Coastal Protection: Always a Work in Progress

BY LENNIE ROBERTS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

Devil’s Slide, this area was protected from a massive freeway development after a 40-year campaign by CGF and others.

“THE COAST IS NEVER SAVED, IT IS ALWAYS BEING SAVED.”

PETER DOUGLAS
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION, 1942-2012

It seems that every few years it’s necessary to “save” the California coast — over and over again. With astonishing effectiveness, the people of this great state have rallied and prevailed in preserving the coast. With regularity, however, the forces of development gain enough traction to make another run at the one agency that still stands firm like rocky cliffs against the onslaught of exploitation.

In the latest assault this past December, a developer-friendly cadre of members of the California Coastal Commission pushed to fire the Executive Director, Dr. Charles Lester. Their purported reasons were vague and unsupported by facts, and as time went on, it became clear that they wanted to be able to influence and control the staff to be more friendly to developers.

Despite a virtual tidal wave of public support, including over 24,000 letters and emails from all over the globe and a remarkable letter from over 153 commission staffers, the commissioners sank to a shameful new low, and on February 10 voted 7-5 to fire Dr. Lester. At the heart of this nefariousness were Governor Jerry Brown’s four appointees, a bitter irony given that Brown signed

Continued on Page 6
Dear Friends,

We accomplished a lot last year. So much in fact that this spring we released our first-ever annual report. We created this to illuminate the impact that our members and supporters made possible. Check it out at: www.greenfoothills.org/2015Report.

As you’ll see in the report, we advocated on 30 local land-use issues in 2015. We spoke up for farmland and hillsides, for forests and wetlands. We were the champions of the San Mateo County coast and of creeks and parks throughout the region. Our wins were the result of work started years ago, and many of our efforts laid the foundation for wins to come.

And we didn’t do it alone. Land conservation is a team sport, and we tackled every issue with the help of committed community leaders like you.

In 2015 we partnered with decision-makers like Debbie Ruddock, a councilmember in Half Moon Bay. We continue to work with Debbie to protect coastal open space as the city updates its general plan. Last year we strengthened relationships with dozens of local decision-makers like Debbie throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. We’re a more effective organization when decision makers know us, what we stand for, and how much local support we have when we send comment letters or give public testimony.

We also partnered with community members like Kyli Arford, an East Palo Alto resident. Kyli serves on her city’s General Plan Advisory Committee, and we have been working with her and other East Palo Alto residents to get stronger goals for parks and urban green space in the city’s general plan. Kyli and her husband, Sharif, also graduated from our Community Advocates Leadership Academy (CALA). A ten-month weekend program, CALA trains local change-makers how to more effectively make an impact in their community. (We’re recruiting for CALA 2016/2017 right now. If you know someone who might be interested—maybe you?—let us know.)

And, we partnered with farmers like Michelle Lieberman and Gal Mariansky, who run One Acre Farm in Morgan Hill. They are among the many local families working the land who are evidence enough that agriculture is alive and well in our region. In addition to speaking to local decision-makers for farmland protection, Michelle and Gal support us as major donors (making them members of our new Stegner Giving Circle). They support us in this way to ensure that local farmland has a champion working to protect it.

So thank you for your ongoing generosity and your commitment to protecting open space for future generations. Thank you for working with us, volunteering with us, and investing in us. I hope you enjoy our first-ever annual report. We accomplished a lot in 2015, and there is so much work to be done. I am more hopeful for local open space than ever before because we have wonderful people like you on our side.

Megan Medeiros is our Executive Director. Raised in the foothills of the Mount Diablo Range, she now lives in downtown San Jose. She enjoys hiking, bicycling, and rock climbing.
Hellos and Goodbyes on Our Board

BY JEFF SEGALL BOARD PRESIDENT

As we enjoy an El Niño-enhanced springtime wildflower bonanza, it seems like a fitting time to note the changes on our Board of Directors.

First, hearty hellos to two new board members: Matt Burrows and Ricardo Samaniego.

Matt is an old Greenfeet hand, having served on our Board from 2006 to 2014, including multiple years as President. His knowledge of our organization and long-time commitment for our mission are welcome additions. Matt lives in San Carlos and enjoys hiking and traveling while he’s not working or volunteering with us.

