

**Hawthorns Area Public Access Working Group  
Public Access Working Group Members**

*Hawthorns Area Plan*




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**Bryna Chang**  
Interest Area  
Representative








Bryna grew up in Los Altos Hills and attended Palo Alto schools. She has lived within about 6 miles of the Hawthorns Area for the last 44 years and now lives in Palo Alto. Her son has just started attending Woodside Priory School, so she travels past the Hawthorns Area almost every day and hikes in Windy Hill on a weekly basis.

Bryna is passionate about environmental conservation, and relish the opportunity to apply her skills and experience to an effort that has a more prominent conservation mission than the volunteer work she has done to date. Bryna is currently the Vice-Chair of the Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission. She also spent most of her time as a dedicated school and community volunteer, serving on elementary, middle, and high school site councils and PTAs, and leading her children’s school green team for many years. She holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences and an MBA with a certificate in Public Management, both from Stanford. Professionally, she most recently lectured at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and ran the MBA Program Office at Stanford where she managed strategy and operations. She also spent time directing the Stanford Public Management program and have experience in internet product management and management consulting. She has conducted professional and/or pro-bono projects with several government and nonprofit organizations, including the Tanzania National Parks, Conservation Strategy Fund, Sustainable Conservation, Urban Ecology, Golden Gate National Recreational Area, and Monterey Bay Aquarium.

<p><b><u>Tyler Feld</u></b> Interest Area Representative</p> 	<p>Tyler grew up in Southern California with outdoor experiences walking to school through neighborhood open spaces. This prompted a degree from UC Santa Cruz in Environmental Studies. Following his degree, he spent five years as an environmental and outdoor educator, where he connected youth with ecologies throughout Northern California. Following the pandemic, he utilized his passion for ecology and connecting communities to nature to begin working in natural resources. He currently works with Grassroots Ecology engaging local communities in habitat restoration at various parks and open spaces around Silicon Valley.</p>
<p><b><u>Charlie Krenz</u></b> Interest Area Representative</p> 	<p>Charlie is 24-year resident of unincorporated Portola Valley and unabashed nature lover. As a young man, he spent his summers hiking in the Sierras. Locally, he’s a birder, native plant enthusiast and passionate mountain biker. As a volunteer he’s produced more than a few videos on topics related to local open space areas: <a href="#"><u>Stories of Mt Umunhum</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>The Alpine Road Story</u></a>, <a href="#"><u>Horse + Bike</u></a></p> <p>Charlie has also lobbied on behalf of Alpine Road, a popular connector route to Midpen open space areas, campaigned to open Foothills park to non-residents and served on the Midpen Vision Plan Advisory Committee. An engineer/business person, he served on the board of his local water district for 10 years.</p>
<p><b><u>Rachel Oslund</u></b> Interest Area Representative</p> 	<p>Rachel grew up in San Carlos as an avid hiker, camper, and outdoors person. She returned to the Bay Area after college to attend graduate school at San Jose State University and earned a master’s degree in education. She is now a Montessori educator focusing on elementary and secondary students. Her experiences taking students into nature have created a passion for making sure outdoor spaces are not only accessible to all, but also that people understand what makes these spaces so special. She is looking forward to working with the local communities to create something that will both be treasured by the people while still being a place for flora and fauna to grow and thrive.</p>

