



WINTER 2018

## Trail Center News

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### President's Message

Reflecting on 2017, I'm excited to report that the Trail Center continued to rack up an impressive set of projects, spanning from the redwood forests to the shores of the Bay to the mountains above Lake Tahoe. It was great to continue existing relationships, but also find new partners at places like the Incline Flume Trail (in another state, no less!) and Hidden Villa. I'm deeply grateful to the many volunteers who have helped us to assist numerous park and open space agencies maintain and construct trails. I witnessed great dedication in many regards, be it braving poison oak or wrestling with balky power tools. And we didn't only build staircases and retaining walls, but also a foundation of new leaders in our crew leader trainees. In 2018, we look forward to taking on even more challenges. Please join us for the fun and satisfaction!



Sincerely,  
Judd Volino  
Trail Center President

Upcoming work days:

**Castle Rock State Park, Feb. 10, 2018 (rain date: Feb. 24)**

**Castle Rock State Park, Mar. 10, 2018 (rain date: Mar. 17)**

Sugarloaf Mountain Open Space - City of San Mateo, Apr. 21, 2018 (Earth Day)

Consult [www.trailcenter.org](http://www.trailcenter.org) for the full slate and latest updates.

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### Trail Center Celebrates 35th Anniversary in 2018

In April the Trail Center will be celebrating its 35th Anniversary with a picnic followed by a short hike on scenic trails it has built on Sugarloaf Mountain in San Mateo recently. Stay tuned for the date and time.

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## Volunteer Spotlight: Dave Croker



*There probably aren't many people who can say they have been doing trail work for most of their life but Trail Center volunteer Dave Croker belongs to that elite group. It wasn't long after Dave moved to the Bay Area that he discovered the Trail Center, which has benefitted from his considerable expertise on hundreds of projects for more than 25 years.*

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

**A:** I've been doing trail work since I was old enough to carry a shovel. My dad organized and led a Sierra Club group in southern California working in the Cleveland National Forest when I was growing up. I joined him on many of his first scouting trips into the Santa Ana Mountains, and then continued when the trail maintenance started. I already had over 100 trail trips (including many overnight trips) under my belt when I moved to the Bay Area for work in 1990. After the first six months of living in a new place, I realized something was missing from my life: trail building. So, I found the Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Association which was active doing trail maintenance at the time. I worked a couple trips with them and in doing so learned about the Trail Center. Within the next few months I had already been on several trips with the Trail Center and signed up for crew leader training.

**Q: What attracted you to trail work?**

**A:** I got exposed to it very early in my life. It wasn't forced on me though. I thoroughly enjoyed the work and the social aspects of the work days. I've always had a civil engineer mind: I used to build roads and trails in the sandbox and all over the backyard for my Hot Wheels, Tonka trucks, and other toys. Now I get to keep the inner kid alive by going out and playing in the dirt. I still thoroughly enjoy the social aspects of the workdays and getting to meet all the different volunteers. I enjoy sharing my knowledge of trail maintenance concepts and getting people excited about the work they are doing and how it makes a difference. The volunteer aspect of giving back to the trails is also a big factor in what makes me keep coming back month after month.

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

**A:** Two things: the people, and the knowledge that the Trail Center has earned—and retained for 33 years—a solid reputation with land managers up and down the Peninsula. The friendships that I have made over the years with all the great volunteers has a lot to do with my continued participation with the Trail Center. All of my groomsmen and the officiant at my wedding were friends I met through the TC, and a few others also attended the wedding.

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

**A:** I think some of the earliest crew leader training overnight sessions still have a place in my heart. But, every successful workday is very satisfying and the ribbon cuttings at new trail openings are pretty special.

**Q: Anything else you want people to know?**

**A:** I'm pretty proud of the fact that I've participated on well over 300 trail events in my life (not counting scouting and planning trips). And I'm looking forward to hitting 500 someday! I have been a continuous member of the Trail Center Projects Committee since the mid 90s and was a member of the board for several years during the 2000s. I spent 8 years as an invited representative of the TC as a member of the Castle Rock State Park Master Trail Plan Committee. And I'm really bad at getting my work day reports out on time.

