

Heeding the Call of the Coast

BY JULIE HUTCHESON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I recently read a friend's social media post about the benefits of a day at the beach along the San Mateo coast. Her sentiment of joy and appreciation - rising from her words of adventure, solace, fun, family time, and rejuvenation - undoubtedly resonates with many of us. The coast, from the forested Santa Cruz mountains to the crystalline blue of the Pacific Ocean, offers so much natural beauty to residents and visitors alike. Green Foothills has a long history of working to protect this breathtaking landscape and the public's access to it while ensuring that new development does not unduly harm coastal resources.

Our work continues but with increased urgency and focus. The effects of climate change call for strong local coastal policies to address sea level rise and shoreline erosion. New development, especially housing, should be permitted only in areas where residents will be safe from crumbling cliffs, storm-driven wave surges, and increased flooding over the coming decades. Coastal forests and streams should be managed to increase resilience to catastrophic wildfires and flood events. Keenly aware of these and other pressing environmental coastside issues, Green Foothills is developing a San Mateo County coastal program to bring greater clarity, focus, and renewal to our efforts.

There will be more to come on this in 2024, so keep an eye out. Meanwhile, our advocacy in the Upper Pajaro Watershed in northern San Benito County is taking flight with the hiring of Environmental Associate Jessica Wohlander. Expanding our work into San Benito County is a natural and complementary extension of our current work (see page 6). We are grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Network's California Wildlife Program for funding this work.

Also new on staff is Ben Estrada, who heads our Leadership Program. We are seeking to grow the Program's partnerships and power-shifting efforts as we enter our second year of bilingual instruction. See our Annual Report Executive Summary on pages 8-9 highlighting the Leadership Program's impact, now 10 years strong.

And of great importance this year is reaching our \$2 million fundraising goal for the Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund, which will allow us to hire more advocacy staff once achieved. To date we have raised about \$1.2 million, leaving \$800,000 to go. If you can contribute (or contribute again) to this endeavor, please pleage your support at greenfoothills.org/LRAF.

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 of Green Foothills' Healing in Nature program at Pillar Point Bluff, by Jamal Edwards; p.3 Healing in Nature Outing at Corte de Madera Creek Preserve, 2023, by Green Foothills; p.4 Stanford Foothills by Julia Hallee; p.6 San Benito County hills by Nathan Kosta; p.10 Montara State Beach by Jason Shelton; p.11 Coyote Valley by Jamal Edwards, farmworker housing courtesy of Peninsula Open Space Trust; p.12 Lennie Roberts headshot by Andrea Laue.



Healing, Connecting, and Learning in the Natural World

BY JOCELYN RODRIGUEZ SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER

In the hustle and bustle of modern life, it's easy to lose touch with the natural world. We find ourselves engrossed in screens, deadlines, and the constant hum of urban living, often forgetting the profound impact nature has on our well-being. For me, this realization came during a transformative journey with Green Foothills' Healing in Nature program. Healing in Nature brings people together from across our community to experience local parks and nature preserves. It encourages participants to immerse themselves in their surroundings, creating a deep connection with the earth and each other.

This program has changed me, leading me to bring the healing power of nature into my daily routine. Recognizing the importance of the natural world for mental and physical health, I started hiking more, added more plants into my living space, and began gardening to cultivate a more optimistic outlook. Tending to my modest garden serves as a source of hope and helps me to believe in a brighter, greener future.

ABOUT HEALING IN NATURE

To foster the connection between ourselves and the natural world, Green Foothills' Healing in Nature outings offer guided meditations, mindful walks, and contemplative exercises facilitated by local healers. Docents share knowledge of the rich history of the land, Indigenous stewardship practices, and local flora and fauna.

To offer these benefits to a wider audience, we are making our Healing in Nature outings more inclusive and accessible this year by creating tailored, restorative experiences for diverse audiences, including Spanish speakers, youth, and those with limited mobility.

CONNECTING IN NATURE'S EMBRACE

In addition to enhancing personal well-being, this program envisions a ripple effect, extending outward to create a more interconnected community. As people become more attuned to the natural world through Healing in Nature, they are likely to develop a shared sense of responsibility for the environment, ensuring a legacy of stewardship for future generations.

