



Trail Center News

Volunteers Since 1983
Summer 2017

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President's Message



You know it is a stormy winter when even the back-up rain dates for projects get rained out. That is exactly what happened for all four potential Trail Center workday dates in January and February. However, that does not mean we were idle. Our board continued to meet and our Projects Committee was hard at work identifying projects for the upcoming months. In fact, when we couldn't work at our planned venue (Portola Redwoods State Park) in March because of a washed out bridge and other storm-related damage, Kathy Diamond - who serves as our Volunteer Coordinator and is also a member of the Projects Committee - suggested a return to Sugarloaf Mountain in San Mateo. Kathy had been hiking there and noticed that for the first time since the Trail Center constructed the first hiker-friendly trail to the top of Sugarloaf in 2013-14, storms had caused significant erosion and damage.

You can get a firsthand look at what we accomplished on Sugarloaf in March, at Alum Rock Regional Park in San Jose on Earth Day in April and at Memorial Park in May in this issue of the TC News. We are so grateful to the volunteers who came out to make these workdays a success!

For those of you who would like to support the Trail Center through a donation of time but, for various reasons, aren't interested in the physical labor we do on the work days, I would like to remind you that we have plenty of opportunities for you. Since we are an all volunteer organization, we are always in need of people who can work behind the scenes. Current specific needs include social media, web support, community outreach and especially design and distribution of this newsletter. Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Kathy Diamond, volunteer@trailcenter.org, if any of these opportunities are of interest to you.

Judd Volino

President of the Board, Trail Center

Next Event



**Thurs. July 20-
Sun. July 23, 2017**

Incline Flume Trail
Lake Tahoe Basin
Management Unit of USFS

[Volunteer Now](#)

[Project Details](#)

Photo: by Jude Matsalla,
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[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

**Already a Volunteer?
Become a
Trail Center Member!**

The Trail Center is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, founded in 1983 and the volunteers who come out every month to build, re-route and maintain trails are the Trail Center's most valuable asset.

However, tools and work gloves and post-build snacks need to be purchased and other occasional expenses, such as trailer repair, need to be financed.

The Trail Center relies



Hank Magnuski, "super-volunteer"

The Trail Center's super-volunteer Hank Magnuski first discovered the joy and satisfaction of doing trail work while on a Pacific Crest Trail Association project with his son, Nick, in the Sierras. That led the Palo Alto resident to look for a way to continue at the local level and that is when he came across the Trail Center 15 memorable years ago.

Since that time Hank has made innumerable contributions to the Trail Center's success, including organizing annual summer Trail Center work parties on various sections of the Pacific Crest Trail. However, something that not even many regular Trail Center volunteers know is that Hank has an even deeper, ongoing connection to the PCT.

Once or twice a season Hank is the proprietor of a very special enterprise known as the Sonora Pass Café, where he was given the trail name "The Owl." There he provides hikers with food and beverages they have only dreamed on the first 1000 miles of their challenging trek from Mexico to Canada. Beer, freshly brewed coffee, fruit, cakes, cookies and WiFi are among the luxuries he offers the weary hikers. You can read or watch the full story of Hank-the-trail-angel's trail magic at [Pacific Crest Trail Hikers Find Refuge at the Sonora Pass Cafe](#).

"The Trail Center has been so fortunate to count Hank among its most dedicated volunteers since 2003," said Judd Volino, Trail Center Board president. "I know you will be as impressed as we are grateful as you read on and learn about Hank's motivation and many contributions to the Trail Center's success."

Q: When and how did you get involved with the Trail Center?

A: In July of 2002 I went with my son Nick on a PCTA Project to Ebbetts Pass South to work on trail in the Highland Lakes area and got hooked. Looking around for a local group I discovered the Trail Center and participated in a Tool Party that Fall. I found that the Trail Center was in crisis and was about to fold.

A type of "this is it" meeting was scheduled for the general membership on January 27th, 2003 where either new leadership would step up to replace the current Board (which was pretty burned out at the time) or the Trail Center would fold. Well, people responded to the call and within a month we had a new Board: Dawn Woo, Aparna Kapur, David Kison, Bob Tracey, Bruce

solely on membership fees and donations to meet these expenses.

If you have been volunteering with us for awhile, please consider taking the next step and becoming a member -- for the modest fee of \$35 per year -- or making a donation of any amount.

