



# The Trail Companion

2008/2009

## *What's New at the Trail Center*

*By Dave Taylor, Trail Center  
President*

Hello from the Board of the Trail Center. This edition of the Trail Companion may be bit late, but as the accompanying stories will attest, the Trail Center has been active.

I urge you to look over our projects and hopefully become inspired to come out to a build yourself next year. The Trail Center has been participating in the Planning Workgroup for the San Mateo County Master Trails Plan. One of the county's goals is to try and link up its trails to other state, local, and trust land trails to create a more integrated trail network.

We continue to actively support the San Mateo County Parks, Santa Clara County Parks system, and CA State Park System. The Trail Center is represented on the planning committee for Castle Rock State Park. There will be no shortage of projects for the foreseeable future.

However, more volunteers are always welcome, and even if you



Volunteers at San Mateo County's Huddart Park

are not physically able to participate in a build or maintenance project, help always is needed in other areas. Our web page could be improved, the newsletter needs more support, and the board of directors would welcome some new members as well. So think "outside the box" in terms of contributing.

Finally, thanks to all of your membership dues and gifts I can report that for the last fiscal year our expenses and revenue balanced. As an all volunteer organization housed in the Peninsula Conservation Center, we are an economical bunch with limited fiscal needs, but your support is still needed.

### **This Issue: Focus on Trail Center Activities through 2007**

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## The Trail Center

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

Board of Directors  
Dave Taylor, Hank Magnuski,  
Bob Tracey, Rich Feldman and  
Justin Knowles

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# TC Builds 2006 - 2007

	Date	Park	Partner
1	21-Jan-2006	Crystal Springs Trail	San Mateo County Parks
2	11-Feb-2006	Santa Teresa County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
3	18-Mar-2006	Butano State Park	CA State Parks
4	22-Apr-2006	Santa Teresa County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
5	13-May-2006	Butano State Park	CA State Parks
6	3-Jun-2006	Butano State Park	CA State Parks
7	15-Jul-2006	Butano State Park	CA State Parks
8	17-Aug-2006	Pacific Crest Trail Association	PCTA/ USFS
9	23-Sep-2006	Sanborn County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
10	30-Sep-2006	Butano State Park	CA State Parks
11	14-Oct-2006	Mt. Sutro Open Space	Mt. Sutro
12	4-Nov-2006	Sanborn County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
13	18-Nov-2006	Tool Party and Annual Meeting	Trail Center
14	2-Dec-2006	Mt. Sutro Open Space Preserve	Mt. Sutro
15	6-Jan-2007	Sanborn County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
16	24-Feb-2007	Pescadero Marsh	CA State Parks
17	3-Mar-2007	Mt. Sutro Open Space	Mt. Sutro
18	24-Mar-2007	Huddart County Park	San Mateo County Parks
19	21-Apr-2007	Huddart County Park	San Mateo County Parks
20	12-May-2007	Pescadero Marsh	CA State Parks
21	2-Jun-2007	Mt. Sutro Open Space	Mt. Sutro
22	16-Jun-2007	Sanborn County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
23	12-Jul-2007	Ebbetts Pass North	PCTA/ USFS
24	18-Aug-2007	Pescadero Marsh	CA State Parks
25	15-Sep-2007	Bean Hollow State Beach	CA State Parks
26	6-Oct-2007	Almaden Quicksilver Park	Santa Clara County Parks
27	3-Nov-2007	Sanborn County Park	Santa Clara County Parks
28	17-Nov-2007	Tool Party and Annual Meeting	Trail Center
29	1-Dec-2007	San Bruno Mountain	San Mateo County Parks

The next newsletter will feature the Trail Center's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Check out the Trail Center online**

**Website: [www.trailcenter.org](http://www.trailcenter.org)**

**Pictures: [www.picasaweb.com/trailcenter](http://www.picasaweb.com/trailcenter)**

# Coastside: Trail Center Revisits the Audubon Trail

By *Tim Oren*

In August 2007, the Trail Center returned to Pescadero State Beach and the Audubon Trail, a trail it had worked on two years ago. Whereas the previous effort saw our volunteers battling walls of poison oak and thickets of willows near the end of the trail, this effort was concentrated at the beginning.

