



greenfootnotes

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Gratitude as I Pass the Torch

BY MEGAN FLUKE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“You can’t stop saving Coyote Valley!” was my youngest daughter’s response when they heard about my decision to step down from my role as Executive Director. These words embody the spirit that has driven me throughout my tenure and highlight how much Green Foothills means to me and my family.

After ten years, I believe it’s time for fresh perspectives to propel Green Foothills forward. My last day will be September 30 and I am looking forward to recharging, taking time for myself, and exploring nonprofit consulting and leadership coaching opportunities.

I want to express heartfelt gratitude to our incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and invaluable partners. Together we have achieved significant victories for biodiversity, climate resilience, and equity. Having been part of the historic decisions and acquisitions casting protections across the 7,400-acre Coyote Valley in south San Jose will always be a great source of pride.

Another treasured accomplishment was the opportunity to recognize — in partnership with many others — Lennie Roberts’ advocacy impact, with an interpretive panel at Devil’s Slide in Half Moon Bay and by establishing the Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund. Always humble, Lennie has dedicated her life to protecting thousands of acres of habitat in the Santa Cruz Mountains and she deserves all this and more.

I’m proud of the work we have done to grow a more diverse and inclusive conservation movement. Fueling this is our Leadership Program, now offering Spanish interpretation, which has provided environmental justice advocacy training to 260 changemakers since 2013. Our new Healing in Nature program, the community advisory board, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan, and our indigenous partnership work have also helped better root Green Foothills’ work in the needs of our community.

During my tenure, we deepened and expanded our impact and stability, growing our donor community to 1,100 and our budget to \$1.4 million with an emphasis on grants. These achievements position Green Foothills for an extraordinary future. I am grateful that Julie Hutcheson has accepted our board’s offer to become our new Executive Director. I’ve worked alongside her from my first day and she brings talent, continuity, passion for the mission, and a commitment to equity.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of Green Foothills’ remarkable story. I will miss the day-to-day work and collaboration with all of you and remain committed as an active donor and supporter.



Cargill lawsuit press conference, 2020



Coyote Valley victory press conference, 2021



With Leadership Program graduates, 2022

A New Chapter Begins

BY JULIE HUTCHESON DIRECTOR OF IMPACT



As I step into the role of Executive Director on October 1, I am so grateful for the past decade working alongside Megan Fluke. She is leaving Green Foothills well-positioned to advance our work for climate resilience and equitable access to nature close to home. One of her most important achievements has been to bring an equity lens to the organization to build a more diverse and inclusive conservation movement. I am committed to continuing that work.

I hope you will join me on September 24 at Nature’s Inspiration to wish her well and usher in a new chapter at Green Foothills.

I’m excited about the future. Having had the privilege of serving this organization for 12 years—7 years as Legislative Advocate and 5 years as Director of Impact—it is an honor to start a new chapter in Green Foothills’ great history. With a talented team, a committed board, a growing donor base, and a diverse and broad set of partners working to protect local nature, we are primed for the work ahead.

Our advocacy work will continue undaunted. And our nascent initiatives—the Upper Pajaro Watershed, San Jose Urban Greening, and Healing in Nature programs—provide opportunities to scale our impact. We will also explore the potential for a Leadership Program Spanish-language-only cohort and robust alumni stewardship to drive greater outcomes.

As incoming Executive Director, I bring to bear deep experience with our Advocacy and Leadership programs to guide Green Foothills into its next phase. I understand how our expertise, persistence, partnerships, and community engagement are vital to achieving victories. As an advocate, I used these tools to protect thousands of acres of open space and farmland in Santa Clara County. As Director of Impact, I helped reimagine the Leadership Program and mentored participants, and guided staff in adopting a data-driven, results-oriented approach that has helped us gain increased institutional funding.

Most important though has been the journey to this point—the friendships made, the lessons learned, and how we’ve supported each other. I thank all staff, volunteers, partners, and donors who will continue to support Green Foothills.

Together we will greet the future with purpose and strength.



We are a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to protect open space, farmland, 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 thrives, everyone has natural beauty to enjoy, and communities live in balance with nature.

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Photo credits: Cover photo by Larry England; p. 4 Moss Beach by Steven King; p. 7 Juristac courtesy of Amah Mutsun Tribal Band; p. 8 Nature’s Inspiration by Dan Quinn, Healing in Nature by Jamal Edwards, edwardsportraits.com.



