



The Trail Companion

Summer 2003

Volunteers Tackle Portola State Park

By Dave Croker

After a two-month layoff during the reorganization of the Trail Center, we were all eager to finally get out and dig in the dirt again. Our first project involved trail maintenance at Portola State Park on March 22, 2003. Several volunteers spent the day cleaning up downfalls and improving drainage on a couple trails at Portola State Park. We had a nice cool day in the redwoods that kept everyone happy and energetic, and it showed by the amount of work that we got done. On the Slate Creek Trail, a group used our big saw to remove several downed trees up to 18 inches in diameter. On the Pescadero Creek Nature Trail, volunteers tackled a serious drainage problem that is caused by large amounts of runoff from a culvert on the road above. We dug out a huge diversion ditch to redirect water into a natural drainage and off of the trail. We also cut back a bunch of brush and made improvements to the trail tread to make the route safer to walk. Thanks to all who came out for a great day and to help get the Trail Center back on the right track.

The work at Portola State Park continued on April 19. During the heavy rains of 1998, a huge slide took out a couple 100 feet of the Iverson Trail rendering it impassible and thus forcing the state park staff to close off the south section of the trail (south of Tip Toe Falls). The Iverson Trail is one of the most popular trails in

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*Crewmembers watch as David Alderman works to remove one of many downfalls on the Tip Toe Falls Trail (March 22).
Photo by Dave Croker.*

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The Trail Center is a non-profit volunteer organization formed in 1983 to provide and promote quality non-motorized trail opportunities for all people in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Alameda and San Francisco counties. The Trail Center works with government agencies, outdoor enthusiasts and other interested parties to create and manage an interconnected network of trails for the five-county region. The Trail Center publishes *The Trail Companion* and organizes trail building, repair and mapping projects.

The Board of Directors meets every month on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Peninsula Conservation Center.

Board of Directors

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Summer Hikes in San Pedro Valley

by *Richard Allsop*

San Pedro Valley Park in Pacifica is a wonderful summertime option for people living on the northern SF Peninsula. The park is located close enough to the coast to be cool and parts of it are sheltered enough to be a pleasant walk in anything except a gale. I've described the hike up Montara Mountain from the park in a previous article; now I'm going to cover some of the other trails within the park.

The park includes two forks of San Pedro Creek. The south fork drains the north side of Montara Mountain, and trails starting there lead you to Montara. The middle fork forms a valley, running on a northwest-southeast line into the coastal ridges. This Middle Valley has broad, flat meadows, surrounded by hillsides with chaparral and eucalyptus.

To get there from the Visitor's Center, walk north past the group picnic areas and the horseshoe pits to Weiler Ranch Road, a service road running down the floor of the Middle Valley. This trail is popular with joggers and walkers, but two other trails that do a little climbing provide special treats.

Valley View Trail goes up the north side of the valley from Weiler Ranch Road Trail, just beyond the horseshoe pit road junction. The trail climbs up through eucalyptus and chaparral of varying densities. I saw paintbrush, checkerbloom, and sun cups when I walked it in early spring; it has good displays of soap plant later in the spring and early summer. You can look west out the mouth of the valley, past Pacifica to the ocean, while the north face of Montara Mountain cuts off your views to the south. The Valley View trail climbs along the top of the ridge for a ways, then drops back to the Weiler Ranch Road Trail in a series of switchbacks through more patches of eucalyptus.

Back on the valley floor you can turn right to return to the Visitor's Center, or

turn left to go to the Hazelnut Trail junction. The road stays near the north side of the valley for a little ways, then turns south and crosses the creek on a solid bridge. You come to the junction with the Hazelnut trail just a little ways past the bridge, near another bench.

The first section of the Hazelnut Trail looks like an old roadbed, broad, with high side cuts. It switchbacks up the side of the canyon through denser chaparral than the Valley View Trail, with ceanothus, golden-leaved chinquapin, and a few madrones. The density makes it feel more secluded, although you still get views of the valley. I was too late to see the fetid adder's tongue in bloom on my last visit, but I saw lots of irises, checker lilies, and yerba santa. At the top of the ridge you'll have views of Pt. Reyes and the Marin coast on a clear day, and the north side of Montara looks very impressive from this angle. The trail then descends gradually, following the ridgeline, through eucalyptus and chaparral, before it begins the final descent through chaparral and small meadows to the main parking lot and the visitor's center.