To learn more about this program, go to greenfoothills.org/healing-in-nature.

The Healing in Nature program is funded in part by a GlobalGiving grant made in partnership with KPMG Living Green Program; the Open Space Authority Urban Grant Program; San Mateo County District 3 Measure K Funds; Valley Water; and support from other generous donors.



Jocelyn Rodriguez, Special Events Manager, has been on staff since 2022. She leads the implementation of Green Foothills events including Healing in Nature outings and Nature's Inspiration, our annual celebration.



SIX DECADES OF PROTECTING THE STANFORD FOOTHILLS

BY ALICE KAUFMAN POLICY AND ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Green Foothills celebrated an important victory last October, when Santa Clara County approved a 99-year extension of the requirement that development in the Stanford foothills must have a supermajority vote of the Board of Supervisors. The requirement has been in place since 2000 but was slated to expire less than a year from now in 2025. Nonetheless, Stanford continues to assert its right to eventually develop these pristine lands. This victory was just the latest chapter in our decades-long effort to protect the thousands of acres of Stanford Universityowned open space - an effort that goes back to Green Foothills' founding and that will continue as long as our organization exists.

"KEEP FACTORIES OUT OF THE FOOTHILLS"

In the 1950s, Stanford University decided to begin developing hundreds of acres of rural open space south of the Stanford campus for industrial research. The Stanford Industrial Park, as it was then called, grew rapidly, extending westward towards Foothill Blvd (then a narrow winding road). In 1960, the city of Palo Alto annexed hundreds of acres of Stanford's open space with the intent of using it for industrial development, leading to an attempt by local community members to overturn that decision by ballot measure referendum. Although that early effort failed, the movement to "keep factories out of the foothills" led to the creation of the Committee for Green Foothills (as we were originally named) in 1962.

Stanford continued to plan for industrial development in the foothills. In 1969, Green Foothills sued Stanford and the City of Palo Alto over attempts to develop scenic open space fields and Coyote Hill, located at the southwest corner of Page Mill Road and Foothill Blvd. That led to a landmark settlement whereby Coyote Hill

was protected as open space for decades. Then, in 1985, Stanford stirred up controversy again, this time among its faculty and students with a plan to build the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in the foothills. Stanford ultimately abandoned that project.

FIRST PROTECTIONS FOR THE FOOTHILLS

In 1998, Santa Clara County initiated a General Use Permit (GUP) process for Stanford's future land development in the unincorporated parts of Santa Clara County. For the first time, all of these 4,000-plus Stanford-owned acres were subject to an overarching planning process. (Stanford also owns thousands of

acres in unincorporated San Mateo County, Palo Alto, and other neighboring cities, to which the GUP process does not apply.)

"STANFORD IS EXPECTED TO RETURN AT SOME POINT WITH A NEW PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT."

The future of the approximately 2,300 acres of open space in the Stanford foothills was the subject of especially intense community debate. Stanford had always considered the foothills area as land it might one day want for purposes besides open space. The GUP process, however, presented Green Foothills and other environmental groups the opportunity to push for permanent protection of this land.

When the County approved the GUP in 2000, it also established the Stanford Community Plan, which provides detailed policies and restrictions on how Stanford land will be developed. One of the fundamental policies of the Community Plan was the establishment of an Academic Growth Boundary (AGB) – a line roughly following Junipero Serra Blvd that divides Stanford's developed lands from the open space in the foothills. Under Community Plan policies, no development could be approved beyond the AGB without a supermajority (4/5) vote of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. Stanford wanted this supermajority requirement to last only 10 years, but the County ultimately decided upon 25 years.

EXTENDING THE FOOTHILLS' PROTECTION

By 2016, Stanford had built out most of the development approved in the 2000 GUP and applied to the County for a new GUP. However, conflicts quickly ensued over the County's requirement that the impacts of proposed development be fully mitigated, especially with regard to housing and traffic. Stanford withdrew their GUP application at the last minute in 2019, shortly before

the Board of Supervisors was preparing to vote on it.