Ricardo is a fresh face to Committee for Green Foothills. He is an avid hiker and resident of Los Altos. We connected with Ricardo after he completed the 9-month Board Leadership Academy training through the Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley. A Senior Tax Executive with Samsung, Ricardo is excited about the opportunity to leverage his network and skillset in support of our mission.

While we welcome Matt and Ricardo, we say goodbye to three members of our board. Dave Olsen of El Granada and Ann Forrister of Moss Beach stepped down from our board last fall. Ann and Dave both brought a deep knowledge of local coastal issues as well as focus to revising our strategic plan. Although no longer on our board, both will continue to work to protect the San Mateo County coast and enhance coastal public access, among other important issues. We thank them for their service.

It is especially bittersweet to note the departure of our long-serving board secretary, Helen Chapman. Helen’s filled that role with dedication, consistency and excellence, but her contributions to our board and the broader Greenfeet community go well beyond that: she brought those same qualities to her many other involvements with Committee for Green Foothills. Helen’s long-term perspective, her deep knowledge of the people and politics of San Jose, and her collegial nature, have benefited our work in ways both subtle and profound during her tenure. She will be dearly missed. I know I speak for all of us in wishing Helen all the best in her future endeavors.

WELCOME MATT AND RICARDO, GOODBYE HELEN, ANN AND DAVE

Matt Burrows
Ann Forrister
Dave Olson
Ricardo Samaniego
Helen Chapman

Jeff Segall is the President of our Board of Directors. A Bay Area resident for over 17 years, Jeff enjoys hiking and biking in local open space. Jeff has 10 years of dedicated service with CGF, and 14 years working on open space issues.
On Friday, March 11, 2016, a decade of tireless advocacy bore fruit when the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) voted 5-2 to deny the City of Morgan Hill’s bid to develop hundreds of acres of farmland on its urban edge.

Our motto—local, vocal, effective—was evident in our varied efforts to raise awareness of the impending LAFCO decision. It helped to account for the more than 350 letters LAFCO received asking that the city’s request be denied, and the dozens of people who came out to support our efforts and provide public comment at the LAFCO hearing.

For years, I requested that the City rethink their ill-advised plan to develop the Southeast Quadrant (SEQ). This 1,200 acre rural area is the last large expanse of contiguous prime farmland in the Morgan Hill area and serves as an informal greenbelt between the city and San Martin, its neighbor to the south.

The plan for the SEQ allowed for commercial uses, a private high school, and eventually a residential area. The city claimed the urban development would help preserve farmland in the SEQ and possibly other areas in the county via their newly adopted “agricultural preservation program.” Yet the agricultural program has many serious flaws that made it ineffective and the city did not demonstrate a need for the land as it already has a 100 year supply of vacant land within current city limits.

Morgan Hill’s proposal stood in complete opposition to LAFCO’s mandate of encouraging orderly boundaries, discouraging urban sprawl and preserving agriculture and open space lands. It was also inconsistent with countywide urban growth management policies, portions of the South County Joint Area Plan, and the Santa Clara County’s Land Use and Resource Conservation policies related to agricultural preservation.

Our hard-fought victory plays an important role in moving long-term farmland preservation efforts in Santa Clara County forward.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK TO THE RESCUE?

With this proposal for urban sprawl defeated, we now focus our attention on the necessary steps to help in better guiding growth away from important agricultural lands in southern Santa Clara County. The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Strategy (SALC) led by the County along with the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority could play a substantial role in this effort. SALC, which is to be completed in September 2017, will outline new policies and an implementation plan to ensure the ongoing preservation of agricultural lands and the farming industry in the county.

WILL THE BALLOT BOX HELP MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?

Another step is to ensure Morgan Hill and Gilroy retain the best aspects of their existing general plans that are proposed for removal. In addition, both cities will have to face the voters on the issue of growth come this November. In Gilroy, a grassroots group is seeking to put an urban growth boundary initiative on the ballot: a direct result of Gilroy’s attempt to prematurely expand its boundary by 720 acres for residential development.