<p><b><u>David Smernoff</u></b> Interest Area Representative</p> 	<p>David has lived in Los Trancos Woods for 25 years and frequents the local trail systems on foot with his family, friends and multiple generations of dogs, and via mountain bike. He often stops and pulls non-native plants during hikes and loves taking pictures of our beautiful native plants. He co-founded the Arastradero Preserve Stewardship Project in 1996 which grew into the Acterra Stewardship program and in 2017 was the founding board president of Grassroots Ecology as it spun out of Acterra. He served on the MROSD Board from 1995-1998, as executive director and board member for Acterra, and continue to serve on the Grassroots Board. His day job was at NASA-Ames Research Center studying advanced life support systems, and currently is in a small startup working to commercialize unique compounds derived from photosynthetic bacteria. He received a Doctorate in Biology from Stanford University.</p>
<p><b><u>Karen Vantra</u></b> Interest Area Representative</p> 	<p>Karen has lived in the Bay Area her entire life and 20 years in the town of Portola Valley. A lifelong explorer, she has hiked at almost every preserve in the district. For the last 10 years she has volunteered in a tax program run through the IRS and the United Way for low-income people as a Tax Preparer and a Site Coordinator. For 3 years she served on the Portola Valley Ad-Hoc Wildfire Committee, which passed home hardening ordinances, initiated the 10-year cleanup of our evacuation routes, and launched a multitude of other efforts to keep Portola Valley safer from the growing threat of wildfire. Karen is an Electrical Engineer by trade and a founder of a technology company that went public in November 2001. She also enjoys cycling, mountain biking, and paddle boarding.</p>
<p><b><u>Scott Mosher</u></b> Ward 1 (Gleason) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Scott Mosher consults with Veregy Consulting to help electric utilities evaluate, pilot and deploy smart grid technologies. Previously, he was Vice President of Anililx, Inc., a telecommunications expense management company he co-founded in 1999. Earlier in his career he worked throughout California in finance, high tech consulting and telecommunications at Sybase, Andersen Consulting and FSG (Financial Strategies Group).</p> <p>Scott also has a deep background in community service. Since December 2010, Scott has served on the board of the S. H. Cowell Foundation. The Foundation focuses on improving the lives of children and families living in poverty in Central and Northern California. Scott serves on the Investment and Audit</p>

	<p>Committees. Scott also was actively involved in the Los Gatos public schools for many years, where he has volunteered in a number of financial leadership positions. In 2008, the Los Gatos Union School District Superintendent and School Board named him “Volunteer of the Year.”</p> <p>Scott graduated with a BS in Industrial Engineering from Stanford University before obtaining his MBA from INSEAD, an international business program at its campus in Fontainebleau, France. He recently completed his tenure as President of the INSEAD Alumni Association in the San Francisco Bay Area.</p>
<p><b><u>Vivian Neou</u></b> Ward 2 (Kishimoto) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Vivian Neou is currently a Vice President of California Native Plant Society Board of Directors. Professionally, she is a retired software executive. She became interested in native plants after she retired and started hiking. That led her to volunteer at the CNPS SCV Nursery, where she became the nursery manager. She's a past president of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and is active in many other roles in the chapter. Vivian enjoys leading hikes for Midpeninsula Open Space District, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve and Edgewood Park &amp; Natural Preserve.</p>
<p><b><u>Wilma (Willie) Wool</u></b> Ward 3 (Cyr) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Willie has lived on the SF Peninsula for over 50 years. She went to college here, raised a family, and taught high school. For the last 25 years, she has hiked the over 100 parks that are within one hour from here once and often twice a week logging 5 to 15 miles per week first as a teacher for Santa Clara Unified Adult Education then for Fremont Union High Adult and Community Education. 40-50 students register for her Hike for Health class year-round. Willie is also a docent for the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.</p>

