

2014

Annual Report



OF THE BAY AREA RIDGE TRAIL COUNCIL

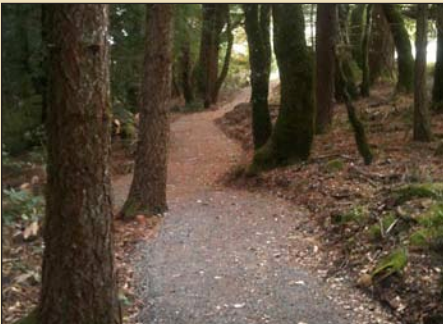


The new Kestrel Trail descending from the new Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve staging area. Photo by Ron Horii.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council closed 2014 with 350 miles of dedicated Ridge Trail. Trail planning, construction, and dedications moved the Ridge Trail closer to completion, and hundreds of trail enthusiasts and volunteers participated in Ridge Trail events.

Trail and Staging Area Dedications

Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve: In March the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District opened a new staging area and extension of the Sierra Morena Trail in San Mateo County's El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve. Located on Skyline Boulevard, one mile south of Skeggs Point, the staging area was partially funded by a Ridge Trail/Coastal Conservancy partner grant, and provides parking



The new trail in El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve. Photo by Bern Smith.

for 65 cars and 4 equestrian rigs, as well as restrooms and a bike rack. The staging area greatly improves access to area trails, including dedicated Ridge Trail to the north (linking Huddart and Wunderlich) via a new safe Highway 35 trail crossing.

Skylawn Memorial Park: A one-mile section of Ridge Trail opened in San Mateo County's Skylawn Memorial Park on May 13. The trail climbs up to a grassy ridgeline in Skylawn and offers expansive views of the ocean and bay. The mostly paved route will allow trail users to eventually access the San Francisco Watershed's Cahill Ridge Trail after the San Francisco Public Utility Commission develops a one-mile connector trail in the watershed.



Cyclists and hikers on the Skylawn Memorial Park Ridge Trail. Photo by Karen Kidwell.

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park: On July 27, more than 300 trail supporters celebrated the dedication of three miles of Ridge Trail in Calistoga's 1,900-acre Bothe-Napa Valley State Park. The newly dedicated trail climbs up Ritchey Canyon through the redwoods and ends at the Traverso Homestead. From here, the Ridge Trail will eventually connect to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.



Ridge Trail supporters at the Bothe-Napa Valley State Park trail dedication.

The start of the trail, Bothe Trail Junction, is where the Bay Area Ridge Trail and Napa Valley Vine Trail routes converge. Eight



Bothe-Napa Valley State Park trail junction. Photo by Janet McBride.

agencies and organizations hosted the dedication: the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition, Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, California State Parks, Napa Valley State Park Association, Visit Napa Valley, City of Calistoga, and City of St. Helena.

Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve: On August 23 the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority and Bay Area Ridge Trail Council dedicated the new .3-mile Kestrel Trail, which links the new Sierra

Road staging area to the Sierra Vista Trail in the 1,676-acre Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve. From the staging area, which accommodates twenty-two vehicles and two horse trailers, the trail heads downhill on steep, grassy hills overlooking the Santa Clara Valley, Santa Cruz Mountains, and Hamilton Range. In addition, a .6-mile section of the Sierra Vista Trail was upgraded to include equestrian access, and the 1.2-mile Aquila Loop Trail opened. A \$107,000 Coastal Conservancy/Bay Area Ridge Trail grant helped fund the new trail and staging area.

Mt. Umunhum: The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District opened the Bald Mountain parking lot on October 27, which will serve as the gateway to the 3,486-



View of Mt. Umunhum from Bald Mountain. Photo by Bern Smith.

foot Mt. Umunhum summit and provide 24-vehicle parking for hikers, cyclists, and equestrians taking the four-mile Ridge Trail to the summit.

Benicia: In November the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council dedicated a section of Ridge Trail on East 5th Street in Benicia. The 1,700-foot trail segment runs between

Military East and East H Street and brings the seven miles of Ridge Trail in Benicia closer to the Benicia-Martinez Bridge pedestrian path. Benicia's first Ridge Trail segment was dedicated 25 years ago.

