



# greenfootnotes

COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS

www.GreenFoothills.org

## Remembering Joan Bruce

A life dedicated to teaching

*“A teacher enlarges people in all sorts of ways besides just his subject matter.”*

— Wallace Stegner

By Cynthia D’Agosta

Like Stegner, local teacher Miss Joan Bruce was a model of this expression, inspiring and sharing life experiences with her students for

decades. Stegner, of course, started the Creative Writing program at Stanford in 1958; Joan dedicated her life to teaching in Palo Alto schools from 1951 to 1993 (Ross Road, Walter Hays, and Escondido).

Stegner wrote and taught about the importance of

preservation and land stewardship; Joan hiked the land — covering miles of trails on the Peninsula, in the Sierras, and throughout the world, always bringing back classroom lessons on the environment.

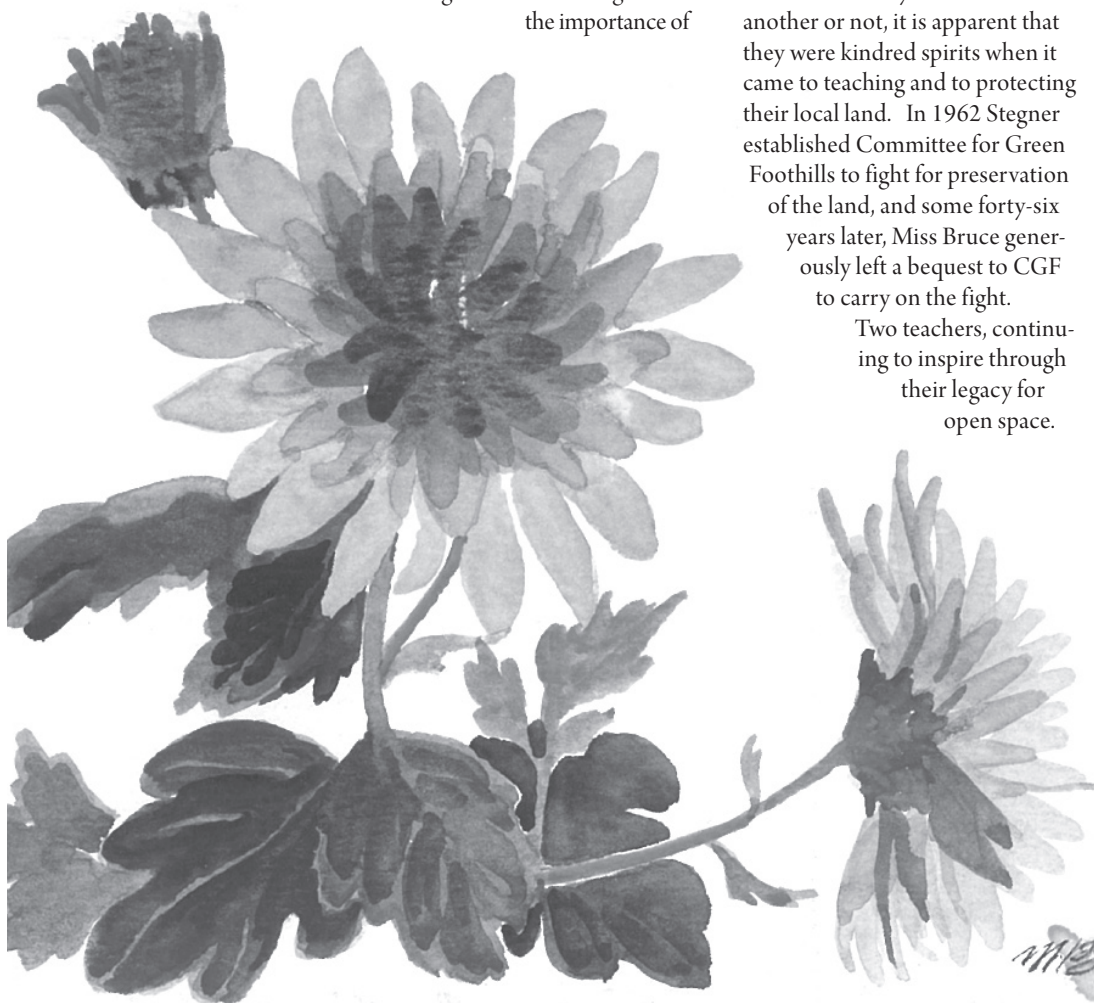
Whether they knew one another or not, it is apparent that they were kindred spirits when it came to teaching and to protecting their local land. In 1962 Stegner established Committee for Green Foothills to fight for preservation of the land, and some forty-six years later, Miss Bruce generously left a bequest to CGF to carry on the fight.

Two teachers, continuing to inspire through their legacy for open space.

Our research of Miss Bruce led us to Mrs. Kay Phillips, a life-long friend who shared her stories of growing up with Joan and then to CGF member Chrisi Fleming of Portola Valley. Chrisi met Joan as a young classroom assistant, traveled internationally with her, and then when raising a family with Jack Fleming, Joan became a member of their extended family.