<p><b><u>Sandy Sommer</u></b> Ward 4 (Riffle) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Sandy is a landscape planner with broad vision as well as an in-depth understanding of public access planning, stewardship, and conservation real estate in the public and private sectors. Between 1999 and 2014, Sandy worked at the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. She has served on the boards of directors of several non-profit organizations, as an appointed public official, and in community service groups, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and Squaw Valley National Ski Patrol. Her interests include hiking, mountain biking, environmental protection, regional trails, as well as equitable access to the outdoors. She has visited almost all the preserves and has an affinity for Russian Ridge.</p>
<p><b><u>Jeff Greenfield</u></b> Ward 5 (Holman) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Jeff is currently serving on the City of Palo Alto's Parks and Recreation Commission as Chair. He has served as Chair twice and is about to begin his 7th year on the Commission. He has also served on the Canopy Advisory Board since 2017. There is interest due to the Hawthorns Area's proximity and potential connection to Foothills Nature Preserve and Pearson - Arastradero Preserve.</p>
<p><b><u>Helen Quinn</u></b> Ward 6 (MacNiven) stakeholder</p> 	<p>Helen Quinn has been a resident of Portola Valley for over 45 years. She and her husband have been active supporters of the work of POST, Green Foothills, and Sempervirens for many years. She is well aware of the value of the regional network of open space preserves. She served for ten years in the 70's and 80's on the Portola Valley Town Trails committee and walks the trails in the area frequently to this day. She is a docent and leads hikes for the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve at Stanford and for Green Foothills outings to Santa Clara Valley Open Space preserves.</p> <p>Her professional career as a physicist at SLAC National Accelerator Center won her worldwide recognition and leadership roles. Since retirement her principal activity has been in support of improved K-12 science education across the US, work based on a study that she led for the National Academy of Sciences.</p>

**Kerry De Benedetti**  
Ward 7 (Kersteen-Tucker)  
stakeholder



Kerry has been a resident of Woodside area for over 50 years and have enjoyed the local trails on horseback and on foot.

Living close to Thornewood, she paid attention to the planning of the trail project there. In conjunction with serving a short term on the Town of Woodside’s Open Space Committee, she attended a Land Trust Alliance Workshop on Conservation Easements. After finishing the UC Master Gardener program, she volunteered at the Cascade Ranch on the native plant propagation project with the Amuh Mutsun Land Trust.

In the past, Kerry was an art program facilitator for elementary school children and for people residing in Alzheimer’s facilities. Currently, she volunteers at Mission Farm in Woodside, where produce is grown for local food banks and kitchens.

**Margaret MacNiven**  
Board Director, Ward 6  
Midpeninsula Regional  
Open Space District



Margaret has been on the Midpen Board of Directors since January 1st, 2023. She represents Ward 6 which includes Portola Valley. She has lived on Long Ridge off Skyline Boulevard for 45 years and is familiar with the District’s thoughtful and thorough outreach program when considering public access on their lands.

**Sarah Wernikoff**

Vice Mayor,  
Councilmember, Town of  
Portola Valley



Sarah was elected to the Portola Valley Town Council in November 2020 and has served as Vice Mayor since December 2021. Sarah has over ten years’ experience as a non-profit board trustee, including in leadership positions as Chair of the Board of the Lumind IDSC Foundation, Co-Chair of the Portola Valley School Foundation Endowment, Portola Valley School District PTO President, and most recently as Chair of the Board of Pals Programs and Branch Services, organizations that support individuals with disabilities. Sarah’s political work includes serving as COO of Close the Gap California, and as campaign manager for a state senate candidate. Prior to her work in politics, Sarah worked in management consulting and ecommerce general management. In most roles, Sarah’s responsibility has included P&L oversight, organizational development and optimizing operations for growth and efficiency.

**Cathy Garrett**

Facilitator, PGAdesign, Inc.



Cathy is an award-winning landscape architect and president of PGAdesign with 39 years of experience in design and project management. Driven by a deep curiosity, she relishes understanding a place’s context—including its history, form, natural qualities, and human presence—to imbue her designs. She values creating spaces that draw people in and become places that build community resilience and hold importance in people’s lives. Open space projects comprise a robust array of Cathy’s myriad projects. She has prepared master plans, trailhead and trail plans, and cultural resource assessments for many preserves and parks.

Cathy excels at facilitating conversations through community engagement. She helps build common ground between stakeholders, establishing meaningful sites within constraints that respect the site, integrate sustainability, and serve the entire community. Her focus is on active listening to find a shared understanding that advances an approach the community can set their positive energy behind.

Natural places nourish Cathy at many scales, from the vastness of an ecosystem to that of mycology. She spends time in wild places, becoming acquainted with the patterns of natural systems which focus her attention on the constantly evolving natural forces that contribute to a place.