In Morgan Hill, the city will attempt to renew its Residential Development Control System which sets a population cap and other residential growth control policies. However, Morgan Hill has removed important language concerning the criterion it should use when determining whether it is appropriate to expand its boundary for residential development.

Educating residents in both cities as to ballot box outcomes will be important in ensuring sensible growth and better protection of our farmland and open space.

Julie Hutcheson joined Committee for Green Foothills as our Legislative Advocate in 2010. She is a member of the Santa Clara County Food System Alliance, serves on the Morgan Hill 2035 General Plan Advisory Committee and Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency Public Advisory Committee. She is also the founder of Thrive! Morgan Hill.
Join Us for Our Upcoming Events

_A Bilingual Hike on Coyote Ridge_
San Jose - _Sunday, April 17, 2016_
Join Committee for Green Foothills and Latino Outdoors on a rigorous nature hike led by Open Space Authority (OSA) docents to see the spring wildflowers among the rare serpentine soil habitat of Coyote Ridge. With OSA’s recent acquisition of 1,800 acres of Coyote Ridge, their bilingual docents will show us new areas we have yet to see. We hope to learn about this important habitat and catch a glimpse of Bay checkerspot butterflies. This 5-mile round trip hike has a steady 2-mile climb and will gain 900 feet in elevation to the ridge.

_Earth Day Event_
East Palo Alto - _Saturday, April 23, 2016_
Join Committee for Green Foothills, the City of East Palo Alto, and Youth United for Community Action for an Earth Day celebration. This community block party will have live music, a raffle, prizes, and local organizations sharing information on climate change and its effects on our region. Lunch will be provided.

_Devil’s Slide Walk and Picnic_
Devil’s Slide, Half Moon Bay - _Saturday, May 7, 2016_
Enjoy stunning views of the coast as we learn about CGF’s epic 40-year campaign for the Devil’s Slide tunnel and the unique geology of this area. During this leisurely, educational 2.5 mile walk, Legislative Advocate Lennie Roberts will talk about her many decades of advocacy along the coast including her current work. Lunch will be provided.

_Mary Davey Hike_
Hidden Villa and Rancho San Antonio, Los Altos - _Sunday, May 22, 2016_
Join us for a hike to celebrate Mary Davey’s Birthday, her life, and her contributions to Committee for Green Foothills. This moderate 4.5-mile hike goes through Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, starting and ending at Hidden Villa. We will stop at the bench dedicated to Mary Davey to take a break, remember Mary, and enjoy lunch with a view before heading back through the forest. Last year we saw flowers in bloom, a California king snake, newts, and whiptail lizards.

_Mary Davey Legacy Society Brunch_
La Honda - _Saturday, July 9, 2016_
To celebrate members who have included Committee for Green Foothills in their legacy giving, we have arranged a special brunch and tour of Jamis and Margaret MacNiven’s private “off the grid” home. It is located near Skyline Ridge and Long Ridge Open Space Preserve. Up on the hill, we will see great views and California plants and flowers.

_Nature’s Inspiration: Honoring Shelton Johnson_
Runnymede Farm, Woodside - _Sunday, October 9, 2016_
Join us for a special afternoon in celebration of Committee for Green Foothills’ 54-year legacy and the people who dedicated their lives to protecting nature. As our country celebrates the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, we’re thrilled to be honoring Yosemite National Park Ranger Shelton Johnson, an advocate for bringing underserved youth to the parks to connect them with nature. Shelton was featured in the Ken Burns documentary film _The National Parks: America’s Best Idea_. In 2009, he wrote _Gloryland_, a fictional memoir of an African American from South Carolina who becomes a Buffalo Soldier assigned to patrol Yosemite in 1903.
Continued from Page 1

the Coastal Act into law back in 1976. But instead of jumping in, Brown sat on the sidelines and did nothing. As the Sacramento Bee editorialized the day after the debacle: “Only a complete coastal reboot will do…. A clean slate must include replacement of Brown appointees who instigated the mess.” We stand ready to help implement this clean slate.