With the supermajority vote requirement for the AGB set to expire in 2025, Green Foothills urged the County not to wait for Stanford to return with a revised GUP application, but to move forward with needed updates to the Stanford Community Plan. We advocated for the supermajority requirement to be made permanent, but County staff recommended a 99-year extension. We felt this was acceptable, but Stanford demanded an extension of no more than 25 years. They argued that extending the supermajority vote requirement for 99 years was too restrictive.

We countered Stanford's arguments by pointing out that the supermajority vote requirement is not a total ban

on development. We also noted that the County's 2018 Sustainable Development Study Supplement found Stanford could nearly triple its current density without going beyond the AGB and without becoming any more densely developed than similar university campuses.

On October 17, 2023, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors agreed with us and unanimously approved updates to the Stanford Community Plan that incorporated the 99-year extension.

STILL NOT PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

Although this was a hard-fought and important victory, the foothills are not permanently protected. Stanford is expected to return at some point with a new GUP proposal for additional development. We hope that new development proposals will be located on the existing campus, but it will still only take a vote of four of the five Supervisors to approve development in the foothills outside the AGB.

Wallace Stegner, Green Foothills' founding president, said "You don't have to live in the hills, you don't have to own any part of them, to feel their influence and have a stake in them." These foothills are part of the heritage of everyone who cares about open space in our area, and we will continue to work to protect them.



Alice Kaufman, Policy and Advocacy Director, has been on staff since 2012. She leads Green Foothills campaigns throughout our region, including the campaigns to protect Coyote Valley and Juristac.



Launching Green Foothills' Upper Pajaro Watershed Program

BY JESSICA WOHLANDER ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATE

Green Foothills has historically focused on Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, Mountain lions and other wildlife, however, are unaware of county lines, and development impacts don't stop when one county ends and another begins. As land further north becomes scarce, developers are turning their attention to lands further south in San Benito County. So is Green Foothills.

While committed activists and community members have often come together to fend off harmful development proposals, the threats to open space in this beautiful region are increasingly frequent and alarming. Green Foothills' new Upper Pajaro Watershed program, focusing on San Benito County and southern Santa Clara County, is intended to address this.

I am thrilled to be joining Green Foothills specifically to work on issues in the Upper Pajaro Watershed region. I first fell in love with this area while working on the campaign to ban fracking in San Benito County in 2014. Since 2018, I have been building relationships and strengthening my ties to this land as co-founder and co-executive director of Terra Cultura, an educational eco-arts farm based in Aromas.

San Benito County desperately needs revenue for basic services and infrastructure, and developers have proposed a slew of projects that they promise will bring

in needed funds. However, many of these, such as truck stops, warehouses, and quarries would destroy critical landscapes and the natural beauty that makes the area exceptional. Development in key wildlife corridors and sensitive habitats would harm wildlife already struggling to survive. Proposed projects would pave over valuable farmland and rangeland, making it increasingly difficult for the few young farmers entering the profession to access land on which to grow our food. Increased traffic would congest already deteriorating roads, pollute our air, and drastically degrade the uniquely peaceful feeling of leaving city bustle behind.

This region is special and the people who live here care deeply about it. Working together, we can take care of each other and our communities and provide for local needs without sacrificing farmland and wildlife habitat or encouraging the type of sprawl development that ends up being more costly to residents than compact infill growth. I am looking forward to building a resilient region where wildlife thrives, everyone has natural beauty to enjoy, and communities live in balance with nature.



Jessica Wohlander, Environmental Associate, joined Green Foothills in October 2023. She leads advocacy efforts in San Benito County and southern Santa Clara County.

Why I'm Excited About the Leadership Program

BY BEN ESTRADA I FADERSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER

Since its launch in 2013, the Green Foothills Leadership Program has trained more than 260 participants in equitable, inclusive environmental advocacy. The program prepares them to step into leadership roles at nonprofits, public agencies, and community-based groups. I am inspired by everyone who has gone through the program, and am excited to join Green Foothills as Leadership Program Manager. Here are some stories about alumni making a difference in their communities.



