

MOUNTAIN CYCLIST



LEADING THE PARTICIPATION OF MOUNTAIN CYCLISTS IN THE TRAIL COMMUNITY

WINTER 2012

Rancho Corral de Tierra: New National Park in Montara

By Jim Sullivan

Rancho Corral de Tierra (RCdT) is the newest addition to Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

At nearly 4,000 acres, Rancho is one of the largest undeveloped parcels of land on the San Mateo peninsula. Once planned for development, this land is now protected as part of our nation's natural legacy.

Located above Montara, El Granada, and Pacifica, the RCdT is slated to be almost 100% open to Mt Bikes (MB). With terrain that includes trail loops from sea level to almost 2000 foot peaks, the RCdT will offer trail rides for the most entry level to the gnarly epic adventurer.

ROMP members have been active from the get-go in assisting National Parks Service (NPS) staff in surveying these coastal lands. ROMP members have worked tirelessly with fellow non motorized enthusiasts (hikers & equestrians) in assuring that all trails are studied and planned with shared access and inter-connected loop trails as the main goals. RCdT has excellent lines of sight and low clustered coastal brush as the norm. These combined elements make for trails that can be shared by all users.

ROMP board member Jim Sullivan currently leads a NPS and ROMP sponsored 3rd Sunday of the month "Ride to the Rancho" MB tour that starts in Pacifica. Jim also stages the last Sunday of the month beginner clinic at the RCdT site. See these plus many other ride options on the ROMP calen-

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Sierra Vista Trails Open to Acclaim, Crowds, Birth Pangs

By Ted Stroll

About 200 people, including San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, City Councilmember Sam Liccardo, California Assembly members Jim Beall and Nora Campos, Silicon Valley Leadership Group president and chief executive officer Carl Guardino, and local radio and television weather personality Roberta Gonzales assembled in mountain biking territory on October 22.

They gathered on Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve land near the top of Sierra Road for the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority's dedication of a 5.3-mile extension of Boccardo Trail into the rugged and previously off-limits hinterlands east of Alum Rock Park.

The new trail network's popularity was evident before the speeches began. Attendees could see a string of hikers venturing along the ridge section that parallels Sierra Road and affords views of Alum Rock Park far below.

Since that opening, the ridge segment has been popular. On one ride, I counted 16 hikers. There are many mountain bikers too, and the trail is being compacted by tires and feet. According to OSA staff, Boccardo Trail gets 13,000 visitors a year. The extension is likely to generate additional traffic.

Tough Climbing

You see many fewer people on the part beyond the ridge. That's not surprising, because to visit the whole extension involves a lot of steep climbing.

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Bikes Excluded From Mindego Hill

By Henry Pastorelli

Mindego Hill is a beautiful, grassland high point on the western flanks of Russian Ridge Preserve. MROSD voted on November 10 to close to bicyclists the Mindego Ridge access trail and the Mindego Hill summit trail due to concerns about the San Francisco Garter Snake. Access will remain year round for hikers, equestrians and patrol trucks.

One fearsome extrapolation of this proposal is the open-ended nature of MROSD trails restricted access on MROSD trails. If bikes are verboten from Mindego Ridge trail, even though it meets the stringent criteria established by the Federal Endangered Species act in that it is outside the minimum protection (1,500 feet) demanded by the most restrictive Fully Protected endangered species rules, it opens the possibility that this broad interpretation could be used to ban our ranks in the future, whether it be 1500ft, or 10,000 feet....and beyond.

Another point is that Mindego Lake Road, aka Mindego Ridge Trail, was driven daily by the Mindego Ranch residents for 50 years. For the last 15 + years, MROSD rangers have patrolled the road. A history of sightings or "takes" of San Francisco Garter snakes observed on the road by rangers would have strengthened MROSD's no-bikes stance yet there is zero mention of this.

Romp attended the recent MROSD board meeting and raised this question and also asked what study data identified cyclists as snake killers and if it is such a sensitive habit, why isn't a seasonal or full closure required for all users.

The proposed Ancient Oaks Connector trail is the only new multi use trail proposed in the Mindego Gateway project plan.

Below is an excerpt from the Board meeting which provides more details:

Receive Staff Presentation and Consider Approval of New Trail Use Recommendations as Described in the Attached Memo for the Mindego Gateway Project at Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve

Jeff Alvarez of Biosearch Associates provided a summary of his experience and background. He explained that he is working

with the District to develop a management plan for the Mindego area because of the sensitive snake population and that snake observations have been made around the lake and on the existing access road. He further reported that there have been observations of new hatchlings called "young of the year" in the area and explained that "young of the year" is a criteria for success in the breeding of SF garter snakes. He stated that in order to protect the species' habitat and to avoid any "take" of the species, Biosearch Associates is recommending that the site have very limited use, including hiking and equestrian use only on the Mindego Hill Trail and a portion of the Mindego Ridge Trail (access road).