## Off-Trail Help Wanted

The Trail Center is in need of off-trail volunteers in a variety of capacities. An experienced individual is needed to ultimately take over from Trail Center Treasurer Larry Stites. Larry also maintains the Trail Center's membership database and would like to have a back-up person in that capacity as well. Other opportunities include design and publication of this newsletter and providing snacks and beverages for the tailgate parties at the end of each workday.

## Aspiring Crew Leaders Gather in Woodside for Training

On two Saturdays in October 2017 the Djerassi Artists Residents Program site in Woodside served as both the classroom and outdoor training venue for 14 Crew Leader Trainees from four organizations. Of the fourteen trainees, nine were Trail Center members: Eva Franko, Karl Mosgofian,

George Willis, Helen Shaughnessy, Lianna Jewett, Kevin Moore, Tim Moore; Aaron H. and Lisa Jewett did "brush up" training. Hidden Villa had two participants: Ron Badger and Scott Farnworth. UCSF and Sutro Stewards each sent one person to participate: Xulia Suero and Mark Sullivan, respectively. Felicia Herron from the host venue, Djerassi Artists Residency Program, participated as well.



The October 14 classroom training began with Judd Volino's Crew Leader Basics, followed by Bill Farrell's amusing and memorable "Wait, Wait. Don't Trails Me!" safety presentation. Dave Taylor shared his wisdom on Leadership and Dave Croker wrapped up with Structures.

Heading out into the field, the trainees broke up into four smaller groups to hone skills at the four hands-on outdoor training areas, which included Trail Layout with Dave Croker, Tread with Larry Stites;, Drainage with Judd Volino, and Brushing & Finishing with Hank Magnuski.

On October 21 the trainers and trainees returned to Djerassi for supervised hands-on trail improvement work. Four areas, each a spur trail to various art objects created by resident artists over the years, were targeted. The Trail Boss for the day was Dave Taylor.

Special thanks to Eva Franko and Judd Volino for their coordination with Felicia Herron from Djerassi to make this training day a success and to ensure that things went smoothly. Aaron H. handled check in duties. Finally, credit is also due to Hank Magnuski and Dave Croker who received the initial contact from Djerassi, followed up with Felicia, and made two scouting trips to the property.

Check out the [Training Day](#) and [Djerassi Work Day](#) full reports and photos on our website.

## Annual Tool Party

An enthusiastic group of volunteers made quick work of cleaning and sharpening tools and cleaning and organizing the Trail Center's tool trailer at the Annual Tool Party on Saturday, November 18, 2017.



### Tool Party Photos & Timelapse Video

## Poison Oak Warriors and Volunteers Make Progress on New Trail on Sugarloaf Mountain

During two workdays in September 2017, Trail Center volunteers began work on a new segment of the City of San Mateo's Sugarloaf Mountain Open Space trail network. This route will provide a connection between the "grand junction" of several fire breaks/roads on the west side of the park and a switchback of the Amphitheatre Trail, which was completed several years ago. It will also replace the lower two-thirds of an illegally built and poorly sited trail and bring the upper third of that trail up to a sustainable standard for grade and drainage.



The Trail Center began the process of making this trail a reality by collaborating with the city's Park Planning Administrator, Greg Meek, to identify viable projects in the master plan in the fall of 2016. In January 2017 volunteers, including Dave Croker, Kathy Diamond, Judd Volino and Bill Farrell conducted several scouting trips to evaluate possible corridors, and flagged "control points" for a proposed path. Greg Meek then made several visits to walk the path during the spring and early summer to ensure there were no endangered plant species of concern in the corridor.

On September 9, "Poison Oak Team 8," consisting of Frank F. and Frank H., Tom Morse, Tim, Karl, Kathy, Judd, and Dave C (running the Shindaiwa gas trimmer) worked to clear the corridor of significant stands of poison oak. Much appreciation goes out to this crew for being willing to take this on. Several of the crew donned the Tyvek "bunny suits" for protection from poison oak oil. Frank F. and Karl get special recognition for carrying the emergency water tank on their backs while following Dave.



