. Located just outside the city limits of Half Moon Bay, the historic farm was right in the path of any expansionist plans of a development-minded City Council.

Beginning in the 1970's the City Council had its eyes on this prize. Back in the 1960's the County purchased 20 acres next to the historic Johnston House for a future Coastside County Government Center. When it became apparent that the County's business could be more efficiently done in one location, the County transferred those 20 acres to the City of Half Moon Bay.

The opening gambit — Half Moon Bay plays the soccer field card

CGF's first major battle was to fend off the City's plans to locate ball fields and other intensive recreational uses on this farmland. Placing these facilities in the middle of prime agricultural land would have seriously compromised the ability of the Giusti family, which had farmed the property for 35 years, to continue their operations. Due to restrictions on use of pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals next to areas where children congregate, a large "buffer zone" would have been imposed on the Giustis' farming. Night lighting for the ball fields would have further compromised their ability to grow artichokes, as this lighting attracts the plume moth, an artichoke pest. After a long struggle, the Coastal Commission denied the permits for the ball fields, but this land was still at great risk.



Brian O'Neill, courtesy POST

POST's Johnston Ranch, farmed for nearly 150 years, forms an urban-rural barrier on the south end of Half Moon Bay.

Measure D — a developer's dream, an environmental nightmare

In the early 1990's, CGF was called upon again to lead the campaign against a new threat. Measure D had been placed on the ballot by developers who wanted to build a conference center, condos and golf courses on this property. This Countywide ballot measure would have exempted the entire 862 acres of the Johnston Ranch from the protections of the County's Local Coastal Plan (LCP). Although the developers spent over \$600,000 on their campaign, this ill-founded proposal went down to a stunning defeat with an 82% "no" vote.

Environmentalists rejoiced at the public support for preserving agricultural lands. But we also hadn't forgotten the old saying about environmental battles, "Victories are temporary; defeats are permanent."

POST comes to the rescue

We waited for the next move by the developer-owners. To our surprise and delight, the owners chose to sell the property to Peninsula Open Space Trust. The land was finally protected through private philanthropy. No longer would environmentalists

have to ride in to defend the land from urban sprawl.

Or so we thought.

School district plays hardball and threatens eminent domain

Last fall, a new and powerful threat emerged to shake any sense of complacency about the long-term security of this land. In a blatant attempt to force the Half Moon Bay City Council to back down from their stance of protecting the environmentally-sensitive habitat of the Wavecrest property (a stance firmly supported by CGF and many others), the Cabrillo Unified School District announced its intention to acquire up to 25 acres of the Johnston Ranch — using eminent domain if necessary.

The plot thickens — School district and developers in cahoots

Not content with having their new middle school stand as the sole appealing public amenity of the proposed Wavecrest development, the school board has now become the

See COAST, next page

COAST, from previous page

outspoken flag-bearer for the developers of the Wavecrest project. Even in the face of widespread opposition from the Giusti family, POST, the Farm Bureau, CGF and many citizens, the school board has refused to back down from the threat to this important open space unless the entire Wavecrest project — much more than just a middle school — is approved.

Drawing the battle lines

Theoretically, the school district could acquire this property from POST by eminent domain. But this would require a countywide vote to allow a school in the middle of this rural, agricultural land. This proposal would be vigorously fought at every step of the way.

A reasonable way out

Years of delay and more contentiousness do not bring us closer to the goal of building a new middle school. The board of the Cabrillo School District should

have much greater concerns than being the water-bearer for a highly unpopular development. The last two ballot measures to fund Coastside schools have been defeated, largely due to the school board's political machinations and their decision to partner with developers in far-flung locations rather than build on land they already own near downtown Half Moon Bay.

In the context of this new threat to coastal open space, it is ironic that the proposed coastal expansion of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District raised a concern about the use of eminent domain to acquire land for permanent protection. The Board of MROSD has been responsive to those concerns, and has agreed to eliminate permanently its power of eminent domain on the Coast and acquire land from willing sellers only.

Will decades of fine environmental work to protect the Johnston Ranch be undone by a school board out of touch with its mission? The answer is blowing in the wind. **CGF**

CGF Forum shares techniques for saving open space

BY KATHY SWITKY

Committee for Green Foothills kicked off 2004 with our first public Environmental Forum in February. Some 120 people heard UC Santa Cruz Environmental Studies Professor Daniel Press discuss the key ingredients in successful efforts to preserve land and natural resources in California, highlighting what works — and what doesn't work.

Prof. Press, the author of *Saving Open Space: The Politics of Local Preservation in California*, signed books after the talk.

