



From the Valley to the Coast: Setting the Table for the Future of Farming

BY JULIE HUTCHESON DIRECTOR OF IMPACT AND LENNIE ROBERTS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

An aerial shot of farmland along San Mateo County's coast.

For over half a century, Green Foothills has worked to preserve farmland, because local, well managed farms are indispensable to our community's resilience.

Here in our region, our local farms not only offer us fresh healthy food, but they also provide us with open space, carbon sequestration, flood control, fire hazard mitigation, and wildlife habitat, among other essential natural services.

These natural services play an important role in climate change adaptation and resilience. Recent research has shown that an acre of farmed agricultural land in our region produces 58 to 77 times fewer greenhouse gas emissions than an acre of developed land. And using climate-smart, "regenerative" farming practices can increase farm soil health and its ability to capture carbon. This was the driving force behind Santa Clara County's newly adopted and innovative Agriculture Resilience Incentive grant program which Green Foothills supported. The pilot program will

provide farmers and ranchers funds to implement agricultural practices that promote soil carbon sequestration and conservation of natural resources.

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We are a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to protect open spaces, farmlands, and natural resources in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties for the benefit of all through advocacy, education, and grassroots action.

We envision a resilient region where wildlife thrive, everyone has natural beauty to enjoy, and communities live in balance with nature.

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- Julie Hutcheson
Director of Impact
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Legislative Advocacy Director
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3921 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303
info@GreenFoothills.org
GreenFoothills.org
(650) 968-7243

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A New Normal: Protecting Nature in the Time of COVID-19

Dear Green Foothills Family,

As we sort out what getting back to normal looks like, one thing is certain: local resilience must be a priority. Green Foothills will be a champion for resilience and local nature for the benefit of wildlife and for all the rest of us who call this region home. Right now we are doing all that we can to put our organization on strong footing, so that we can be your advocate, effectively long-term. Here are the actions we are taking to weather this challenging period.

1. Our advocacy for open space, farmland, and natural resources continues as strong as ever. From supporting local agricultural incentive policies and protections for mountain lions to fighting against massive development in the Santa Cruz Mountains, our advocates are carrying out our mission despite the shutdown.

2. We are committed to keeping our entire staff employed. Green Foothills applied for and received a forgivable \$115,000 loan from the federal government. Our board and staff have planned for worst, best, and most-likely scenarios, and we are re-evaluating these plans each month.

3. We have shifted our signature event, Nature's Inspiration, to a virtual celebration, on September 27. Join this community celebration and enjoy live musical performances from famed musicians, guest appearances by prominent local leaders, and pie! We are also offering entirely new sponsor benefits, including a doorstep visit from a board or staff member to deliver a care package to help you enjoy the event from home.

4. Our reimaged Community Advocates Leadership Academy class of 2020 will now graduate in August instead of in June, with shortened online classes and more out-of-class group work. This year's cohort of 20 participants have a deeper understanding of environmental advocacy and anti-racism, and we are working with graduates to secure leadership roles to champion change.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

This is a time of economic hardship for many, and Green Foothills will not be immune. I want to thank the generous members of our community who have donated, pledged their support, or increased their giving. I also want to thank the thoughtful individuals who have let us know that they must reduce their giving this year. We would appreciate knowing your giving plans to help us project our future. We depend on the support of people like you to do our work, and the more we know, the better we can plan for the year ahead.

Green Foothills is on stronger footing because of wonderful people like you. Thank you for your continued support.

Thank you,

Megan Fluke
Executive Director

We Thank Our Loyal Supporters and Newest Donors

During this challenging and unprecedented time, it's all the more important to recognize and thank our dedicated community. From January 1 through June 30, **269 donors supported our work**. We want to extend a warm welcome to our newest donors, 71 thoughtful people who joined our community this year and contributed over \$16,000 to help us do what we do best, protect the local natural environment. We thank each and every one of you, and look forward to gathering together, someday soon let's hope, to celebrate our collective impact.



"I am grateful for the opportunities that Green Foothills opens up for sincere and organized acts of solidarity that collectively over time will result in change and movement. As a Chicana/Mexika mother and dancer on the red road, Green Foothills inspires me to take action and center Mother Nature and First Peoples in this struggle to retain land as free and sacred."