ISABELLA 'AMNE GOMEZ, a Muwekma Ohlone Youth Ambassador and first-year undergraduate at Santa Clara University, joined the 2023 Leadership Program to gain skills for her tribe's benefit, focusing on environmental stewardship. Her capstone project for the program focused on educating Muwekma Ohlone youth about native plants. She plans to specialize in American Indian, nonprofit, and environmental law, to help overcome barriers facing her tribe.



KIAN NIKZAD enrolled in the 2021 Leadership Program to find ways to combine his interests in sustainability and information technology. Collaborating with others in the program on a successful capstone project, he influenced Santa Clara County to consider restrictions on surface mining near groundwater. Post-program, Kian secured two roles, as an IT consultant and as a manager for the California Master Beekeepers Program.



LIZBETH "XOCHIPAPALO" AMADOR combines caring for the environment with involvement in Aztec dance troupe Calpulli Tonalehqueh. A 2021 Leadership Program graduate, she has applied the skills she gained there to projects on urban farming and native plants. She encourages her dance troupe to make a positive environmental impact through advocacy and volunteering.



MEL SARMENTO is an Associate Director with the North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District and Program Director for the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. Mel joined the 2020 Leadership Program to gain skills to address diversity issues in the environmental field and its nexus with the housing crisis. She is working to ensure everyone feels connected to and committed to protecting the natural world.

I am eager to support this wonderful program and alumni network. I am still on my own journey, finding how I can use my abilities to make meaningful change and protect our environment. If you are on a similar journey or know someone who is, you can learn more at greenfoothills.org/lead.

The Leadership Program is made possible thanks to Applied Materials Foundation Community Fund, the County of Santa Clara, Knight Foundation, North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District (NSCRCD), San Mateo County Health, Sand Hill Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Network's California Wildlife Program, and other generous donors.



Ben Estrada joined Green Foothills in September 2023 as our Leadership Program Manager. He is responsible for overseeing the training program and its alumni network. Ben is bilingual in English and Spanish.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary



Our 2023 report celebrates local changemakers from the Green Foothills Leadership Program as well as the impact of our advocacy work. The Leadership Program, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, trains up-and-coming local changemakers in inclusive, effective environmental advocacy. Our complete annual report with details of what we accomplished together in 2023 as well as recognition of our wonderfully supportive Green Foothills community is online at greenfoothills.org/2023report.

SAN MATEO COUNTY

Violet Wulf-Saena (class of 2016) founded Climate Resilient Communities, helping underresourced communities of color find climate solutions.

REGIONWIDE

Wendy Chou (class of 2022) of San Mateo became a senior manager in climate advocacy at nonprofit Acterra.

EAST PALO ALTO

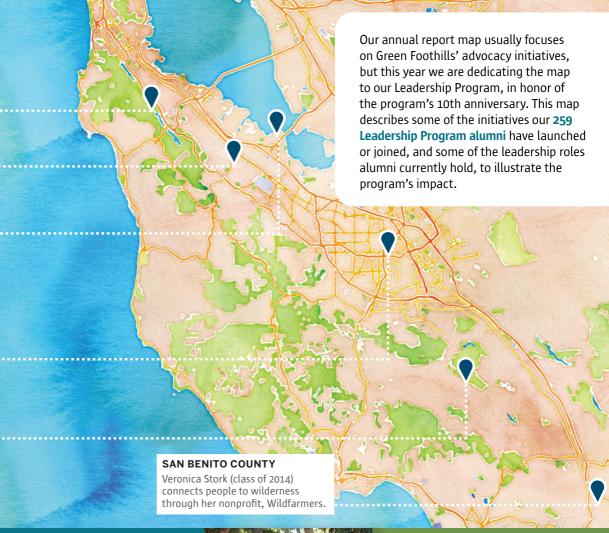
Uriel Hernandez (class of 2017) joined the East Palo Alto Planning Commission and works in urban forestry for tree cover and climate resilience.

SAN JOSE

Briana Horta (class of 2023) of San Jose became a Management Analyst in Urban Forestry with Santa Clara County.

AMAH MUTSUN TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

Alexii Sigona (class of 2019), a member of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, is studying Indigenous environmental stewardship and helping lead the campaign to save Juristac.





