

BAY AREA BARNS AND TRAILS - PRESERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

'Helping acquire, protect, preserve, and maintain stables, trails, pastures, staging areas, and horse camps in the San Francisco Bay Area.'



REGIONAL E-NEWS FROM 'BAY AREA BARNS AND TRAILS'

January 15, 2006 (1 of 2 pages)

Bay Area Ridge Trail Arrives in Benecia

E-mail sent to the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council info@ridgetrail.org

From Jane Mitchell - "an enthusiastic equestrian"

Subject: "Rode the Benecia Trail today! Mon, 05 Dec 2005"

"Hi Martha, Good Monday Morning to you: Well, I thought you'd like to know my good friend Dee Davis and I found the Rose Drive Trailhead! We parked our truck and trailer one block away at the base of Cambridge drive. It's a very wide section of street and the west side of the street is bordering no homes, but a little creek area. We led our horses for one block, crossed Rose and left up the trail! It is WONDERFUL! The view is fabulous...from Mare Island to the Mothball Fleet, Tamalpais and Mt. Diablo!

The trail is in good shape, our horses are "bare-footed" and they were comfortable the entire ride. We didn't go to the end of the trail, our horses would have been too tired to do the whole thing and then return. That leaves more for discovery on our next ride!

CAUTION!!!... there are a few wooden "walk-over, low bridges" where the areas may be boggy at times. We chose not to walk our horses over these...some of the boards are broken, some weakened. It would have been a hazard to the horses, so we walked beside the little bridges, used the plowed up firebreak in one area. ??

What would it take to get the little 4 x 4 sign that designates the trail is open to equestrians? We would be more comfortable if the other users of the trail knew for a certainty that we are indeed allowed to be there. The only sign currently says "Bike-path".

I noticed the Ridge Trail spur that leaves from inside the State Recreation area does have an equestrian sign.

Ranger Gerald returned a call I made to the State Rec Area. He confirmed for me that we are welcome to ride in the park. I asked him why we didn't have the little equestrian sign and his response was, "Well, we don't get too many horses in here."...I had to laugh...and replied, "You may find you'd have more if there was a sign....and if the equestrian friendly designation were mentioned on the California State Parks website. Nowhere in Benecia's listing could I find mention of horses being allowed. I'm working on that. Thank you RIDGE TRAIL so much for your 'heads-up" on the trail!...honestly...it's changed our lives to know we can ride our horses right here at home. We keep them out on hwy 680 toward Cordelia...so a 10 minute trailer ride and we're at the trail! Thank you, thank you, thank you! "

-Bay Area Ridge Trail Council info@ridgetrail.org

New Sections of the Bay Area Ridge Trail dedicated in 2005: Santa Clara, Napa and Marin Counties

Coyote Lake - Harvey Bear Ranch - A new 4.5 mile section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail was opened in a brand new Santa Clara County Park near Morgan Hill. This trail is the spine of a much larger system of trails through the new park and provides great views of down into the valley while traversing oak woodlands and open grasslands.

Napa Solano Ridge Trail - A new trail extending Napa's Skyline Park trail system is the first section of the Ridge Trail on private property and was built and will be maintained entirely by the Council. The 1.3 mile loop trail is now available at the end of the 4-mile Skyline trail, making for a 10-mile round trip to visit this new section. The trail is closed to equestrians and bicyclists for the winter of 2006 to allow it to "season" and will reopen to everyone in April. (Skyline Park Horse Camp)

New Sections of the Bay Area Ridge Trail dedicated in 2005: Santa Clara, Napa and Marin Counties (con't)

Samuel P. Taylor State Park to Loma Alta Open Space Preserve - 10.7 miles of trail travels up and over White Hill and San Geronimo Ridge to Inkwells/Dhority Bridge and Samuel P. Taylor's Cross Marin Trail. (Devil's Gulch Horse Camp). Trail also heads east about 5-miles to Big Rock Ridge.

www.ridgetrail.org

Views, hiking (& horseback riding) offered in Brushy Peak Regional Park just minutes from Livermore

By Matt Carter, TRI-VALLEY HERALD STAFF WRITER Inside Bay Area- Nov. 8, 2005

"Rising 1,700 feet above sea level, Brushy Peak offers dramatic views of the Livermore Valley. But it's been a while since people could avail themselves of them. That's set to change when the East Bay Regional Park District opens the gates of its first new park in the area in more than a decade. Minutes away from downtown Livermore, the 2,036-acre park at the end of Laughlin Road is expected to be ***popular with hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders ... beginning Saturday, most of the rest of the park will again be accessible on foot, by bicycle or on horseback.***

"This is going to be a great wildflower park," said Robert Doyle, assistant general manager for the park district's land division. Because the park is on a migration corridor, Doyle said bird watchers will also be pleased with the variety of species present. If the Contra Costa Water District expands its network of trails around nearby Los Vaqueros Reservoir, it will soon be possible to hike from Brushy Peak to Mt. Diablo and all the way to Walnut Creek, Doyle said.

Brushy Peak's transformation into a public park dates back to 1994, when the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District purchased 507 acres, including Brushy Peak and the sandstone rock formations.

Three years later, LARPD and the East Bay Regional Park District entered into a cooperative agreement to expand the park and open it to the public.

Acquiring land is the East Bay Regional Park District's expertise, and the park has since quadrupled in size. That process was helped along by the expansion of the neighboring Vasco Road Landfill, which is paying for \$5 million in improvements to the park to compensate for the landfill's impacts.

Before the park could be opened to the public, sensitive habitat areas had to be restored and protected.

A road through an alkali wetland was relocated, and creek beds fenced off to keep cattle out. To control non-native plants and reduce fire risks, the park district will continue to allow cattle to graze in the park. But with the creeks fenced off, willow and cottonwood trees are expected to take root...

An existing trail takes visitors temptingly close to the top of Brushy Peak, which is dotted not by scrub but coast live oak. Until volunteers hand-clear a path to the top, visitors are asked not to blaze their own trail.

Biologists must first decide how to route the trail so that it doesn't harm whipsnakes.

Although the park includes an 18-space parking lot and restroom, visitors are advised to bring their own drinking water and must keep dogs on leashes... The park district's land holdings now total a staggering 96,000 acres, about 13,000 acres of which are "banked" and not yet open to the public.

"It's important to get land and hold on to it because the price keeps going up," said Ayn Wieskamp, a Livermore resident who serves on the park district's board.

The park district has a goal of opening two to three parks a year. The 1,800-acre Vargas Plateau near Fremont, which has been "land banked" for 15 years, is the district's next major park project, Doyle said. The park district hopes to open the area to the public by 2007 or earlier, he said.

.For more information on Brushy Peak Regional Park: <http://www.ebparks.org/>

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