TAMARA ALVARADO, SAN JOSE

Shortino Family Foundation Executive Director, Capulli Tonalehqueh Fire Keeper, and new donor in 2020



Become a donor at [GREENFOOTHILLS.ORG/DONATE](https://www.greenfoothills.org/donate)

Welcome to Our New Donors!

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SMALL FARMS ARE THE LINCHPIN OF OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Down in the Santa Clara Valley and along the San Mateo coast, a new generation of farmers dedicated to making a positive change in our food system has emerged. They embrace “regenerative” farming practices that include minimizing or even avoiding tilling; growing a great diversity of crops and rotating these crops; using cover crops, compost and organic fertilizers; irrigating more efficiently; and providing habitat for beneficial insects, pollinators, and other wildlife. This ecologically sound approach to farming builds healthier soils to support more nutrient-rich, high-quality foods, reduces a farm’s carbon footprint, and increases climate resilience. Many innovative farmers also seek to create more equitable access to farming and educational opportunities, to the healthy food they grow, and to fair and fulfilling work environments.

The majority of farms here are considered relatively small in scale and are the linchpin of our local food system. The current public health crisis has only further served to highlight their critical role and value to our region. As the coronavirus pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in our national food system and agribusiness-scale practices, consumer concerns over the threat of empty supermarket shelves or uneven availability of groceries led to more people turning toward purchasing food grown on our local small farms.

During the past few months, a remarkable spike in subscriptions to our local farms’ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, better known as “veggie box” programs, has led to many with waiting lists of hundreds.

NEW GENERATION OF FARMERS FACE CHALLENGES

Despite this growing appreciation for locally grown food, our farmers face many challenges, including invasive pests, lack of storage and processing facilities, labor shortages, shortages of affordable housing for both farmers and farmworkers, cumbersome regulations, lack of access to markets and financing, and inadequate and undependable water sources particularly in San Mateo County. Climate change has added extreme droughts and flood events to the list of challenges.

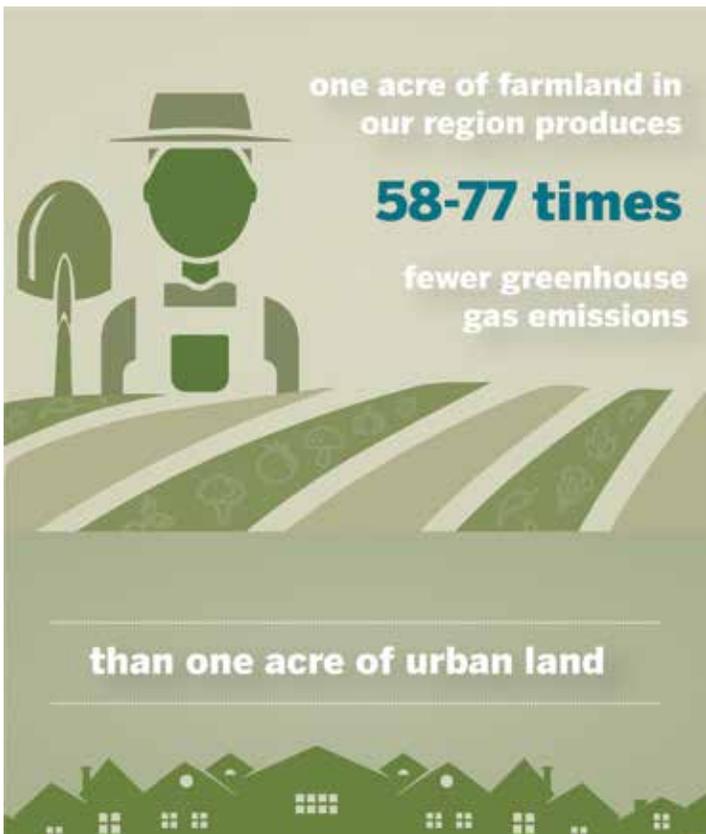
One of greatest obstacles is the purchasing of farmland. Given the high price of land in our region, it is nearly impossible for a beginning or small farmer to buy a plot of land. Many farmers cannot compete with investors or developers speculating on the development value of farmland or the very wealthy wanting to build a luxury country home. Aging farmers whose heirs have no interest in taking up the farming mantle can often sell their farm for its speculative development potential versus the actual agricultural value. This is an unsustainable pattern if we are to achieve the meaningful preservation of farmland and a robust farming environment in our counties.