How to Get There: Take Highway 1 to Pacifica and turn east on to Linda Mar Boulevard. Stay on Linda Mar Boulevard to the end, where it intersects with Oddstadt Boulevard. The sign for San Pedro Valley County Park is visible straight ahead. Turn right, and then left into the entrance of the park. You have a choice of parking areas, but you will be going north from the visitor center. Parking is \$4.00 per vehicle. The visitor center, open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Saturday and Sunday, has a good selection of books and maps, and some informative displays.

Maps: Pease Press *Trail Map of Pacifica* or USGS 7.5 minute quad. *Montara Mountain*. Trail maps for San Pedro County Park are available at the visitor center.

Past and Present at Henry Coe State Park

By Bob Kelly

All quotes are from an interview with unit ranger Barry Breckling at park headquarters March 15, 2003, except for cited quotes from Henry Coe's Pine Ridge Ranch by Bob Kelley, published by the Pine Ridge Association, Morgan Hill, 1993.

Henry W. Coe State Park was founded in 1958. It first became public land when Henry's daughter, Sada, donated the 12,000 acre Pine Ridge Ranch and ranch buildings to Santa Clara County in 1953 "as a memorial to her father and other early cattle pioneers"(Kelley 1) In 1958, the county "gift-deeded"(1) the ranch to the State of California where it became Henry Coe State Park.

The current Unit Ranger Barry Breckling, came to Coe State Park in 1977 to replace promoted Ranger Joe White. Joe gave Barry some of Sada's writings as an introduction to the park. "That was a wonderful impression, to have this kind of feeling of the history and the importance of this place that Sada really loved." On one of his first cross country hikes, Barry saw what he thought was a bobcat, as this bobcat ran away "...all of a sudden I saw this bobcat had a long tail, Oh! It's a baby mountain lion... I knew the mother was close by, and she was, she came by and she didn't run off, she ...arched her back and growled at me. I didn't get any closer." Barry's first spring at Coe produced a significant rain after two years of drought. This led to a spectacular display of wildflowers, of particular interest to him. Right from the start, the park held a special attraction and since his arrival, Barry has

been a driving force behind the preservation of the park.

Henry W. Coe State Park is located in the Diablo Range east of Morgan Hill and Gilroy in Santa Clara County, one of the most remote areas in the county. It encompasses much of this portion of the Diablo Range and runs south almost to Pacheco Pass, Highway 152, with a south eastern portion in Stanislaus County. Park headquarters can be accessed off Highway 101 via East Dunne Ave in Morgan Hill. Further south on Highway 101, off the Leavesley Road exit, there is an entrance near the end of Gilroy Hot Springs road, and finally, one weekend a year by permit, the Bell Station or Dowdy entrance off Highway 152 is opened to vehicles. "The Dowdy entrance is slated to be opened in 2004 but things like this are often delayed."

Archeological evidence shows that two groups of Native Americans lived in the area. The Ohlones lived on the western side of the Diablo Range and Yokuts to the east. "Every place we put a backpacking camp, the Native Americans already thought it was a nice place to live." Ranger Breckling also relates that archeological studies in the park show a marked difference in the two cultures: "We actually see house pits on the east side, a whole different way of making houses, where we don't see on the west side...so we can see a difference between the Ohlones and Yokuts.... apparently, the Ohlones just built it flat on the ground. ...the Yokuts



Red Creek Road, San Antonio Valley. Photo by Richard Allsop.

would dig a pit...a foot or two deep in the center...round, maybe 7 to 10 feet across and in some cases, much larger, where they had a sweat lodge...or ceremonial house. But the main reason was they could lay in there...and have a slanted, comfortable place to lay on, with their feet towards the lower point...we think this is the main reason for having a sloping floor for the house."

After the Spanish mission era, the next non-native people to pass through the area were the 49ers of the California gold rush. There is evidence of mine activity in the park, but no gold was discovered and

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Poison Oak Busted! Volunteers Perform Extensive Repairs and Maintenance on the Gray Whale Cove Trail at McNee Ranch

By Hank Magnuski

In late October of 1769, Don Gaspar de Portolá and his band of some forty adventurers camped at a small creek on the San Mateo coast. Portolá was seeking Monterey Bay and didn't realize he had already passed it. On October 30th, after waiting out a storm for four days, the party climbed a trail to the top of the mountain where they "discovered" San Francisco Bay. Of course, the Ohlones were there to greet them and knew about it all along.