Jack once served on the Board of CGF; he and Joan shared a passion for the work we do. It was through this connection that Miss Bruce found it in her heart to leave a legacy for CGF to continue the fight to preserve open space. She could not have known just how much her generosity would mean to us, given the recent challenging economic times. But there is no doubt that she knew it was a smart investment for the environment.

It is with deepest appreciation that we thank Miss Bruce for her generous gift to CGF and to the local environment. To carry on her legacy, we plan to recognize Miss Bruce with a bench dedication at Arastredero Park in Spring of 2010. 





**COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS**

**Committee for Green Foothills** is a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to establish and maintain land use policies that protect the environment throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

Committee for Green Foothills mission is to protect the open space, farmlands, and natural resources of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties through advocacy, education and grassroots action.

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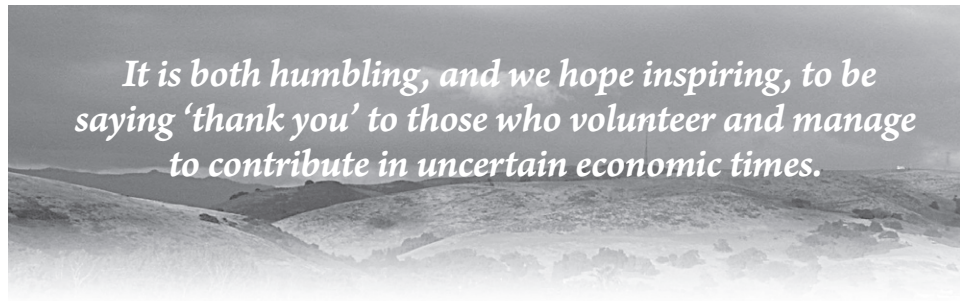
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*It is both humbling, and we hope inspiring, to be saying 'thank you' to those who volunteer and manage to contribute in uncertain economic times.*

In this issue of Green Footnotes, I am pleased to introduce a series of stories inspired by compassionate, dedicated people who, over the years, have supported CGF and our larger mission of saving open space. It is humbling, and we hope inspiring, to be saying 'thank you' to those who volunteer and manage to contribute in uncertain economic times.

We are moved by individuals such as **Miss Joan Bruce**, known to only a few of our members, who left CGF a bequest in 2008. As we planned for ways to show our appreciation to her, we were motivated to extend our


thanks to the many who built our legacy of environmental advocacy, and those who continue this important work today.

The stories cover remarkable individuals and the equally remarkable results of their good deeds. CGF Director **Jim Foran** writes about families who have donated land to establish a number of Santa Clara County Parks. Director **Helen Chapman** talks about how her efforts as a young mother to find a place for her children to

play resulted in a twenty-year commitment to creating parks and playgrounds. Other articles explore our legacy of open space — shared land values, different cultural associations with nature, landscape character of place, dialog around local landscape, efforts to stop sprawl in south county, and a father and son wilderness adventure.

As CGF Vice President **Margaret MacNiven** writes, with Nature's Inspiration we have successfully saluted legacy members of CGF. We want to thank the many individuals that made this year's event such a lovely tribute to a gracious and giving leader, **Mary Davey**. We hope to continue the theme of honoring our environmental legacy and leaders at Nature's Inspiration 2010 — stay tuned!

Many television programs have aired recently that chronicle CGF's legacy. Our roots are anchored in the founding and history of our National Park System and saving San Francisco Bay. They are nourished by **Wallace Stegner**, Congressman **Pete McCloskey** and many other members of our larger CGF family who have worked over the years to protect the landscape we love.

CGF's legacy improves with time. Our advocacy work on projects requires long term commitments such as protecting Devils Slide, Coyote Valley and Stanford Hills — as does our work providing essential planning oversight for Habitat Conservation Plans, Coastal Plans, and County General Plans. Through our diligence, we have built a legacy that inspires people like Miss Bruce to support our continuing work to preserve the land and the place she loved. 

# Gilroy Sprawl Proposals Defeated by Local and Regional Partnerships

By **Brian Schmidt**

Over a year ago, we wrote the following:

*Committee for Green Foothills has worked with local partners to protect open space where it is most at risk. The Committee and Save Open Space Gilroy (SOS Gilroy) are working together very effectively to preserve working farmland and natural open space in southern Santa Clara County... We expect to continue this relationship with strong groups like SOS Gilroy, and we hope to expand our relationships to encompass new groups elsewhere in southern Santa Clara County. ("Working with Local Partners — the Example of Save Open Space Gilroy," Green Footnotes, Summer 2009)*

This partnership strategy resulted in a series of wonderful victories for the environment, culminating in the October 19 Gilroy City Council meeting, where the City Council rejected the last two remaining of the four original proposals to expand the City outward by 800 acres for mostly low-density residential uses and yet another golf course.

## **Environmental Opposition Gained Broad Support**

The Committee for Green Foothills worked together with SOS Gilroy and Greenbelt Alliance to fight the proposals, which would bloat the city without any pressing need. Plenty of residential land available for development lies within current boundaries, and the proposals for expansion beyond the periphery of the city contradicted well-understood smart growth principles. The environmental analysis clearly failed to consider climate change impacts, a crucial issue that has to be dealt with at every level of government.