THE MANY ATTACKS ON THE COAST

This is not the first attempt to fire an Executive Director of the Coastal Commission. Peter Douglas, the commission’s charismatic Executive Director for 26 years, survived several coup attempts by developer-friendly commissioners. The most famous was in 1996, when hundreds of coastal supporters turned out at a tumultuous hearing in Huntington Beach, and the Commission backed down.

THE PEOPLE OF CALIFORNIA CREATED THE COASTAL ACT, AND MUST CONTINUE TO DEFEND IT

Voters approved the statewide citizens initiative (Proposition 20) in 1972 that required the state legislature to create a plan for coastal development and conservation by 1976. A cliff-hanging drama ensued, with big oil and other development forces pushing hard against coastal protections. But thanks to the legendary efforts of Mel Lane, later the commission’s first chairman, and thousands of citizens, the legislature passed the Coastal Act in 1976, and Governor Brown signed it.

The Coastal Act has been an amazing success. For 40 years now, the California Coastal Commission, along with its local government partners, has ensured maximum public access to our coast’s sandy beaches and rocky bluffs, preserved sensitive habitats and natural resources, and protected prime agricultural lands and magnificent scenic vistas.

SAVING THE COAST IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

Passage of the Coastal Act in 1976 was only the beginning of the drama. In 1980 the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopted a strong Local Coastal Program (LCP) by a 3-2 majority, which implemented the policies of the Coastal Act. But the board’s pro-coastal majority was promptly replaced by a more developer-friendly majority, and the US Department of Interior was preparing new offshore oil-lease sales, including along the San Mateo Coast. The prospect of oil derricks, oil-slicked beaches, and attendant wildlife impacts from spills, alarmed environmental groups.

A coalition of these groups, led by Committee for Green Foothills, decided to place an initiative on the county ballot. This coalition drafted the ballot language, circulated petitions, and gathered over 30,000 signatures to qualify the Coastal Protection Initiative for the ballot. Measure A prohibited the Board of
Supervisors from weakening or discarding 38 key policies of the LCP without a county-wide vote.

The supervisors, offended at the affront to their authority, placed the competing Measure B on the ballot, a measure that included token coastal protections. It was designed as a poison pill, and would have become law had it received more votes than Measure A and both had passed. We worried that Big Oil would fund Measure B.

An angel had offered to provide major funding for Measure A, but we wanted to keep this information quiet. This caused other complications. At one point we received an unsolicited offer from a former newspaper person to help with our brochures. We were concerned, however, that he was a mole from the other side, so we told him we didn’t have enough money for any more mailings and therefore couldn’t accept his generous offer. This wasn’t true, of course, and we’ll never know for sure whether this was a legitimate offer or not, but it illustrates the concerns.

In 1986 voters approved Measure A by a huge majority and defeated Measure B. This year marks the 30th anniversary of this victory. Many people who worked on Measure A consider it to be the most significant and lasting measure other than the Coastal Act itself. Almost no proposals to weaken the county’s critical LCP policies have arisen since then. The coast that we all enjoy today is there because of Measure A and the Coastal Act … plus Committee for Green Foothills’s eternal vigilance along with other environmental groups who monitor decisions for compliance with our LCP.

THREATS TO THE COASTAL COMMISSION

San Mateo County’s crucial partner in coastal protection is the California Coastal Commission, a 12-member body whose members are appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, and Senate Rules Committee. The commission must certify LCPs as consistent with the Coastal Act, and it acts as an appellate body for certain types of development that have been approved locally. The commission has an extraordinary task of balancing the Coastal Act’s priority requirements for public access and resource preservation with the ever-present development pressures in our growing state.

Key to the success of the Coastal Act is the independence of the commission staff and its Executive Director to provide objective, science-based, and technical analyses for each proposed development that they consider. The forces of development are incessantly working to undermine this independence, and it is now our task to push back on this effort. We need to redouble our efforts to ensure that the commission’s independence is not subverted by the very interests that the coastal act was mandated to regulate.

Committee for Green Foothills will continue to work to champion coastal protection thanks to the support of our partners and members.