His topic was framed — both literally and figuratively — by CGF's Open Space Open House, at which 20 local environmental nonprofits and governmental agencies working on local open space issues offered information about their efforts. The forum audience had opportunities before and after the lecture to learn from groups that work on a number of fronts: land use advocacy, land purchase and management, restoration, support of environmental candidates, and land use regulation.

As part of the forum, CGF prepared a synopsis of these groups, to help explain why so many organizations are involved in local open space protection. That synopsis is available in our online Activists' Toolbox, at www.GreenFoothills.org/toolbox.

We'd like to thank Hewlett-Packard Company for graciously hosting the event in their corporate auditorium, and for providing refreshments. The event was made possible in part by a grant from the Peninsula Community Foundation. **CGF**

For information about upcoming events, visit www.GreenFoothills.org/calendar.



CGF files

For three decades, CGF has worked to protect the Devil's Slide area of the San Mateo County Coast.

QUARRY, from page 3

dumping of rock at the summit of the quarry is expected to continue for at least another year.

Easement not providing adequate protections

While this visible scar from quarry operations appeared only in recent years, people anticipated decades ago that the quarry could transform green hillsides into rock wastelands. To limit this problem, an agreement was reached with the quarry owners in 1972 for the dedication of a Ridgeline Protection Easement. The purpose of this easement was to preserve a ridgeline from being torn out by the quarry, as that ridgeline shields the massive quarry operations from public view.

The easement covers a sector near the middle of the quarry's length. Unfortunately, the easement does not protect the area now being scarred with rock waste. However, even the limited protection afforded by the easement in its own area appears to have been violated.

To mark the protected elevation level, four fixed monument markers were installed; the easement prohibits the quarry from lowering the ridgeline below this marked elevation. But two of the monuments marking the agreed ridgeline have apparently disappeared, and a series of landslides have moved vast quantities of dirt in the vicinity of the ridgeline.

Quarry walls tumbling down

If you can imagine how an ever-widening cavity in a tooth will eventually cause the collapse of the walls around the cavity, you can get an idea of how part of the sidewall of the largest pit in the quarry gave way and slid into the pit. The quarry's own geologists estimated that an eventual total of around 3.5 million cubic yards of rock material could give way. Indeed, in the last three years, there have been three landslides in the area.

Landslides from the quarry may have done more than violate the ridgeline easement. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) owns land adjoining the quarry, and records from Santa Clara County suggests that landslides from the quarry have slid onto MROSD property. If this is the case, the landslides from the quarry are a "trespass" onto public property, and another violation of the public's rights.

Negotiations not yet showing results — it's time for solutions

For some time now, Committee for Green Foothills has been researching and discussing these problems with concerned citizens, government officials and the quarry operators. Both Santa Clara County and MROSD have been negotiating with the quarry, but these negotiations have achieved little to date.

It seems clear that we need the public to speak up and demand solutions to these problems. We have asked the County and quarry operators to address three specific issues:

1. Let the public know if its rights have been violated. CGF has asked Santa Clara County to confirm publicly whether the ridgeline protection easement has been violated, which is almost certainly the case. MROSD should do the same with respect to the quarry's potentially releasing landslides onto MROSD property. While the Committee has no reason to believe that the government agencies are mishandling or concealing these problems, the public should be involved in protecting its property rights.

2. Solve all three public violations. All three of these environmental



Jitze Couperus

The quarry walls have given way to three landslides in as many years, including one that may have slid onto property owned by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

encroachments are related: the ridgeline scarring and overburden dumping, the ridgeline easement violation and the landslides onto public property all mar the hillsides and affect public views. Should the quarry operators be found guilty of any of these violations, it would likely be extremely expensive for them to rebuild and stabilize the ridgeline at the elevation level protected by the easement.

If the quarry operators want the public to accept something less than our full rights regarding the ridgeline easement and other violations, the appropriate trade is that the quarry should decrease visual impact from the overburden hillside scar.

3. Find specific solutions for hillside scarring. The quarry operators expect to stop placing overburden on the visible hillside and begin revegetating the area within the next two years. CGF believes that we need a legal deadline for ending the scarring as soon as possible.

In addition, the quarry should make binding commitments not to place overburden in any areas visible from the valley floor. Finally, the quarry should speed up the revegetation process by dividing the overburden area into different sections, and work in only one section at a time while revegetating the other sections.

Are quarries appropriate in our hills?

Problems with quarrying in the hillsides go far beyond this one hillside scar and Hanson's potentially illegal acts. Because this particular quarry began operations more than 60 years ago, before the County had regulations for such operations, it is not required to have a County permit. Other quarries that initiated operations more recently would be subject to more direct County oversight by way of permit requirements.

