



# greenfootnotes

COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS

*After 35 years of advocacy and dozens of proposals fought, is the end of San Jose's southward sprawl in sight?*

## Acquisition sets the stage for Coyote Valley protection

BY ALICE KAUFMAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

*Bobcats are just one of the many animals that depend on Coyote Valley.*

For decades, Committee for Green Foothills has fought against development proposals in Coyote Valley, the thousands of acres of fields, farmlands, creeks and wetlands south of San Jose. Coyote Valley is uniquely important not just because it represents some of the last remaining valley floor habitat in the Santa Clara Valley, but because it is one of the few places where wildlife can manage to travel between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. Together with other groups and concerned residents, we have defeated one development proposal after another, but always with the knowledge that new threats would arise in the future as long as Coyote Valley remains slated for future development.

In 2016, a new development proposal came forward: a 30-acre site next to Fisher Creek (both critical habitat and a linkage for

wildlife) was to become a giant warehouse and distribution center. If built, the peaceful fields of North Coyote Valley would soon have been the site of hundreds of semi trucks coming and going, with the lights, noise and activity that a busy industrial development brings. Worse, we knew that approval of this first development project could well have had a “domino” effect, resulting in more and more proposals being submitted for other

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## COMMITTEE FOR GREEN FOOTHILLS

We are 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.

Our mission is to protect the open spaces, farmlands, and natural resources of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties through advocacy, education, and grassroots action.

### Committee for Green Foothills

3921 East Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

info@GreenFoothills.org  
www.GreenFoothills.org  
(650) 968-7243

### STAFF

Megan Medeiros

**Executive Director**

Alice Kaufman

**Legislative Advocacy Director**

Lennie Roberts

**Legislative Advocate**

Paul Ledesma

**Legislative Advocate**

Helen Wolter

**Legislative Advocate**

Pat Haines

**Digital Marketing Manager**

Mandy Henry

**Development and Communications Manager**

Justyne Schnupp

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### PHOTOGRAPHY

Teddy Miller, 2016 - Pg 1, Ron Erskine - Pg 2,  
Abe Kleinfeld - Pg 3, OSA Wildlife Camera  
- Pg 4, Stuart Weiss - Pg 5, Kevin Kane/  
WireImage for Rock and Roll Hall of Fame  
- Pg 6, Dana Tynan - Pg 8, Megan Medeiros  
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# Thanking Julie Hutcheson, Our Tireless Advocate

BY RON ERSKINE, BOARD PRESIDENT & MEGAN MEDEIROS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The array of talents it takes to be an effective advocate is nothing short of staggering. Advocates must have complete command of countless constantly shifting parts: the details of proposals, the regulations of specific jurisdictions, the politics at play, the sentiments of concerned community groups, and much more.

Once legislative advocates are as prepared as they can be, they take what they know to the community. They sit down with policymakers, attend neighborhood meetings, and speak before councils and commissions. They also attend unofficial meetings with parties of many different interests and sensibilities. It takes a deft touch to be persuasive and effective in each of these situations, many with people skeptical of our positions.

In short, an effective Committee for Green Foothills legislative advocate must be the best-informed person in the room, speaking up with a balance of determination, deference, and respect that fulfills the objectives of our mission to protect the open space, farmland, and natural resources of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

Julie Hutcheson possesses that special amalgam of talents that are the foundation of a superb advocate and has shown the dedication and perseverance to do a superb job.

After seven years with Committee for Green Foothills, Julie is moving on to the next chapter in her professional life as External Affairs Manager with the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School. We are sorry to see Julie go, but all of us at Committee for Green Foothills say goodbye with gratitude, respect, and best wishes.

Julie joined us as a Legislative Advocate in 2010, when Committee for Green Foothills decided to dedicate greater resources in southern Santa Clara County. Hiring her was one of the

best decisions our organization ever made. She embraced the challenge, and her tenacious professionalism won many victories for open space — victories that will be felt for generations.

Julie researched and understood the issues better than anyone. Her thoroughness and her tactful politics convinced the undecided and earned the respect of opponents. Her advocacy protected thousands of acres of farmland in

Gilroy and Morgan Hill and brought us many other important victories for local open space. You didn't have to spend much time around Julie to see that being a legislative advocate was far more than a job; it was her personal mission.

We could not be more proud of Julie's tenure with us, and we know she will bring the same dedication, wisdom, and passion to her new field.

Julie, we will all miss you. Don't be a stranger!