"Wildlife Conservation
Network commends Green
Foothills' work in the Upper
Pajaro River Watershed,
where there is an urgent
opportunity and need to safeguard
connectivity for wildlife and
healthy ecosystems."

Neal Sharma

Senior Manager, California Wildlife Program, Wildlife Conservation Network



'Sand Hill Foundation believes our community's ability to thrive is determined by equitable opportunity, dedication, and heart. Green Foothills Leadership Program's bilingual advocacy training exemplifies that combination – driving inclusive, sustainable environmental solutions locally."

Ash McNeely

Executive Director, Sand Hill Foundation

Our Impact in 2023

Advocacy Program

acres of open space protected or benefited





7 key wildlife and plant species benefited

2 policies or plans adopted by governmental agencies

Leadership Program

local changemakers graduated

(including 6 Spanish speakers) for a total of 259 alumni since 2014*



alumni in a new leadership role

for a total of 122 since 2014*



land use issues

advocated



22 were in collaboration with a total of 70 tribes, organizations, and community leaders

21,464 comment letters sent in response to our 10 calls to action with 5 favorable outcomes, and 3 outcomes still pending

145 letters in response to our call to thank legislators for their votes

initiatives won by alumni

for a total of 50 initiatives since 2014*

13 initiatives launched or joined by alumni for a total of 53 since 2014*

*year the first cohort graduated

The Leadership Program is supported by Green Foothills donors, Applied Materials Foundation Community Fund, the County of Santa Clara, Knight Foundation, North Santa Clara Resource Conservation District (NSCRCD), San Mateo County Health , Sand Hill Foundation, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and Wildlife Conservation

Financials April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

Income: \$1,564,767

Total revenue decreased slightly due to investment income loss. Grant income was a little lower; however, there was an increase over last year in contributions, including those for our long-term advocacy fund.

Grants	42%
Bequests	1%
Contributions	11%
Nature's Inspiration	19%
Investment Income	(3%)
Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund	29%

Expenses: \$1,202,722

Overall expenses decreased, but an investment in fundraising infrastructure was made to improve our efficiency in that area.

Advocacy, Education, Grassroots Action (Program)	71.7%
Fundraising	13.5%
Administration	14.8%



"For over 60 years, Green Foothills has been the gold standard in protecting open space, natural resources and farmland

in all of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Their record is unmatched and we are all the beneficiaries of their superb advocacy."

Anna Eshoo

Donor since 2015. U.S. Congresswoman



"Green Foothills is working to make our region a place of thriving biodiversity and flourishing natural lands. That is why I am deeply proud to serve as a board member."

Shruti Gopinathan

Donor since 2023. Green Foothills Board Member

Welcome New Donors! July 1, 2023-December 31, 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.

Pooja Agrawal Nadia Ahmad

Alfonso Banuelos, Ir.