Widespread opposition developed in response to the proposal. In addition to environmental groups, the County Planning Office, Water District, and Local Agency Formation Commission all submitted negative comments. The Gilroy School District Board opposed the projects because of their fiscal impacts on schools. Interestingly, the fiscal analysis did not follow the usual pattern of blandly supporting the proposed projects, and instead it showed a significant cost to the city. The fiscal consultant, Applied Development Economics, was not the usual consultant we've seen elsewhere.

Two projects dropped out before the October 19 vote. The City Council then voted 4-3 to reject the environmental documentation for the projects as inadequate, killing the proposals — for now, anyway. Mayor Al Pinheiro and Council members Cat Tucker, Peter Arrellano, and Perry Woodward deserve congratulations for their decision.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Gilroy, we will continue to work on climate change issues, and we will continue to work successfully with local and regional partners to oppose sprawl and protect open space in the South Valley. **CGF**

*The Committee for Green Foothills worked together with SOS Gilroy and Greenbelt Alliance to fight the proposals, which would bloat the city without any pressing need.*

## Legacy Society provides lasting support

For those who care deeply about our local environment, estate planning offers a unique opportunity to acknowledge a thoughtful life by helping future generations. Establishing a bequest can ensure your legacy and that of Committee for Green Foothills.

The work of Committee for Green Foothills is made possible by the generosity of people like you. Your gifts will ensure that we will be able to continue to protect the open space that is important to you.

Since 1962, Committee for Green Foothills has used gifts like yours to continue to stave off development pressures and short sighted planning so that our open space, farmlands and natural resources can be enjoyed for future generations.

If you have included CGF in your estate planning, we hope that you will let us know. We would appreciate the opportunity to express our gratitude, and to welcome you into the Green Foothills Legacy Society.

Contact Cynthia D'Agosta at (650) 968-7243 x360 or [cynthia@greenfoothills.org](mailto:cynthia@greenfoothills.org).

# Sita, Ramayana, Nature, and the Committee for Green Foothills

By Brian Schmidt

In the parks and along the trails of the Peninsula and South Valley, Indian families can be a common sight, with older women sometimes wearing saris and sandals enjoying the same dirt paths as others using hiking boots.

All cultures show a desire to be in nature and rely on it as a place to seek wisdom. The strength of that interest in Indian and South Asian cultures, the background of many here in the Bay Area, will come from many sources. One of the earliest and best-known sources dates back to one of the most important epic stories from India, the Ramayana.

The myth, over two thousand years old, primarily concerns Prince Rama and a war he fought to recover his wife Sita from abduction by the demon king Ravana, followed by Rama's ascension as a king himself. The story goes far beyond a simple plot, to outline relationships and duties in a community and how to achieve the wisdom needed to perform one's duties. Much of that wisdom comes from the extensive time spent in nature.

Prince Rama himself and one of his brothers spend fourteen years in "vanvas" (hermitage/exile) in a forest, where they lose their royal softness and learn from the spiritual hermits they encounter. In turn, Rama's sons Lava and Kusha are born and grow up in vanvas under the tutelage of the sage Valmiki, and only returning to civilization when they become adult heirs of Rama.

The one person connecting these two episodes is Sita, who spent both periods in exile, first with her husband and then

with her sons. Her willingness to be in nature, even during hardship, exceeds that of any other figure.

There almost seems to be a connection between this strong foundational figure of Indian literature living in nature with the many strong women that founded the environmental non-profits here in the Bay Area. Other connections between Ramayana and Bay Area nature include a positive attitude to animals - a monkey king and his army fight alongside Rama to retrieve the kidnapped Sita from demons. Even vultures, commonly sighted here but not looked on that fondly in European culture, are represented in Ramayana by the vulture demi-god Jatayu, who fights the demon Ravana to prevent Sita's kidnapping from their forest home. Failing to stop the abduction and mortally wounded, Jatayu survives long



enough to tell Rama the direction to search for his wife. Someone from this cultural background might not be disappointed to learn the big bird they see flying is a vulture instead of a hawk.

Sita even ties into the environmental concern with agriculture as much as nature. According to the myth, she was found as a baby in a plowed field, a daughter of the Mother Earth Goddess Bhuma Devi.

The Bay Area's ethnic diversity will help strengthen its environmental commitment. The obvious enjoyment among Indian families for our local natural open spaces helps verify this, as does the wisdom of myths and legends from a diversity of cultural backgrounds. **CGF**

*All cultures show a desire to be in nature and rely on it as a place to seek wisdom.*



# Favorite Places

## Hiking the John Muir Trail

by Mahlon Hubenthal

**A**lthough I hadn't gone backpacking for years, how could I say no when my son, John, asked me to hike the John Muir Trail?

We started hiking after lunch at Tuolumne Meadows on August 17th and reentered civilization at Whitney Portal, 200 miles and 17 days later. The trail was full of surprises. We hiked through groves of Aspen, Juniper, Red Fir, White Fir and Ponderosa, Lodgepole, Foxtail and Limber pines.

