



MONTHLY UPDATE

EBATC Announcements, Meeting Minutes, News: February 2008

EBATC website: <http://www.ebtrails.org>

East
Bay Area
Trails
Council
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Oakland,
California
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94605

The EBATC is composed of public agencies, equestrians, hikers, bicyclists, and conservationists who are committed to furthering the protection of the scenic and recreational resources of the East Bay.

Trail Notes from Michael

It looks like we will be having an extraordinary meeting on February 20. If things go well, we can expect a presentation from our friends at Mt. Diablo State Park (MDSP). They are just beginning the process of preparing a Unit Trail Plan for the park. I think it got started when staff desired to "inventory" their trails on the mountain to give them the ability to define them as "assets" for purposes of funding. I understand the process got a jolt of energy, when the Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay requested the Park to consider allowing bike access to a number of trails. This blossomed into a full-fledged trail plan, which will involve a 2-year process. The idea is to involve the public in a great many aspects of planning for the park. The MDSP has prepared a Power Point presentation, and has been sending a team around to stakeholders to give the presentation, and respond to comments. At this stage, they have given the presentation to the Mount Diablo Interpretive Association (MDIA), and to Save Mount Diablo. They will continue this process until they have met with all of the stakeholders. At the same time, they are carefully inventorying their trails with GPS technology. Once these efforts are complete, they plan to undertake the normal process of preparing draft plans, and obtaining public input. Tentatively, I have arranged for MDSP to give its presentation at the next EBATC meeting. Since their entire "show" takes 2 hours, and in order to give us some time to digest the material between meetings, MDSP will return to EBATC at a subsequent meeting to exchange ideas. Even if we are unable to pull this first step together for February 20, please consider this to be a "heads up" about a remarkable project that will involve us all for some time.

As we all know, Measure AA will be increasingly important, as we get closer to the election. The EBRPD has prepared a list which gives a broad indication of how they might utilize the proceeds of Measure AA loot. This will be discussed at the meeting, so be sure to attend to provide your input. I understand this is a draft summary, and during the next

EBATC FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday, February 20, 2008

7:15 to 9:30 pm

East Bay Regional Park District
Headquarters: Board Room
2950 Peralta Court, Oakland
Telephone (510) 635-0135

Agenda: February 20, 2008 Meeting

1. Call to order: 7:15 p.m.
Approval of Agenda: Action
Approval of Jan. 2008 Minutes: Action
2. Presentation
Mt. Diablo Trail Unit Plan
3. New Business
California budget crisis and state parks
Draft Measure AA spending plan
4. Reports/Updates
Vargas Plateau
Feeder Trail #1
Fernandez Ranch
Possible new trails at Del Valle
Ridge Trail Multi Use Gap Closure strategy
5. Reports from members-Round Robin

months, the District will be seeking further ideas from the public.

This is an exciting time for trail enthusiasts, so expect several more interesting topics on the agenda. Vargas Plateau is entering a crucial stage, and will require our support. New things are happening at Feeder Trail #1 and at Fernandez Ranch. We would like to take further steps on the Ridge Trail initiative to close multi use gaps. Some folks want to build new trails at Del Valle. California is experiencing a budget crisis, and State Parks is proposing closing many of its Parks. Come and chat with us about these things and more.

I would like to express a special thanks to Jim Townsend for a great presentation at the Janu-
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EBATC Minutes for January 16, 2008

In attendance were:

Judy Etheridge SRVHA, BARTC
Howard Hornig Hayward Hiking Club
Ernest Perry Iron Horse Equestrian
M. Sedlak Pleasanton
Laurie Page Concord Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Assn.
Chris Barnhart CMPTRA
John Eastman Oakland North Hills Sibley-
Temescal Trails Group
Judi Bank Metropolitan Horsemen
Art Levit East Bay Wed. Hiking Group
John Eckhause Hiker
Hank Magnuski Trail Center
David Croker Trail Center
Larry Kolb Sierra Club
Michael Kelley BARTC; IMBA
Jim Townsend EBRPD
Marilynn Terstegge TWHA, CSHA
Diane Offut CSHA
Joan Murakamai BTCEB
Morris Older BARTC; TWHA
Bern Smith BARTC
Nancy Dupont Heritage Trails Fund
Sandy B.
Rich Guarienti PAC
Lyndi Beale BTCEB
Cyril Manning BTCEB

Call to order

Meeting called to order at 7:25 pm by Chair, Michael Kelley (MK). The agenda was approved after MK added two items: 1) Update of the Concord Naval Weapons Station Community Reuse Project and 2) State park budget cuts. The November 2007 minutes were approved. MK remarked that he would like to see more detail in subsequent minutes.

