

OSA Outlook



WINTER 2015



Open Space Authority Acquires Coyote Ridge Through Extraordinary Private and Public Funding Partnership

The Open Space Authority has completed acquisition of 1,831 acres of open space land on the dramatic Coyote Ridge in south Santa Clara County. The acquisition was made possible through a public and private funding partnership that contributed \$8.6 million towards the purchase of the Coyote Ridge property valued at over \$15 million. The Open Space Authority spent \$7,500 of its own funds on the purchase.

The Coyote Ridge property is one of the most biologically important open spaces in the Bay Area. It has one-fifth of the Bay Area's serpentine grasslands, ten miles of creeks and streams, multiple ponds, grazing lands, and many rare plant and animal species, including the federally endangered Bay checkerspot butterfly. (Continued on page 2)

Andrea Mackenzie Lauded for Conservation Action and Vision

The Bay Nature's prestigious 2016 Local Hero for Conservation Action award recognizes leadership in conservation of the natural landscapes, wildlife, and flora of the SF Bay Area. The award will be presented to Andrea on March 20, 2016 at the Bay Nature's Local Hero Awards Dinner. (For more details visit: <https://baynature16.eventbrite.com>)

"I am grateful to receive this award, while recognizing that major conservation gains are not won by individuals but by a determined and vigilant community of people," said Andrea Mackenzie.

For more than 25 years, Andrea has been a passionate leader for open space protection; working at the intersection of urban and open space planning, policy and funding to preserve the region's most significant natural and working landscapes. Her passion is fueled by a deep love of nature and strong belief in the power of collaboration. Andrea believes that investing in the preservation and stewardship of our natural and working landscapes is essential to ensuring a sustainable future for the Bay Area.



Andrea is now focused on catalyzing decision-makers, the business community and the public to see nature as a critical life support system for our cities and urban populations. Joining conservation colleagues in Sonoma and Santa Cruz Counties, she helped launch the Healthy Lands, Healthy Economies Initiative and Nature's Value in Santa Clara County, the first-ever comprehensive assessment and economic valuation of the services provided by open space, natural areas and working lands.

David Loeb, publisher of *Bay Nature* magazine and executive director of the nonprofit Bay Nature Institute, said "We're just thrilled to honor Andrea Mackenzie for her many years of leadership on open space issues all around the Bay Area. She has a truly regional vision that has translated into protection of open space, habitat, and working lands from Healdsburg to Morgan Hill. And she understands the critical importance of building public support for conservation, as evidenced by her effective leadership of two successful open space funding measures over the past decade."

OPEN SPACE AUTHORITY ACQUIRES COYOTE RIDGE

(continued from page 1)

The Bay checkerspot butterfly depends upon the plants that grow on rare serpentine grasslands. In the streams and ponds you'll find tiger salamanders, red-legged frogs, and the western pond turtle. The golden eagle and the western kite hunt in wide circles overhead, while elusive species like the American badger and the pallid bat may be rarely seen but also call Coyote Ridge home.

CRITICAL CONNECTIVITY FOR WILDLIFE

The Coyote Valley floor provides critical connectivity and wildlife pathways between the Santa Cruz Mountains and Coyote Ridge which is in the Diablo Range. Mountain lions, bobcats, black tail deer, and coyotes depend on contiguous lands to safely find food, shelter, and mates. Even burrowing owls, whose local habitat is almost gone, have been spotted wintering on Coyote Ridge.

Coyote Ridge is the first open space to be enrolled in the Valley Habitat Agency program, which helps execute the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan, a set of guidelines for helping protect endangered and threatened plants and animals. The Authority will work closely with the Habitat Agency to enhance Coyote Ridge's livability for its many wild residents.

The Authority has begun its planning for the future Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve, and estimates an opening in summer or fall of 2018. In the meantime, the public can continue to enjoy the docent-led public hikes that are held each spring during the height of wildflower season. Wildflower hike dates and times will be announced in March 2016.

PARTNERING FOR CONSERVATION

The Authority thanks all the generous partners that contributed to this successful acquisition. United Technologies Corporation donated the property through the California Natural Heritage State Tax Credit Program. Funders include the Wildlife Conservation Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 land acquisition program, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, State Coastal Conservancy, Bureau of Reclamation Central Valley Project, State Parks Recreational Trails Program, and a contributor who prefers to remain anonymous.

Visit our website for more details, videos and photos at openspaceauthority.org/trails/coyoteridge.html



"By acquiring the Coyote Ridge property we are helping to ensure that its significant natural resources are protected in perpetuity; that a new Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve can be established; and that a new segment of Bay Area Ridge Trail can be opened."

