



Photo: May Chen

Winter rains bring mushrooms and mints to the forest floor.

# Discover

## 680 Trail Restores Connection

Hurray! As of October 27, major construction activities are complete. This three mile long multiple-use trail restores a historic link between the Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Open Space Preserve and the Loma Alta Preserve that will allow bicyclists, equestrians and hikers access from San Rafael to West Marin and beyond. A gigantic thank you to all those involved, including volunteers, Conservation Corps North Bay, our talented trail crew and many more.

The trail corridor is fragile and needs the wet season to stabilize and harden naturally. For now, the trail is open to hiking, but closed to horses and bicycles. Rangers are monitoring the trail for weather impacts and use. Please respect and comply with the temporary closure until the trail opens to all in spring 2012. For more information, visit [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org) or contact Superintendent **Chris Bramham** at [cbramham@marincounty.org](mailto:cbramham@marincounty.org) or **(415) 473-3639**. Subscribe to the 680 Trail webpage to receive project updates by e-mail.

## And the Winners Are ...

What an enthusiastic response to the Name the Hawk Contest! We received nearly 500 entries from over 50 cities, including a few in Nebraska, New York and Texas, and from two third grade classes at Bel Aire Elementary School in Tiburon. Overall, the majority of entries were of Native American and Coast Miwok origin. The winning name, "Suyu" (pronounced "shoe you"), is Coast Miwok for red-tailed hawk, and was submitted by Christopher Coughlin of Corte Madera, Joan Darling of San Rafael (by way of Nebraska) and Susan Pascal Beran of Fairfax. Christopher, who is part Coast Miwok, responded, "Our membership will be well used and much appreciated." An excited Joan said, "I'm ecstatic! And, I'm



Illustration: Alejandra Aguirre

"Wonderland Hawk" entered by a student in Christine Heilmann's third grade class.

on a roll for naming birds. Last year I won the contest to name the peregrine falcon chicks that hatched at the Nebraska State Capitol." Susan was moved, "We are profoundly grateful. We so love nature and this area's history." Susan's daughter Emily was recognized for writing the best essay her fourth grade teacher ever received in an annual assignment about California Missions. Emily's story was about a rebellious Pomo maiden. Each winner received a one-year membership to the California Academy of Sciences. Many contestants told anecdotes of birds that nested near their homes year after year or of how their families treasure Marin's parks and open spaces.

## Project Updates

### Road and Trail Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Report

Our October 29 community workshop drew over 60 participants, many of whom listened in rapt attention as staff presented much new data that included the preliminary results of a visitor use survey and an assessment of the condition of over 250 miles of existing roads and trails. The next phase of work includes developing a range of project alternatives. We will hold another community workshop in late January 2012—stay tuned for details on our website in December. For more information, visit [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org) or contact Chief of Planning & Resources Elise Holland at [eholland@marincounty.org](mailto:eholland@marincounty.org) or (415) 473-2820. Subscribe to the Road and Trail Management Plan/Environmental Impact Report webpage to receive project updates by e-mail.

### San Geronimo Valley Upland Habitat Restoration

Since 2007, staff has prevented tens of thousands of cubic yards of sediment from entering San Geronimo Creek and its tributaries, home to endangered coho salmon, through its road and trail improvement work in the Gary Giacomini Preserve. This past summer and fall we repaired stream crossings, replaced failed culverts and reshaped problem sites on the Willis Evans Trail. Thanks to SPAWN (Salmon Protection and Watershed Network) and all volunteers who came out November 19 to replant the native plants that were removed prior to the road and trail repairs this summer.



One of many glorious views from the new 680 Trail.

Photo: Craig Solin



Photo: Rachel Lopes, Hiltride

Kids riding progressive dirt jumps at a bike park.