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For nearly 40 years, Lennie Roberts has been our voice in San Mateo County. One of the Bay Area’s most respected environmental leaders, Lennie has led countless critical open space battles on the San Mateo county coast and along Skyline Boulevard.
Bay Restoration Will Help Harbor Seal Population

BY BRYAN BECK BOARD MEMBER

Prior to European settlement and urban development, San Francisco Bay was home to huge wildlife populations. As one of the world’s largest estuaries, it provided abundant food and habitat. But as the bay shoreline was developed for cities, farmland, and salt evaporators, wildlife populations suffered tremendous losses.

In the bay, harbor seals are an apex predator, and their populations are consequently an indication of the health of the entire ecosystem. Bones found in shell mounds and data on seal hunting in the 19th century indicate past populations far higher than today’s; they also show that restoration can benefit the bay’s environment and wildlife habitat. That’s why one of the goals of

**CGF ENDORSES BAY RESTORATION FUNDING**

In June, voters in all nine Bay Area counties will vote on Measure AA, the Clean and Healthy Bay ballot measure, which would authorize a $12 parcel tax to restore and protect the bay. Committee for Green Foothills has endorsed this ballot measure, and we hope all our supporters will encourage everyone they know to vote for a clean and healthy bay in June.

The measure would provide $500 million over 20 years to restore tidal-marsh habitat around the bay, reduce pollution and trash in the bay, improve trails, and prevent shoreline flooding. San Francisco Bay once had 200,000 acres of tidal marsh and wetlands; today, the figure stands at only about 40,000. Scientists say that about 100,000 more acres are needed for a healthy bay. Projects such as the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project are restoring thousands of acres of tidal marsh, but they need funding to accomplish this goal.

Tidal marshes and wetlands provide unique habitat for hundreds of species of birds, fish, and other animals, including several threatened and endangered species such as the western snowy plover, Ridgway’s rail, and salt marsh harvest mouse. They also filter pollution from water flowing to the bay and provide wonderful open spaces for hiking, biking, and birding. With sea levels
the Bay Restoration Authority, a regional government agency, is to improve the bay as a wildlife habitat by restoring natural conditions where possible.

In the *State of the Estuary Report 2015*, the California Academy of Sciences and the National Park Service estimated the San Francisco Bay harbor seal population as ranging from 200 to 425 between 1998 and 2014, with no clear trend. Since seals move in and out of the bay as food supplies change, and since exact numbers are hard to count, the population is currently considered stable.

Harbor seals currently use about 20 haul-out sites around the bay at least occasionally to get out of the water and warm up and rest. Restoring bay shorelines to natural conditions can be expected to benefit harbor seal populations greatly by providing additional haul-out sites, as well as by providing improved habitat and food sources.

Harbor seals, like all marine mammals, are protected by law—people must stay 100 yards away from them. Approaching more closely causes them to feel threatened. Harbor seals are not very agile on land, and their best defense is to return to the water, losing out on the warmth and rest they need.

In addition to spotting adult seals, you may encounter pups on the shoreline. It’s most likely that these pups left alone on the shore have not been abandoned. The mother may be out foraging or may have fled into the water as you approached. If you come across one, it’s best to move away so the mother will return. If you are concerned that the pup may in fact have been abandoned, report it to the appropriate authority for the site so it can be monitored by experts. Locally, abandoned or injured pups can be reported to the Marine Mammal Center at 415-289-SEAL (7325).

What can we do to protect our Bay harbor seals? Restoration of bay shoreline habitat can protect seal haul-out sites, improve habitat and increase their food supply. By working to preserve and expand the natural areas of the bay, we can ensure bay harbor seals, and all bay-dependent species, will continue to thrive into the future.

Left: Harbor seals, just one of the many wildlife populations that will benefit from bay restoration.

*Bryan Beck has been a Committee for Green Foothills board member since 2013. A longtime resident of Redwood City, his hobbies include bicycling and nature photography.*

predicted to rise several feet over the next few decades, tidal marshes are also vital to protect our communities, as they absorb storm surges to prevent flooding and sequester carbon from the atmosphere.

The ballot measure requires that funding may be used for levees only if wetland restoration is incorporated into the design—a new concept that saves money, provides better flood protection, and creates new habitat (“Living Levees,” Green Footnotes Fall/Winter 2015).