Director Kishimoto asked that the differences in impacts between hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers be explained. Mr. Alvarez explained that horses are innately nervous around snakes and are generally aware if there is a snake nearby. He then explained that there is a greater risk of take with a mountain bikes because some bikers may not comply with posted speed limits. He stated that the likelihood of take on the snake is higher with bike use than for equestrian or hiking use. Further discussion ensued.

Public Comment: The following people spoke against staff's recommendation of limiting the use of the proposed Mindego Hill trail to hikers and equestrians: Struther Smith, Josh Moore, Lyndall Erb, Jim Sullivan, and JC Dill.

Brief discussion was held regarding bicycle storage at the Mindego Hill site.

Ms. Bankosh (MROSD Planner) then responded to some comments made by the public regarding evidence of snake mortality from mountain bike use. She explained that there have not been any scientific studies conducted on mountain bikes and the snake due to its status as a fully protected species, but that there are documented instances of bikes killing snakes, including a documented incident at Crystal Springs Reservoir mentioned in the San Francisco garter snake recovery plan and a YouTube clip of a mountain biker killing a garter snake recorded by the cyclist.

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Public Comment: Strether Smith provided rebuttal to Ms. Bankosh's comment.

Director Harris asked if staff had considered conducting a study on the interactions of trail users and the San Francisco garter snake. Ms. Bankosh responded that a study like that would be appropriate for another species but that since the San Francisco garter snake is a fully protected species, the District would not be able to acquire any permits to conduct a study that could result in harm to the species.

General Manager Steve Abbors briefly commented on the District's land-management decisions and stated that for this particular instance, the District is making its land management decision based on recommendations provided by scientific experts and that the District needs to be in full compliance of laws regarding fully protected, endangered species. Mr. Abbors also addressed the public's concerns about the District's attempt to prohibit future mountain bike access on District preserves and stated that staff is currently working on many projects to provide multi-use access throughout District land and that the intent of today's meeting is to address one particular issue at Mindego Hill. Further discussion from the Committee ensued.

Motion: Upon motion by Director Cyr, seconded by Director Harris, and unanimously passed, the Committee adopted staff's recommendations of designating the proposed Ancient Oaks Connector Trail as a multi-use trail. (Vote: 3-0-0)

Director Harris expressed her concerns on limiting the use of the trails to only hikers and equestrians and stated that the trails should continue to be multi-use and open to all users. She questioned if the District should open up a trail at Mindego Hill given the sensitive habitat that exists. Ms. Bankosh responded that public access to the Mindego Hill is a condition in the purchase agreement with POST but also that the District is trying to balance its mission of providing public access and protecting resources. She explained that opening the trail but having limited use is a compromise to establish that balance.

Motion: Upon motion by Director Cyr, seconded by Director Kishimoto, the Committee adopted staff's recommendation to designate the proposed Mindego Hill Trail as hiking and equestrian-only trails; install a gate along Mindego Ridge Trail; permit horse watering in designated troughs; construct the trail with as little grading or other as surface disturbance as possible; and limit vehicle access to daily patrols and authorized persons that follow a five mile per hour speed limit. (Vote: 2-1-0: Noes: Harris)

For more information on the Mindego Gateway Project, please visit http://67.199.5.159/plans_projects/mindego_gateway.asp

White Oaks trail (AKA Frame Breaker trail) Re-route

By Henry Pastorelli



Last spring, MROSD completed removal of an existing steep and poorly drained 1.25-mile portion of the White Oaks Trail in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve. It was replaced with a new 0.9-mile main trail and a new 1-mile connector trail through grassland and mixed evergreen forest. The new trail provides a more scenic and enjoyable recreational connection between the preserve's main parking lot and trail network. The new trail design incorporates best management practices for controlling erosion and was constructed at an average 10% gradient using small earth-moving equipment. All are urged to check it out.



SCCP Planning Meeting #4 Report

By Gus (Butch) Meyner, Motorcyclist, bicyclist, taxpayer, voter

On November 8th at 7pm, I attended the “Parkland Acquisition Plan for the County of Santa Clara” public meeting #4. Thanks to all for attending the meeting in east San Jose on that Tuesday. Highlights included meeting Robb Courtney, the new Santa Clara County Parks Director. It was also great that Dave Cortese could share his experience, and give a concise explanation of what and why things were happening. It was actually quite cool, though the subject is largely urban park planning right now.

At the meeting, there were 12 locals/ voters/ concerned citizens. About four folks were watching and executing the show. Most significant (to me) was Steve Blomquist, from Supervisor Dave Cortese’s office, and Robb Courtney, the new Santa Clara County Parks Director, were there.

There was a specific agenda, but due to the small size of the participating public, it was very participant driven. People spoke, and we largely had specific recreation sites in mind. The current direction of the Acquisition Plan is based upon “themes”, rather than “sites” we want for recreation areas.



Supervisor and President of the Supervisors, Dave Cortese, had shown up during this discussion of “themes” versus sites. He interjected his short experience with the board and what he saw what was needed, in his view. He stressed that it was just from his view, and that he thought it is his job to execute what we, his constituents, want and need. Dave gave us a nice summary of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going in regards to County Parks Land Acquisition.