*Julie Hutcheson was our first Legislative Advocate focused solely on southern Santa Clara County.*



*A native Bay Area resident, Ron has volunteered for over 20 years at Henry Coe State Park and serves on the Board of Directors of Coe Park's Pine Ridge Association. An avid outdoorsman and lifetime backpacker, he has twice hiked*

*the John Muir Trail. He writes a regular outdoor column called "Getting Out" for the Morgan Hill Times and Gilroy Dispatch that he hopes will entice others to hike our local parks and preserves.*





# PG&E Habitat Conservation Plan: A Threat To Edgewood's Endangered Species

BY ALICE KAUFMAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Wherever you live, you live near a PG&E facility. PG&E's gas pipelines and electrical lines go everywhere and across every kind of habitat, including wildlife refuges and nature preserves. That's why we were concerned when we discovered this April that PG&E is seeking approval for a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that would cover all of their "operations and maintenance" activities for the entire nine-county Bay Area.

This HCP would allow PG&E to "take" (i.e., to harm) federally listed threatened or endangered species or their habitats without obtaining the normally required incidental take permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The draft HCP defines "operations and maintenance" to include pipeline installation and replacement, installation of new electrical transmission lines, and even "minor substation expansion"—activities that can cause significant habitat disturbance and that would normally require a permit that would mandate mitigation for the specific harm to any listed species. Under the HCP, however, PG&E would determine its mitigation in advance, typically by paying money into a mitigation bank to purchase other land considered critical habitat for that species. However, habitat destruction cannot always be adequately mitigated in this way, especially when it comes to extremely rare and unique species or habitats.

## THREAT TO EDGEWOOD PARK

Edgewood Park in San Mateo County, a veritable island of threatened and endangered plant and animal species (some of which survive nowhere outside this nature preserve), is at particular risk. For several years, Committee for Green Foothills and other environmental groups have been in discussions with PG&E about their proposal to dig a mile-long trench through Edgewood's fragile habitat in order to install a replacement pipeline.

Although PG&E has promised to restore the habitat afterwards, their track record in such restoration at Edgewood is woefully inadequate. In the summer of 2015, when PG&E tested a pipeline that runs through Edgewood Park, the Friends of Edgewood and California Native Plant Society, who have years of experience restoring native habitat and controlling invasive weeds at Edgewood, made detailed recommendations to PG&E about restoration techniques. However, nearly two years later, the sites where PG&E disturbed the soil are still full of invasive weeds crowding out the native plants.

## WE'RE ON THE JOB

We have submitted comments on the PG&E HCP describing

this issue and requesting that Edgewood Park, at least, be excluded from the HCP. We want to ensure that PG&E's maintenance work in Edgewood would have to go through its own permitting process, where specific mitigation measures tailored for Edgewood's habitat could be implemented. It is clear that a one-size-fits-all HCP will drastically fail to protect threatened and endangered species at Edgewood.

PG&E's draft HCP and the accompanying environmental review document garnered a variety of comments from Bay Area environmental groups, despite that fact that many people had to mobilize in a hurry when they learned about the draft HCP just three weeks before the comment deadline. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has not announced when it will publish a final version of the HCP. Meanwhile, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is expected to publish its own environmental analysis of the HCP. We will continue to monitor this project and will work to protect sensitive habitat throughout our area.



*Edgewood Park, home to many threatened and endangered species, is at particular risk under PG&E's draft Habitat Conservation Plan.*

Alice Kaufman is our Legislative Advocacy Director and has been on staff since 2012. She is a founding member of Redwood City Neighbors United, a community group working to defeat the massive Cargill/DMB Saltworks development on the Redwood City salt ponds.



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Coyote Valley properties.

As soon as we found out about this proposal, we began making calls, meeting with city councilmembers, and working with community members and other groups to rally opposition to the proposal. Our efforts were rewarded when the San Jose Planning Department, which had scheduled the project to go before the city council within a few weeks, delayed the hearing by one month, then by two months, and then announced that the city council would not decide on the request until after a full

***“This victory could not have been achieved without Committee for Green Foothills members and our allies.”***

environmental review had been completed. Having bought ourselves a few precious months of time, we continued to bring our message to decision-makers and to the public through our newsletters

and emails, social media, in-person meetings and presentations, and of course through collaborating with our many partners who are also passionate about protecting Coyote Valley. More than 100 people turned out for the community meeting held by the city on this project, and dozens of comments were submitted by members of the public as well as agencies and organizations.