Leasing land is also difficult, as some landowners have no financial interest in renting the land for farming purposes. Other owners often will commit to only a one-year lease in order to keep their options open to a lucrative selling or development opportunity. Such short-term leases make it very challenging for farmers to plan for their businesses or make costly investments in infrastructure or long-term improvements to the soil and property.

GREEN FOOTHILLS’ EFFORTS HAVE PROTECTED THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF FARMLAND

Green Foothills’ work to protect farmland dates back to our support of the 1972 California Coastal Initiative, which mandates protection of prime agricultural lands. We championed the 1976 Coastal Act, which created permanent boundaries between urban and rural areas in coastal San Mateo County. We advocated for the adoption of San Mateo County’s Local Coastal Plan which has protected the coastside’s rural agricultural lands from subdivision and other uses. We led the successful effort to persuade Santa Clara County to zone 20- and 40-acre agricultural parcels as a minimum to stop developers from further fragmenting the rural landscape. We campaigned for Gilroy’s voter-approved urban growth boundary in 2016 to stop significant sprawl on over 720 acres of farmland. And now we are leading the Protect Coyote Valley coalition to permanently protect a unique Santa Clara Valley landscape that includes over 4,000 acres of farmland.

In addition to these efforts, throughout the decades we have served on numerous committees and task forces seeking to strengthen our local agriculture. We have given input or co-authored reports on agriculture and our local food system. We have supported policies and actions that help farmers, farmworkers, and the preservation of farmland. And we have fought numerous egregious proposals to pave over thousands of acres of our farmland in both counties.



Recently, we urged the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to uphold the initial commitment they made in 2019 to spend \$5 million for farmland preservation. Taking the form of an agreement between the County and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, it fulfilled the County's \$5 million local match obligation for the \$15 million it received from the State Department of Conservation for the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements.

Our local land trusts, whose founding we ardently supported, have permanently preserved many acres of our local farmland that we had fought to protect from development. Now many of these protected acres have been leased or sold to farmers at appropriate prices.

Our efforts have garnered notable progress, but so much more needs to be done. There are still many thousands of acres of farmland in the counties of San Mateo and Santa Clara that continue to be at risk of being lost to development. Local funding sources for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements remain inadequate given the immense need.

PROTECTING LOCAL FARMLAND IS AN ONGOING, URGENT ISSUE

Over the next few years, we will continue to help set the table for the future of farming, focusing on ensuring policies, plans, and programs better protect our local farmland from inappropriate development and sprawl. We will also continue building coalitions that collectively shift political will and empower thousands of people to take action for positive change toward a more robust food system that enhances climate and community resilience.

Keeping our fertile farmland in the hands of farmers is a challenge our communities must meet. Our counties harvest a cornucopia of produce: artichokes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, garlic, leeks, peppers, beans, peas, tomatoes, pumpkins, and a variety of leafy greens. And there are still a few orchards in the former Valley of the Heart's Delight that produce cherries and stone fruit to make your mouth water.

It takes 500 years to make an inch of the fertile soil that produces our local food. It takes only a fraction of that time to destroy it. It's up to us to ensure that these lands remain open and productive now and for future generations.

What You Can Do to Support Farmland

Through our collective efforts we can seed a better future for our local farms, food system, and public and environmental health. There are many ways you can help!

- Buy local food through one of our farms' CSA programs, roadside farm stands, and farmers' markets; and patronize grocery stores and restaurants that purchase directly from local farms.
- Respond to Green Foothills' calls to action that will protect farmland and support farming.
- Support local, regional, and state funding for the permanent preservation of farmland to ensure that the productivity of these lands is maintained in perpetuity. 🌱



Julie Hutcheson, Green Foothills' Director of Impact since 2018, first joined staff as a Legislative Advocate in 2010. Julie has co-authored two publications on agriculture in the Santa Clara Valley: Small Farms, Big Potential: Growing a resilient local food system (2020) and Santa Clara County Food System Assessment (2013).



Lennie Roberts has been with Green Foothills for over 50 years. In that time, she has championed the protection of the San Mateo coast and other key landscapes leading a number of critically successful and historic open space campaigns and ballot initiatives.