We had an unexpectedly warm and sunny day out on the Coast. We had 13 volunteers, plus two rangers who came out for part of the day (Dave Augustine and Joanne Kerbavaz). Three Sequoia Audubon Society volunteers joined us. The Audubon Society has been very supportive of efforts to repair trails in Pescadero Marsh. We operated with two crews, led by Justin Knowles and Hank Magnuski.

Hank's gang, with various subtractions and additions of people as some volunteers left early, spent the whole day rerouting trail back onto the levee top, into lanes that were weed-whacked by Ranger Dave. They had to contend with thick mats of roots from rushes, which spread by rhizomes under the surface. Tough going and good work!

Justin's crew (aka the 3 Daves crew (Croker, Kison, and Taylor) got the engineering

chores. They built a nice ramp down to the "Talking Tree," a great climbing tree for kids, to replace the failing steps cut into the levee. Then they improvised a reinforcement of and widening of a trail section that crosses a set of rusting and collapsing culverts, using sand bags, geotextile, metal stakes and lumber all found and salvaged in the field. *Improvise and survive - good show!* I think both of these results exceeded the rangers' expectations.

At the end of the day, a few of us hiked further out, and removed two willows that were partly blocking the trail, and cut back other intruding brush. It's obvious the trail is getting traffic out to the final bench, so removing obstructions should increase usage and help keep it open. The path we cut through the willows and P.O. out there is still open, though the P.O. is closing in. It'll need attention again in 2-3 years maximum.

It was a good thing that Ranger

Dave was there with his week-whacker, since the Trail Center's Shindaiwa packed it in. A plastic clutch that connected the pull cord and the drive shaft broke into three pieces, so there was no getting it started. It's down for repairs.

I had brought out a map of the Marsh found in a 1979 State Parks master plan on the net, and chatted about it with Joanne, who's helping think about what to do if the grant for improvements and restoration comes through. She seems enthusiastic about restoring the old road route (continued on page 7)



Watch out poison oak. Dave Croker has the Shindaiwa.

# Coastside: Trail Center Visits Pescadero Marsh

*By Dave Taylor*

February and May of this year found Trail Center crews out at Pescadero Marsh, part of Pescadero State Beach. Under the supervision of Ranger Dave Augustine, Pescadero is one of several parks where maintenance is always needed because of the shortage of park staff and the aggressive growth of vegetation near the coast. The local Sequoia Audubon Society maintains a strong interest in the marsh because it supports so many birds that migrate via the Pacific Flyway. They have monthly bird watching hikes and our trail work will make them easier.

Our first project was to repair the North Pond Tail. This trail starts out on the north end of a large estuary full of wading birds and ducks and winds its way across a bridge and then up a hill to a ridge that overlooks the Pacific. On a clear day as we had for our project the view is wonderful. The trail terminates with a view of a pond on the other side of the hill. Looking across the pond one can see the end of the Audubon Trail, a trail the Trail Center worked on extensively two years ago. A large heron rookery also borders the north side of the pond.

February required extensive brushing work. Hank Magnuski, Scott Heeschen,



The trails and levees at Pescadero are solid

and Fred Feldman shared duties on the Shingawa, our motorized hedge trimmer. Attacking the blackberry and poison oak with a vengeance, one cutter kept two people busy pitching slash off the trail for the entire day and they only progressed from the top of the hill to the bridge! The other 10 volunteers worked on drainage and tread maintenance issues. We widened the trail and made it more comfortable to walk, all the while enjoyed pleasant sunny weather and a nice breeze off the ocean.

May brought a fabulous turnout of 35 volunteers and a glorious spring day. Sunburn was more of a problem than the chill of early morning fog.

We found that the lack of winter rain had not slowed down the plants, and weeds had grown in the tread and the poison oak and brambles had plotted a comeback. This time Shingawa duties fell to Dave Croker who quickly pruned back the new growth and went on to clear the path back to the highway. Once more it took two people to keep up with the cuttings!