Excuse any misrepresentations of what anyone expressed. Everyone needs to go to <http://www.parkhere.org/portal/site/parks/> and complete the Acquisition Plan survey under “Quick Clicks”, ninth (9th) choice down. The greatest need for mountain bikers is for us to comment on the acquisition process, and that our concerns and wishes should be an integral part of the acquisition criteria. To do this, email your comments to Brian.Hattsell@prk.sccgov.org by November 18. My comment is that two new criteria need to be added to the Park Acquisition Guidelines or “Themes”. These two items are

1. Grassroots support and Community desire should be given significant weight
2. Demand for an underserved activity should be given significant weight.

Basically, the land acquisition policy has changed from site specific to goal specific. The process we are going through now is to define and confirm those goals. At this community meeting, though the public wanted to address specific site desires, the goal was to define the “themes”

My personal agenda is expansion of the county motorcycle park into the adjacent 5000 acre United Technologies property. I know that motorcycle riding would be limited (but high quality), but the mixed use aspect and beauty and desolation can make this a spectacular park. The popularity of a Motorcycle Park, and funding from the state OHV fund make this a unique possibility.

ROMP helps build 2400 Bikes

By Chuck Fry

Susan Runsvold had a vision. She wanted to do something to help needy children at Christmas. Sue remembered her own childhood, and the joy and sense of freedom her first bicycle gave her, and decided that she would help provide bikes to children whose parents couldn't afford them.

In 2004, Sue raised enough money to buy 40 bikes, which caught the attention of the San Jose Mercury News. The modest success of that initial effort laid the groundwork for Sue's organization Turning Wheels for Kids. TWfK's first Big Bike Build in 2005 gathered volunteers to screw together bikes bought in bulk, and provided kids with 450 bikes and helmets.

Since then, TWfK and its annual Big Bike Build have grown beyond anyone's imagination. This year, TWfK raised enough money to buy 2400 bikes for local children who might not have had anything under the tree. Someone's got to put those bikes together... and that's where

ROMP, other bike clubs like Almaden Cycle Touring Club and Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz, corporate participants such as REI, Fox Racing Shox, and Specialized, and other local organizations come in, donating the labor to turn those boxes of bike parts into complete ready-to-ride bikes.

I've been fortunate to participate in 3 of the Builds, including this year as your ROMP team captain and quality control wrench. It's an inspiring experience.

Walking into the South Hall of the San Jose Convention Center on the morning of the Build, one first notices the



stacks and stacks of boxed, unassembled bikes in the middle aisle. It's hard to believe, but by 1 PM every one of those thousands of

boxes will have been assembled into a complete bike! Riding buddies and old friends are everywhere among the build teams. Even when the bike in your hands is giving you fits, it's hard not to smile, knowing that some child will soon be riding it and grinning. Raffles and the celebrity trike race help keep the smiles going all morning long.



Thanks to our ROMP team members Heidy Braverman, new ROMPer Taylor Brianne, Norm Cevallos (who helped with some of the "cat herding" to put the team together) and son Noel, Dave and Linda George, David Skinner, David Smith and son Zavier, Brandon Tinianov, Glenn and Linda Wegner, and Brandon Wong for stepping up and donating a Saturday morning to make local children's Christmas a little brighter! For more information and to make donations go to: <http://turningwheelsforkids.org/>

Viagra for ROMP

By Henry Pastorelli

The newly elected Board consists of 3 interim Presidents. Henry Pastorelli is leading the club until January. Linda George will take over until April and then Theral Mackie will take over the summer session until August. ROMP is trying a rotating presidency to invigorate the club, provide new leadership ideas and ultimately secure a long term president. Here are our ideas below—got any other ideas?—let us know by emailing President@romp.org. Next year's plans include:



More rides

A Gala ride, similar to the Bicycle Trails Coalition of the East Bay (BTCEB), will start in March and occur once a month thereafter. The rides will tour the various Santa Clara preserves, parks and open spaces. There will be at least easy and intermediate levels of rides and food and drink will be served after. The intent is to meet local riders, explore the different areas and trails near us and have some fun.

ROMP will host a Bullet Train night ride in the Spring and Fall. The idea is to take the Caltrain Bullet train to the City, ride the waterfront over the Golden Gate and do a loop around the Marin Headlands. We return the same route.

More events

ROMP will hold two events at Gilroy Hot Springs (one in the Spring and another in the Fall). Camping, soaking, riding and hiking will be on the agenda. Trail work staged out of here is another option.



Continue our advocacy efforts

ROMP will continue to fight for more bicycle access and work with local land managers to achieve this. We will continue to raise awareness in the mountain bike community as issues arise.