Ultimately, Santa Clara County needs to decide whether massive industrial quarries such as this are compatible with the open space recreation and environmental value that people place on the County's hillsides.

Committee for Green Foothills will continue to monitor quarry operations, work toward solutions to these particular problems and take any needed steps to protect our hillsides. **CGF**

For more information and photos, including what you can do, visit www.GreenFoothills.org/quarry.

MROSD, from page 1

porters of the MROSD boundary expansion, dubbed the Coastsides Protection Program. (Campaign materials are also available in the Committee for Green Foothills' office.)

Expansion of District endorsed by political leaders, Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, newspapers, many others

Elected officials, Coastsides community leaders and environmentalists announced COSA's formation at a January press conference overlooking the Half Moon Bay shoreline. District 12 Congressman Tom Lantos stressed the importance of COSA's endeavors: "If there was ever an organization that was sorely needed, it is this one."

The movement to support coastal protections is gaining speed: COSA and the Coastsides Protection Program have been endorsed by dozens of cities, counties, agencies, elected officials, businesses and organizations, as well as more than 300 individuals from the coastsides and beyond. A complete list of endorsements is available on COSA's website, www.CoastalOpenSpace.org.

The *Half Moon Bay Review* has opined in favor of the Coastsides Protection Program and we expect additional newspaper endorsements to follow. The Half Moon Bay Coastsides Chamber of Commerce recently endorsed the program as well. Importantly, the San Mateo County Farm Bureau recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MROSD, pledging its support for the expansion once state legislation has been passed that prohibits the use of eminent domain in the coastal area. The support of the farming community for this effort is critical and underscores the focus of the Coastsides Protection Program on saving "working" open space such as agricultural lands as well as natural habitats.

Two LAFCo boards vote to support proposed expansion

Support for the Coastsides Protection Program is gathering momentum, and the work of COSA and CGF has had two important successes recently. Two regional agencies advising on the proposed boundary expansion, the Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo) of Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties, have formally recommended the approval of the proposal. This is due in large part to the huge outpouring of letters, faxes and emails these Commissions received from Committee for Green Foothills member-activists and others in advance of the hearings.

Commission vote in March; future steps still uncertain

The final decision regarding the MROSD boundary expansion lies with the San Mateo County LAFCo, which will hold hearings on the issue in March. Committee for Green Foothills, the Coastal Open Space Alliance and others are working hard to continue to build public support for this proposal.

However, even if the San Mateo County LAFCo approves the proposed boundary expansion for MROSD, this does not guarantee that the boundary expansion will become a reality: LAFCo procedures allow for opponents of the final decision to launch a protest petition drive. That could result in this issue's going to the ballot box in November.

Should this happen, CGF and COSA will be ready to rally even more public support for the expansion of Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District boundary. It's important that we not allow a small but vocal minority to compromise the future of



coastal open space. Stay tuned for details about how you can continue to support the District's Coastsides Protection Program, which is the single best way for us to ensure protections for coastal open space and agriculture.

Coastal protection and the preservation of agriculture are long-term benefits that will be enjoyed by generations to come. We'll be sure to keep CGF members and *Footnotes* readers up to date as we continue this huge effort to ensure our legacy. **CGF**

GET INVOLVED!

The San Mateo County LAFCo Board will hold two public hearings on the Coastsides Protection Program in March. The first hearing, scheduled for March 9, will be held in Half Moon Bay.

The LAFCo Board will continue the hearing on **Wednesday, March 17, at 2:30 pm** in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 400 County Center, Redwood City.

This is critical! We need to mobilize as much support as possible at this hearing. If you can attend, please contact CGF's San Mateo County Legislative Advocate April Vargas at April@GreenFoothills.org or (650)728-5215.

To receive timely and urgent messages about how you can get involved on this and other issues relating to local open space, sign up for CGF's email action alerts at www.GreenFoothills.org.

For more information, visit www.GreenFoothills.org/MROSD.

**PLEASE
COME
TO THE
MARCH 17
MEETING!**

Volunteer Spotlight: Peter and Sue LaTourrette

BY KATHY SWITKY

Quiet, steadfast and exceedingly generous, Committee Board members Peter and Sue LaTourrette are well known for their many years of volunteer service, vision, leadership and just plain hard work.

As anyone who knows them can attest, neither Peter nor Sue is prone to stand in the spotlight. But they are always there, dedicated to giving their support wherever it is needed. These stellar CGF volunteers recently received a bit of recognition: last December, the Los Altos - Los Altos Hills Joint Community Volunteer Awards

Committee presented Peter and Sue with a Community Volunteer Service Award.