The remaining crews set to work putting all the erosion gullies right. Smoothing out the tread and putting in drainage bars occupied most of the volunteers, but removing willow roots proved to be a challenging project of a few volunteers.

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# Trail Center Builds New Trail in Huddart Park in Two Days

By Dave Croker

The Trail Center teamed up with San Mateo County Parks to build a brand new trail in the headquarters area of Huddart County Park. For years, park rangers, led by Priscilla Alvarez, have wanted to create a safer alternative to the park roads for hikers trying to go between the Sequoia group picnic area and the Zwierlein and Werder picnic areas. In addition, hikers wanting to join up from the lower group areas to Sequoia have had to travel out of their way using narrow roads to go--what looks on the map--a very short distance. The new trail connects the Sequoia Day Camp and the Bay Tree Trail.

In February, a team of 4 Trail Center volunteers (Dave Croker, Hank Magnuski, Dave Taylor, and Scott Heeschen) scouted the new route through poison oak, manzanita thickets, and thick brush. However, in the end, they were very satisfied with the route and were excited to get started.

In March, our first of only two workdays, we began by brushing the entire corridor and even began some tread work in places where we wanted to get a jump start while the soil conditions were favorable. We had 20 eager volunteers join in on the fun, including a handful from the local volunteer group Friends of Huddart Park. It was amazing to



San Mateo County Park's Huddart Park before Trail Center Work

see the transformation of the corridor from one where you had to crawl on hands and knees in the morning, to one where you could easily walk upright from end to end in the afternoon.

Earth Day in April saw us finish off the trail with 28 enthusiastic volunteers. We only worked a half-day, but that's all it takes when you get large numbers of people working together. It helped that the weather cooperated and brought us cool temperatures. By the time we broke for lunch, the trail was finished beautifully, with fine attention to detail, including a 10' long retaining wall built by Tim Oren, Frank Rowand, and crew. And speaking of lunch, once again Trail Center Volunteer Coordinator Larry Stites did a wonderful job feeding everyone

an Earth Day lunch at the Werder Group picnic area.

If you get the chance, park at the Sequoia Day Camp parking lot and head to the north side of the area. From there, follow the gravel trail down the embankment into the forest (that's right, the park has since rocked the trail because of anticipated heavy use). The trail is only about 0.2mile long, but travels through an amazingly diverse flora: redwoods, oak grassland, and a stand of manzanita "trees," among others. We all said about the same thing when we saw it finished: "Foot for foot, this trail is quite possibly one of the prettiest and most diverse trails on the Peninsula." Thanks again for all that participated in this excellent and successful project!

# Trail Center Takes it to the City

*By Craig Dawson, Mt. Sutro Stewards*

Not many people think of setting off for a hike from the center of a dense metropolitan area like San Francisco. Neither would it be a likely destination if you wanted to explore a forgotten and wild open space, unvisited by man for decades.

However, San Francisco's UCSF Mt. Sutro Open Space Reserve has been the focus of Trail Center activity for several years now and over the last year a major effort has been undertaken to restore a recently uncovered "Historic Trail." This seemingly remote area is a 61 acre island, located behind the UCSF Parnassus campus.

It is the last remnant of

Adolph Sutro's land that once encompassed most of the San Miguel Mountain Range, once known as the "Outside Lands", but is now located in the center of San Francisco. Sutro came to San Francisco in 1880 after making a fortune in the Comstock mines and proceeded to invest in real estate. Before long he owned more than 2,100 acres, a twelfth of the City! On Arbor Day in 1886, Sutro began planting eucalyptus on what was then called Mt. Parnassus.

The significance of that is how it relates to the Historic Trail renovation and attempts to date the original trail construction. First, one must hike the historic trail, through the dense eucalyptus canopy, past the red elderberry, Douglas iris, ferns and rare

native plants and try to imagine what the area would have looked like before the forest was planted. A hiker on this trail in 1880 would have seen unobstructed views of the San Francisco Bay and the Marin coastline to Point Reyes. They would have walked past the many dramatic Franciscan chert rock formations, which are the prominent features of the mountain. The builders of the original trail went to great lengths to ensure one was exposed to the views by bringing the trail around the mountain and through these features by constructing hundreds of feet of drywall which solidly support the trail to this day. That is why many believe that the Historic Trail is over a century old.