Sara Barth

Sandra Bernhard

Sue Bishop Marie Bobias

Dan Bovle

Margo Budman

Gloria Cahuich Gonzalez

Don Carlson Lisa Carrier Valerie Carter **Arturo Cervantes**

lovce Chase Sarah Christie Linda Ciotti

Rebecca A. Cooney

Charles and Tanis Crosby

Ursula Currie

Katherine Cushing M. Kathryn Deboo

Martin Delson Melissa Demaray

The Walt Disney Company

Michele Drake

Laurence England

Ben Estrada John Kehoe Elaine Fung

Juan Pablo Galvan Martinez Richard and Carrie Levin

Joelle Garretson

lim Geers

Patricia Geyer Carlin

Jeffrey Gong

Laurie Goodman

Shruti Gopinathan

Linda Goytia Kelly Gram

Diane Greenberg

Kelly Griffin

Priscilla Grille

Julie Groves Kavita Gupta

Vishal Gupta

Alison Hicks

Abigail Hindson Richard Hyman

Melissa Ibarra Robin Jeffries

Nilakshi Kapil

Preeti Kathuria John Kehoe

Lisa Kelly

Breene Kerr Irina Kogan

Karen Koppett

Deepthi Kovvuri

Ashutosh Kumar Cody Larkin

Larry and Jill Lauro

Robert Lee

Elaine Lee

Meredith Leonard

Lisa Liddle

Linda Locklin

Iulisa Lopez Castaneda

Edward Lorraine

Bianca Marconcini

Theresa Markiewicz

Nancy Martin

Marisa Martin

Rochelle McLaughlin Shana Middler

Nicole Moutoux

Anjani Nandan

Dan Olstein

Pedro Perez

Christina Peterson

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Lisa Pratt

Steve Preminger

Susan Price

Philip Pun

Denise Raabe

Emily Ramos

Ann Reisenauer

Alesia Reves

Maria Ristow

Claudia Rossi

Emily Schwing

Scott Seaman

Iulie Seelen

Barbara Smith

Edmund Sullivan

Laura Teiera

Sachdev Thomas

Anne Marie Todd

Cynthia Towle

Mohan Upadhyaya

Vicki Veenker

Lisa Villasenor Bena Vohra April Webster Robert Weeks Kira White Barr Carolyn Williams

Jessica Wohlander

Robert Zepernick

Li Zhang

Green Foothills Is Watching...

San Mateo County

CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO – where the draft Ravenswood Business District Specific Plan Update is expected to be released in early 2024. We are urging the city to avoid impacts to Bay wetlands, provide equitable access to trails and open space, and listen to the community during the planning process.

Santa Clara County

CITY OF SAN JOSE — which is considering allowing commercial and recreational uses along Monterey Road in Coyote Valley. Development here could be devastating to the wildlife that use the Coyote Creek corridor, which runs along the back of the Monterey Road parcels. The city will release their draft plan in early 2024.

CITY OF SAN JOSE — where the community engagement process for the planned development on the Pleasant Hills Golf Course site is underway. We are pushing the city to require significant amounts of open space as part of this new development.

CITY OF SAN JOSE — which will determine whether additional environmental review is required for Heritage Oaks Memorial Park, a proposed 102-acre cemetery and mausoleum project in the hills west of Coyote Valley. The city approved this project in 2014, but new information about wildlife movement has emerged since then. We are urging the city to require a supplemental Environmental Impact Report.

San Benito County

COUNTY OF SAN BENITO — where a massive truck stop with parking for over 160 trucks has been proposed in a wildlife habitat area that includes a freshwater wetland. We will monitor this project as the county prepares the draft Environmental Impact Report.



Coyote Valley

Green Foothills Applauds...



Farmworker housing built in 2018 at San Gregorio Farm

San Mateo County

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO AND CITY OF HALF MOON BAY – for partnering to fund and construct muchneeded farmworker housing on city-owned property in

Half Moon Bay. Green Foothills supports this housing project, which will provide 47 units specifically for farmworkers.

Santa Clara County

SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS -

for extending the supermajority vote requirement to modify the Stanford Academic Growth Boundary by 99 years. This action protects over 2,000 acres of open space in the Stanford foothills by requiring 4 of the 5 Supervisors to approve any new development there.

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



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Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund

Ensure nature always has a champion.

The Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund is named in honor of Lennie Roberts' 50+ year career as a volunteer advocate with Green Foothills. Lennie has been a tireless champion for the protection of the farmlands, forests, beaches, and scenic beauty of the San Mateo coast, and the public's access to it. Her efforts have helped ensure that we can enjoy much of the irreplaceable coastside landscape in its natural state.

Donations to the Lennie Roberts Advocacy Fund will provide longterm support for the next generation of Green Foothills advocacy. Donations to this fund are restricted to our Advocacy Program.

We have already raised over \$1 million of our \$2 million goal. Please help us reach our goal this year so we can fund a new advocate position in 2025. Visit **greenfoothills.org/LRAF** to make your pledge.





Mary Davey Legacy Society



Protect local nature for generations to come by remembering Green Foothills in your will or estate plans.

Mary Davey, a Green Foothills board member from 1968 until her passing in 2010, was a passionate advocate for social justice and the environment. Her boundless energy and tireless work for others inspired us to create the Mary Davey Legacy Society to celebrate those wonderful people who have included Green Foothills in their legacy planning.

Visit <u>greenfoothills.org/legacy</u> or contact Justyne Schnupp, Associate Development Director, at justyne@greenfoothills.org.