Presentation

Trail construction and improvement: opportunities and constraints.

MK introduced the speaker EBRPD Trails Development Program Manager, Jim Townsend, who began by briefly reviewing a talk about trails he gave at the Tilden Wildcat Horseman's Five Day Ride.. Jim encouraged questions during his presentation. He began by describing several large properties totaling around 10,000 acres that have been acquired in the last 10-15 years and others that may soon be obtained by the District which provide primary opportunities for trails but are not open to the public. There are capital funding sources available to open these properties such as Prop-40 funds, Measure B in Alameda County, Measure J in Contra Costa County, and a transportation tax that has 3 million dollars allocated for non-motorized use trails .

Even though there are funding sources to open parks and trails it is a long process. First a land use plan (LUP) must be developed. A LUP comprises a full description of the property; flora, fauna, geologic, cultural resources and the plan for access roads, trails and visitor services. A CEQA permit is needed for the change in land use and if applicable State and Federal Wildlife requirements must be met. Then public input for the park opening is solicited. In some cases, there are other public agencies that own part of a park and time is spent coordinating with them.

The location of some trails require permits from one or more relevant regulatory agencies such as State Fish and Game, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the Army Corp of Engineers.

MK asked if any Measure AA funds were left. Jim replied that there are some remaining AA funds that have mostly been allocated to specific projects. The District is considering going back to the voters to renew Measure AA . If passed, it will raise about \$500 million. The District plans on using some of the funds for regional trails such as the Iron Horse and Bay Area Ridge Trails. The District is planning a series of public information and input opportunities about the renewal of Measure AA. In the five examples below, Jim enumerated issues that have emerged when District lands or trails are to be opened to the public.

Sunol Regional Park Wauhab Ridge addition (1,700 acres) The LUP has been delayed because those opposed to the use of cattle to control vegetation on the Wauhab Ridge threatened to file a lawsuit.

Dublin Hills (1,000 acres in the District) The Schaffer Ranch Development will provide the staging area. There is an interim land use plan for the park. Jim stated that the District is working with the Native Plant Society which is concerned about rare plants at the site.

Diablo Foothills Park Jim used the Ginocchio addition as an example of issues that arise when a trail is opened to the public before the LUP is completed. Prior to the acquisition local equestrians living along Northgate Road had to ride 1-2 miles on the road to enter Mt. Diablo, and recently a horse was killed by a motorcyclist on the road. The District responded to the equestrian concerns by allowing use of an existing, but closed trail as a emergency, safe entrance to Diablo Foothills and Mt Diablo before a LUP amendment for the property was completed. The temporary trail goes behind homes and several home owners have protested. Jim is considering rerouting the trail away from the homes. MK asked about an exemption for safety reasons to the LUP to reroute the trail away from the homes before the LUP is completed .

Vargas Plateau (1,000 acres) The city of Fremont wants the District to pay for improvement of parts of the city-owned road leading to the park before it is opened. The city agrees that the road needs work whether or not the park is opened. Negotiations are in progress between the City and the District which may delay opening the park.

Brushy Peak The park is open but the building of a loop trail to the Peak has been delayed by environmental concerns. Thankfully, the necessary permits have been obtained, and the trail will be built this summer, in coordination with and the City of Livermore which owns most of the land to the north of the peak.

Jim enumerated additional issues affecting the creation of trails:

- 1) Pressure by influential individuals and special interest groups
- 2) Threatened or actual lawsuits
- 3) Restrictions of Bond Measure funds
- 4) Availability of Operations funding

A meeting attendee remarked that the number of projects could hamper the completion of any and asked if a time limit for each project could be imposed for each. Jim responded that there is a list of trail projects in various stages and some are subject to agency approvals.