— Matt Freeman, Open Space Authority
Assistant General Manager



who
am I
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Hurry out to Sierra Vista or Rancho Cañada del Oro after a rain and you might spot me scurrying along a trail. Watch where you step: I look a bit like an autumn leaf and my tail is about as long as my body. I'm probably headed for a stream or pond, where I spend the breeding season, which can extend through the winter.

Strategic Santa Teresa Ridge Acquisition



The Authority recently purchased two pivotal land parcels totaling 8.79 acres located on Santa Teresa Ridge in San Jose's Santa Teresa neighborhood. The parcels are a gateway to some 1,500 acres of open space land that provide a scenic backdrop to south San Jose with sweeping views across the Almaden Valley to downtown San Jose and the Mt. Hamilton Range.

General Manager Andrea Mackenzie said, "Acquiring these parcels is a first step toward implementing the community's vision of Santa Teresa Ridge as a public open space corridor and establishing an interconnected network of parks, open space and trails. This network will link Calero, Santa Teresa and Almaden Quicksilver County Parks with the Authority's Rancho Cañada del Oro and Coyote Valley Open Space Preserves and greatly expand opportunities for urban residents to connect with nature and enjoy its many health and recreational benefits."

For nearly three decades, the Santa Teresa Ridge has been a regional priority for open space protection. The Authority's 30-year conservation vision, the Santa Clara Valley Greenprint, identifies the Santa Teresa Foothills as part of the Southern Santa Cruz Mountain high priority Conservation Focus Area.

Assistant General Manager Matt Freeman said, "The acquisition of these small but strategically located parcels aligns with the Valley Greenprint goals and also meets the criteria for the Authority's Urban Open Space Program, which strives to partner with the County, cities and nonprofit organizations to strengthen and expand investment in open space close to where people live."



Volunteers Help Winterize Sierra Vista Trails

On Saturday, November 7, the Open Space Authority hosted the Annual REI-Bay Area Ridge Trail Service Day as one of 18 volunteer land steward locations throughout the Bay Area. Hard-working volunteers worked to shore up and winterize the trails at Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve.

"This is the fifth year we've participated and we had over 45 volunteers," said Dana Litwin, the Authority's Volunteer Programs Administrator. "This large Land Steward project is just one of many opportunities for volunteers at the Open Space Authority. We offer Trail Patrol for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians, and Community Outreach opportunities for those who enjoy representing the Authority at community fairs and festivals."

The Authority also offers a Docent program, which allows volunteers to share a love of nature, culture, and history by leading fun, educational hikes, programs and activities. "With about 10 volunteers for each staff person, the Authority has a wealth of talent to draw upon for everything from trail maintenance to leading the very popular wildflower hikes at Coyote Ridge," said Dana.

The next Docent training series begins on Wednesday, February 3, from 6–8 p.m., and on Saturday, February 6, from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. For details, contact Teri Rogoway, Education Programs Coordinator at trogoway@openspaceauthority.org or visit openspaceauthority.org/volunteer/interpretivevolunteers.html.





Derek Neumann and Megan Robinson



Andy Evert

The Promise and Preparation for El Niño

Derek Neumann, the Authority's Field Operations Manager and Megan Robinson, Lead Open Space Technician, recently sat down to discuss their preparations for El Niño and what preserve visitors can expect in the coming winter months. Excerpts are below.

WHAT IMPACT HAS THE DROUGHT HAD ON THE AUTHORITY'S OPEN SPACE LANDS?

Derek: Creeks, rivers and ponds are drying out much earlier in the season. We've seen an increase in broken limbs on trees, and oaks and Bay Laurels are dying in greater numbers.

The drought has shrunk the amount of available grazing lands, which limits our ability to keep cattle moving among properties and manage the native grasslands. On the upside, many invasive, non-native grasses have died off due to drought conditions, while the native bunch grasses and other plants that are adapted to the drier conditions have continued to thrive.

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING FOR FROM EL NIÑO?

Derek: I hope we see quite a bit of rain – in periodic daily showers rather than daily torrential rains which cause trail damage and erosion such as we saw in 1990. Heavy, continued storms pummel the land leading to erosion, run off and an excess of sediment in our creeks, streams and lakes. This degrades water quality for drinking and wildlife habitat.

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING THE TRAILS AND PRESERVES FOR EL NIÑO?

Megan: We can help prevent soil erosion and runoff with preventive maintenance of roads and trails. Our El Niño pre-work includes clearing out brush and debris from drainage ditches and culverts to avoid overflowing. For trails, we set up supplies of various types of rock so they are readily available to armor sections of the trail. Depending on the type of soil, we use combinations of rubble, drain rock and very fine rock to protect trails. We maintain about a 4-foot trail width with a slope to allow for drainage.