Our yearly swap meet in conjunction with Cupertino Bikes will continue along with our Pumpkin Ride and Christmas party. The club will support the efforts of our local trail builders and maintainers at Henry Coe State Park, Soquel Demo Forest and Waterdog

City Park. We will maintain our membership and support for Gilroy Hot Springs. Our efforts (led by Jim Sullivan) on the coast side are proving to be fruitful as the first San Mateo County Park to allow off road bicycle access has opened; Pillar Point. Jim's work with GGNRA also keeps Rancho Corral de Tierra in Montara open to bikes and other areas nearby may open soon. We have also advocated for and donated over \$7000 to open the Skyline Trail in Castle Rock State Park Saratoga to bikes.

I have heard that Romp floats on deep waters. This year it will be especially important to keep the club afloat as our membership has dropped. Without ROMP, I truly believe we wouldn't have the great trails to ride on that we do. Please come on out for a ride, trail work or event and show your support. It's a great club. Thanks for helping out.

Letter From the East Bay

By Michael Mejia, President Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay,
www.btceb.org

President Michael Mejia and Director of Outreach Jay Busby of the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay paid a visit to ROMP's October annual Board Elections gathering at Kapps in Mountain View. Sidestepping suggestions that they just showed up for the free beer and pizza, the expressed intent was to observe a sister organization as it manages its way through general issues and changing responsibilities.

The welcome was warm and the enthusiasm high as ROMP had just come away from a very successful event at the Gilroy Hot Springs and the prospect of building bikes for kids seeming very well in hand. The vitality of both events fueled the prospect of other opportunities in the future. Some of the ide-



as kited were for a ROMP-dedicated picnic table at 1500 feet of elevation up in Henry Coe, a spring vehicle-supported back-country overnight trip in Coe, and a ROMP trail worker shop shirt production idea.

There was also an enthusiastic review of a recent pumpkin ride, a review of plans for the holiday party and the usual grinding through money issues. There was an assessment of the effectiveness of communication with the membership, and a discussion of goals for the future of cycling in different parks, connecting parks with trails, and hoping to make a better use of opportunities.

The harder business of the meeting was in the election of Directors for the next year. Changing lives and changing responsibilities often mean a great deal of fluctuation where these kinds of efforts are concerned. What was observed was so familiar; a small group of very dedicated and passionate cyclists who, over many years, have taken their turn at the helm and the oars numerous times. This body of volunteers stressed the importance of new people to step forward and lend a hand. At the same time, though, these folks clearly depended a great deal on each other to do the job at hand and stepped back into

harness in full knowledge of the effort it will take.

The BTCEB representatives shared ideas about their monthly Gala Ride program, which draws 40-70 attendees each month. They talked about how it has functioned to build membership, develop leadership, and enrich connections between members. The main advantage of these events is that they are centered around what cyclists like to do most, and that is ride their bikes. In addition it recognizes and engages assets within advocacy organizations and their associates to form and guide fine cycling events. Not only does this bring the membership together but by broadcasting the event publicly it draws new people close to the organization and to riding venues they might not otherwise experience. It was agreed that the BTCEB Gala Ride program structure and financing documents would be shared with ROMP.



The BTCEB

representatives also shared information about their sponsorship of 10 NorCal High School MTB racing teams as a long-term vehicle for developing advocacy. Issues of BTCEB Logo placement on jerseys and expecting the racers to attend their events, especially BTCEB Rides, were described as key to knitting an otherwise inaccessible group of teens to the responsibility of advocacy. Adult mountain bikers have never had the advantage this kind of enculturation as the sport is so new and recent in their lives. This is important groundwork for the future of trails advocacy.

Jay Busby reported the events of the meeting to BTCEB Board of Directors in their monthly Conference Call and at the Board Meeting in November. The Board listened with great interest as the experience validated many of the ambient issues that the BTCEB manages as well. All in all, it was considered a very productive visit. The Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay would like to thank ROMP, its Directors and membership, for their hospitality and sharing their process.

Special Events

Santa Cruz MB Festival

3rd Annual

April 14th and 15th

Mountain Bikers Of Santa Cruz (MBOSC) is proud to present a variety of mountain biking events and competitions. Amateurs and pros will be racing.

On the schedule are popular events from last year such as:

- Short Track
- 831 Jump Contest
- Pump Track Pandemonium
- Skills Clinics

The SCMBF is Santa Cruz County's premier mountain biking event. The mission of the SCMBF is to celebrate mountain biking in Santa Cruz County.

Sea Otter Classic

April 19th – 22nd

The Sea Otter Classic has turned into a four-day celebration of cycling that welcomes over 8,000 athletes and 49,000 fans. The event is now the largest cycling festival in North America and is universally regarded as the cycling world's premiere festival.