Left: This June Bay Area voters will have the chance to approve the Clean and Healthy Bay ballot measure, a parcel tax to restore the bay.
Redwood City Plans Massive Development on the Bay

BY ALICE KAUFMAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

In a time when our region is worrying about protecting homes and businesses from rising seas, one would think that cities would not want to add to the amount of development in the path of sea level rise. But in Redwood City, the Inner Harbor Specific Plan would change the zoning and the general plan in order to allow four 9-story office towers comprising over 1 million square feet of office space, plus 550 residences, to be built in an area known to be vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise. Worse, the Plan proposes to allow dredging of a shallow-water wetland area that provides valuable habitat for waterfowl in order to create a private marina—even though testing has shown that the bay sediment in the area contains alarmingly high levels of contaminants, including mercury, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The Plan proposes to address the sea level rise issue by, essentially, having developers construct their own flood-protection infrastructure. This haphazard approach to protecting the community from sea level rise is about as nonsensical as creating a functioning road system by asking each homeowner to construct the portion of the road in front of their own house. Further, although the Plan encourages landowners to construct gradients at the water’s edge and plant tidal marsh vegetation, there is no evidence that the Inner Harbor area (which is built on bayfill) can sustain a healthy tidal marsh, and no requirements for landowners to maintain and monitor any marshlands that are created.

Rather than relying on piecemeal attempts to provide flood protection, the city should develop a comprehensive sea level rise plan, coordinated with other cities and San Mateo County, that addresses the entire Bayfront, not just a few pieces of property here and there. I am advocating with the city not to approve the Inner Harbor Specific Plan and instead to focus their efforts on a feasible sea level rise plan.

The area is bordered on two sides by Redwood Creek and Steinberger Slough. The diked pond in the upper portion of the plan area provides valuable wetland habitat for waterfowl.

Santa Clara County Measure A: Yes On Parks

BY ALICE KAUFMAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

Since 1972, the Santa Clara County Park Charter Fund has provided funding for acquisition and maintenance of the County Park system, with voters renewing the fund seven times over the last 43 years. This June, Measure A in Santa Clara County will give voters a chance to once again renew this funding for another 15 years.

The Park Charter Fund is not a separate tax—it is a set-aside of property tax revenues. Since 1986 the set-aside was 1.5 cents per $100 of assessed property value, but it was reduced in 2006 (the last time the fund was renewed) to 1.425 cents. Measure A will put the amount back up to 1.5 cents, which current projections indicate will result in $53 million for the Park Charter Fund for fiscal year 2017-18. This funding will be allocated as follows: 10% to land acquisition, 10% to capital improvements, and 80% unrestricted (generally used for operations and maintenance). Projects to be funded with this revenue include building new trails and providing amenities such as staging areas and restrooms in order to open up newly acquired properties to the public. One of those properties is the 2,700-acre Coyote Highlands site, where we fought a development proposal in 2013; although the project was approved, the landowner subsequently sold the land to the County Parks Department.

As development booms in the Bay Area and the population increases, the need for publicly accessible open space grows more critical, and funding to protect and maintain our parks becomes more scarce. We have endorsed Measure A in Santa Clara County, and we hope all our supporters will encourage everyone they know to vote “Yes On Parks” this June!

Alice Kaufman is one of our Legislative Advocates. She is a founding member of Redwood City Neighbors United, a community group working to oppose the massive Cargill/DMB Saltworks development on the Redwood City salt ponds.
The Committee is Watching...

San Mateo County:

SAN MATEO COUNTY COAST—where three separate major planning efforts—Plan Princeton, Connect the Coastside, and Plan Half Moon Bay—are slowly grinding along.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO—which is considering allowing uncontrolled access in the heart of the peninsula watershed lands, a source of drinking water for 2.6 million customers. Along with several environmental groups, we’re urging San Francisco to improve and expand its docent program which will provide increased public access while best protecting our critical public water supplies from increased risks of wildfire, protect wildlife including migration corridors, and control illegal trespass activities.