That creek is Martini Creek, on the southern boundary of McNee Ranch State Park, and the trail Portolá followed later became the Old Pedro Road Trail, connecting the coastline with the San Francisco basin. The Martini's were early farmers of the property. During the period of 1879-1915 a coastal highway was in use connecting Colma to Half Moon Bay. This road navigated around Devil's Slide and was so treacherous that in 1915 a new route more inland was constructed and was named "Old Pedro Road." Portions of the Colma to Half Moon Bay road are now the Gray Whale Cove Trail. In 1937, Highway 1 cut through the Devil's Slide area and Old Pedro Road was abandoned. Many stretches of the original asphalt can still be seen on the Old Pedro Road Trail.

The Ocean Shore Railroad ran along the western edge of McNee Ranch from 1907 to 1920 and its roadbed forms the basis for Highway One in the area. Duncan McNee was a real estate developer and owner, and once owned 800,000 acres of California land. The ranch became a commando training ground during WWII and coastside bunkers can still be seen on the property.

The McNee Ranch State Park opened in 1984, and in the 90's strong citizen protest kept the Devil's Slide Bypass from cutting the Ranch in two. Current plans call for a tunnel. On May 10th, 2003, the Trail Center, under guidance of California State Park Rangers Valerie Maciejowska and Chet Bardo, held a workday at the Gray Whale Cove Trail. Tim Oren, site supervisor, and the other TC crew leaders guided 28 volunteers in this effort. Volunteers constructed some 15 drain dips or other water diversions



Chief Poison Oak Buster, Dave Croker, suited up to save hikers from weeping rashes. Photo by Hank Magnuski.

and brushed the northern half of the trail (including a large amount of poison oak removal). The team packed rocks into the eroded parts of the trail and established a new grade.

On July 12th another workday is planned on the GWC Trail, and we will complete the southern half along with the connector trails going to the Martini Creek trailhead. In the fall, work will commence on repairs to the Old Pedro Road Trail. There are numerous washed-out stretches of trail where culvert replacement, erosion control or tread rebuilds are required. Check the website for workday times and dates. Volunteers are needed and the vistas are fantastic!

(Much of this information came from the book "Montara Mountain" by Barbara Vander Werf, an excellent guide to the area.)

The Mellon Grant Legacy Spreads to Arizona

by *Geoffrey Skinner*

Twenty years ago, the Appalachian Mountain Club, with a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation, founded trail organizations across the U.S., including the Trail Center. One of the most successful of the TC's sister organizations, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, has spawned yet another new trail organization, this one in Arizona. Eric Schwab of VOC reported that Michael Baker, a former volunteer with VOC moved to Arizona and founded Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona (VOAz).

Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona is a program based at the Dorothy Garske Center of Phoenix. VOAz's mission is to involve all Arizonans in environmental stewardship. Incorporated as nonprofit in August 2002, VOAz has organized outdoor volunteer work projects in cooperation with public and private agencies to preserve, protect,

and maintain the state's natural environment since 1999. VOAz is currently funded by the Dorothy Garske Center, but that support will be reduced as they implement a membership program and begin soliciting funds to sustain and grow the program.

Most projects last one or two days on weekends. VOAz events are carefully planned to provide enjoyable and productive opportunities to participate in trail work and habitat protection and improvement projects. Over the past four years, VOAz volunteers have planted trees and removed exotic invasives along the San Pedro River, repaired fences in the Nature Conservancy's Hart Prairie Preserve, constructed new and realigned existing portions of the Arizona Trail, and built a meditation trail in Sedona. With an event roughly twice a month, VOAz volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours each year.

To learn more about VOAz and see great event pictures, check their website at www.dgcenter.org/voa/

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...Portola...

Portola State Park, so it was a shame to keep hikers off the route. With budget problems, the state does not have the resources to reopen the trail, so it remains closed to this day. Through conversations with state park rangers, however, the Trail Center was able to step in and provide the people and effort necessary to kick start the process of repairing the Iverson Trail.