Moore Creek Regional Park: An additional mile of Ridge Trail opened in the Napa County Park and Open Space District's 673-acre Moore Creek Regional Park. The Valentine Vista Trail connects to 2.7 miles of Ridge Trail dedicated in 2013.



Volunteers help build the trail in Moore Creek Regional Park. Photo by Dee Swanhusser.

Trail Construction

John Nicholas Trail: The Santa Clara County Parks Department wrapped up construction and opened the 3.5-mile singletrack, multiuse Ridge Trail in Sanborn County Park. The John Nicholas Trail fills a Ridge Trail gap between the Skyline Trail and Lake Ranch Reservoir and is accessed from the Sunnyvale

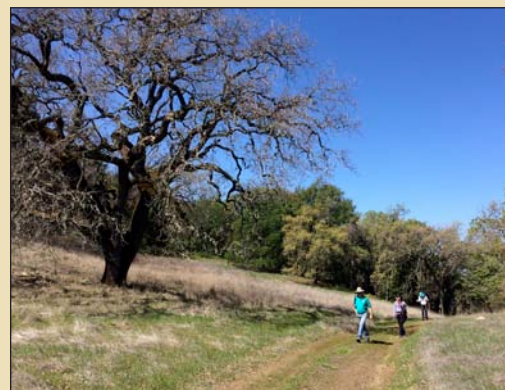
Mountain staging area. The steep trail features three new bridges, numerous switchbacks, and retaining walls. The Ridge Trail Council, REI, Volunteers for Outdoor California, and Santa Clara County Parks worked with more than 500 volunteers to build the trail. The trail project also included an upgrade of 4.5 miles of singletrack Skyline Ridge Trail to multiuse trail, greatly expanding loop options for cyclists.



A new bridge on Sanborn County Park's John Nicholas Trail. Photo by Manuel Acosta.

Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail: Trail builders completed construction of the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail on both the north and east slopes to prepare for opening in early 2015. The trail project was a collaboration of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma County Regional Parks Department,

Coastal Conservancy, and California State Parks. The 4.8-mile North Slope Ridge Trail and the 1.2-mile East Slope Ridge Trail cross numerous properties and ecosystems, and offer superb views.



Hikers on the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail. Photo by Tracy Corbin.



Signpost at the new Sierra Vista trailhead. Photo by Elizabeth Byers.

Penitencia Creek Trail: The City of San Jose broke ground on a one-half-mile section of Ridge Trail along Penitencia Creek between Noble Avenue and Dorel Drive. This is part of a four-mile linear multiuse trail along the creek from its confluence with Coyote Creek to Alum Rock Park. In addition to trail construction, the project includes restoration of the stream bank and development of a trailhead. A \$200,000 Coastal Conservancy/Bay Area Ridge Trail grant provided partial funding for the project.

Portola Trail: The San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department built a half-mile section of the Portola Trail on the southern slope of Twin Peaks. The trail opened in the winter of 2014.

Projects

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and San Francisco Recreation & Parks created the Lake Merced Measured Mile, where signs and half-mile markers allow walkers and runners to measure their progress along a 2.2-mile section of the Ridge Trail around Lake Merced.



Trail and Open-Space Funding

Santa Clara County's Measure Q passed in November, which will generate \$7.9 million per year to implement the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority *Greenprint*. Of the twenty-six identified priority projects, seven would lead to acquisition or development of primary Ridge Trail alignments.

Events

Ridge to Bridge: More than 270 hikers, cyclists, and equestrians and 54 volunteers participated in the annual Ridge to Bridge hike and ride. The event offered several hiking and



Equestrians participated in Ridge to Bridge. Photo by Emily Bauska.

cycling options, with the primary route traversing Mt. Tamalpais, the headlands, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Between registration and participant fundraising, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council raised \$24,000.



Hikers at the East Bay Hills Thru Hike and Ride. Photo by Charlie Ladd.

East Bay Hills Thru

Hike and Ride: Forty-eight hikers and 25 equestrians traversed 55 miles of the Ridge Trail from Martinez to Castro Valley. Volunteers organized the camping, meals, and entertainment at campsites along the trail. The event raised more than \$21,000 for East Bay trail organizations, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council. Board members Morris Older, Charlie Bowen, Bob Siegel, and volunteer Raj Hajela planned the event.