### Stafford Lake Bike Park

Our progress continues! Environmental review is complete and the Board of Supervisors approved the master plan on November 15! Next steps include preparing construction drawings and fulfilling permit requirements. The bike park will serve all skill levels with exciting features including jumps, elevated trails and pump tracks. If everything goes according to plan, construction drawings will be complete by March 2012. We will launch an aggressive fund-raising campaign to secure the money necessary to build the park. If sufficient funds are raised, construction is anticipated in 2012. Additionally, we are looking for volunteers to aid with construction and maintenance of the facility. For more information, visit [staffordlakebikepark.com](http://staffordlakebikepark.com) or contact Principal Park Planner **Steve Petterle** at [spetterle@marincounty.org](mailto:spetterle@marincounty.org) or (415) 473-6394. Sign up for the bike park e-mail list at [staffordlakebikepark.com](http://staffordlakebikepark.com).

### Open Space Turns 40!

The Marin County Open Space District celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2012! Today, Marin County Parks, of which the District is part, boasts over 20,000 acres of open space and four regional parks. To commemorate this milestone, we are planning a series of events and celebrations. Stay tuned for more!

### Bird Lovers Needed

Join Marin Audubon on several Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in December! The Northern Marin CBC is on December 15, the Point Reyes count is on December 17, and the Southern Marin CBC is on December 31. Because there are four County

parks and 28 open space preserves included in these counts, the data gathered each year provide us with valuable information on the health of the habitats we manage. These nationwide annual counts also tell us much more than just how many birds there are in our backyards. For instance, nearly all of the shorebirds and waterfowl that spend the winter in Marin breed far north of here. Many come from the high arctic, where the effects of climate change are already having profound impacts on those habitats. Christmas Bird Counts may be one of the best ways for us to monitor those changes. Birders of all levels are welcome to participate on the all-day counts as a counter, spotter, or driver, or you can stay home and count birds at your feeder. For more information on the Northern and Southern counts, visit [marinaudubon.org](http://marinaudubon.org) and for information on the Point Reyes count, visit [forestdata.com/cbc/](http://forestdata.com/cbc/).

## Pending Open Space Purchase in the San Geronimo Valley

Marin County Parks recently entered into an agreement to purchase 22 acres of undeveloped land adjacent to the Gary Giacomini Preserve in San Geronimo. The property hosts a wide range of plants and animals that reflect the stunning biodiversity of the area. The purchase will secure permanent public access along the Manzanita Fire Road and enable us to implement road repairs that will reduce the amount of sediment entering San Geronimo Creek—considered the best remaining habitat for endangered coho salmon in this part of California.

A fundraising effort is underway to secure the remaining \$100,000 needed to complete the purchase by September 2012. The State Coastal Conservancy has already contributed \$450,000 and Marin County Parks has committed \$100,000. To donate: Visit the [Marin Open Space Trust](http://Marin Open Space Trust) website at [marinopenspacetrust.org](http://marinopenspacetrust.org) and click on the **Donate Now** link. You will be directed to the **Network for Good** donation webpage for Marin Open Space Trust. Follow the prompts to make a contribution. For more information, contact [Marin Open Space Trust](mailto:postmaster@marinopenspacetrust.org) at [postmaster@marinopenspacetrust.org](mailto:postmaster@marinopenspacetrust.org) or **(415) 884-2270**.

## Supervisor Hal Brown Retires

Marin County's Second District Supervisor Hal Brown retired October 29, 2011 after 28 years of public service. A true champion of parks and open space, Hal supported the preservation of over 1700 acres of open space in Ross Valley,

including the Bald Hill, Cascade Canyon, Loma Alta and White Hill preserves. The newly renovated Hal Brown Park at Creekside bears his name to honor his many contributions to Marin County and the communities he served.

## Events at a Glance

Over the past few years, our newsletter has evolved and changed with the times. For 2012, we will roll out an online e-newsletter—subscribers will receive the news directly in the body of an e-mail, rather than as an attachment. In the meantime, there will be other small changes, all of which are part of our efforts to reduce the consumption of resources used to print and distribute hard copy publications. Beginning this season, the events section is smaller. When we launched a new website in summer 2010, we added a robust online events calendar that offers electronic subscription through e-mail, RSS Feed, Atom Feed or by downloading an iCal file. We encourage everyone to subscribe to our events calendar to learn about upcoming volunteer, walks and ranger activities. Visit [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org), click **Events Calendar** and in the body of the webpage, look for the links **Subscribe**, **iCal** and **RSS** (top right corner). Follow the prompts to sign up for the service you want. We will continue to provide a plain text, printer-friendly version of the newsletter (including full event detail) on our website. Hard copy is available upon request for people without computer/internet access. Call **(415) 473-6387** to request.