The state park's regional trail crew members surveyed and flagged a new reroute to take the trail up and around the head of the slide while utilizing a 100-yard piece of the Old Haul Road. Trail Center volunteers and the state park staff met on April 15 to review the project. Then on April 19, celebrating Earth Day, nearly 30 people gathered for a fantastic day of new trail construction. The conditions were nearly perfect (if not a little too damp and muddy), and with a good group of volunteers, we impressed the state park staff with the amount and quality of work we accomplished. One leg of the reroute was finished as far as could be done, and the other leg has been completely brushed out and tread begun. That included removing several downed redwoods and Douglas firs (up to 4' in diameter—probably a record on a Trail Center project) by a state park employee with help from our volunteers. When the 4' long sections of the 4' fir landed downhill after being cut, people on the south leg crew (a couple hundred yards away) could hear the loud thud! Everyone knew that they had been part of a very successful day, and the state park staff thanked us profusely. The Trail Center thanks you for participating in a great day of trail work.

The Trail Center will be finishing the reroute and reopening the Iverson Trail on June 7, just in time for the summer hiking season. We'll also celebrate our 20th anniversary while participating in the annual National Trails Day.

Intern Opportunity

Do you like to hike, write, or take nature and landscape photos? Jean Rusmore, co-author of "Peninsula Trails" and "South Bay Trails", could use help updating trail information, maps and photos for these books. Reports submitted to her could be used for class credit with cooperating teachers. Email your credentials and availability this summer to Jean at jeanrusmore@att.net.

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Past and Present at Henry Coe... (cont.)

most mines were abandoned except for a few that yielded quicksilver (mercury) for a short period. The first homesteaders didn't arrive in the Coe area until the 1860s, due to its remoteness. "It was a wild area, one of the last strongholds for the California grizzly. Sada wrote stories on the killing of the last California grizzly (in the Diablo Range) which she puts it as 1910".

Henry (Harry) Coe and his brother Charles acquired their land through "cash entry." The U.S. government would sell selected land it owned to raise money. The brothers also bought out a number of homesteaders in the area. The area made it very difficult to have a viable farm and 160 acres of homesteaded land was hardly enough for a successful cattle operation. The brothers were very aggressive in acquiring land this way. Harry Coe gave Poverty flat its name because the owner at the time, a man named Finley, would not sell to Coe even though "he was just living down there in this really cold place, where you couldn't grow corn or anything, it was just rocks..." By 1865, The Coe brothers owned "6,000 acres... along the northern portion of Blue Ridge and ... neighboring Cold Flat" (Kelley 1). The brothers bought Pine Ridge Ranch from Wesley Boden in 1900 and later Harry bought out Charles.

Henry W. Coe Jr. died on March 18, 1943 and left the Pine Ridge Ranch to Sada's brother, Henry Sutcliff Coe. According to Henry S. Coe, his father thought the ranch was too much for a single woman to operate. However, Sada and her then husband, Charles Robinson, had lived on the ranch and operated it for her father. In fact, when they divorced, Sada operated the ranch on her own for several years until her father's death. She moved off the ranch when her brother inherited it. She was an accomplished horsewoman and loved ranch life. As the new ranger at Coe, Barry Breckling met Sada in 1977, two

years before her death, and was immediately impressed with her. "It was wonderful to meet her, somewhat of an eccentric old lady... she played all... sorts of different instruments. She could get dressed up in very nice dress and (when she was younger) she could also hop on a horse and ride better than most of the cowboys around here."

Henry S. Coe sold Pine Ridge Ranch to the Beach Land and Cattle Company in 1948. In the short period the cattle company owned the land, they built the network of roads interlacing the park today. Sada purchased the ranch from the cattle company in 1950. Ranger Breckling recounts how this chain of events may have played out. "Sada may have done something sneaky, it sounds like maybe she got this Beach Cattle Co. to buy the property and then ... she arranged to buy it from them. That's what the brother always suspected."

In 1953 Sada decided to donate her land to a public land agency to preserve it and open it to public appreciation. "This vast wilderness should be a living memorial (she would make it) a gift to the people to live forever as park in memory of her people. It would be free for those eager pressing throngs to come and enjoy its vast primeval wilderness" Sada not only donated the land but also donated furniture and art for the future visitor center. She began the process to build the park's visitor center when the county still had possession. However, nothing was done until 1971, when Sada gave \$80,000 to fund construction. The state then drew



County Line Road, San Antonio Valley.
Photo by Richard Allsop.

up plans for a modern visitor center. "When Sada saw the plans, she said nope, and she got her own architect to draw the plans" for a building that would fit with the existing structures