Fun at Tour de Fat. Photo by Nic Turiciano.

Tour de Fat: New Belgium Brewing Company hosted its annual Tour de Fat in

Golden Gate Park, a fundraiser for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. Hundreds participated in the bike parade and then enjoyed music, theater, costumes, games, and beer. Thanks to New Belgium and volunteers, including 75 Ridge Trail volunteers, the event raised \$17,500 for both organizations.



REI-Ridge Trail Service Day: Working with local land-managing agencies, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and



REI Service Day volunteers enjoy working on the trail. Photo by Jaimie Baxter.

REI hosted Service Day at nine sites (three cancelled due to rain). Three hundred seventy-six volunteers worked 1,450 hours to build and maintain

the trail, brush and prune, install drainage dips, plant native vegetation, and remove fences. Over the past seven years nearly 3,400 volunteers have donated 13,500 hours on *Service Day*. Chipotle Grill generously donated burritos and Wells Fargo sponsored the event.



Bay Area Ridge Trail supporters take a guided tour of the Presidio before the anniversary party. Photo by Elizabeth Byers.

25th Anniversary:

All year long the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and its volunteers celebrated the organization's 25th anniversary. Volunteers hosted dozens of outings on the Ridge Trail with hundreds of council members and friends participating. Many events provided unique trail opportunities, such as shuttles for one-way hikes, camping, or previews of closed properties. In total, volunteers led 29 outings. On October 19, the Ridge Trail Council hosted an

anniversary party at the Presidio's Log Cabin with support from nine agency sponsors and thirty wineries. One hundred fifty guests visited with friends, tasted wine, viewed trail displays, bid



Bay Area Ridge Trail enthusiasts at the anniversary party. Photo by Malcolm Jones.

at the silent auction, listened to Ridge Trail stories, and paid tribute to Dee Swanhuysen. The event raised \$20,000 for the Ridge Trail Council.



Hikers at one of the dozens of 25th anniversary outings. Photo by Greg Davis.

Grants

The California Coastal Conservancy awarded the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and Bay Trail a Climate-Ready Grant on a Santa Clara County demonstration project. The project examines how trails can reduce greenhouse gases. The South Bay Trail Loop, which links the Bay Area Ridge Trail and Bay Trail along the Guadalupe River, is the subject of the case study due to its proximity to major employers, population centers, and existing and planned transit.

REI awarded a \$30,000 grant to the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council.

Awards

The Santa Clara League of Conservation Voters awarded the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council a Special Recognition Award for 25 years of environmental service.



Janet McBride speaks at the award ceremony. Photo by Garnetta Annable.

People

Emily Bauska joined the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council as the new volunteer coordinator.



Emily Bauska

Dee Swanhuysen retired after 25 years as the council's North Bay trail director. She was involved in 59 North Bay trail dedications covering 137 miles, as well as planning the two significant route extensions in 1990 and 2012.



Dee Swanhuysen (left) with Janet McBride at the anniversary party. Photo by Malcolm Jones.



Trail volunteers, East Slope, Sonoma Mountain. Photo by Lutrell Harms.

Volunteers

In 2014, approximately 740 dedicated volunteers donated thousands of hours: they worked at trail events and participated in trail workdays, meetings, and outings. The 29 volunteer-led Ridge Trail outings had 631 participants. The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council is indebted to all volunteers for their enthusiastic support!