We climbed up and down steep mountain passes, forded creeks, walked through soggy meadows full of spectacular wildflowers, saw one memorable cluster of Alpine Columbine growing against a rock wall, wet with rain, and a rarely seen Fly Amanita mushroom. We saw lots of deer — does, fawns and bucks with velvet horns, Marmots and Pikas — small chinchilla-like animals with large ears — bats, butterflies, dragonflies, frogs, garter snakes, and lizards. Fortunately, we encountered few mosquitoes and no bears. In the evenings, John usually fished for, caught and released wild golden and rainbow trout.

During our hike we met men and women hikers of all ages, shapes and sizes — solo hikers, pairs, and groups of friends — one fellow my age hiking the 1,000 mile, California segment of the Pacific Crest Trail, a couple well up in their seventies climbing Glen Pass, a group of high school girls at Thousand Island Lake. We met two priests from Stockton and a parishioner traveling in our direction, and joined them at Mass early Sunday morning before climbing Forester Pass.

It was a pleasure to encounter an occasional pack train and hike alongside trail crews — young men and women, packing tools, pry bars, sledge hammers, shovels and lunches — mak-

ing long commutes from their base camps, moving boulders and busting granite to maintain the trail bed. We saw several rangers on the trail — one racing to help a hiker coughing up blood, due to class-2 altitude sickness.

The experience was unforgettable. Each night we camped near a lake or rushing stream, watched the moon rise over granite peaks, saw showers of stars, listened to the sound of wind and water. It costs only a hiking permit and imposes few rules: store your food in a bear canister, pack out your trash, start no fires above 10,000 feet (other than in a backpacking stove), camp 100 feet away from water and carry no fire arms.

One memory stands out. As we walked across the broad, grassy Bighorn Plateau toward a small tarn where we camped, hundreds of grasshoppers jumped as we stepped and a Congress of Ravens cawed and rode the wind currents above our heads. In the distance, a Merlin, flying low, veered sharply and evaded a diving Peregrine Falcon. We watched the high peaks redden at sunset and the moon rise over Mt. Whitney as storm clouds rolled over the Kern River trench and Kaweah Ridge. Together on the adventure of a lifetime, camped in what seemed the center of the world, we had two more days on the trail and Mt. Whitney to climb. Life doesn't get much better than this.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those with the foresight and determination to preserve the wilderness, those who funded, planned and built the trail, the crews who maintain it, the rangers who protect it, and the hikers who travel it. The John Muir Trail belongs to all of us — a legacy for us to enjoy and to pass on, unspoiled, as we received it. **CGF**

*Mahlon Hubenthal is a long time volunteer editor of articles for Green Footnotes and supporter of CGF.*

# CGF Hosted Community Dialog: “The South County’s Unique Landscapes – Why, Where & How they should be preserved”

By Cynthia D’Agosta

To understand the many reasons why we strive to preserve and restore the character of our regional landscape, one should turn to the writings of CGF founder and nature writer, Wallace Stegner. He was passionate about this, so much so that it is said he left the Peninsula and this great state because he was disheartened by the changes taking place in the local landscape of the 1970-80’s. Upon leaving, however, he encouraged us: “... to establish a real

continuity between the present and the past” so as not to lose it all.

*“The event was outstanding with a great representation of diversified interests... compassionate research and wise comments... a productive morning”*

— Jeannette Langstaff,  
San Benito Conservation Alliance

## The Field of Historical Ecology

South Santa Clara County is a place where there is still opportunity to hold onto the character of the local landscape, shaped by its past, while planning for its future. As part of our efforts in South County, CGF is working with local interest groups and individuals to understand why, where, and how the landscape should be preserved. The why, is somewhat easier to understand. The where and how can be more

elusive. Recently, I’ve become familiar with Historical Ecology as a promising new tool for bridging the past with the present and future to inform our planning efforts.

## The South County Ecological Region

For a CGF-hosted South County Community Dialog held on November 7th, I asked Robin Grossinger, Scientist and Director of the Historical Ecology Program of the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SEFI) to combine into one presentation, two reports he prepared for the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD).<sup>\*</sup> There were two objectives in asking Robin to speak: first, to describe the ecology of the entire South County region from South San Jose to the Pajaro River and Soap Lake area and, second, to identify opportunities for preserving and restoring ecological systems in these areas.

Robin delivered a colorful description of the watershed from Coyote Valley to Pajaro River basin with reference to Pacheco Pass, Soap Lake regions, Llagas and Uvas-Carnadero Creeks. We learned of historical oak tree distribution throughout the region and changes to the landscape waterways over time. Perhaps the most vivid regional image came from a slide Robin showed which illustrated how

Coyote Creek, as it came from the Diablo Mountain Range, would, from time to time, move its focus of deposition from the northern end in San Francisco Bay, to the southern end at Soap Lake (near Hwy. 152). Thus meandering, over time, in two directions –connecting these important and very different regional systems thru the South Valley.