Coe park's boundaries did not change much until the late 1970s. Since that time, the park has grown to over 80,000 acres. Major land acquisitions included Coit Ranch, Thomas addition and Gill Mustang Ranch, all added in 1980 "we went real quickly, from 13,000 to (approximately) 60,000." More recently, the Redfern addition was added along with some smaller parcels "and there's still some other properties, some 4,000 acres, that we may actually get within the next year or two." In the past year or so the Nature Conservancy purchased the Lakeview

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Meadows parcel of about 12,000 acres adjacent to Coe Park which includes the original Gilroy Hot Springs Spa property. Of that approximately 12,000 acres, about 6,000 acres went to Coe Park and a like amount to the Santa Clara County Open Space District. The Nature Conservancy currently holds title to the hot springs property "...and there's one other parcel out there..." that the Nature Conservancy is still trying to purchase.

The park has a great group of state trained park volunteers, most are members of the Pine Ridge Association, a nonprofit group supporting the park. The state and the volunteers have established an extensive system of backcountry camps with recently installed state of the art toilet facilities. Connecting and alternate trails have been built to tie in with the existing network of ranch roads. Barry indicated that there will likely be no additional new trail construction though there are several potential reroutes or repairs, particularly the Fish Trail.

Other than the extinct California grizzly, most of the native animals are still present in the park. In the late 1970s native Tule elk were reintroduced to the park and have been seen in the areas of Oristimba Creek, Red Creek and the Thomas addition. However, nonnative animals and exotic plants are an issue in the park. Feral pigs in the park cause erosion and eat mainly acorns which may affect the native Oaks, particularly the slow growing Blue Oaks. Acorns are also the main source of food which the native deer

and their fawns depend on to survive through winter. Last year, the state hired a professional trapper to trap and remove pigs. With the funds available, he has removed over 1200 pigs. On a recent hike, I noticed several currently inactive pig traps still in the park. The turkeys found throughout the park are also not native but Barry indicated there are no plans for the turkeys now. The state is working to remove exotic plants, particularly Star Thistle, in the Hunting Hollow area. Insects have been released to help control the thistle along with prescribed burning and application of a plant specific herbicide.

The mission of the state parks department is to return and maintain Henry Coe State Park as close as possible to its natural state. Local newspapers have recently reported on a preliminary plan by the Santa Clara Valley Water District to build dams that would flood significant portions of the park. Currently, only one dam proposal is being seriously considered. A dam on Pacheco Creek would back water up into the park. However, it would likely take legislation to build a dam that would flood state park lands. The acting State Parks Director, Ruth Coleman, has publicly stated that flooding even a portion of a state park is not in keeping with the mandate of the state parks to preserve these lands in their natural state. For now, the park remains a great place to hike, camp, birdwatch, or admire wildflowers.

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Here is my Annual Membership Fee:

\$25 \$40 \$60 \$100 \$250 \$1000

Membership and contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by the 501(c)(3) law. Employers will often match funds. Does yours? Please ask.

Please make checks payable to: Trail Center.

I Would Like to Volunteer:

Crew Leader **Fundraising**

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Map Making **Web**

Trail Building/Maintenance

Fundraising **Office**

Newsletter
(Photography, Writing, Editing)

Other: _____

I would like email notification of Trail Center events (1-3 times month)

Please return to :

**Trail Center
3921 E. Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303**

Upcoming Events

National Trails Day – Portola Redwoods State Park Trail Build, BBQ, and Camping

June 7, 2003 – Saturday

Gray Whale Cove Trail Maintenance – McNee Ranch State Park

July 12, 2003 - Saturday

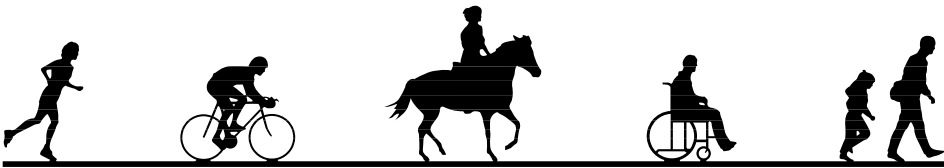
Peninsula Conservation Center 10th Anniversary Party

All member organizations will have representatives and displays.

Food and drinks provided. RSVP to the Trail Center.

July 13, 2003 - Sunday

For directions and further information, email outreach@trailcenter.org, check www.trailcenter.org or call (650) 968-7065.



*Trail Center
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