This four-day, action-packed cycling and outdoor sports extravaganza features a full schedule of amateur and pro cycling events, as well as family activities for all ages. Food court, beer and BBQ garden, and live entertainment. Laguna Seca Raceway, Monterey, CA.

www.seaotterclassic.com

Ridge to Bridge

April 28th

Ridge to Bridge is the 'signature' Ridge Trail event in Marin, where riders and bikes are put on a bus and driven north of the Bridge for a one-way ride back. This year will be a bit different than previous years, as we'll be starting, and finishing, in the Presidio this year (we usually start and finish @ north end of GG Bridge). See the listed EVENTS at www.ridgetrail.org

Calendar

South Bay Ridge Ramble

May 19th

South Bay Ridge Ramble is a new event. Again, we'll use shuttles to allow for one way rides. We'll be staging out of Santa Teresa County Park. The longest ride will be from Lexington Reservoir up through Sierra Azul. We'll also offer a shorter option, which will start @ Hicks Road. For more information, see www.ridgetrail.org

Rides

PTB Wednesday Wrides at Waterdog

Starts around 6pm during daylight savings time. All groups will meet back at Passion Trail Bikes right around dark for the usual story telling & beverage enjoyment. All rides start pedaling from the shop: Passion Trail Bikes, 415 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002 650-620-9798. www.passiontrailbikes.com/ or email info@passiontrailbikes.com.

ROMP MBOSC at Soquel Demo Forest

Second Sunday, 9:30AM
C/INT/12-18/2500-3000

This is the ever popular joint MBOSC ROMP Second Sunday Demonstration Forest Ride. Both clubs will meet at the green bridge at 9:30 AM. Wheels rolling by 10:00 AM, up Buzzard's Lagoon to Santa Rosalia Ridge. Consensus will determine the route down the mountain. Contact: Josh Moore 408-420-7342 mtbikes@gmail.com

Social and Scenery Ride

Third Saturday, 10:30 AM
B/EASY/10/800-1000 Enjoy a ride for experienced beginners and intermediates who want to go slower. Meet at 10:15am (wheels roll at 10:30) to ride, socialize, enjoy the scenery, and work on your biking skills at a slow to moderate pace with frequent breaks for 2.5 hours or more de-

pending on group wishes. Explore and learn new trails in a supportive group or share your favorites in these preserves. Bring your helmet, water, sunscreen and possibly a snack. Rain cancels. Location: Meet in the Vista point parking area on Skyline Blvd/ Highway 35 located 1.1 miles north of its intersection with Page Mill Road and directly across from the Mid-Peninsula Open Space Russian Ridge Preserve. Contact: Phil Solk psolk@live.com, 650.291.9461

Pacifica To Rancho Corral de Tierra

3rd Sunday of the month, 10am-12:30pm. Free! Helmet required. Join legendary mountain biker-turned-instructor Jim Sullivan on a moderate, 11-mile ride from Pacifica to Rancho Corral de Tierra and back. You'll learn basic mountain bike techniques and see how Rancho connects to other open space. Directions: Turn east onto Linda Mar Blvd. From hwy 1 in Pacifica. Turn right onto Peralta, following Peralta to Rosita rd, Left on Rosita and park in front of Linda Mar School on Right. Maximum of 15 visitors. Reservations required as event details may change; For more info or to RSVP, please e-mail Jim at ssulljm@gmail.com phone 415-561-4323



The Monthly ROMP

Wheels of all abilities roll at 10am every fourth Sunday of the month at a different location in San Mateo or Santa Clara county. Discover new places to ride and hang out after with new friends.

March: Arastradero in Palo Alto

April: Water Dog - Belmont

May: Henry Coe from Hunting Hollow – Morgan Hill

Join the mtb-romp google group for exact details.

Mountain Biking Beginner Skills Class

Last Sunday of the month, 1-3pm.

Learn Climbing, Descending, and Single track riding techniques.

Meet by Ember Ridge Equestrian Center, Park on Etheldore St.

Free! All ages and skill levels welcome. Helmet required. Led by Jim Sullivan, member of the Pacific Bike Park Committee. RSVP required because class size is limited. For more info or to RSVP, please e-mail Jim at ssulljm@gmail.com

Social Events

Bike Repair for the Community

Second Saturday, 10:00 AM

Learn to repair bikes and contribute to the community. Volunteers work on donated bikes, with the help and guidance of skilled mechanics. Tools and stands are available, but bring your own if possible. The bikes are then given away to needy children and adults regularly through various help organizations. No Event in December. Event starts at 9:00 during daylight savings time. Location: Behind BTN Automotive 2566 Leghorn Ave, between Rengstorff and San Antonio Mountain View

Trail Work

Henry Coe State Park

Second Saturday, 9:00 AM

Contact: Paul Nam vocnam@yahoo.com

Santa Clara County Parks Monthly Volunteer Projects

3rd Saturday of each month, 9am-noon

Contact: Santa Clara County Parks (408) 355-2254

Soquel State "Demo Forest"

See trailworkers.com for more information.

Wilder Ranch Trailwork

First Sunday Every Month, 09:00 AM

See trailworkers.com for more information.

Waterdog Lake, Belmont

Ongoing projects throughout the year.