OUR SMALL LOCAL FARMS

Providing a multitude of benefits to our region



Produce more nutritious & flavorful food



Increase food safety & security



Support access to healthy food



Diversify our local economy



Promote farmland preservation



Enhance our environment & wildlife habitat



Create a sense of community & connectivity

Stop the Lehigh Expansion

BY ALICE KAUFMAN LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

In the foothills just west of Cupertino, the Lehigh Permanente Quarry forms a 3500-acre scar in the otherwise green and undeveloped hillsides of the Santa Cruz Mountains. For decades, mining operations there have discharged toxic selenium into Permanente Creek and contributed to air pollution, noise, and dust in the region. Up until now, Lehigh's mining operations were expected to cease in 2025.

Now, however, Lehigh has applied to Santa Clara County for an expansion of mining operations that will last until 2050, destroy the ridgeline bordering Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, and add about 200,000 truck trips every year hauling rocks and dirt through the streets of Cupertino.

LEHIGH'S CURRENT OPERATIONS

The Permanente Quarry dates back to before World War II, when it was the Kaiser Permanente Cement Plant. (It's now owned by Lehigh Heidelberg Cement, a German company that is one of the world's largest cement producers.) Over the decades, constant mining of limestone and rock for cement and aggregate has created a massive quarry pit covering hundreds of acres and plunging almost 1,000 feet deep.

To protect against dangerous over-mining of the north slope of the quarry pit, a scenic ridgeline easement – a property right owned by Santa Clara County that prohibits damage to the ridgeline – was established in 1972. This easement not only guards against excessive mining that could cause landslides, it protects the view of the hillsides for the residents of Santa Clara County. The ridgeline, which forms the visual border between the quarry pit and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, is about ¼ mile from hikers on Rancho San Antonio's Stephen E. Abbots Trail.

For years, local residents have suffered through the noise, dust, and air pollution from a massive heavy industrial operation just hundreds of yards from their homes, waiting on the expected end of Lehigh's mining activity in 2025. Because Lehigh couldn't dig further into the hillside without violating the scenic easement, they would have to stop their operations. Further, the 2012 Reclamation Plan, which details exactly how Lehigh will clean up the site after the mine is closed, estimated that mining operations would cease in 2025.

LEHIGH MAKES A NEW PROPOSAL

Despite these deadlines, in 2019, Lehigh submitted a proposal asking the County to allow them to dig further into the hillside and cut into the ridgeline, in violation of the scenic easement. Lehigh claims that this must be done in order to stabilize the slope, which otherwise will continue to erode. If granted, this expansion would not only violate the scenic easement, it would extend the life of the quarry far beyond what was contemplated in the Reclamation Plan approved by the County.

However, if the slope is in a dangerously unstable and erodible condition, this must be due to Lehigh's own mining activities – which suggests doubt as to Lehigh's ability to safely conduct mining operations. The fact that under this new plan, Lehigh estimates that mining operations would continue until 2050 suggests that Lehigh's primary motivation is not improved safety, but the desire to excavate more material from the slope than is currently allowed by the 2012 Reclamation Plan or the scenic easement.

In addition, Lehigh has proposed to import 20 million cubic yards of dirt to fill its quarry pit when the mine is closed. The 2012 Reclamation Plan required using material already onsite for this



purpose. According to Lehigh's own documents, importing such a massive amount of dirt would require about 200,000 truck trips annually, or more than 800 truck trips per weekday (assuming no trucks run on weekends). The noise and air pollution resulting from over 800 dirt-filled semitrailer trucks driving to and from the quarry every weekday for 20 to 30 years would be substantial.

LEHIGH'S MINING OPERATIONS HAVE OTHER UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The harmful impacts of Lehigh's mining operations go beyond the destruction of the hillside and ridgeline and the additional trucks. Lehigh's cement plant is one of the worst polluters in the state for hydrochloric acid, sulfur oxides (SOx), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), among other pollutants. Lehigh's mining operations result in toxic discharges of selenium into Permanente Creek. As a result of a Sierra Club lawsuit, Lehigh must remediate its selenium discharges, but the Regional Water Quality Control District's monitoring shows that periodic violations still occur. All these impacts would be continued for decades longer if Lehigh's quarry expansion were approved.

THE COUNTY SHOULD DENY LEHIGH'S PROPOSAL

Santa Clara County has the authority to deny Lehigh's request to amend the 2012 Reclamation Plan. Although Lehigh has "vested rights" to continue any historic mining activities established before the County started requiring industrial operations to apply for use permits or otherwise restricted their activities, Lehigh has no right either to expand outside of the historic mining area or to undertake any new and different type of activities. Further, vested rights or no, the County has absolute authority to enforce the scenic easement that protects the ridgeline for the benefit of the public. And last, the County need not consider Lehigh's request to amend the 2012 Reclamation Plan to allow Lehigh to haul 20 million cubic yards of dirt to the quarry.