In June 2017, we were able to celebrate the end of this distribution center proposal with the purchase of the property in question by the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). This



*A coyote caught on one of the Open Space Authority's wildlife cameras.*

victory could not have been achieved without Committee for Green Foothills members and our allies. It was the incredible community response and surge of opposition to this project that convinced the developer to sell the property to POST, after he realized that warehouses could be built far more easily on less ecologically sensitive sites. Thanks to everyone who submitted comments, attended meetings, shared information on social media, and otherwise helped make this happen!

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

The news of the POST purchase of the site (now called Fisher

## WHO LIVES IN COYOTE VALLEY?

A 2016 study by Pathways for Wildlife set up camera stations along Fisher Creek and Coyote Creek to record movements by medium to large size animals.

Significantly, the camera stations in the Fisher Creek recorded as many animal sightings as the cameras in Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve and Coyote Creek County Park – leading to the conclusion that Fisher Creek is important as a landscape linkage, since animals are detected there as frequently as in protected habitat areas.

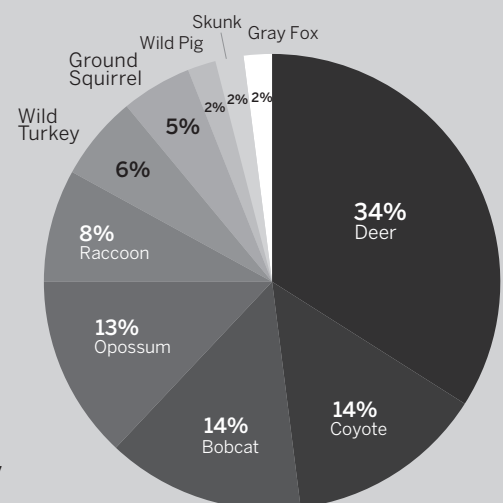
### Babies In Coyote Valley!

A particularly exciting aspect of the Pathways for Wildlife study was several sightings of deer fawns, coyote puppies, and bobcat kittens, traveling with their parents along Fisher Creek. The study concluded that Coyote Valley provides breeding and natal den habitat, including food and water, for these species.

### How To Improve Coyote Valley For Wildlife

Although animals do migrate through Coyote Valley, the path is not easy for them. Culverts become blocked by debris, or can be full of water and thus impassable during the rainy season. Animals that try to cross roads are

killed by cars. The *Landscape Linkage* report recommends adding new culverts, widening the existing ones, and adding overcrossings as well to help animals get across barriers like Highway 101, Monterey Road, and Santa Teresa Road.



Source: Coyote Valley Linkage Assessment Study Final Report, 2016, Pathways for Wildlife



Flats) was accompanied by the release of *Coyote Valley Landscape Linkage*, a groundbreaking report from the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (OSA). This report provides the first detailed vision for preservation and restoration of Coyote Valley as a landscape linkage—a broad swath of habitat that connects the over 1 million acres of habitat in the Santa Cruz and Diablo ranges. Wildlife use Coyote Valley to migrate between the two ranges, but with restoration and with improved permeability for wildlife, its functionality could be greatly increased.

For example, Fisher Creek is currently a narrow channel cutting through agricultural fields and diving under roadways through small culverts that are often blocked by debris. Although animals do manage to navigate through here, the culverts were unusable during last winter's rainstorms. When forced to cross Monterey Road, animals are often killed due to the concrete median that blocks their way. OSA's *Landscape Linkage* report proposes adding new undercrossings and improving the existing ones to allow animals to travel more safely across the valley. Equally important, OSA proposes restoring the historic Fisher Creek floodplain, which formerly did not drain into a narrow channel but instead spread out over acres of wet meadows. If restored, this area would not only provide a type of valuable habitat that has nearly disappeared from our area, but would also help safeguard against flooding from Coyote Creek downstream in San Jose. Other parts of Coyote Valley would be restored to freshwater wetlands, willow groves, oak woodland and oak savannah.