Contact: Kevin Sullivan

ksullyman@yahoo.com



Meetings

Santa Clara County Parks Commission Meeting

First Wednesday 06:30 PM

Santa Clara County Parks Commission Monthly Meeting - to view the agenda, actual start time (can vary), & meeting location, check www.parkhere.org, follow the Quick Clicks down to select General Agency Information, then select Parks and Recreation Commission. Look for the corresponding link for Parks & Recreation Commission Agendas, Minutes.



San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission

First Thursday, 02:30 PM

San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting (2:00) The San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for establishing policies to guide the work of the San Mateo Parks and Recreation Division.

Board of Supervisors Chambers, Hall of Justice 400 County Center Redwood City CA 94063

MROSD Meeting

Second and Fourth Wednesdays, 07:30 PM

MROSD Board of director's meetings are open to the public on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7:30 PM in the district offices at 330 Distel Circle (off El Camino Real north of Rengstorff), Los Altos. Check with MROSD for any last minute changes.

Open Space Authority Board of Directors meeting

Second and Fourth Thursday, 06:30 PM

Board Room Suite 200 6830 Via del Oro San Jose 95119



Bay Area Ridge Trail County Committee

Monthly meetings for the San Mateo and Santa Clara County Committees.

Contact: Josh Moore mtbikes@gmail.com
www.ridgetrail.org/

ROMP Business Meeting

Most months, usually the fourth Monday, round about 7pm. Join the mtb-romp google group for exact details. This is where we talk about what ROMP is planning to do. Also, if you would like to speak to the leadership of ROMP, please contact the president and we will put you on the agenda. We also welcome talks and presentations from outside organizations. Location: 191 Restaurant and Bar. 191 Castro St Mountain View CA 94041 Contact: president@romp.org

The Monthly ROMP

By Josh Moore

Starting in March 2012, we will have a fun monthly ride in diverse locations in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties open to riders of all abilities and ages on the fourth Saturday of each month. The purpose of these rides is to: have fun; meet other riders; and discover new riding destinations and explore.

The concept of a monthly club ride, sometimes called a jersey ride or gala ride, is not new. I reckon bike clubs have been doing it for over a century. ROMP has also led weekly or monthly rides for riders at all levels for decades. The Monthly ROMP will be different. The plan is riders of all skill levels will break into appropriate groups, ride for a couple hours and return to the parking lot at roughly the same time for some snacks and beverages provided by the club to enjoy the social aspect of mountain biking. Rather than meeting in the same location each month, the ride will be hosted at diverse locations from Pacifica to Morgan Hill. These no drop rides will be well organized, appropriate for most anyone, and may incorporate some kind of theme (such as The Annual Pumpkin Ride) which should guarantee that everyone has a good time. The first ride will be at Arastradero Preserve in Palo Alto on Saturday, March 24th, 2012. For a complete list of locations see the list below (Subject to change).

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Mar | Arastradero – Palo Alto |
| April | Water Dog - Belmont |
| May | Henry Coe from Hunting Hollow – Morgan Hill |
| June | McNee Ranch & Rancho Corral de Tierra – Montara |
| July | Grizzly Flat / Saratoga Gap - Saratoga |
| Aug | El Corte de Madera OSP - Woodside |
| Sept | Almaden Quicksilver from Hicks – San Jose |
| Oct | Purissima Creek OSP – Half Moon Bay |
| Nov | Grant Ranch – East San Jose |
| Dec | Santa Teresa from Harry – South San Jose |
| Jan | Monte Bello from Page Mill – Palo Alto |
| Feb | Harvey Bear Coyote lake – Morgan Hill |





(Continued from page 1)

RCdT

dar and ROMP meetup page: romp.org/calendar.html
meetup.com/ROMP-mountain-bikers-bicyclist-pedalers-cyclists-trails/

As the National Park Service assumes management at RCdT, ROMP will be working in partnership with the NPS staff, community, California State Parks, and San Mateo County Parks to improve trails, trail-heads, and trail connections.