[Donate](#)



Quick Links



[More Upcoming Events](#)

Meet The Rest of the TC Board



Eva Franko



Marilyn Stockdale Green



Justin Knowles



Karl Mosgofian

Hartsough, David Alderman, Ed Alderman, Rich Feldman, David Taylor, and Jason Tuenge. (Where are they now?)

I took on Projects and that spring organized work at McNee Ranch on the coast.

It's been all uphill since then and today we have a rock solid (so to speak) core of about 25 regulars, and a new group of crew leaders and supervisors (and most recently a new president).

Q: What attracted you to trail work?

A: I've always been a hands-on, make things kind of person so the use of tools to construct and create was very appealing. That, coupled with my satisfaction in doing community service (from my time in Scouts) and working in scenic places with great people coupled with the stress relief of hard physical exercise made trail work hard not to like.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your affiliation with the Trail Center?

A: Healthy trails helps make for a healthy society, and in this time of major budget crunches and maintenance deferrals, our mission is so important and so beneficial I always feel I get way more than I give by participation.

Q: What has been your most memorable experience with the TC?

A: In 2003 I was unable to get to the Sierra, so I planned an adventure to hike from the Palo Alto Baylands to the Pacific Coast (now documented at www.paloaltothepacific.org). The last stretch of that route involved getting from Butano State Park to Gazos Creek State Beach, but the only obvious route involved hiking on narrow, windy, scary roads. Looking at the Topo map there seemed to be a connecting trail, but it was nowhere to be found on the ground. After many attempted surveys and route hunting, I found an aerial map from the 70s at the USGS where that trail was as clear and visible as US 101. Supervising Ranger Michael Grant approved the rehab of this trail (the land was a POST property recently annexed to Butano) and the Trail Center spent a half-dozen workdays completing that missing connection. As a bonus we found a truly magnificent old-growth Redwood half-way up the hill and the trail is now named after that tree, the "Candelabra Trail". For me, that was one of the greatest projects ever.

Q: Anything else you want people to know?

A: Get dirty, it's fun, and the Trail Center will welcome you.



Larry Stites
(Treasurer)



Dave Taylor

Workday Highlights: March - May 2017



Sun Shines On Sugarloaf for Launch of Trail Center's 2017 Season

After four consecutive weather-related cancellations, on March 11 the Trail Center launched its 2017 season at Sugarloaf Mountain in Laurelwood Park in San Mateo. The weather was perfect and 37 volunteers showed up to help repair the damage from this winter's wonderful storms.

There were three main problems on the Amphitheater Trail (which the Trail Center constructed in 2013-2014) that needed attention: mucky steps at the beginning of the trail, a mucky causeway further up and a super-mucky switchback that caused serious problems in proceeding up the trail. Under the direction of Project Supervisor Hank Magnuski, three experienced crew leaders directed the volunteers. Bill Farrell was assigned step repair, Dave Croker took on the switchback challenge and Luke Lempart handled everything else in the middle. Larry Stites once again provided after-work refreshments, Kathy Diamond rounded up the volunteers, and Justin Knowles for helped with the survey of work that needed to be done.

There are very steep steps at the beginning of this trail, and continuous water seepage was making the step surfaces muddy. Drains would be difficult to do given the terrain, so a plan was made to top off each step with two or three inches of base rock that provides for some drainage and improves the traction on each step. The rock also provides a hardening for this very heavily used staircase. Kathy arranged for a ton of base rock to be delivered, and the City came through on the request. Midway, however, it appeared the crew would be significantly short of material required, so Bill creatively mined nearby gravel and rock to supplement the fill used. These larger rocks greatly improved the potential drainage and strength of the stairs and by the end of the day the really hard working volunteers had filled and topped each step. The resulting improvement was dramatic.

Luke's crew handled a lot of drain clean-out and refurbishing. After a winter season such as we had it becomes very obvious why good drainage is needed. Our consensus, after looking at long stretches of this trail that were in perfect condition, is that the Trail Center did a good job of planning and building up front.

The mucky causeway was fixed with some inside retaining walls to divert the seepage and all the base rock that could be hauled to the site to fill in the top surface.

Dave's switchback project required digging into the hill to remove a slide, repairing a lot of the tread and creating an inside ditch to divert the water. The net result was a tremendously improved and hike-able trail for the

community.