It is vital that the vast majority of Coyote Valley be protected from further development if this conservation vision is to be achieved. The *Landscape Linkage* report acknowledges that to support all the species that currently live in and move through Coyote Valley, the habitat area should be over 1 mile wide. This vision of a true landscape-scale linkage is a far cry from what some people think of as a "wildlife corridor"—a narrow pathway between buildings and fences through which animals scurry while dodging predators, humans and vehicles in order to reach a safe spot on the other side. The reality is that animals need wide areas of habitat for migration, whether it is daily travel within a home range, seasonal migration, or offspring seeking to disperse from their parents' home ranges. Coyote Valley can provide all this, as long as we all recognize that it is far more valuable as open space than as industrial development. 🐾



*Tule elk on Coyote Ridge with Coyote Valley region in the background.*

## Welcome New Members!

### New Donors January — May 2017

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Kelvin Thomas  
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Kiyomi Yamamoto  
Neil Yashinsky

***"After working with Committee for Green Foothills in a professional capacity, I was impressed with its dynamic staff and community engagement. I then chose to become a member to show my individual support for this great organization."***



**Kiyomi Yamamoto**  
Greenbelt Alliance  
South Bay Regional  
Representative,  
member since January

**Become a member today. For more information, please see: [www.greenfoothills.org/donate](http://www.greenfoothills.org/donate)**

# Joan Baez and Committee for Green Foothills Growing and Rocking and Rolling Together

BY LENNIE ROBERTS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

**O**n Sunday, September 24, Committee for Green Foothills will celebrate our most famous member, the one and only Joan Baez. Our 14th annual *Nature's Inspiration* is an event not to be missed.

## LOCAL: PALO ALTO ROOTS

Baez, the legendary folk singer and activist, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this April. But we happen to know the humble seeds of her influential career were planted right here in Palo Alto during the late 1950s alongside those of Committee for Green Foothills.

Back then, a young Baez was a student at Palo Alto High School hearing Martin Luther King, Jr. speak, learning guitar, and singing for classmates.



*Local legend Joan Baez, our honoree at this year's Nature's Inspiration event, was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this April.*

## VOCAL: MUSIC AS ACTIVISM

Baez graduated in 1958 and moved to Massachusetts, where her distinctive soprano and repertoire of traditional folk songs quickly took her from coffeehouses and clubs to the Newport Folk Festival and on to a successful music career and the cover of *Time Magazine*. In 1962 Baez was entrenched in the civil rights movement, touring the South, and singing to audiences of all colors.

Baez's music and her tireless work for peace, human rights,

and the environment, including local open space are equally famous. She has played for presidents, marched alongside Dr. King and Cesar Chavez, and protested war and injustice at home and abroad.

## EFFECTIVE: ROCKING AND ROLLING

Baez recently announced that this summer's Four Voices tour and next year's new album are her last. However, she remains a powerful voice for people and for the environment. A Woodside resident of 45 years, she is no stranger to local activism. Baez worked alongside Committee for Green Foothills and dozens of her neighbors in 2001 to defeat a massive development proposal on the 92-acre Lawler Ranch property in Woodside. Its rolling oak woodlands and open grasslands remain a treasured viewshed from highway 280 today. Baez and Committee for Green Foothills also collaborated with the Horse Park at Woodside to restore eroding hillsides and adopt land restoration and wildlife-friendly management techniques. She sang passionately as a part of this year's Women's March at a community action rally in Redwood City, and at Standing Rock in North Dakota to protest the Dakota Pipeline.

We are honored to celebrate the positive impacts the voice of Joan Baez has had over more than five decades of activism. In many ways, today's social and environmental issues are not unlike those of the 1960s, and the ongoing work of Baez and Committee for Green Foothills is as essential as ever.

*Nature's Inspiration* promises to be an uplifting celebration of one incredible woman and of our community as we gear up for the work ahead. I hope to see you there. 🌱

***"If you're gonna sing meaningful songs, you have to be committed to living a life that backs that up."***

**Tickets and sponsorships for Nature's Inspiration with Joan Baez are available at: [www.greenfoothills.org/NI2017](http://www.greenfoothills.org/NI2017)**

*For 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.*



# The Committee is Watching...

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## *San Mateo County*

**CITY OF HALF MOON BAY** — where the Planning Commission will be holding public hearings on the Local Coastal Plan over the next several months. We will be advocating for policies that fully protect scenic views, open space, active farmlands, and sensitive habitats, and that fully avoid hazards from sea level rise.

**CITY OF REDWOOD CITY** — where the city council is allowing a general plan amendment for the massive Harbor View office tower project to go forward for environmental review. This project would add 1.2 million square feet of office space across the street from the Cargill salt ponds, in an area vulnerable to sea level rise. We oppose this project due to its inappropriate location and potential for environmental impacts.

**CITY OF MENLO PARK** — where the master plan process is underway for Bedwell Bayfront Park. We supported the city's plan to ban drones and radio-controlled aircraft in this park, which is surrounded on three sides by the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge. We will be monitoring the Master Plan process to ensure that the park's stated goal of providing a place to enjoy peace and quiet is adhered to.