Photo: Shannon Burke

A young kingsnake captivates a curious audience.

# EVENTS

## Volunteer

SAT, DEC 3. 9AM – 1PM

Old St. Hilary's Broom Bust

SUN, DEC 18. 10AM – 12PM

Black Point Boat Launch Cleanup

SAT, JAN 14. 9AM – 1PM

Rick's Broom Patch

SAT, JAN 21. 10AM – 4:30PM

BAEER Fair

SAT, JAN 28. 9AM – 1PM

Trail Maintenance Team Event



Photo: Shannon Burke

Family walks bring kids and nature together.

SUN, JAN 29. 10AM – 12PM

Mill Valley/Sausalito Path Cleanup

SAT, FEB 4. 9AM – 1PM

Back to Bahia

SAT, FEB 11. 9AM – 12PM

Gift of Love

SAT, FEB 18. 9AM – 1PM

White Hill Habitat Restoration

SUN, FEB 26. 9AM – 12PM

Corte Madera Creek Habitat Restoration

## Naturalist Walks

SUN, DEC 4. 10AM – 2PM

Mushrooms at Indian Valley

TUES, DEC 6. 9AM – 12PM

Birds at Las Gallinas

WED, DEC 14. 10 AM – 2PM

Salmon of Lagunitas Creek

SUN, DEC 18. 9AM – 3PM

Birds of Point Reyes

THURS, JAN 5. 9AM – 2PM

Trek to the Top of White Hill

TUES, JAN 10. 10AM – 2PM

Winter at Mount Burdell

SAT, JAN 14. 9AM – 2PM

Mushrooms at Indian Tree

WED, JAN 18. 10AM – 2PM

Devil's Gulch

SUN, JAN 22. 10AM – 3PM

Exploring the Point Reyes Coast

FRI, FEB 3. 9AM – 1PM

Birds at Bolinas Lagoon

THURS, FEB 9. 10AM – 3PM

Cataract Trail

SAT, FEB 11. 10AM – 2PM

Winter Birding at Rush Creek

WED, FEB 15. 10AM – 2PM

Early Wildflowers at Chimney Rock

THURS, FEB 23. 10AM – 2PM

Deer Park

SAT, FEB 25. 10AM – 2PM

Abbotts Lagoon

## Family Walks

SAT, DEC 10. 10AM – 1PM

Nature for Kids at Verissimo Hills

WED, DEC 21. 10AM – 2PM

Nature for Kids at Devil's Gulch

SUN, JAN 8. 10AM – 2PM

Nature for Kids at Mt. Burdell

FRI, JAN 27. 10AM – 2PM

Nature for Kids at Cascade Canyon

SUN, FEB 5. 10AM – 2PM

Nature for Kids at Bahia

WED, FEB 29. 10AM – 2PM

Nature for Kids at Tennessee Valley

## Ranger Activities

SAT, DEC 10. 10AM – 12PM

Kayaking Santa Venetia Marsh

SAT, DEC 17. 12PM – 2PM

Canine Holiday Potluck

SAT, JAN 7. 10AM – 12PM

Water Flows Downhill

SAT, JAN 21. 9AM – 11AM

Water Walk and Talk

SAT, JAN 21. 9AM – 1PM

San Pablo Paddle

WED, FEB 8. 6:30PM – 8:30PM

Living with Mountain Lions

SAT, FEB 25. 10AM - 12PM

Rush to Rush Creek

### MORE INFO

**FOR EVENT DETAILS** including description, directions and cancellation information, please visit [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org) and click on **events calendar**.

**EVENT ACCOMMODATIONS:** Events and/or locations may have limited accessibility to persons with disabilities. If you require accommodations to participate in an activity, or materials in alternate formats, contact Steve Petterle, not less than four work days in advance of event: **(415) 473-6387, TTY (415) 473-2495, CRS 711** or [spetterle@marincounty.org](mailto:spetterle@marincounty.org).



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