## Community Forum Panel Discussion

Following the talk, a panel spoke briefly about South County environmental issues of concern. Panel members included:

- Brian Schmidt, CGF Legislative Advocate as moderator
- Chuck Striplen, Research Associate, SFEI Historical Ecology Program, and Amah Mutsun Tribal Band member
- David Collier, Sierra Club Stakeholder Representative to the County Habitat Conservation Plan
- Julie Phillips, Morgan Family Chair of Environmental Studies, Kirsch Environmental Center, De Anza College
- Robin Grossinger, Director, SFEI Historical Ecology Program

Chuck spoke passionately on how the Ahmad Mutsun Tribe members are active stewards of their lands and heritage. Julie described how De Anza’s Environmental Studies Department is introducing the discipline of Landscape Ecology as a new and different perspective on how to “read” the landscape. Students are hiking through the historical watersheds of our valley, learning its sustaining values, and how to restore its natural habitat. Among other things, the program offers education and certification for wildlife corridor technicians, master birders, and environmental advocates. David addressed the process for public involvement within the County’s Habitat Conservation Plan, encouraging audience members to go online and learn about the process. And Robin shared the importance of re-introducing valley oaks using historic landscape patterns noting that the South Valley has four of the last remaining eleven stands, statewide, of this important native species. Following introductory remarks, the panel addressed questions from the audience.

## Continuing the Dialog

CGF looks forward to hosting more South County environmental dialogs from a list of topic ideas generated by guests of this event. Our many thanks to Gary and Joe Dalton of the LIZARRAN Restaurant in Gilroy for a successful event; to Julie Hutchinson of Morgan Hill for hosting the event; and to the Packard Foundation for making funds available to support this important South County work. 

<sup>\*</sup>Reports are available on SFEI’s website.

<http://www.sfei.org/HEP/reports/southsantaclaravalley.html>  
and <http://www.sfei.org/HEP/reports/coyotecreek1.htm>

# Legacy Building — One Pebble at a Time

By Helen Chapman

Who would have thought joining up with a group of moms in my neighborhood to find a space for a playground for our children would turn into twenty years of activism on park and open space policy? It still amazes me that the simple wish of having more open space for my children to enjoy and play in the outdoors has been such a challenge to accomplish. I took it for granted that decision makers would share my passion and rise to fill the need for creating more accessible and inviting playgrounds and parks.

The four-year effort to build the first small park in our neighborhood taught me diligence and persistence. I learned early in the process that decision makers did not see parks as a key element of sustainable city planning. To be effective and obtain my goal, I needed to pursue a different direction.

During my service on the San Jose Parks and Recreation Commission I learned that years of inaction on park policy caused San Jose to rely on established goals that were inadequate and in need of an upgrade. One action I am very proud of was influencing how San Jose calculated its park development fees. For years San Jose only collected fees based on 70 % of the raw land values that was three years out of date. We convinced the City Council to upgrade the calculation to 100% of current year land values.

Even in light of this victory, purchases of parklands continue to be deferred. One of the most alarming facts is that among the eight largest western cities, San Jose has the lowest total city owned parkland per thousand residents. San Jose's goal for non-school neighborhood parks is also the lowest of these eight cities. This simply has to change. Every strategic and general



*Well planned parks benefit us all.*

plan highlights the need for neighborhood parks. We need to make land preservation a priority and increase parklands in existing and future urban and suburban neighborhoods.

How can this be accomplished? We need strong voices on local committees, city wide, to educate decision makers of the importance of being proactive on park policy and creating strategies that will implement visions already in place. It will take time and effort, but generations of San Jose residents will benefit.

A poem by James W. Foley sums up my philosophy on being involved and having your voice heard.

*Drop a pebble in the water: just a splash,  
and it is gone;  
But there's half-a-hundred ripples circling  
on and on and on,  
Spreading, spreading from the center,  
flowing on out to the sea.  
And there is no way of telling where the  
end is going to be.  
You just never know where that first  
meeting will take you. **CGF***

***We need to make land preservation a priority and increase parklands in existing and future urban and suburban neighborhoods.***

*Helen Chapman is CGF's newest Board member and served for six years as a Parks Commissioner for the City of San Jose and board member of Our City Forest. She continues to be a vocal advocate for open space and accessible parks in her area. Growing up in the East Bay, Helen has an appreciation for open space and outdoor activity and dedicates her time so that the next generation will have the same opportunities. Helen received an Outstanding Women of Silicon Valley Award in 1996 for her work on establishing a park in her neighborhood and is currently President of her neighborhood association.*

# Nature's Inspirations

## Honoring Mary Davey

By Margaret MacNiven, CGF Vice President

On September 20th, CGF was proud to welcome an enthusiastic crowd of Honorary Hosts, Sponsors and special guests to honor Mary Davey, one of the founding members of CGF, at our 6th annual Nature's Inspirations event held this year at the Los Altos History Museum. We are privileged to have had the opportunity to celebrate Mary, whose life has been dedicated to improving not only the environment, but also civil rights, services for the elderly, and housing in the Bay Area for over 50 years.

Mary's commitment and enthusiasm are contagious, as we saw in those speaking on her behalf. Joe Simitian said, "Mary has never just shown up, she has been the first, she


has been the leader, she has been the President and when she has led, those of you who have worked with her know that it's not her idea of leading to just sit in the corner and give instructions. She is a leader that leads from the front with her shirt sleeves rolled up and who never asks anything of us that she wouldn't do herself."