Questions asked:

- What is the role of volunteers to build/maintain trails? Jim described the Ivan Dickson program which funds 6-10 volunteer trail improvement projects annually. Each park has a volunteer program and volunteer opportunities are listed on the EBRPD website. Doc Quack, an EBRPD biologist, supervises various nature-oriented trail volunteer projects. . The newly formed Volunteers of California (Vo-Cal) will be doing a project this year with the District.
- What are the most serious constraints to trail creation? Permitting by regulatory agencies which is slowed by insufficient funding of the agencies. EBRPD is considering creating a District-wide habitat plan on currently owned properties. If the plan is accepted individual permitting for each project would no longer be necessary speeding up the opening of parks and trails, and would reduce the threat of habitat-generated lawsuits.
- What is necessary to change a trail use designation? Proposed changes are subject to park planning approval and public input; if there is no negative input, the change will be approved.
- Does EBRPD have full-time trail crew? Jim replied that each park is only able to devote about 5% of its resources to trail narrow maintenance.

Jim reported that several miles of mostly urban-type trails were built in 2007: 1 mile accessible trail

at Camp Arroyo in del Valle; 1 mile of Delta deAnza trail; 1 mile of Iron Horse Trail in Pleasanton; 1 mile at the Big Break Regional Shoreline in Oakley; and a staging area and trail improvements at the Delta-de Anza trail in Oakley.. Bern Smith, Ridge Trail representative, asked if there is an estimate of what is costs to build different kinds of trail. Jim said the cost varies widely and some paved trails can cost between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 per mile. A new unpaved trail at Lake Chabot was planned and constructed quickly and at little cost, so prices vary widely. Jim ended his presentation by appreciating the opportunity to speak to such a large turnout.

Reports/Updates

Due to the full agenda, MK postponed reports on the new Ridge Trail Multi-use Gap Closure Initiative and Vargas Plateau progress.

Measure AA—by the end of February, the District will have created a list of projects to build public support for Measure AA. The Board solicited input for desired projects. EBATC member, Morris Older, distributed copies of a draft letter of EBATC's wish list to the Board . He had three questions: should the letter be sent to the Board even though the period of comment has expired, yes; who should sign it; and does any wording need to be changed, yes? Questions, comments and suggestions for changes were made. Can funds for operations be specified? No, because AA is a bond measure. MK requested some wording to encourage funds to create inner city parks with a little space for nature and some trails. Bern requested adding wording for the Bay Water Trail and more overnight camping sites. Morris suggested adding wording about completing regional trails. A comment was made that the voters like specific projects. Someone was concerned that there was too much mention of mtn. bikes which could be a negative due to the divisive history of mtn. biking in the District. Morris will make the changes that the Committee is in favor of and the Chair will review the letter before it is sent to the Board.

Ridge Trail Update Bern Smith reported that the Ridge Trail has received 10 requests for the 2 million dollars of Coastal Conservancy funds. East Bay projects include: 1) build a staging area for 55 vehicles at Vargas Plateau, \$225,000. 2) funds for 1 mile of RT plus a small amount for a staging area at Fernandez Ranch 3) funds for the Carquinez Loop trail. The RT is working with Caltrans and the Bike Coalition to fund construction for the approach to the Benicia Bridge. Something may open in 2009.

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Minutes: continued from inside page

New Business

EBRPD Volunteer Program for 2008

The Ivan Dickson projects are still being planned. Date for the annual EBATC multi-user trail event. Setting the date will be deferred until the dates of the Ivan Dickson project have been set.

Next EBATC meeting

Wednesday, February 20 at 7:15 PM at the EBRPD Headquarters.

Round Robin

MK reported that EBRPD received a Notice of Preparation (NOP) from the Concord Naval Weapons Station Community Reuse Project and that the District responded encouraging the selection of Alternative 7. The Project soliciting input about the future use of the Weapons Station. Should EBATC write a letter?

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Minutes prepared by Judy Etheridge

EBATC

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Trail Notes: continued from front page

ary meeting. It received record attendance from trail supporters. For those who were not there, it was entitled "Trail Constructions and Improvement: Opportunities and Constraints," and included a tremendous amount of information. Check out the minutes of the meeting for a detailed discussion.

I look forward to seeing you on the 20th.

Happy trails,

Michael Kelley