This photo shows the accelerated erosion on bluffs in Moss Beach when adjacent areas are armored with rip-rap (boulders). The bluffs in the foreground lost about 10 feet in January of this year.

Saving Our Beaches

BY LENNIE ROBERTS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

California's coastal bluffs, cliffs, and iconic beaches face a perilous future, as rising seas and hammering waves, fueled by climate change, are causing increased rates of shoreline erosion.

Many beaches have disappeared where shoreline “protection” structures such as sea walls and rip-rap (boulders) were installed in hopes of protecting coastal development. Ironically, these structures actually accelerate shoreline erosion. Waves that hit seawalls and other unyielding structures are reflected back towards the ocean or onto adjacent unprotected bluffs. Each reflected wave takes beach sand with it. Over time, the beach disappears.

Usually, the most cost-effective long-term solution is to proactively retreat and let beaches naturally move inland as the sea rises. Unfortunately, coastal property owners often lobby for more walls and barriers, making it difficult for local governments to orchestrate a managed retreat. Half Moon Bay's 2021 Local Coastal Program (LCP) Update is a stellar example of forward-thinking coastal hazard solutions, but San Mateo County still needs to update its 1981 LCP hazard policies, and is struggling with decisions involving retreat.

Green Foothills recently appealed a permit for development that we felt was too close to eroding bluffs. The Coastal Commission agreed, and required greater bluff setbacks, prohibition of future armoring

of bluffs, removal of the structure if unsafe to occupy, and disclosure of coastal hazard risks to future buyers of the property.

We remain concerned about shoreline “protection” structures installed before the Coastal Act. These are considered “grandfathered” and therefore can be repaired or replaced, despite causing tremendous loss of beaches. For example, the bluffs at Surfer's Beach south of the breakwater at Pillar Point Harbor are eroding seven times faster than before the breakwater's construction in the early 1960s. Winter storms and high tides now threaten Highway 1 and the Coastal Trail. The San Mateo County Harbor District is pursuing a short-term solution by moving sand that has accumulated inside the breakwater to replenish the eroded beach. Eventually the highway and trail may need to be re-routed inland as storms and rising seas destroy the rip-rap wall.

We will continue working to ensure that new development on the San Mateo coast is located out of harm's way, to save our beaches for all to enjoy.



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.



green
foothills

10th anniversary
2013-2023

Leadership Program

Amplify Your Environmental Advocacy. Lead with Community.

Want to learn to lead effective environmental advocacy campaigns? Advance initiatives for environmental conservation, justice, and inclusive public process? Better prepare for leadership roles at nonprofits, public agencies, and community-based groups? Apply for the Green Foothills Leadership Program!

Classes meet one Saturday a month from January-August 2024, generally from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Applicants should live in or serve communities in San Mateo, Santa Clara, or San Benito Counties. Most sessions are held in person, with 2-3 sessions via videoconference. Scholarships are available; sliding scale tuition is \$100-\$3,000.

Spanish language interpretation is provided for all sessions.

Apply by 10/31/23 at greenfoothills.org/lead

Scholarships made possible thanks to the support of Applied Materials Foundation Community Fund, the County of Santa Clara, Guadalupe Coyote Resource Conservation District, Knight Foundation, Sand Hill Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Network's California Wildlife Program, and Green Foothills donors.

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"It honed my skills in
grassroots and coalition work."

- **Ofelia Bello, Executive Director,
Youth United for Community Action**

"It helped me understand local
government and what persuades
public officials."

- **Alexii Sigona, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band**

Welcome New Donors!

December 1, 2022-June 30, 2023

Green Foothills depends on your donations to protect nature and wildlife, save farmland, and secure more equitable access to open space close to home. Thanks to our generous supporters for making our work possible. For a complete list of donors, please visit greenfoothills.org/OurDonorCommunity.

Kaiser Permanente	Vaishak Deshpande	Bret and Sheryl Hydorn	Diane Regonini
Harris/Wilkinson Family Fund	Joseph Dobrenski III	Christine Imaizumi	Merrily Robinson
Save Mount Diablo	Charlotte Doudell	Graceann Johnson	Everardo Rodriguez
Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency	Jack Dvorkin	Nubia Kaba	Migdalia Rodriguez
Panorama Global Fund	Jamal Edwards	Cynthia Kapphahn	Rachel Rose
Grace M. Abbott	Judith Fan and Robert Reay	Richard Klein	Caryn Rossi
Nicholas Acheson	Richard and Allyn Feldman	Shruti Lakshmi Koneru	Blake Sandy
Christopher Acheson	Romana Fernandes	Brenda Kring	Ibrahim Simsir
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Emily M. Clark	Howard Higley	Kathy O'Neal	Karen Zamel
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Gabriele Cressman	Charles Hinkle	Alice Pineda	
Mike and Leslie Crisp	Lincoln Holland	Frances Quon	
John Crowell	Yu-Ting Huang	Gayathri Ramamurthy	
	Charles Huggins	Susan Raye	

Green Foothills Is Watching...