Pete McCloskey quoted Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. when addressing Mary. "As life is action and passion, it is required of a man that he should share the passion and action of his time, at the peril of being not to have lived." With a

lifetime of friendship in his voice, McCloskey said, "If there is any woman who fits that criteria, it is you, Mary Davey." We couldn't agree more.

Other speakers from environmental groups as well as those in political office honored Mary that afternoon - Craig Britton, Peter Drekmeier, Rich Gordon, Nonette Hanko, Breene Kerr, Larry Klein, Julie Lancelle, Ira Ruskin, Scott Strickland from Liz Kniss's office, Dean Warshawsky, and the CGF Board and Staff. There wasn't a dry eye in the house as Mary received a handmade gift, an extraordinary interactive nature collage from her daughter and artist, Kit Davey.

Throughout the gathering an abundance of great wines from generous local vintners flowed, allowing us to raise a toast to Mary. We enjoyed a variety of wonderful hors d'oeuvres, furnished by Just Us Catering, as guests lined up to congratulate Mary, bid on some of the silent auction items so generously donated by CGF supporters, and catch up with fellow environmentalists.

To all the partners and vendors who made this event so successful — Thank You! And to the guests who joined us in celebrating Mary, thank you for your continued support of CGF's ongoing work and advocacy. We look forward to seeing you again next year when we once again celebrate the CGF legacy at our 7th annual Nature's Inspirations. 



Howard Wilshire, Jane Nielson, Claire Feder and Ernie Goiten



Roger Lawler, Lennie Roberts and Jody Lawler



Pete McCloskey



Cynthia D'Agosta and Mary



Mary, Melissa Hippard and Ira Ruskin



## The Committee is watching ...

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**Half Moon Bay** — where CGF objected to the City Council's decision to prohibit public access and "manage" drainage and vegetation on the embattled Beachwood property, unless the city obtains proper permits that will ensure protection of sensitive habitats

**High Speed Rail** — which can have both positive and negative environmental impacts in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

**Milpitas** — is considering following San Jose in banning takeout plastic bags and non-recycled paper bags, steps that could help protect the city's creeks and San Francisco Bay

**Morgan Hill** — deciding whether to expand the city outward for "recreational" reasons and whether to have a strong commercial and agricultural protection program or one that only facilitates the loss of farmland

**Palo Alto staff and Planning Commission** — tasked by the City Council to develop size limits for houses in the Palo Alto Foothills

**Redwood City** — recently hired a consultant to evaluate application materials for the DMB/Cargill mini-city proposed for a 1,400 acre pond

**San Mateo County Planning Commission** — considering a whopping 2200 page Draft EIR for the controversial Big Wave project on former wetlands at the Pillar Point Marsh

**Santa Clara Valley Water District Board** — considering environmental recommendations received from its Environmental Advisory Committee for increasing environmental protections in streams and watersheds

**San Jose's Planning Staff** — for the first time, considering and presenting options to the Task Force or City Council for having the City, instead of developers, hire the consultants who prepare environmental documentation related to streamside riparian development

**The California Supreme Court** — which is now considering a technical issue in the Committee's litigation to stop Stanford and Santa Clara County from evading their responsibilities under the Stanford General Use Permit, and also to stop proposed environmental damage to San Francisquito Creek

## The Committee applauds ...

**California Department of Fish and Game** — for objecting to a Timber Harvest Plan on a 35-acre property near Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve that would allow cutting of 14 Old Growth redwood trees that provide important wildlife habitat

**San Jose City Council** — for taking the first steps toward the strongest ban of take-out plastic bags and non-recycled paper bags in the country

**Speaker Karen Bass** — for appointing Santa Cruz Supervisor Mark Stone to the California Coastal Commission, to replace a 12-year incumbent, Monterey Supervisor Dave Potter, whose voting record did not reflect the environmental values of the Central Coast District

**San Mateo County Board of Supervisors** — for denying a large Mediterranean Villa shoehorned onto a steep, landslide-prone site in Palomar Park

**Walgreens** — for discontinuing single-use plastic bags, voluntarily, at its three Palo Alto stores and for promoting reuseable bags — we hope this will be repeated elsewhere

**San Mateo County Board of Supervisors** — for upholding Community Open Space Zoning on the historic "Burnham Strip" in El Granada

# 2009 was a busy year ...

## With your help, CGF accomplished much, but

*In 2009, The Committee for Green Foothills continued its work to advocate, educate and use grassroots action to protect the farmlands, natural resources and open space of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Recently, years of work came to fruition as we saw Coyote Valley development taken off the table, and we began work to create an open-space vision in East Palo Alto. Your support allows us to continue adding to this list of GreenFeats! Thank you!*

### **San Mateo County Bayside**

**Land Use Plan in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park** — working with citizens, elected officials and regional agencies, to encourage a viable, community-based open-space vision

**DeGuigne Development Proposal in Hillsborough** — working with neighbors to prevent subdivision of this historic estate into 25 home-sites

**Palomar Park House** — joined neighbors in opposing a Mediterranean Villa on a steep hillside in Palomar Park (Board of Supervisors denied the Design Review and Grading Permits and directed that the house be redesigned and relocated)

**San Francisquito Creek Protection** — opposed a proposal to build two huge houses on creek banks in Stanford Weekend Acres (Zoning Hearing Officer denied the subdivision)