WHAT CAN VISITORS EXPECT TO SEE IN THE PRESERVES DURING THE WINTER RAINY MONTHS?

Derek: Visitors will see field staff monitoring the preserves during rain storms looking for downed limbs and trees, and as Megan described, armoring trails. The Authority's field staff will focus on maintaining public safety and access to the preserves, and protection of wildlife habitat.

HOW CAN PEOPLE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE COOL, RAINY WEATHER IN THE PRESERVES?

Megan: The best trail for a hike after a rainstorm is the Mayfair Loop Trail at Rancho Cañada del Oro. It's a well-seasoned trail with good drainage that meanders through serpentine and manzanita and offers great views of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Wonders and Perils of El Niño

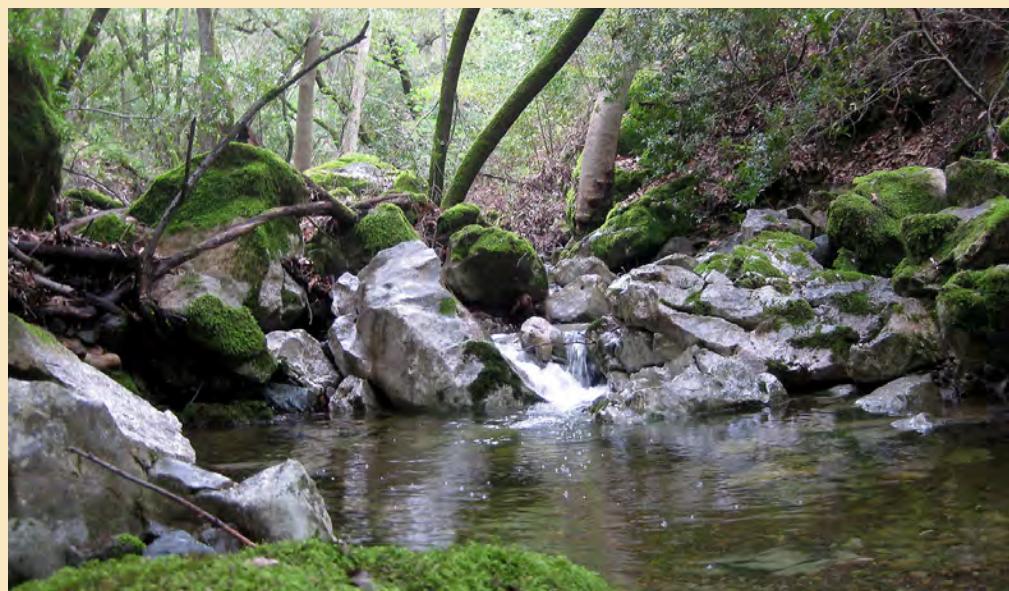
Even Mother Nature's resilience has been sorely tested during the 3-year drought. Galli Basson, Natural Resource Specialist at the Open Space Authority, shares her El Niño wish list for all creatures, great and small, on open space lands in Santa Clara County.

Galli reports that on the larger end of the scale, many trees are stressed from lack of moisture and are vulnerable to fire and pests. A saturation of rain will restore tree resiliency, so they can continue to provide benefits such as critical habitat, helping to clean toxins from air and water, reducing soil erosion, and providing cooling shade.

The drought is causing large mammals, such as deer, mountain lions, American badgers and foxes to expend greater amounts of energy to locate water sources. El Niño rains would replenish their ponds and creeks so these animals could focus on hunting, foraging and reproduction, also energy-consuming tasks.

Not surprisingly, the drought's impact on aquatic resources has greatly impacted species such as frogs and salamanders — even interrupting their breeding cycles. El Niño rains would refill streams, ponds and wetlands that these small creatures rely on for habitat, food and breeding.

An unexpected benefit of El Niño is the possible arrival of exotic migrant birds traveling from Central America that are blown off-course. We might see warblers (pictured to the right), sparrows, thrashers and fly-catchers in our back yards that are not normally found in this part of the U.S.



Creatures Great and Small

An Intersection of Natural and Cultural History



Teri Rogoway and Les Krammer

Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition during 1775-1776 brought over 240 people up from Mexico to Northern California and was a game changer in the historic evolution of the SF Bay Area. The following wave of Spanish colonization provided great opportunities for those who reached their promised land, while Native American tribal culture and populations collapsed in their wake.

Along the way, the expedition journeyed just one mile shy of what is now the 348-acre Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve.

Due to this proximity, the preserve's Arrowhead Trail became certified by the National Park Service as an interpretive site of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Les Krammer, a dedicated volunteer at the Open Space Authority, worked diligently for over 18 months to gain the certification, with the support of Teri Rogoway, the Authority's Educational Programs Coordinator.