Green Foothills will be working to prevent the County's approval

of these harmful impacts. The scoping process for the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is expected to be initiated sometime this year. We will keep you informed of how and when you can provide comments on the environmental review process.



Alice Kaufman is our Legislative Advocacy Director and has been on staff since 2012. She currently leads Green Foothills' campaigns on Coyote Valley, Juristac, and other hillside protection campaigns.



Watch for Our Future Updates

The rolling hills of the Santa Cruz Mountains are interrupted by Lehigh's massive quarry pit. Lehigh has applied to Santa Clara County for an expansion of mining operations that will last until 2050, destroy the ridgeline bordering Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve, and add about 200,000 truck trips every year (or more than 800 truck trips per weekday) hauling rocks and dirt through the streets of Cupertino.





6 Actions Toward Allyship with Local Native Americans

BY MEGAN FLUKE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Green Foothills has worked closely with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band in recent years to protect the 6,400 acres of Juristac southwest of Gilroy from the threat of a sand and gravel mine. There is a stronger chance we will succeed in permanently protecting this wildlife corridor and sacred site because of this collaboration. Since then, all of us at Green Foothills have been thinking about how allyship is integral to our mission and what solidarity with local Native Americans looks like for our organization.

I'd like to thank representatives of the Amah Mutsun, Muwekma, Dine (Navajo), Lenca, and Maya and Amah Mutsun Nations with whose help this piece would not have been possible.

“From the perspective of the Navajo people, we are taught that our spiritual well-being depends on one’s own sacred relationship to the land,” says Ahíga Snyder, a Los Gatos resident, wildlife researcher, and member of the Navajo Nation. “The more care we put into the earth below our feet, the healthier and more fulfilled our lives will become. Each of us can trace our lineage back to a time when our ancestors had a reciprocal relationship with the earth. We all belong to this earth, and we can all benefit from being proper stewards.”

Just ten generations ago (late 1700s), California was home to more than 400 tribes, over 100 distinct languages, and 300,000 people. By 1900, five generations later, California’s population of Indigenous people had been decimated to less than 16,000 by Euro-American colonialism, enslavement, violence, and disease. Genocide and cultural destruction also damaged the natural environment, as land shifted from being a close relative to a settler commodity.

We can all agree that Native Americans have been — and continue to be — wronged. Humanity, wildlife, and nature continue to suffer greatly for it. Yet against the odds, California’s Indigenous nations resisted, survived, and continued to carry on their cultural, spiritual, and linguistic traditions to this day.

For two and a half generations (since 1962), Green Foothills has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of land through over 900 campaigns as a part of our vision of the region being a place where wildlife thrive, everyone has natural beauty to enjoy, and communities live in balance with nature. We have worked toward our vision by empowering people across the region to effectively participate in local land use issues.

Left photo: View of Juristac, a sacred Native American site and 6,400-acre major wildlife corridor in Santa Clara County.

Still, Green Foothills can be doing more to meaningfully engage with local tribes and Indigenous people, with the awareness that environmental conservation organizations in the United States have had a very problematic history in regard to Indigenous peoples (perhaps most notably, Sierra Club founder John Muir supported the forceful removal of Native American peoples from the National Parks).

Native American people have an inherent stake in any environmental issue in their traditional territory and are uniquely impacted by environmental degradation. “Our ancestors understood that if we do not take care of our environment (our Mother Earth), then we face extinction as a people because we have a codependent relationship with the Land,” says Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. Local tribes and Indigenous peoples can be uniquely powerful and effective partners in efforts to protect open space and natural resources. But non-Indigenous environmentalists must listen and take proactive steps to work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, to heal our relationship with the land, and to build trust in the process of working together to achieve common goals.

For the past six months I have listened to and learned from local Native American people and their Tribal Elders, anthropologists, social justice advocates, and environmentalists. With each conversation I asked the question, “What does it mean to be an ally to Native Americans?” Below are some of the core messages I heard.