**Horse Park in Woodside** — granted 10 year Use Permit with environmental protection (thanks to CGF for working with neighbors and the Horse Park to eliminate environmental damage from operations, after originally filing a complaint)

### **San Mateo County Coastside**

**Williamson Act Audit in San Mateo County** — working with Ag Advisory Committee to ensure that lands granted a tax break under the Williamson Act fully comply with the contract conditions and remain in open space or in agricultural use

**Substandard Lots Held in Common Ownership in Montara** — CGF and concerned residents strongly supported the Board of Supervisors landmark ruling declaring they are no longer separate “legal” parcels (Decision, in effect, requires parcels to be at least 5,000 square feet for residential development, consistent with the zoning)

**Former Campbell’s Mushroom Soup property in Pescadero** — met with Zynik Capital Corporation representatives, who have acquired the property, to advise on County and Coastal development regulations

**“Burnham Strip”, Area Zoned as Community Open Space in El Granada** — CGF joined with neighbors and community groups to oppose a permit for a single family residence (Board of Supervisors denied the permit)

### **Santa Clara County**

**Agricultural Lands** — continuing the fight to save agricultural land, especially in South Santa Clara County

**Zoning ordinances in Palo Alto** — the City Council reviewed extensive zoning revisions that regulate development in the foot-

hills from Page Mill Rd. to Skyline Drive. (CGF Advocate Brian Schmidt was the only environmental group representative on the advisory committee and while city staff made certain improvements over an outdated ordinance, Brian encouraged them to go further. By decisive votes, the City Council rejected the proposal for inappropriate second residences on these parcels, directed planners to develop maximum house size limits, and started considering the issues of giant basement developments that are the latest aspects of monster mansions)

**Take-out Bag Ban In San Jose** — the City Council took the first definitive step for the strongest take-out bag ban for any major city in the US, banning plastic and requiring paper bags to be made from 40% recycled content (Councilmember Liccardo, one of the two leaders on the issue along with Kansen Chu, thanked CGF and other groups for our work on the issue)

**Riparian Protection in San Jose** — City staff, for the first time, agreed with Task Force recommendation to consider removing developer control of preliminary environmental documents related to riparian protection

**966-acre Rancho San Vicente in San Jose** — prior CGF work stopped development in Coyote Valley and Almaden Valley, eliminated economic incentives for the ranch property and resulted in its purchase and addition to the County Park System. (A developer planned to build mansions on the ranch, that connects Santa Teresa and Calero County Parks, once Coyote Valley was developed)

**Sprawl in Gilroy** — stopped housing development proposals that would extend Gilroy past its current boundaries when plenty of land exists for compact development within allowable limits

### **Above and Beyond**

**Local Commissions** — working with other organizations to have new, more environmentally friendly community members applying for Commission seats.

**Open Space Authority** — a low return rate for request of past parcel assessments ensured that the Open Space Authority will continue its work (Thank you CGF members for following our “InAction Alert” on this issue)

**Development Proposal Withdrawn for Pajaro River in San Benito County** — massive 6,000 residence proposal, just outside Santa Clara County, was withdrawn following intense environmental concern and opposition

**High Speed Rail and CALTRANS highway plans** — monitoring highway plans leading into Santa Clara from San Benito and High Speed Rail planning through South County, San Jose and the Peninsula

# ... with big plans for 2010

## there is plenty of work still to be done

### Water Concerns

**Watershed Protection** — working with San Mateo County officials and interested groups to protect watersheds, specially agricultural development on steep slopes and wetlands

**Erosion Control/Environmental Enhancements** — Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors were receptive to recommendations for erosion control/environmental enhancement from its Environmental Advisory Committee, chaired by CGF Advocate Brian Schmidt (The Board of Directors plan to consider the recommendations and take action at a later date)

### Education

#### CGF-hosted Open Space Author Readings and discussions:

Howard Wilshire *The American West at Risk: Science, Myths, and Politics of Land Abuse and Recovery* at Kepler's Books

Dick Jackson, *Urban Sprawl and Public Health* at Santa Clara University

Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News Environmental Reporter led a discussion at the Peninsula Conservation Center on how to get better newspaper coverage for the work we are doing

Silicon Valley Planned Giving Council Incubator Program — selected CGF to participate

Silicon Valley International Association of Business Communicators invited CGF to attend their 2nd annual, Gift of Giving event designed to share Marketing/Outreach expertise with the non-profit sector

### Outreach

**Our Annual Coyote Ridge Hike** — thanking our members and explaining the importance of open space

**CGF-hosted Historical Ecology forum and Panel Discussion in South County** — to educate elected officials and members of the public, drawing attention to the need to protect open space in South County

**CGF Outreach with De Anza Community College students** — to protect local habitat and Coyote Valley Wildlife Corridors

**CGF-hosted Farm Tour** — of Urban Farms Collective Roots, Full Circle Farm, Emma Prusch Farm Park and Veggielution

After attending the 2009 Urban Farm Tour, Mike Shea encouraged an account of his "Cambric of Los Gatos" to donate to Village Harvest a Farm Tour presenter. We are glad to see our work have a positive impact on fellow organizations.