On September 16, the Trail Center hosted a work day for general volunteers. The main goal was to complete the remaining brushing and duffing required for the new corridor and to build a narrow starter tread. About 25 volunteers participated, including a group of enthusiastic teenage boys.

Dave Taylor's crew worked on the segment that includes a switchback north of the existing trail. This segment passes through a mixture of meadow and mature oaks. They were able to remove a lot of duff from the future tread area, remove some remnant poison oak and brush back their uppermost segment. The teenagers did a bit of widening of a portion of the use trail that we'll be incorporating into the final route.

Hank Magnuski and his team of largely seasoned volunteers worked on the portion between the gully and the use trail. They continued behind Dave T's crew to work on rough benching of that section leading up to the first switchback.

Aaron's crew worked on the south side of the gully, including around the turn with the

oak/buckeye intertwined and on the oak and bay-shaded hillside. They completed lots of brushing and duffing. They had the most challenging terrain, as the corridor is on a steep hillside at that point but the volunteers dug in their heels and completed the initial bench cut.

Finally, Bill Farrell's crew worked duffing and brushing the southernmost segment. This segment has a few short stretches between trees that will have to be finessed and possibly supplemented with some retaining walls to get a good grade and solid bench, but the crew got a great start. The first 50 yards or so of trail from the future trailhead was not cleared to discourage use before the trail is ready.

View the [Sugarloaf Work Day](#) report and photos on our website.

## Trail Center Teams Up With Locals to Improve Incline Flume Trail



In July 2017, Trail Center volunteers headed to the Lake Tahoe region for their annual work trip in the Sierras, partnering with Friends of Incline Trails (FIT), the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA), and the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association (TAMBA) to continue work on the Incline Flume Trail near Incline Village, Lake Tahoe, Nevada.

Ten Trail Center volunteers set up camp in a not-so-backcountry location behind the lodge at Diamond Peak Ski resort. They worked on crews that combined Trail Center and local volunteers, which provided a great opportunity to share skills and experiences.

Approximately 2.5 miles of trail in the vicinity of Diamond Peak ski area were improved. The work included fixing at least five seasonal and year round stream areas and several minor trail realignments to prevent erosion and improve the user experience.

The Trail Center's efforts were acknowledged in the [FIT August 2017 newsletter](#) and some TC volunteers also appear in a segment of [this Tahoe Fund \(a backer of FIT\) video](#).

View a complete [Incline Flume Trail Work Day album](#).

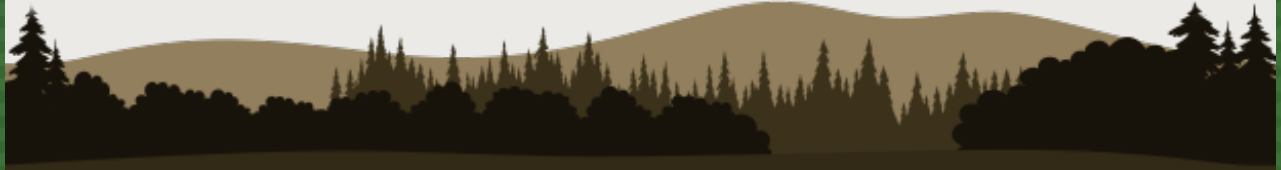
### Other highlights in brief...

- Trail Center replaced a steep and rugged use trail in Coyote Point Recreation Area in San Mateo with a nicely graded path and a 21 step winding staircase leading to the Bay over the course of two workdays and numerous "bonus" days in the summer of 2017. Check out the [Trail Center Photo Albums](#) page to see the project's progression.
- We performed much needed maintenance on the [Mt. Ellen Summit Trail in August 2017](#), focusing on brushing, switchback improvement, and tread restoration.
- In December, we worked at Hidden Villa for the first time, making improvements to the tread and switchbacks and replacing some failing retaining walls and steps on the [Long Bunny Loop Trail](#).

**Become a Member in 2018!**

Trail Center depends on your annual membership as its primary means of support. Please contribute to the 2018 campaign today.

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