Les Krammer is extremely well-versed in the region's cultural history and believes that the National Park Service certification will also shine a light on the history of the Amah Mutsun Native American people who lived on this land for over 6,000 years. "By telling the story of the cultural history, which includes both the Amah Mutsun Ohlone and the de Anza Expedition, we gain a deeper appreciation for the historical significance of this region," said Krammer. "By partnering with organizations like the National Park Service, we are able to demonstrate to a broader audience the importance of protecting and preserving the unique historical and natural identities of undeveloped lands."

Teri Rogoway, reflecting on her own Native American and Spanish heritage, holds a deep appreciation for the land in its entirety, and believes that native people were here to take care of the land and protect the wildlife. Finally, after a succession of private ownership, the land will remain an open space preserve in perpetuity. Teri fervently hopes that everyone will feel welcome, enjoy the wildlife and natural beauty and reflect upon its natural and cultural history, including those who came before us.

For information on docent-led hikes and other activities planned for the Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve, visit openspaceauthority.org.



who
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ANSWER: I am a California newt. My scientific name is *Taricha torosa*, which is Latin for muscular, or fleshy. I'm relatively safe from predators because my skin contains a potent neurotoxin, so for your own safety, please don't pick me up. I depend on clean waterways surrounded by grassy or forested habitat, which is increasingly rare in my range, spanning from Humboldt to San Diego counties.

Come Discover Beauty and Peace in Nature this Holiday Season



STARRY NIGHTS

Saturday, December 5 • 7–9 p.m.

Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve

Join our astronomers for a peaceful and cool evening out under the stars. Listen as they share their knowledge of the beautiful sky!

GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER

Saturday, December 12 • 5–10 p.m.

Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve

Come and watch as the meteors fall into the night!

New Regulations for Unmanned Aerial Systems (Drones)

In response to the growing use of drones in parks and preserves, the Open Space Authority Board of Directors has approved a policy to regulate the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) on and above all Authority properties. The Authority's UAS policy prohibits the launching, landing and operation of UAS on or above both Authority owned and managed lands. Unmanned aerial systems include model aircraft, drones, and quadcopters. The policy applies to all Authority properties and the airspace directly above them. It does not supersede or change the laws regarding FAA-regulated airspace.

As UAS are now less expensive, their use has become commonplace in public parklands. UAS have been detected flying in sensitive wildlife areas which can disturb, stress and harm wildlife. Drones can increase the risk of fire and intrude on human privacy. The Open Space Authority's policy on UAS is designed to protect wildlife and habitat and allow visitors to enjoy nature in peace.

Field Operations Manager, Derek Neumann said, "The Authority's primary responsibility as a public agency is to protect visitors, wildlife, and natural habitat. This policy will help

foster the safety of visitors and of the birds and animals that live in and travel through our preserves."

The UAS policy provides exceptions for search and rescue operations, fire protection, and law enforcement. Additionally, the policy includes a permit system to allow for the use of drones to support scientific studies, resource management and other mission-related uses.

"Implementation of this policy will include preserve signage plus instructive materials via printed and electronic media, to educate the public on the potential harmful impacts of drones to people and wildlife, as well as the responsible use of drones to further scientific research within our open space preserves," said Marc Landgraf, External Affairs Manager.





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ANNUAL AUDUBON BIRD COUNT

Join the Audubon Society in their annual event to spot and count birds! This is a fun and important task that helps determine how healthy our local bird populations are. Come rain or shine! More information at www.openspaceauthority.org/activities.

December 6

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve
9 a.m.–1 p.m.

December 20

Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve
8 a.m.–2 p.m.

December 27

Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve
8 a.m.–2 p.m.



PHOTO CREDITS: Page 1: Tule elk – OSA Archive, Bay Checkerspot – Derek Neumann, Serpentine rock – Craig Scoffone, Andrea Mackenzie - OSA Archive. Page 2: Mountain Lion – OSA Archive, Coyote Ridge - Stephen Joseph, Newt – Christina Schell. Page 3: Santa Teresa Ridge – Derek Neumann, Dana – Liv Ames, Trail Volunteers – Dana Litwin. Page 4: Derek & Megan – OSA Archive, Andy – Heather Ernst. Page 5: Deer - OSA Trailcam, Llagas Creek - Cait Hutnik, Warbler - Dave Inman/CC. Page 6: Teri & Les – Patty Eaton, Juan Bautista Mural - National Parks Anza Historic Trail, Newt – Christina Schell. Page 7: Fungus – Derek Neumann, Stars - Bill Adams, Drone – Don McCullough/CC. Page 8: Bird – Keung H.