1. Learn about the past and teach others about the devastating shared history. “California has some of the worst histories with Indigenous peoples,” said Professor Alan Leventhal, an archaeologist who has been teaching and involved in Indian Affairs over the past 42 years at San Jose State University. “The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe had a population of around 30,000 in the 18th century and the population was decimated to 62 members by the early 20th Century.”

“For generations, our people have been focused on survival alone,” says Muwekma Chairwoman Nijmeh. “We are here bringing back our culture which was hidden but not forgotten.”

2. Learn about the present and support healing by recognizing Indigenous peoples are part of the community. California has 109 federally-recognized tribes and one of the most damaging things a person can do is fail to recognize that there are active Tribes locally. The best way to learn whose territory you are in is to contact the nations in question. Most of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties are considered to be in Muwekma territory

with the Amah Mutsun territory in the southern reaches of Santa Clara County and Ramaytush territory in the northern reaches of San Mateo County.

“Often when a member of our tribe tells someone they are an Indian, that person asks where their casino is. California Indians are nothing more than a stereotype for far too many people,” said Chairman Valentin Lopez of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

One simple action is normalizing land acknowledgements, a formal statement that can be made at gatherings or written communication to demonstrate respect for whose traditional territory you are standing on.

3. Seek, listen to, amplify, and support Indigenous voices. “We want people to listen to California Indians, and in particular the Indians of the territories within the Bay Area,” said Chairman Valentin Lopez of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. “We have something very important to say about nature, the earth, and stewardship. We want the public to support the tribes that are nearest to them, visit tribal websites to see how to help them.”

You can regularly donate funds to local tribes and Indigenous organizations on whose land you are living and working, and show up for their efforts as much as possible. “I base my monthly donation to the Amah Mutsun Land Trust on the Shuumi Land Tax model of the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust in the East Bay,” says Nancy Vail, Founder of Pie Ranch on the San Mateo County coast.

4. Urge your city, county, and state assembly districts to take action. There are many examples of local agencies taking steps such as adopting the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, passing resolutions to support the initiatives of local tribes, removing offensive mascots, names or statues, and actually returning lands back to tribes. Cities and counties can go beyond inadequate state standards for tribal consultation in regard to sacred sites and burial sites, adopting “free, prior and informed consent” based policies to ensure that cultural resources are protected.

“These are distinct opportunities for allyship and often these opportunities will not arise unless you personally make the call to your elected officials and request action. Native issues are local issues,” says Tamara Alvarado, a Fire Keeper with Calpulli Tonalehqueh, a traditional Aztec dance group focused on culture, tradition, and Indigenous knowledge and practices of the Mexika.

“These are distinct opportunities for allyship and often these opportunities will not arise unless you personally make the call to your elected officials and request action. Native issues are local issues”



On September 8, 2019 four hundred people gathered in San Juan Bautista, in support of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band's efforts to protect their sacred grounds from a proposed sand and gravel mining operation.

5. Advocate for the protection of sacred sites. “Colonization aimed to destroy our culture, our spirituality, and the environment,” says Amah Mutsun Chairman Valentin Lopez. “Because of this, our traditional sites were never respected or protected. Today there are very few of the sites remaining and tribes are fighting to protect the few sites that remain. Land managers can preserve and protect sensitive cultural sites that are on conserved lands, work to help tribes develop tribal parks and to get important sites conserved to ensure they can have access in perpetuity.”

One way of supporting an effort to protect a local cultural site is by supporting the Protect Juristac campaign. Visit greenfoothills.org/campaigns/juristac.

6. Support access to land. Local tribes should be offered opportunities and formal rights to access land, harvest cultural resources, and practice ceremonies. Land managers should be proactive in ensuring that tribes are actively involved in the process of acquiring and stewarding lands within their traditional tribal territories. It is critical that local tribes be offered seats at the negotiating table.

The cultural easement for the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band at Mount Umunhum is a model for Native American access in perpetuity. “The Creator gave us the obligation to take care of mother earth and be stewards of our non-human relatives. This stewardship looks very different depending on the situation,” says Alexii Sigona of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

“Many tribes now own and steward natural lands that have important cultural sites on them,” says Reed Holderman, former

Executive Director of Sempervirens Fund and current board member with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust. “We need to find the right approach at every site so that cultural resources and natural resources are protected.”