Directions to Rancho Corral de Tierra Trailheads

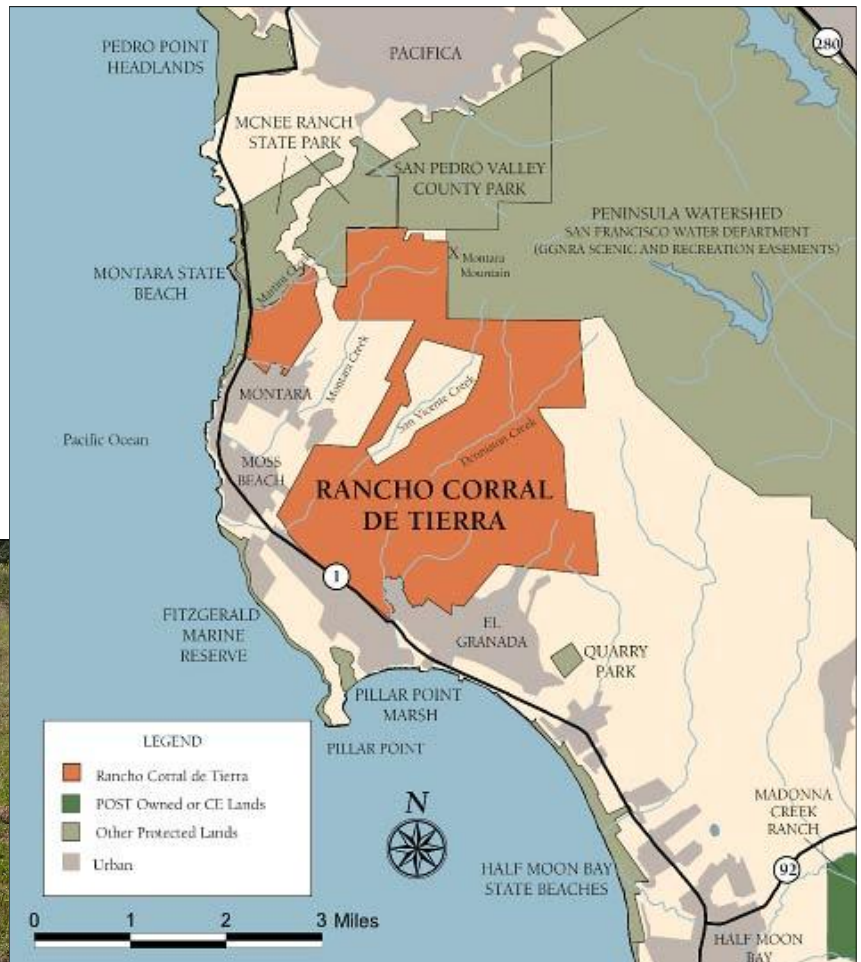
Coral Reef Trailheads

From Highway One in El Granada, turn east on Coral Reef Avenue. Continue straight until you reach the parking lot.

Le Conte Trailhead

From Highway One in Montara, turn east on 2nd Street. Take the first right onto Main Street, and take the second left onto 4th Street. Turn left onto Le Conte Avenue and proceed to the end of the street.

SamTrans bus routes 17 and 294. To get to the Coral Reef Trailhead From Line 17 or 294, exit at the Alhambra and Coronado St. bus stop in El Granada. Head west/north on Plaza Alhambra, about 0.6 miles. Turn right onto Sonora Avenue for 0.6 miles, following bends. Turn right onto Coral Reef Avenue. Follow for 0.1 miles until the end of the street. (Total length: 1.4 miles)



Sierra Vista

According to my GPS receiver, there are 3773 feet of climbing on 4.99 miles along the route, which consists of: a start at the west entrance of Alum Rock Park; up the Todd L. Quick and Boccardo trails; across the Sierra Vista Trail, the singletrack ridge trail paralleling Sierra Road on the south side; down one of three dirt service roads (the continuation of Sierra Vista Trail, Calaveras Fault Trail, or part of the latter plus a shortcut) to a shuttered house that once belonged to the Furtado family; west along the paved one-lane Alum Rock Falls Road 0.4 miles to OSA Gate 7; across Penitencia Creek on a bridge leading to the south side of the canyon; steeply up the rest of the Calaveras Fault Trail, which is a doubletrack at that point, a thousand-foot climb to a vista point that looks over San Jose, Mount Hamilton, and points south; and retracing one's steps.

You can also enter or exit via a gate on Sierra Road west of Felter Road. That saves 1800 feet of climbing, but there's no legal parking there.



The doubletrack climb to the vista point is particularly challenging; it's harder than Catamount Trail at Rancho Cañada del Oro, though not as hard as some Henry Willard Coe State Park ascents.

Technical Challenge

That's not the only challenge. There's a technical one as well. A misstep along certain segments of Sierra Vista Trail will have dramatic consequences. I don't know of any trail in the Bay Area that offers a similar level of exposure. There are two places in which, if you go over the side, you're going to plummet perhaps 500 or 700 feet down a near-vertical slope. Dismount if necessary. If you ride through, do not look over the edge.

In this age of the tendency toward more protected and less interesting outdoor experiences, the design is a marvel. It rebukes the "precautionary principle"—the concept that if an activity could cause a problem, it should be avoided. It gives life to Judge Cardozo's admonition in the 1929 legal decision *Murphy v. Steeplechase Amusement Co.*: "The timorous may

stay at home."

OSA has more plans for the Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve. The agency intends to build a staging area at Sierra Road's high point (approximately 2030 feet elevation), with parking and a vault toilet, and an equestrian-oriented trail between that point and the entrance above the Furtado homestead that will parallel Sierra Road's north side and allow horses to avoid the dangers of the Sierra Vista Trail. The OSA wants to turn the now boarded-up Furtado homestead into a hostel for overnight visits.

Road Closed to Nonresidents

You may also see one of the OSA's pickup trucks parked at Gate 7 on Alum Rock Falls Road if you get that far. At that junction, the 0.4 miles of paved road now open to hikers and cyclists ends. The road resumes its status as closed to all but residents.

