



Volunteer News

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Quarterly Update

of

All District Volunteer Programs

***Volunteer News & Docent Connections* Newsletters Merge**

This edition of *Volunteer News* marks a new age for providing information about all District volunteer programs in a single quarterly newsletter.

For several years, the Community Programs Team has produced two separate newsletters:

Volunteer News* and *Docent Connections

With the upgrade of the District's Web site, individual program home pages, and on-line forms, it has now become possible to combine these two sources of information into a single quarterly newsletter. *Volunteer News* will now include information about all volunteer events, opportunities, and achievements, as well as general topics of interest.

We hope you enjoy this new edition and, as always, welcome your comments. If you are interested in submitting an article, please contact the Community Programs Team at (650) 691-1200 or email volunteer@openspace.org.

Open Space Views quarterly newsletter is another valuable resource for keeping pace with the District. Preserve spotlights, event calendars, and annual reports are just a few examples of the articles featured.

For more information on subscribing to *Open Space Views*, please email info@openspace.org or call the District office at (650) 691-1200. Both *Open Space Views* and *Volunteer News* can also be found on the District Web site at www.openspace.org. Good reading...

2006 Volunteer Recognition Event "Mingle & Mangia at Monte Bello"

As the sun set over the beautiful, 'protected' Santa Cruz Mountains, nearly 180 volunteers, family members, District staff, and Board members gathered for the annual Volunteer Recognition Event.

The old Lori's Stables Area of Monte Bello Open Space Preserve played host to the September 30th event. Incredible mountain vistas provided a perfect backdrop as District Board members and staff paid tribute to the dedicated volunteers who contribute so much to protecting and maintaining open space lands.

A large group of 50+ hikers kicked off the event with an organized 1.5-mile hike from Horseshoe Lake, and a group of mountain bicyclists enjoyed an 8-mile ride through the Monte Bello hills.

At 3:30 p.m., everyone gathered at an old-fashioned "hay bale" amphitheater and visited with new and old acquaintances. Mingling took on a whole new meaning this year with the addition of 'MINGLE BINGO.' This exciting new game challenged participants to fill their game cards by securing the signature of volunteers and staff who had accomplished certain feats. These featured accomplishments ranged from having camped at Monte Bello Backpack Camp to being unwilling to disclose the

specific location of one's tattoo. The new game was quite popular and participants chased each other around seeking valuable signatures.

Once the popular game was completed and the cards were collected, District volunteers were recognized by General Manager Craig Britton and Community Affairs Supervisor Julie Norton. Following a wonderful 'raptor' presentation by Karen Hoyt of Sky Hunters Environmental Education, Board President Jed Cyr acknowledged the dedicated crowd and handed out the first set of drawing prizes.

As the sun began to fall, volunteers feasted on a wide range of Italian dishes, drinks, and desserts. Hot coffee and blankets quickly became popular as the temperature also began to drop.

Community Programs staff members, Renée Fitzsimons, Paul McKowan, and Jennifer Williams presented awards for special achievements to a large group of volunteers, and for the grand finale, Board members and staff handed out the last of the drawing prizes to more lucky ticket holders.

Congratulations to these dedicated District volunteers for another incredible year.

See the special insert for more on this event.

FALL 2006 Outdoor Service Projects

OCTOBER

10/14/06	9:30 - 2:30	Pulgas Ridge	Habitat Restoration
10/21/06	9:30 - 2:30	Pulgas Ridge	Habitat Restoration

NOVEMBER

11/04/06	9:30 - 3:30	El Corte de Madera	Habitat Restoration
11/18/06	10:00 - 2:30	St. Joseph's Hill	Habitat Restoration

DECEMBER

12/02/06	9:30 - 3:30	Skyline Area	Habitat Restoration
12/10/06	9:30 - 3:30	Foothills Area	Habitat Restoration

Please note-additional weekday projects may be added to this schedule. Call the number listed below or visit the District Web site for updates.

To sign up or receive more information, contact:

Paul McKowan, Volunteer Programs Coordinator
 (650) 691-1200
volunteer@openspace.org
www.openspace.org

Volunteer Handbook Update Completed

This spring, the Community Programs Team (Julie Norton, Jennifer Williams, Paul McKowan, and Renée Fitzsimons) completed a long overdue revision of the District's Volunteer Handbook. The handbook is comprehensive and provides all volunteers with important District background information as well as program specific details for each volunteer role. The handbook is available on the Volunteer Info page of the District Web site or a



**Available On-line
or
by Mail**

www.openspace.org/volunteer

hardcopy can be mailed to you – it is 3-hole punched and can be stored in a binder. Long time volunteers and those new to the District will benefit from having this resource material close at hand. Specialized training that generally includes separate materials and resource information will still be provided to each new volunteer as applicable to their program area.

We hope you find this new handbook informative and helpful.

Restoration & Education — The Perfect Match

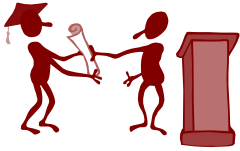
A Recap of the Summer Outdoor Service Projects

Heavy spring rains eventually gave way to warm weather, including an extremely hot July, and the majority of outdoor service project tasks turned to fence, trail, and structure restoration. Of course, there were still some habitat restoration-resource management projects thrown in as the District continues to focus on this important aspect of land management.