Working in solidarity with Native American people requires humility, courage, action, and reflection. The conversation around solidarity is not a new one, it is ongoing and will continue on for many generations. “Sometimes you might stumble and struggle with allyship,” says Kanyon Sayers Woods, an educator within the Indigenous community of the Bay Area, “This is okay. Indigenous people are struggling too as we are recovering.” 🌱

Resources for Allyship with Native Americans



For further inspiration, we've started a resource page with a sample land acknowledgement, recommended books, and more. Feel free to scan this QR code with your phone to directly visit the page or visit us at greenfoothills.org/allyship.



Megan joined Green Foothills as Executive Director in November 2013. Megan is committed to race equity in the environmental movement and the greater Silicon Valley.

Green Foothills is Watching...

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY — which has released their draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the San Jose to Merced section of the rail alignment. We are submitting comments on the potential impacts of High-Speed Rail to wildlife movement through Coyote Valley and Pacheco Pass and impacts to agricultural land east of Gilroy.

San Mateo County

BURLINGAME — where the Planning Commission is reviewing a proposed office building right on the Bayfront that would create an elevated glass wall straddling a creek. Together with other environmental groups, we have submitted comments on the potential impacts to birds from this building design.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO — where County Planning is re-engaging the public on the long-stalled “Connect the Coastside” study, which is looking at programs and improvements for Highway 1 and Highway 92 to improve mobility and accommodate future transportation needs on the coastside.

REDWOOD CITY — where the City Council will be reviewing the draft Climate Action Plan in July of this year. We are asking the City to include stronger policies for adaptation to sea level rise in the plan.

Santa Clara County

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA — which is expected to begin the review process for Lehigh Permanente Quarry’s application for an expansion of mining operations this year. We will be opposing the proposed expansion, which would destroy the scenic ridgeline easement and result in other unacceptable environmental impacts.

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA — where the Board of Supervisors will consider proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments that will increase the options and flexibility of agricultural employee housing and streamlining the permitting process for such housing. We submitted comments to the Planning Commission and are supportive overall of staff’s proposed amendments.

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA — where County Planning staff is preparing for outreach to the community on revising development standards in rural districts, including on agricultural lands. This is anticipated to be a lengthy process that will include an environmental impact report. We expect these amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to provide more objective criteria that will allow for better protection of natural resources and equitable evaluation of development proposals in rural areas.

Green Foothills Applauds...



Mountain Lions, now listed as a “candidate” species under CESA.

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION— for unanimously voting to consider the Central Coast mountain lion population as a candidate for listing under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Now that our local mountain lions are officially a “candidate” species, they are afforded CESA protections.

Santa Clara County

MORGAN HILL CITY COUNCIL— for unanimously passing a resolution calling on Santa Clara County to preserve Juristac in its entirety

as open space.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS— for unanimously approving a proposal to support telecommuting policies in the post-pandemic period.

SARATOGA CITY COUNCIL— for voting to terminate the Mountain Winery Annexation Project, which would have made it possible to construct a 300-room hotel in a Very High Fire Hazard Sensitivity Zone.

Join Us for Our Upcoming 2020 Events

We miss you! With COVID-19, we have pivoted to virtual events. We hope you will join us and we can hardly wait until we can be together in person again soon.



PROTECTING SACRED LANDSCAPES: FROM JURISTAC TO MEDICINE LAKE

Wednesday, August 5, 6-7:30pm

Join the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Green Foothills virtually to learn how together we can protect sacred landscapes and wildlife habitat from industrial development.

Speakers include Chair of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Valentin Lopez, Morning Star Gali of the Pit River Tribe of Northern California, Green Foothills Legislative Advocacy Director Alice Kaufman, and Chief Scientist for Creekside Science Dr. Stuart Weiss.

Join us to get your questions answered and find out how you can take action to protect Juristac.



17TH ANNUAL NATURE'S INSPIRATION

Sunday, September 27, 5-6:30pm

Our entirely new virtual version of our annual celebration will capture the excitement and spirit of Nature's Inspiration while protecting the health and wellbeing of our community. Together let's recognize and thank our honoree Amah Mutsun Chairman Valentin Lopez.

Enjoy live musical performances including Grammy Award-winning Ozomatli, guest appearances by prominent leaders, and a delicious pie from Pescadero's Pie Ranch or San Jose's The Giving Pies! Event sponsorships are still needed for our entirely new virtual version of Nature's Inspiration; visit greenfoothills.org/natures-inspiration. Tickets go on sale at the end of July.