



From the Editor: With workdays suspended over the last couple of months, our newsletter will be shifting focus from recent and upcoming workday news to safety related articles — both general outdoor safety as well as standards for responsible hiking while social and physical distancing. As well, we'll introduce our newest Trail Center Board member and have a look back into the newsletter archives to connect the dots between a number of workdays over the years along the San Francisco Bay.

From Trail Center Leadership: In light of the COVID-19 outbreak and the continued uncertainty about when it will be safe for gatherings, the earliest date at which Trail Center plans to schedule a project is in August 2020. We will determine when workdays can resume based on Trail Center board policy, government and health department directives, and the policies of our park agency partners. Most of all, we will consider, as always, the safety of our volunteers. We will provide updates at the Trail Center website (www.trailcenter.org) and via email to our volunteer list as we make decisions.

Introduction: Heike Fischer



The Trail Center is pleased to introduce the newest member of the Trail Center Board: Heike Fischer. You might already know Heike from a past volunteer workday. Heike was unanimously elected by the Board at a special election held in January 2020. We'd like to give readers the chance to get to know a bit more about Heike. We had questions. Heike had answers.

How did you come to join the Trail Center, and how long have you been with us as a volunteer?

In the summer 2017, my then 14-year old son and I came to our first trail building day to check it out. Our family loves hiking and we thought it could be fun to spend a day in the beautiful setting at Coyote Point, doing some physical work. My son had reserved the right to leave at lunch time if he did not like it, but never mentioned it again. Instead, he

recruited some friends and his brother to come along on future trail building days. We have attended every work day since then, schedules permitting, and look forward to many more.

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Introduction: Heike Fischer (continued)

Where is your favorite place to hike locally?

During the cooler months, I like to hike Windy Hill (always checking on the state of the trail where we did some work last year) and enjoy the sweeping views of both the Bay and the Pacific. If I have more time, my year-round favorite is Purisima Creek Redwoods, another place with fond trail building memories.

What has been your favorite workday project thus far?

I don't have one favorite workday project, but have enjoyed them all for different aspects: Some are memorable because we built an entirely new trail (Sugarloaf Mountain, Portola Redwoods) or did some special work like cutting and moving big logs as a group (Skeggs), digging a big trench (Windy Hill), or reinforcing the trail with sideboards and building steps (Coyote Point – for the latter, I watched the masters at work). But what I enjoy the most is getting to know the other volunteers of all ages and backgrounds and working together with professional rangers to build trails that are being used by many to enjoy the beautiful area we live in.

What is your preferred lunch to pack for workdays?

A sandwich and plenty of fruit. Don't forget some chocolate for dessert!

If you could choose any workday assignment — widening tread, brushing, drain work, etc. — what would it be and why?

All of the above and more. I really enjoy the wide variety of activities (and muscles used!) and learning something new every time. I am glad we have some strong volunteers for the work that requires extra body strength, but find that I can do almost everything which gives me a great sense of accomplishment.

Do you have a favorite tool to work with on workdays? If so, tell us why, and please share best uses for that tool.

It is hard to pick a favorite tool, as they serve different purposes, and I enjoy learning and getting better at the many different activities. One tool that I had not known prior to joining the Trail Center is the McLeod, see my article below. McLeods are among my favorite tools due to their versatility and relative light weight. Knowing that they are also used by firefighters makes them extra cool!

McLeod (aka McLeod Fire Rake)

The McLeod (pronounced 'McCloud'), or rakehoe, was created in 1905 by Malcolm McLeod, a US Forest Service Ranger at the Sierra National Forest, as a tool for firefighters. It has a two-sided blade, with coarse tines on one side and a flat hoe on the other, on a wooden handle. Originally, the tool was made from a section of a crosscut saw and used to rake firelines and cut branches and sod.



In trail building, the rake side of the head is very effective in moving large amounts of duff, i.e. the loose organic material on the surface of the ground which may also have accumulated on trails. The flat, hoe side of the McLeod is used for light chopping, moving dirt, and smoothing. In addition, the flat area is helpful for tamping and compacting tread. McLeods work well for both initial clearing and for finish work, although they are less effective for actual tread construction unless soils are fairly light.

Summer day-hiking safety reminders // Hiking guidelines during Covid-19

The weather is warming up and the outdoors are a great place to be.