In July and August, nearly 60 volunteers gathered at Skyline Ridge and Los Trancos to remove invasive, non-native yellow star thistle. These large-scale projects were very successful. Almost 5 acres was cleared at the Skyline Ridge tree farm restoration area and a follow-up project to the previously sprayed area of Los Trancos wiped that location clean.

A dozen trail and fence restoration projects were also completed at Pulgas Ridge, Picchetti Ranch, El Corte de Madera Creek, Sierra Azul, Rancho San Antonio, Bear Creek Redwoods, and Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserves. And on a sunny day in June, volunteers traded their bent shovels and weed wrenches for hammers and nails as they restored the old dance floor - turned observation deck - at the north end of Russian Ridge.

Four of these summer projects featured District volunteer docents as lunchtime guest speakers. Many thanks to Dick Gehrler, Tommi Smith, Chris MacIntosh, and Walter Moore for their lunchtime presentations on natural and cultural history, Driscoll Ranch, and getting to know your preserves.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITY DOCENT PROGRAM WELCOMES 20 GRADUATES!

On the afternoon of June 17, twenty eager and enthusiastic new Outdoor Activity Docents participated in an informal graduation ceremony in their honor held on the deck at Alice’s Restaurant. The group spent 10-weeks in training together, meeting every Thursday evening for lectures and every Saturday for field sessions at various preserves on topics ranging from principles of ecology, ecosystem overview, biotic communities, flower form and function, geology, Ohlone culture, amphibians and reptiles, to the art of nature interpretation, docent program procedures and protocols, and individual field practicum.

This intensive training is only offered every other year, and this year was a pilot effort with a new structure and format in place. Local area biologist/naturalist/educator Diane West-Bourke was hired to work with Docent Programs Coordinator Renée Fitzsimons to provide an integrated course, where training content was tightly connected to a framework that always referenced ecological principals and the District’s mission.

The new group of docents has been keen to get to work sharing their passion and knowledge with participants on District hikes and rides. The fall Outdoor Activity schedule is bursting at it seams with many additional activities being offered by the Class of 2006.

Please welcome these new docents to the volunteer program:

Judy Boore
Frances Cleveland
Caroline Decker
Andy Jones
Mary Leeburg
Collin Lim
Cherie Long
David Milburn
Thomas Miller
Walter Moore

Kay Partelow
Rebecca Pickart
Deborah Probst
Pamela Reliford
Suzanne Schleck
Sarah Schoen
Phil Van Etten
Trina Warren
Jenny Whitman
Ray Wootten

Nature Center Notes



Eagles Soar at Alpine Pond

The area surrounding Alpine Pond at Skyline Ridge Preserve is getting some much needed attention from three separate Eagle Scout candidates.

Last fall, Eric Bruins earned Eagle Scout honors by installing steps and repairing a section of the easy access trail next to the Nature Center. Visitors had been shortcutting the switchback trail leading down to the dock. Eric and his scout crew installed a set of steps to improve safe access and prevent erosion into the pond.

This summer and fall, two more scouts will fulfill their Eagle Scout badge requirements by also completing projects at Alpine Pond.

Dylan Daniels will be providing habitat for western pond turtles by installing a ‘turtle island’ on the pond.

Stephen Fisher will be repairing a section of trail from the Nature Center up to the Ridge Trail. This trail section

is located in a spring area and becomes nearly impassable each winter and spring.

Many thanks to these scouts and to District Rangers John Lloyd, Elisa Wickham, Loro Paterson, and Seasonal Open Space Technician Chad Van Doren for supervising these important projects.

Interpretive Signs Installed

Visitors to the Daniels Nature Center and Alpine Pond area, especially first timers and those who visit when the Nature Center is closed, are sure to delight in the beautiful and informative new signs that were installed adjacent to the Nature Center deck earlier this year.

The signs interpret two different perspectives of Alpine Pond. One is essentially an overview of the pond – illuminating its origin, today’s value as a wildlife magnet, and the visual amenity it provides to the area. The second panel provides a view of the

pond’s hidden world – the abundance of aquatic life that occurs at varying depths and the inter-relationships between the life forms.

The original artwork and text were developed by Denise Dahn of Dahn Design in Seattle.

What happened to All the Trees and Shrubs?

If you have been in the area around the Nature Center within the last couple of months, you are sure to have noticed that the woodland understory looks down right sparse. District crew has been busy getting the area adjacent to the building into compliance with State fire safety regulations that require a 100-foot clearance around all structures.

Once new growth occurs in the cleared area, it will be maintained at a much lower vegetation limit, allowing the area to have a natural look.



2006 Volunteer Recognition Event

Many thanks to the following individuals, companies,
and local wineries for their donations to this event!

Bay Nature Magazine
Borders
Cindy Roessler
Wild Bird Center of Los Gatos
Hiller Aviation
Hobees
Judy McGuire, Toll Painting

Keplers
REI
Stanford Lively Arts
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
SF Asian Art
Steve Rice, Flowing Touch Massage
Watercourse Way

Local Vineyards

Cinnabar

Picchetti

Vidovich

Cooper-Garrod