## *Santa Clara County*

**COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA** — where the draft Climate and Agriculture Preservation Program has been released for public input.

**CITY OF GILROY** — where city councilmembers are still mulling over whether to reaffirm the downtown alignment and station area as their preferred choice for high speed rail through the city or whether to choose another route.

**COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA** — which is expected to release a draft Environmental Impact Report for a sand and gravel quarry on the Sargent Ranch property this fall. Sargent Ranch contains a variety of sensitive habitats, including serpentine grasslands, wetlands, and riparian habitat. We will be commenting on the EIR once it is released.

**SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT** — which has released the initial study for a new reservoir and dam on the Pacheco River in the hills east of Gilroy.

# The Committee Applauds...

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## *San Mateo County*

**SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** — for passing an ordinance to curb unlawful activities that have put the wildlife and sensitive habitats of Tunitas Creek Beach at risk. Large groups of unauthorized party-goers have widely advertised unlawful overnight camping and raves, cut down trees and impacted stream and riparian habitat, leaving behind enormous amounts of trash, including human waste and drug paraphernalia. San Mateo County is working with Peninsula Open Space Trust to acquire adjacent property and turn this beautiful site into a County Park with bathrooms, trash receptacles and safe trail access.

**SUPERVISOR CAROLE GROOM** — on her reappointment to the California Coastal Commission. Supervisor Groom has been a conscientious and thoughtful member of the commission.

**CALIFORNIA COURT OF APPEAL** — where a three judge panel unanimously ordered Martins Beach to be open to the public as it has been for the past several decades, and affirmed the decision of the San Mateo Superior Court. Surfrider Foundation sued Martins Beach to open the beach after the new owners, closed the gate in 2009, and hired security guards to keep the public out. The beach had been available to the public for decades. CGF

Advocate Lennie Roberts provided expert testimony in the Superior Court trial regarding the economic and social importance of California's beaches.

## *Santa Clara County*

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCO)** — which voted to deny the expansion of Monte Sereno's urban service area and sphere of influence, thus preventing unsuitable urban development in the West Valley hillside, and also responded to a report from the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury by maintaining the integrity of LAFCO's policies and procedures.

## *The Mayors of the following cities in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties*

Brisbane, Burlingame, Cupertino, Daly City, Half Moon Bay, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Jose, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale—for taking the Climate Pledge to support the goals of the Paris Climate Accord. Thank you, Mayors of Peninsula and South Bay cities!



# SMALL MONTHLY GIFT, BIG IMPACT

Support Committee for Green Foothills  
with a recurring monthly donation.

Your membership will stay current and you won't have to worry about renewing again.  
To sign up for a monthly gift, please see: [www.greenfoothills.org/donate/monthly](http://www.greenfoothills.org/donate/monthly)

## Thank You to Our Current Sustaining Members

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Mary Malmgren  
Megan Medeiros  
Michael and Erin Monroe  
Wendy Page  
Paul Reasenberg  
James Reber  
Kent Redmon  
Nancy Reyring

## JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS



### *Nature's Inspiration, Honoring Joan Baez*

Coyote Ranch, San Jose — Sunday, September 24, 1-4pm

Nature's Inspiration is our premier celebration, honoring those who have dedicated their lives to protecting nature. Join us for hors d'oeuvres and wine as we pay tribute to local legend Joan Baez in grateful recognition of her lifetime of environmental and social justice activism. Our venue, Coyote Ranch, is nestled in the beautiful Coyote Valley, the threatened greenbelt between San Jose and Morgan Hill.

**For tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and more information, please visit:**  
[www.greenfoothills.org/NI2017](http://www.greenfoothills.org/NI2017)



### *Coyote Valley by Bicycle*

Coyote Valley, San Jose and Morgan Hill — Saturday, October 21, 9am-12:30pm

### *A Talk with Theresa Lyngso: Living Soil*

Redwood Shores Branch Library, Redwood City — November 18, 10:30am-12:30pm

### *Mary Davey Legacy Society Annual Gathering*

Foster Art & Wilderness Foundation, Palo Alto — November 11, 5-7pm

### *A Talk with Charles Lester: Climate Change and the Coast*

Half Moon Bay Yacht Club, Half Moon Bay — December 6, 7-9pm



COMMITTEE FOR  
GREEN FOOTHILLS

3921 East Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

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