[Full Work Day Report \(includes link to more photos\)](#)



Trail Center Celebrates Earth Day at Alum Rock Park Regional Park

On Saturday, April 22, the Trail Center returned to Alum Rock Regional Park in San Jose to work on the South Rim Trail switchbacks above the confluence of North Penitencia and Arroyo Aguague Creeks. The trail had been closed due to slide damage and a large downed tree and root ball across the trail.

Volunteers parked in the Youth Science Institute lot, and Ranger Huy opened the gate to allow staging at Sycamore Picnic Grove, immediately adjacent to the Sycamore Switchbacks trailhead.

Approximately 30 volunteers helped make this Earth Day workday a success. They began with a hike down the .5 mile Penitencia Creek Trail to the base of the switchbacks. After another .75 mile hike to the top of the South Rim Trail switchbacks, the work began.

The weather was mostly clear, with temperatures in the 50s at the outset and in the high 60s when the workday ended. Following winter rains, the soil was quite workable. The work area was almost entirely under tree cover.

Aaron Hieber's crew had the upper proportion of the trail, brushing and widening the overgrown tread, removing outside berms, defining the inside bench, brushing overhead, and adding a couple drain drips. What a difference!

Dave C's crew (the Earthmovers) cut the trail into the hillside to divert around a slide (undercut by a fallen tree), improved the ramp onto San Jose Parks' engineered solution through a tree root ball (where same tree had come to rest), and opened a scenic vista at a switchback where fallen trees had blocked the view and required ducking to pass.

The scope for Larry Stites' crew included brushing, definition of inside bench, inside drains at switchbacks, new drain dips, and one awesomely beautiful new viewpoint. The top of the trail served up a spectacular panorama for lunch, complete with a view of MC Hammer's house (maybe).

[Full Work Day Report \(includes link to more photos\)](#)



Memorial Park Trail Saved From "Going Back to Nature"

Fifteen experienced volunteers continued the Trail Center's efforts to improve the Mt. Ellen trail network in San Mateo County's Memorial Park on May 13, 2017. The focus was on the Mt. Ellen Summit Trail, which the Trail Center's Bill Farrell identified as needing attention in the summer of 2016, and after the wet winter, the trail in some places was at risk of going back to nature with overgrowth.

Thanks to Rangers Dave Vasquez and Matt Auda-Capel who coordinated the project with us and made sure we had a staging area set aside.

The trail is mostly covered by a fir, oak, bay, and redwood canopy, and the soil has an organic texture that holds moisture without being mucky.

Dave Taylor was back on the job as a crew leader and his crew began at the eastern trailhead and covered the entire first leg, cleaning the inside edge, brushing, removing roots and cleaning out a stretch bounded by a railing. Later they leap-frogged to two other sections. Crew-leader-in-training Karl Mosgofian's team took the next leg, working to restore good drainage at the first switchback, scraping off much low vegetation from the tread and removing lots of soil from the inside edge to bring back the tread width. They moved on to several more sections before the day was out. Hank Magnuski's crew helped restore more bench at the next switchback where the outside edge had been lost. They also moved a lot of soil in the turn on their leg and took the opportunity to heavily cut back shrubs on the uphill side of the trail to ensure a clear corridor for years to come.

In several cases, as crews leap-frogged, volunteers were able to do a second pass on the trail to further improve the tread. After lunch, this all-pro team seemed to get a second wind and covered much more footage than you'd expect from this few people. They reached a more open section where lots of grass was growing and cleared that, concluding near the hairpin turn where the trail begins its westward run on the ridge. In total, nearly every foot of about 1/4 mile of trail was touched in some way to bring it back to standards.

Thanks to: Project Supervisor Judd Volino; Kathy Diamond, volunteer coordinator, who ensures volunteers get good communication about the work day and manages sign-in; Larry Stites, who provided post-work snacks and beverages and Dave Taylor for once again driving the tool trailer to the worksite.

[Full Work Day Report \(includes link to more photos\)](#)

Other Upcoming Projects

- [July 20 to July 23 - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit of USFS](#)
- [Aug. 19 - San Mateo Memorial Park](#)
- [Sept. 16 - Sugarloaf Mountain](#)
- [Oct. 21 - Djerassi Resident Artists Program](#)

Consult TrailCenter.org for the most current information.

Email Volunteer@trailcenter.org to sign up for a particular project.