

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Division of Boating and Waterways | Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | Office of Historic Preservation

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

[Peter Ostroskie](#), Visitor Services Manager
(916) 906-2257

California State Parks Expands Trail Access on Mount Tamalpais

Mill Valley, Calif.— California State Parks is excited to announce that thanks to the generous support from donors and our incredible partners, we have secured funding to complete an important trail project on Mount Tamalpais that will improve access, connectivity, and public safety for outdoor recreationists.

The project involves design modifications to an existing trail known as Easy Grade to allow the addition of bicycles on the trail. This project was first proposed by the Marin Mountain biking community years ago to provide a safer route between Pantoll station and the Mountain Theater. Currently, cyclists must ride the existing narrow and winding Pantoll Road shared with vehicular traffic to make the connection, creating a public safety concern.

The Department evaluated the project through its official Change-in-Use process and determined that the addition of bicycle use on the Easy Grade Trail could be accommodated in a safe and sustainable manner and would not have significant effects on the environment. At the conclusion of the project, mountain bikes will be able to take Easy Grade Trail instead of Pantoll Road, which will improve public safety, reduce vehicle congestion, and will provide better connectivity for cyclists and better recreational experience.

The Change-in-Use process was completed in 2017 and has been waiting as a shovel-ready project, but the lack of adequate funding to implement the work has been a hurdle to get it started. That is where our partners and a few key donors stepped in to help.

We would like to sincerely recognize and thank the California State Parks Foundation, Roots & Branches Conservancy, Bay Area Ridge Trail, Marin County Bicycle Coalition, Access 4 Bikes, and Friends of Mount Tam for their support.

What Our Partners Are Saying:

- **Rachel Norton, Executive Director of California State Parks Foundation**
“Mount Tamalpais State Park is a cherished destination for outdoor recreation, and this project is a true example of partnership in action. By working together, we can enhance access, improve safety, and create better connectivity for cyclists while reducing vehicle traffic on narrow roads. We are proud to support this effort and deeply grateful to the

Best Family for their generous support, which will help make this project a reality and continue their legacy of park stewardship. This is how we take care of the places we love—together.”

- **Janet McBride, Executive Director of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council**
“It hasn’t been easy - or quick - closing the Easy Grade gap for cyclists! The Council has been working since 2007 with State Parks, MCBC, and local trail enthusiasts to change the use on this trail to allow bicycles. This is a long-standing cycle gap in the 550+-mile Ridge Trail and we were thrilled to work with a generous donor to help deliver the last piece in the funding puzzle for this project. This is a step toward connecting the Ridge Trail for hikers, cyclists and equestrians, and we look forward to celebrating with partners and friends when Easy Grade opens later this year.” (Special Thanks to donors like Janice and Matt Barger)
- **Michael Nash, Board President of Roots & Branches Conservancy and Executive Producer for Sound Summit:**
“We’re very happy to lend a hand to this worthy project through funds raised at Sound Summit, our annual music festival atop Mount Tam. Creating a safe, car-free route for cyclists from Pantoll to the Mountain Theater has been a long time coming and is the result of ongoing advocacy by many impassioned folks. It’s exciting that the ground will be broken soon toward finally making it happen. Thanks to our fellow contributors and to all those whose efforts and persistence paved the path along the way.
- **Alex Burnham, Marin County Bicycle Coalition Off Road Committee member:**
“This is truly a day of celebration. It is the result of a tremendous amount of work, showing up ‘at the table’ with State Parks, along with other park users, coming together with the leadership from ORC, Tom Boss in particular, and the continuing effort of the ORC and other members of MCBC, and of course the mountain biking community. Congratulations!”
- **Julia Violich, Marin County Bicycle Coalition Board Member:**
“The reality of a multi-use Easy Grade Trail will provide a welcome alternative to the current narrow and curvy section of Pantoll Road, linking Pantoll Station with Mountain Theater. The project will provide a car-free route to the Mountain Theater, reduce vehicle trips, and will create opportunities for easy family access. State Parks has hit it out of the park on this project.”
- **Vernon Huffman, Executive Director of Access4Bikes Foundation:**
“Access4Bikes is thrilled to finally see funding secured for this very important link on Mt Tamalpais. A4B submitted the original request back in 2017 and has been at dozens of meetings through the years, advocating for action. We are happy that Marin bikers will soon have the safety trail access, away from the very dangerous Pantoll Road.”

We could not do this without them. Access to nature and outdoor recreation is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of the people of California, and to the Mission of California State Parks. Organizations like these play a crucial role in supporting ongoing access. With funding secure, the project is set to start between May and June 2025. It is anticipated that the project will continue through the summer and will be completed in the fall.



View from Proposed Easy Grade pullout- Photo Courtesy of California State Parks
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The California Department of Parks and Recreation, popularly known as State Parks, and the programs supported by its Office of Historic Preservation and divisions of Boating and Waterways and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation provides for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Learn more at parks.ca.gov.

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