Outreach

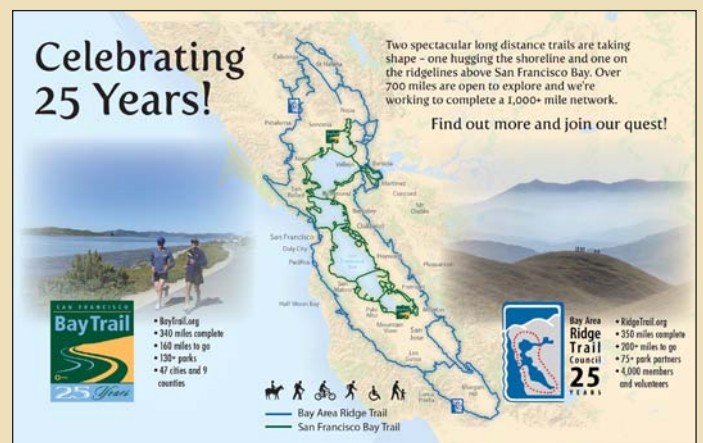
Thousands of people connected to the Ridge Trail through Facebook, Twitter, e-news, and the website. The organization's e-news had 8,600 subscribers and its Facebook site reached 2,500 followers. In October, *Bay Nature* magazine published an extensive article about the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Trail and also featured a Bay Area Ridge Trail and Bay Trail promotion in the June issue (see below).

Organizational Progress

A volunteer committee inaugurated the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council Legacy Circle. It added information about bequests to the website and assembled an estate plan organizer, which can be downloaded from the website.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council restructured its membership program by creating a universal March 1 start date. The change will result in fewer mailings and ensure a more predictable revenue stream.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council reorganized its board and committee structure to encourage more volunteer involvement. Local trail advocacy groups focus on trail development, stewardship, outreach, planning, and hosting trail outings and events. A resource advocacy group helps make connections to new friends, increasing the base of support.



Financial Statement

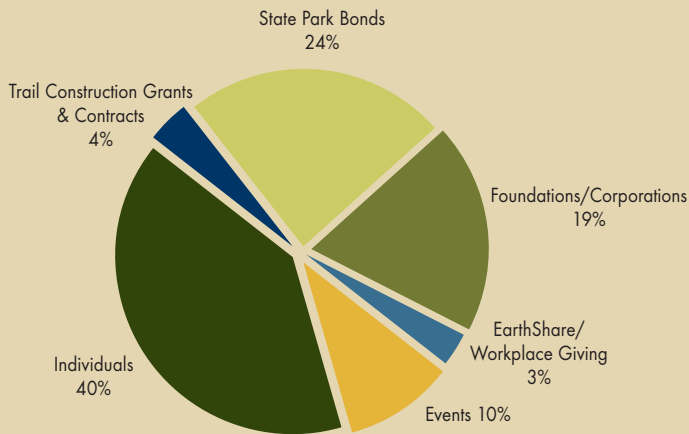
2014 INCOME

State Park Bonds	\$151,659
Individuals	259,394
Foundations/Corporations	124,325
Events	67,640
Trail Construction Grants & Contracts	26,849
Earthshare/Workplace Giving	16,376
Total	\$646,243

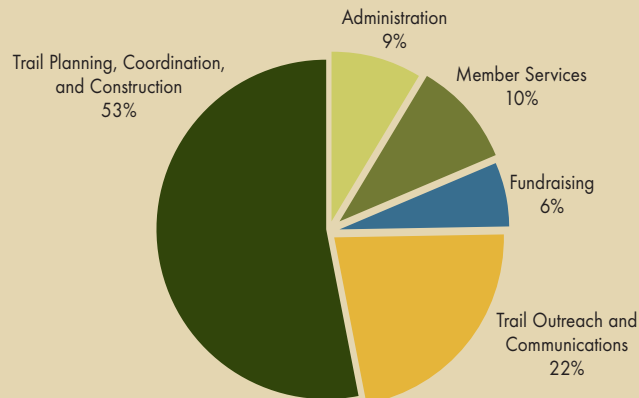
2014 EXPENSES

Trail Planning, Coordination, and Construction	\$341,279
Trail Outreach and Communications	143,135
Member Services	64,791
Administration	55,745
Fundraising	39,809
Total	\$644,759

2014 TOTAL INCOME: \$646,243



2014 TOTAL EXPENSES: \$644,759



Thanks to all our 2014 donors!

SUPPORTERS OF OUR WORK TO BUILD THE RIDGE TRAIL:

The State Coastal Conservancy and the voters of California who support park and open space bonds.

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Clif Bar Family Foundation
County of Marin
Mary A. Crocker Trust
East Bay Regional Park District
Greater Vallejo Recreation District
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
New Belgium Brewing Company
Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Recreational Equipment, Inc.
S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
San Francisco Recreation and Park Department
Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
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