Don't forget to bring:

- Water
- Sun Protection: sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, lip balm
- Navigation: trail map, compass, GPS
- High energy food: bars, PB&J, trail mix, jerky
- First-aid kit
- Raingear if the weather is uncertain

Be on the lookout for:

- Poison oak/poison ivy
- Insects: ticks, wasps, hornets and their homes/hives/nests
- Snakes
- Changes in weather

In addition to standard safety practices, there are additional practices we should keep in mind to avoid contracting or spreading the virus while enjoying outdoor activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some of these may include:

- Hiking only with members of one's own household
- Hiking only within a certain radius from one's home
- Keeping a six-foot distance from other hikers not with you
- Bringing a mask or other face covering for nose and mouth
- Bringing hand sanitizer in case it is needed along the way
- Washing hands immediately upon returning home

These guidelines come to us from our friends at the American Hiking Society. For complete information see their web page: <https://americanhiking.org/blog/hiking-responsibly-faq-covid-19/>

Before venturing out to hiking trails on Federal, State, County or Municipal Land or Parks, remember to check websites for those agencies to review information related to trails access. Some helpful links below:

National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/public-health-update.htm>

US Forest Service: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/covid19-updates>

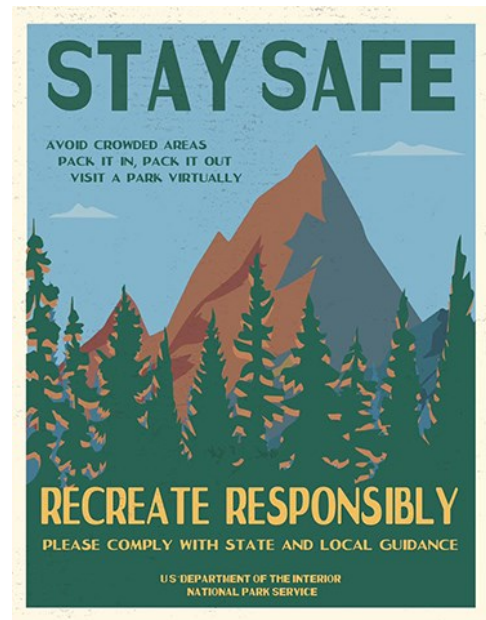
California State Parks Covid-19 Resource Center: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30350

San Mateo County Parks: <https://parks.smcgov.org>

Santa Clara County Parks: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/parks/Pages/Welcome-to-Santa-Clara-County-Parks.aspx>

Midpeninsula Regional OSD: <https://www.openspace.org/content/novel-coronavirus-updates>

This virus has proved to be more contagious in indoor settings (The Risks - Know Them - Avoid Them), and for that reason, we encourage our members to take advantage of the fresh air and exercise in the great outdoors, with the above safety reminders in mind.



Trail Center's Bay-Front Trails

An article in the Trail Center's February/March 1997 "Trail Companion" newsletter not only invited volunteers to help build a new bayside trail in San Mateo, but also noted that the Trail Center's very first project was along the San Francisco Bay:

"We're Building a Bay-front Trail in San Mateo (February/March 1997)

We break ground on a brand new project on Saturday, March 1st and it will be poison oak free!. The Trail Center's very first project [a 5400 ft. long trail construction atop a levee, over 5 days, completed in 1985] was next to the San Francisco Bay--in Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (Ravenswood Preserve | Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District). Now, thirteen years later, we return to the Bay, this time in San Mateo. We'll be building a 2/3 mile-long trail connecting Ryder and Harborview Parks. Our new trail follows a tidal canal and parallels the Bay Trail (the new trail may even be designated as a Bay Trail alternate route).

Call the office to sign up for the kick-off day in San Mateo. Meeting time is at 8:30 am in Ryder Park (take 3rd Ave toward the Bay and look for the signs) We will celebrate our new project with a BBQ afterward. We will alternate our workdays in San Mateo with the on-going project in Arguello Park in San Carlos. This year, both our California Trail Days (Apr. 26) and National Trail Days (June 7) events will take place on the waterfront. See you there.—Geoffrey Skinner"



Twenty years later, in the summer of 2017, Trail Center volunteers made their way back to the San Francisco Bay for multiple workdays to build a new trail in San Mateo's Coyote Point Park. Volunteers started work on National Trails Day, June 3, 2017 to replace a run-down-the-hill trail to the Bay, developing about 450 feet of new trail, plus approximately 40 more feet of steps down to the Bay. Trail Center was pleased to receive word from the San Mateo County Parks that the trails are well traveled and much-appreciated.



We're pleased to learn that one of our regular volunteers, Bob Fox (above, right) continues working on trails to our waterways, most recently the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail. Video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0KQAV9bZOM>.

Trail Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit volunteer organization. Please consider us in your charitable donations.