Individually and together, Peter and Sue have made significant contributions to both their local community and to the greater Bay Area and environmental communities. Nature lovers and hikers, both Pete and Sue have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to public service on behalf of the environment, education and community-building.

Longtime CGF members, the LaTourrettes joined the Committee Board of Directors in 2001, and Sue was nominated as CGF's Secretary soon after. Similarly, Peter became Treasurer, a role he still plays. Both have served this organization in numerous ways; most recently, Peter stepped up to work closely with the staff during the Committee's

search for a new Executive Director, and has spearheaded our reorganization (as he's described in his letter on page 2).

A talented professional photographer, Peter generously donates his work to local environmental causes. He's led numerous hikes and bird watching trips throughout the Peninsula. Peter also

regularly volunteers at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, where he spent years creating a comprehensive set of slides for use in environmental education programs. He's been a mainstay in the Preserve's bird monitoring program, part of a long-term scientific study designed to detect environmental change. And when he can be coaxed inside, he main-

tains websites for several local organizations, among them Peninsula Open Space Trust and Santa Clara Valley Audubon.

Sue is similarly busy with a range of community causes. For the last six years, she has served on the Los Altos Community Foundation Board, where she oversees the distribution of some \$170,000 each year. And among other things, she also volunteers with the Santa Clara Valley Water District on the Permanente Creek project, designed to improve flood protection, erosion control and habitat restoration.

Clearly, this duo is not only dynamic, but also enthusiastic, hard-working, generous, modest, caring and deserving of recognition. Congratulations — and thank you — Peter and Sue! **CGF**



Philip Robertson

Conservation leaders to celebrate Earth Day with CGF

BY VELMA GENTZSCH

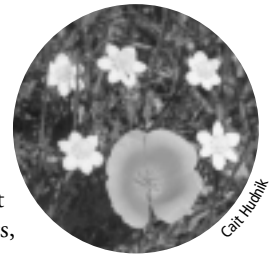
Committee for Green Foothills is pleased to host its Foothills Millennium Fund gathering this spring — very appropriately, on the weekend of Earth Day! Foothills Millennium Fund members, our most generous supporters, will be invited to the home of CGF Directors Peter and Sue LaTourrette on April 25 for a discussion of our current efforts to protect and conserve local open space, to meet our new Executive Director, Tom Cronin, and to discuss upcoming program priorities with our Legislative Advocates and Board of Directors.

Input from our Foothills Millennium Fund donors particularly helps to guide our work, and we rely on the intellectual and visionary resources of this group. This year our gathering will include special honors for volunteers Mary Davey, Paul and Maureen Draper and Tanya Slesnick, for their service as members of our Board of Directors over the past two years.

Mark your calendars — Foothills Millennium Fund members will receive invitations in the mail soon!

The Foothills Millennium Fund is a group of conservation leaders who make annual gifts of \$1,000 or more to support Committee for Green Foothills. While gifts of all sizes help us to strengthen our voices for open space, gifts of \$1,000 and more give us the increased ability and stability to address growing threats that impact our local environment, both now and in the future.

To join the Foothills Millennium Fund (and join us at this year's event), please contact Associate Director of Development Velma Gentzsch at 650-968-7243. **CGF**



BOARD NOTES

The new year, new priorities and the reorganization have brought some changes to the Committee for Green Foothills Board. As the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) moves into a year filled with activity supporting the District's proposed expansion to the coast, CGF President **Mary Davey** has stepped down from our Board of Directors so that she can focus on her new role as President of the MROSD Board. Mary has served on that Board of Directors since 1994, when she was elected to represent Ward 2 (Cupertino, Sunnyvale, Los Altos Hills, and Stanford). In January she was unanimously elected as President of the MROSD Board.

We are exceedingly grateful to Mary for her exuberant and skillful leadership of our organization over the past two years, and are glad to know that she will now be guiding an agency — MROSD — that CGF supporters helped found in 1972. We will miss Mary's creativity, skill, and energy in event planning, fundraising and organizational management — as well as her amazing talents in the art of writing thank-you notes. CGF Director **Karen Kidwell** was elected to serve the remainder of Mary's Presidency until, as usual, the CGF Board elects a new slate of officers at the beginning of our fiscal year in April. Thank you for stepping up, Karen!