SAN MATEO COUNTY—which is considering whether to allow billboards on county-owned property along Highways 101 and 92. Electronic billboards have been shown to cause driver distraction and increase accidents, besides adding to visual pollution. Legislative Advocate Lennie Roberts is hoping to nip this ill-conceived idea in the bud.

PG&E—which is proposing to replace its Line 109 gas pipeline through the San Francisco watershed lands which would entail clearing an 85-foot wide swath through scenic areas and sensitive habitats; including removal of 863 trees; many areas including serpentine grasslands would suffer from permanent loss of native habitat and new infestations of invasive species. Legislative Advocate Lennie Roberts is urging consideration of a less environmentally damaging alignment under Cañada Road.

Santa Clara County

CITY OF MORGAN HILL—which is finishing its 2035 general plan. Legislative Advocate Julie Hutcheson submitted comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report for the draft general plan. We’re concerned with the removal of robust language relating to the urban service area, impacts to agriculture, and the consistency between the new general plan and the current Residential Development Control system among other concerns.

CITY OF SANTA CLARA—where a giant retail and office complex project is proposed on a former landfill that is currently a city-owned park and golf course. The “City Place” project will include over 9 million square feet of development with buildings up to 17 stories tall in a project that would be 5 times the size of Santana Row. Environmental concerns include the hazards of building on a former landfill, enormous traffic impacts from over 28,000 new employees at the site, and the loss of existing open space. Legislative Advocate Alice Kaufman is working with other groups to increase the amount of open space included in this project.

The Committee Applauds...

San Mateo County:

LISA KETCHAM, MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBER—for her effective persistence with San Mateo County Planning and Public Works over four years which has resulted in removal of view-blocking fencing and expanded views of the rocky cliffs and ocean at the end of 7th Avenue in Montara; she’s still working on removing a nearby hedge laced with barbed wire.

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION—for voting 5-2 to deny the City of Morgan Hill’s urban service area expansion requests in the southeast and southwest quadrants of the city. Kudos to Commissioners Ken Yeager, Linda Lezotte, Sequoia Hall, Susan Vicklund-Wilson, and Johnny Khamis for upholding LAFCO’s mandate in this highly controversial application.

GILROY GROWING SMARTER—for seeking to gather 2,000 signatures of registered Gilroy voters to place their Urban Growth Boundary Initiative on the November 2016 ballot. This grassroots effort is intended to reflect the community’s desire for compact growth that has been widely expressed within the ongoing general plan update process, but that has not been reflected in recent city council decisions.

BARBARA KEEGAN, SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON—for reappointing Director Linda Lezotte to the Local Agency Formation Commission. Director Lezotte has thoughtfully served as a LAFCO Commissioner for a number of years both as the Special Districts and City of San Jose member.

CITY OF SAN JOSE—for requiring appropriate environmental review on a development proposal in North Coyote Valley. Last December, an application for a massive 517,000 square foot warehouse/distribution center on 30 acres of agricultural open space land was submitted to the city by the Panattoni Development Company. The city originally planned for the site development permit to be heard at the staff level, without a city council hearing. After Legislative Advocate Alice Kaufman, other environmental groups and local residents, advocated with city staff and city councilmembers for the proper CEQA process to be followed and for the community to be fully informed of this proposed project, the city changed their plans. Now a full EIR will be prepared, community meetings will be held, and the city council will vote on the project in a regular hearing. The process is expected to take about one year. For more information or to get involved in this issue, please contact Alice Kaufman at alice@greenfoothills.org.
Save the Date for Nature’s Inspiration:
Honoring Shelton Johnson

Runnymede Farm, Woodside
Sunday, October 9, 2016

For more information or to become a sponsor, please see:
www.greenfoothills.org/natures-inspiration

Check Out Our First Ever Annual Report

Read about the year of local advocacy efforts our members made possible.
For the full report online, please see: www.greenfoothills.org/2015report

Join Us Online!

Sign-up for our action alerts today at:
www.greenfoothills.org/action-alert-sign-up

Shelton Johnson, Yosemite Park ranger and this year’s Nature’s Inspiration honoree.

Thanks to our supporters for making 2015 an incredible year. Read our full annual report online.