### Celebration

**Nature's Inspiration: Honoring Mary Davey** — see page 8

### Plans for 2010

**Opposition to Baylands Development along Seaport Boulevard in Redwood City** — CGF continues to work with other environmental and community groups to oppose this Mini-City development of up to 30,000 people on former baylands, advocating that the site be restored to 1400 acres of former wetlands

**CEQA Review of the "Big Wave" Housing and Commercial Project** — opposition to this development located on both sides of Pillar Point Marsh is gathering momentum, due to destruction of wetlands under the guise of agriculture

**Park and Ride at Alpine Road** — discussions with County Transportation Authority staff on how to make this facility a reality

**Housing Element Task Force in San Mateo County** — CGF is a member of this new task force

**Organizational Activities** — When they are not working for CGF our Boardmembers and Staff are involved in many organizations in both counties. A partial list of activities:

Board of Directors of the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority • Board of Midcoast Park Lands • Board of The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council • Board of the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters • Burlingame Education Parcel Tax Campaign • Burlingame School Board member • Computer Teacher at Avenidas • Congestion Management/Environmental Quality • Conservation Council • Frank Burrows Memorial Scholarship Fund • Grand Boulevard Task Force • Hidden Villa Board • Independent Monitoring Committee of the Santa Clara Valley Water District • Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network • Los Altos Tax Aide program • MidCoast Community Councilmember • Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District • Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce • Mountain View Trees • Our City Forest • Peninsula Conservation Foundation • Pilarcitos Creek Advisory • San Francisco Bay Trail • San Mateo County Confined Animal Technical Advisory Committee • San Mateo County Housing Task Force for the 2009 County Element • San Mateo County Food Systems Alliance • San Mateo County Green Building Task Force • San Mateo County School Board Association • San Mateo County Transportation Authority Citizens Advisory Committee • San Mateo County's Midcoast Parks and Recreation Committee • Santa Clara County Stakeholder Committee for the Williamson Act • Santa Clara Valley Water District's Environmental Advisory Committee • Save San Francisco Bay Association • Shasta-Hatchett Homeowners Association • Yosemite Association • Yosemite Fund

# Thank you to all of our supporters for helping us.

# A Legacy of Simple Gifts

By Jim Foran

Many of the large public parks in Santa Clara County are the result of the generosity of those who have gone before us. Around the valley several families left legacy gifts of land for just that purpose. I have always found these gifts inspiring and they serve as a reminder of my duty to protect and expand our local public lands.

It is to Sada Coe that we owe thanks for the large **Henry Coe State Park**, now expanded to 100,000 acres, which bears her father's name. In 1953, she left the family ranch located in east Morgan Hill, to the State of California. Without her generosity it would have been impossible to create such a large wild and natural preserve so close to the millions who inhabit our area.


This past summer, CGF's urban farm tour featured another land gift — the **Emma Prusch Farm Park** in the city of San Jose. In 1962, Emma Prusch donated her family farm to the City of San Jose so "The city will make said park a place of relaxation, recreation and enjoyment for the people of San Jose, and in such a manner as will, to the extent that such can be reasonably done, give to said park a rural country character and atmosphere." This 47-acre park, at the intersection of Highway's 101 and 280, preserves the historic farm house and barn, with a varied set of agricultural attractions. Emma was inspired by her friend, Mildred Overfelt, who honored her parents in 1959, by donating what is now called **Overfelt Gardens**,

*Many other generous donors have sold their properties to our open space districts for less than they would have brought on the open market. We owe it to these forward thinking donors to do our part to preserve, protect and to build upon their legacies.*

a large city park in east San Jose, as well as adjacent property for Independence High School and a nearby Medical Center.

East of San Jose lies **Joseph Grant County Park**. This large park, one fifth of the entire County Park system, was donated by Josephine Grant to the Save the Redwoods League which sold the park to the county. The 51 acres of hiking trails have always been my favorite place to hike locally.

Such generosity and reverence for the land continues today. Recently, Walter Cottle Lester agreed to donate his 287-acre farm located in the middle of San Jose to the County and the State, jointly, as a park to display the agricultural heritage of what was once known as the Valley of Heart's Delight. This park, bounded by Brnham Lane, Snell and Chynoweth Avenues and currently in the master planning process, will be named for his pioneer ancestor, **Martial Cottle**. I've been one of the privileged few allowed to walk on the land and feel the city, which surrounds it, almost fade into oblivion. It is a truly remarkable gift.

Many other generous donors have sold their properties to our park departments and open space districts for less than they would have brought on the open market. We owe it to these forward thinking donors to do our part to preserve, protect and to build upon their legacies. I hope that what we do will inspire future generations to add to our public parks and open space. 

*Jim Foran is a CGF Board Member, an elected member of the Board of Directors of the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (OSA), a Member of the Board of The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and The San Francisco Bay Trail. He is also a Member of the Independent Monitoring Committee of the Santa Clara Valley Water District. He has a long history as a grassroots activist in the City of Milpitas, where he led the campaign for Measure Z, the Urban Growth Boundary. He served as a Santa Clara County Park Commissioner for nine years before his election to the OSA Board.*



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