San Mateo County

CITY OF HALF MOON BAY – which is developing an ordinance regulating e-bikes on trails. We're supporting the City Council's proposal to prohibit e-bikes on the nature-oriented Coastal Trail and allow them on wider, paved transportation-oriented trails.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO – which will submit its final draft Housing Element to the state later this year. We support the County's decision to remove from consideration sites in remote rural areas prone to risks from wildfire and landslides, or that have sensitive habitat or lack urban services.

Santa Clara County

CITY OF SAN JOSE — where North Coyote Valley landowners have proposed a 128-acre energy facility on land the City Council voted last year to protect as farmland. The landowners may attempt to bypass the City Council and get approval from the California Energy Commission instead. We are monitoring the situation to protect the wildlife habitat, floodplain, groundwater, and farmland of Coyote Valley.

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA – which will submit its final draft Housing Element to the state later this year. Early in the process, the County considered including rural agricultural parcels in the Housing Element as sites for future residential development. We support the decision to remove those sites from consideration in favor of focusing residential development in urban areas.

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA – which is in the process of reviewing and responding to the over 7,500 comments received from the public about the Sargent Ranch Quarry proposal on the sacred Indigenous landscape and critical wildlife corridor at Juristac. The Planning Commission may vote on this proposal in late 2023 or 2024.

San Benito County

COUNTY OF SAN BENITO – which is expected to release the draft Environmental Impact Report for the Strada Verde industrial development project sometime in 2023.

Green Foothills Applauds...

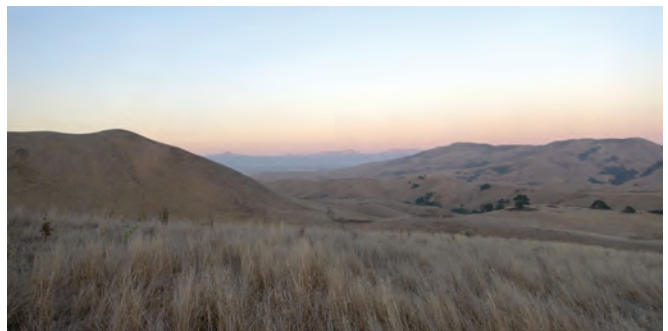
San Mateo County

SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS – for calling for the closure of a hazardous 15,000-gallon propane tank distribution facility located next to the low-income Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Community in Moss Beach. After this action by the Supervisors, the owner of the propane facility decided to close it and sell the property.

Santa Clara County

SAN JOSE CITY COUNCIL – for approving a city-led community engagement process regarding potential development on the former Pleasant Hills Golf Course. When community members have a voice, development is more likely to include urban green space.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CITY COUNCIL – for approving a resolution opposing the Sargent Ranch Quarry and calling for the permanent protection of Juristac.



For the latest news, please visit greenfoothills.org/blog or subscribe to our email newsletter at greenfoothills.org/subscribe.



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Join Us for Our Upcoming Events



NATURE'S INSPIRATION

Come to the forest and relax among friends old and new at Green Foothills' 20th annual celebration, Nature's Inspiration, on **Sunday, September 24, from 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**, at Sequoia Peterson Grove in Sanborn County Park, Saratoga. Sanborn is home to the California redwood, an integral part of our local ecology and the theme of this year's event. Get tickets at greenfoothills.org/tickets.



GREEN FOOTHILLS OFFICE HOURS (VIRTUAL)

Want to learn more about our work, introduce yourself, or get more involved? Join Green Foothills staff who will hop into this Zoom on Friday, September 29, October 27, and December 8 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. RSVP at greenfoothills.org/calendar.



HEALING IN NATURE

We are busy planning the next Healing in Nature outings – meditative, healing experiences at protected parks and open spaces with expert docents and community healers. The Healing in Nature program is made possible thanks to funding from the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and from other generous donors. For dates and locations, see greenfoothills.org/healing.

For a complete list of upcoming events, visit greenfoothills.org/calendar.