The Trail Center and its volunteers worked beside the Mt. Sutro Stewards to repair hundreds of feet of trail, all buried under decades of accumulated organic debris. The work included cutting new tread through a slide area, uncovering and restoring sections of drywall, re-grading the up-slope and adding a new 200-foot entrance section. In keeping with the desire to make the new sections of trail as sustainable as the original, the full-bench method of construction was used throughout. These

(continued on next page)



Safety First: Hank Magnuski gives a safety talk at Mt. Sutro

efforts included work in October and March of 2006 and March of 2007.

The Historic Trail restoration work was completed in March 07 and that along with a series of interlinking trails through the open space, now provides public access to the little known Rotary garden on the summit.

The garden is located on the site of a former Nike missile radar control site, covering about three acres, which has been converted into a beautiful coastal scrub community complete with insects and bird species not seen in the area since the forest was planted.

In June, 2007, the Trail Center helped to complete a realignment of the East Ridge trail which now completes a loop around Mt. Sutro. The success of the trail improvement program over the last year can be measured by the increase in use, including the UCSF Outdoors program offering guided noontime walks through the Open Space.

To learn more about Mt. Sutro visit:

<http://natureinthecity.org/mtsutro.php>

See the attached link that references Hank Magnuski and the Trail Center in Bay Nature magazine under its

Conservation in Action heading.

[http://www.baynature.com/v07n03/v07n03\\_cia\\_sutro.html](http://www.baynature.com/v07n03/v07n03_cia_sutro.html)

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## **Skyline Trail in Sanborn Park (Santa Clara County)**

*by David Taylor*

June 16<sup>th</sup> found the Trail Center working with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (BARTC), volunteers from Santa Clara County (SCC) Parks, and several park rangers on the Skyline Trail in Sanborn Park. Hank Magnuski did his usual stellar job supervising. The Trail Center (Frank Rowand), BARTC and SCC each contributed a Crew Leader. There were 30 volunteers and 6 ranger staff. It was a great day, perfect weather, good soil conditions, and lots of awesome hard working volunteers! Heidi McFarland, the SCC Volunteer Coordinator reported that the effort made a major impact on widening the Skyline trail to the park's four foot standard and that the volunteers completed approximately 2 miles of trail. She felt it was a job well done and sent along thanks to all who participated in making the event a success.

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## **Pescadero: continued from page 3**

clearly shows on the map = no CEQA! (the California Environmental Quality Act requires environmental impact reviews/reports), and talked about using CDF crews off-season to fell some of the intruding eucs. She seemed open to either seasonal closures to avoid bothering the heronry and/or building switch backs up through the eucs as an alternative. A bonus is that Joanne is also in charge of CEQA for Butano, where routing of a trail there is being held up for a CEQA review, so we discussed how best to get that project moving again.

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## **Pescadero continued from page 4**

The Audubon Society is currently writing a proposal for the California Coastal Conservancy to connect the North Pond Trail back to the beach further south, possibly connecting it with the beginning of the Audubon Trail. Two bridges would need to be built to accomplish this. If the project is funded, the Trail Center would construct the trail which probably would be a three or four day project.

# Upcoming Events

## ***Memorial Park, San Mateo County Parks***

Saturday, October 10, 2009

## ***Bay Area Ridge Trail, Santa Clara County Parks***

Saturday, November 7, 2009

## ***Tool Party & Annual Meeting***

Saturday, November 21, 2009

## ***San Bruno Mountain, San Mateo County Parks***

Saturday, December 5, 2009

Visit the website, [www.trailcenter.org](http://www.trailcenter.org), for additional details. If you'd like to receive our email newsletter, Trail Center News, email [volunteers@trailcenter.org](mailto:volunteers@trailcenter.org) to sign up today.

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## ***Forwarding***