The pickup truck is parked there to try to stop mountain bikers from trespassing on the rest of Alum Rock Falls Road. Both the decades-old road closure and the recent opening of part of it are controversial. Alum Rock Falls Road runs up a spectacular canyon for perhaps three or four miles. It is owned and/or managed by San Jose, Santa Clara County, and/or the OSA. Yet only residents may traverse Alum Rock Park and proceed up the road to their property. Anyone else, whether on a bicycle, on foot, or in a motor vehicle, can be cited.

According to the Bridgehunter.com website, the Alum Rock Falls Road Bridge, which crosses Penitencia Creek about half-way up the canyon, had ten vehicle trips per day in 1984. There are about a half-dozen residences along the road. Nevertheless, a city official explained in an e-mail last year: "The City of San Jose restricted, for safety reasons, the use of Alum Rock Falls Road in Alum Rock Park in 1977. The conditions of the road that created the safety concerns included it being narrow, lacking shoulders in many sections, numerous blind corners, combined with steep cliffs and falling rocks and boulders. Based on a recent tour with department officials, it was determined that these conditions still apply today, creating a less safe condition for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially when combined with vehicular traffic. For these safety reasons, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services is not currently planning to allow increased access to Alum Rock Falls Road." Given that assessment, the OSA's opening 0.4 miles of the road has been a nice surprise.

Encroachments

However, not surprisingly, the temptation to ride downhill on Alum Rock Falls Road from Gate 7 has proved to be deter-

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Sierra Vista

minative for some. The elevation of Gate 7 is about 1030 feet and that of the east portal of Alum Rock Park about 580 feet, presenting an inviting but illegal bailout from the authorized route. The legal route requires a thousand-foot climb back up to the ridgeline or to Sierra Road. It's not horribly steep, but many riders will have climbed almost 3000 feet by the time they return from the vista point to Gate 7 and evidently some do not relish the final ascent.

There have been complaints from Alum Rock Falls Road residents about these incursions onto a road that they've been accustomed to having to themselves for years. The area has been "their own private Idaho," one official said.

I interviewed one of the Alum Rock Falls Road residents. He explained that encroaching hikers and cyclists have long alarmed the residents because the road's narrowness and blind corners can make for accidents. Residents have encountered cyclists zooming down the road and hikers walking in its middle. The opening of the extension onto the road has generated an increase in trespassing, though not a dramatic one.

It's obvious, too, that the residents treasure their isolation. There are no barking dogs,



wailing sirens, or loud stereos, the resident told me. However, he added, life is challenging in this remote setting. The summers are hot and winters cold, power goes out, and it's a half-hour drive to the store through Alum Rock Park.

If the road ever falls into Penitencia Creek, life will become more difficult, because the main way out will be via the steep and perhaps muddy Calaveras Fault Trail (which is wide enough to accommodate vehicles). Or, if permission is granted, residents could cross the University of California's Blue Oak Ranch Reserve, which lies beyond the end of the paved road. But it's in the wrong direction.



It will be interesting to see how staff and elected officials representing OSA, Santa Clara County, San José, and the city's Alum Rock Park manage this difficulty. So far, OSA's view is that the problem is both limited and manageable. OSA is contemplating more prominent "no trespassing" signs downhill from Gate 7 and a line painted across the road. There is talk of installing a gate across the road, though that would be a third barrier for residents who already must open two gates in Alum Rock Park when it's closed.

A Grand Loop or Summit Trail in the Future?

Currently, the vista point marks the end of the new trail network. It's just short of a remarkable abandoned paved airstrip and hangar, to which access

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probably will be extended at some point.

Mountain bikers have noticed that about two miles separate the vista point and Joseph D. Grant County Park and that if this space could be crossed a semi-epic ride up Mount Hamilton Road, through the northern part of Grant Park, onto the OSA network, and back down to San José would be possible in theory.

In the way of this ideal are some beautiful-looking parcels of land about 2500 feet in elevation that are either owned either privately or by the University of California's Blue Oak Ranch Reserve (www.blueoakranchreserve.org). A July 2011 California Coastal Conservancy staff report states: "The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council ... and [Santa Clara County] Open Space Authority staff will reach out to adjacent landowners to the south and east, including managers of ... Blue Oak Ranch, to determine best opportunities for extending the trail south about 2 miles to Joseph D. Grant County Park"

(See scc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/scccb/2011/1107/20110721Board3D_Sierra_Vista_Ridge_Trail.pdf.) However, an OSA spokesperson says that this is not being pursued actively at present.

Any such effort will parallel my own to create a signature trail running from the streets of east San José to the Mount Hamilton summit. In 2010, I proposed that trail to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors at a public hearing that county parks staff were attending. Two supervisors, Ken Yeager and Dave Cortese, were interested in the idea, and Cortese said he thought it was workable. I received followup communications from county employees shortly after proposing the route but haven't heard anything in the last year.

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Send ride listings to the club web master

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