With her eye for and professional experience in accounting systems, retiring Director **Tanya Slesnick** has led a sea change of improvements in CGF's administration. Over the past few years, Tanya led us to create a chart of accounts, move our accounting system onto QuickBooks, and set up solid financial systems for our organization. Although she is stepping down from the board after two years of service, Tanya will continue to serve as a volunteer, advising CGF on financial matters. Tanya, thank you for having your sharp pencil (and sharp wit) always at the ready.

The Board also bid a fond farewell to Directors **Maureen and Paul Draper**. In addition to their two years of leadership on the Board, Maureen and Paul served as the generous hosts of the Committee's 40th anniversary celebration extravaganza at Ridge Vineyards in 2002. Thank you both for your service — we'll miss your dedication, insights and warm personali-

ties.

Our recent reorganization also brought directors from the former Green Foothills Foundation onto the CGF board. Long-time Palo Alto resident **Tom Jordan** is a retired land use and environmental attorney, and a former Adjunct Professor in environmental law at San Jose State University. He is also a past President of both the San Jose Symphony and the San Jose Symphony Foundation. Tom even served as President of the CGF board in the late 1960's — and we're glad to have him back!

Also joining the CGF Board of Directors is **K. Christie Vogel**, an active volunteer for the environment and open space. (*Footnotes* readers might remember her from the "Volunteer Spotlight" in our Spring 2003 newsletter.) Since retiring from San Jose Public Library in 1991, Chris has become heavily involved in various volunteer efforts for Peninsula Open Space Trust, Greenbelt Alliance and Committee for Green Foothills. Chris, a resident of El Granada, also serves as Vice President for the board of Midcoast Park Lands.



CGF will miss the warm greetings and exuberant leadership of outgoing President Mary Davey. We wish her the best of luck as President of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board.

Another new CGF Director is a familiar face — our former Executive Director and experienced environmental activist **Zoe Kersteen-Tucker** is now a volunteer board member again. We are grateful to her for continuing to share her experience and skills with the organization.

Finally, we are pleased to report that CGF continues to partner with the Stanford Graduate School of Business, which matches MBA candidates with non-profit boards for one- to two-year fellowships. Through this innovative program, students share their business skills while gaining rewarding experience as non-voting board members.

Our 2003-2004 fellow **Elena Pernas-Giz** will be staying for a second year, and she is joined by fellow **Jeff Stein**, a first-year business student and San Jose native who has worked as a senior policy associate at Taxpayers for Common Sense, a national nonprofit taxpayer advocacy organization, and co-founded the Corps Reform Network, a network of more than 100 environmental, public interest and local civic organizations. **CGF**

UPCOMING EVENT

COYOTE RIDGE HIKE Saturday, April 3, 2004 9 am — 1pm

You're invited to join the Committee for Green Foothills and friends for a springtime hike up to some very special lands in southern Santa Clara County: Coyote Ridge. This unprotected open space offers spectacular views of the valley, and is known for its stunning spring wildflower displays.

Coyote Ridge is home to 14 rare or endangered native plants, and the last healthy population of the endangered Bay checkerspot butterfly. Our group will be led by CGF Director and avid birder Peter LaTourrette, native plant enthusiast Don Mayall from the California Native Plant Society and ecologist Stuart Weiss, who has studied checkerspot butterflies and the effects of smog at Coyote Ridge for two decades.

In a reprise of last spring's very popular hike, Pete, Don and Stu have generously volunteered to lead another intrepid team up the mountain, where we will explore serpentine soil habitats and species.

We'll hike a steep roadway with an 800-foot elevation gain, observ-

ing changes in the vegetation as we ascend. At the top of the ridge, we'll take time to enjoy the spring wildflowers and the views of Coyote Valley below. The hike will cover a total of about three miles.

Bring sunscreen, water and a sack lunch to eat on top. This hike will be a great introduction to the work of CGF to protect open space — bring a friend!

The hike is limited to 30 people, and reservations are required.

RSVP no later than Thursday, April 1 with the CGF office at (650) 968-7243 or Hike@GreenFoothills.org. Reservations are first-come, first-serve — we do expect this hike to fill up quickly.

The hike isn't appropriate for children under 12. If it's rainy or wet, the hike will be cancelled.

Directions: Meet at 9 a.m. outside the Kirby Canyon facility office, 910 Coyote Creek Golf Drive, San Jose. Take 101 South to Coyote Creek Golf Club Drive exit, turn left under the freeway, drive through the gate and continue to the office parking lot. To carpool, meet at Page Mill/280 Park 'n' Ride at 8 a.m. Note: there are no restroom facilities at Kirby Canyon.

Stuart Weiss



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GREEN FOOTHILLS

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