

LANDSCAPES



PENINSULA OPEN SPACE TRUST  SPRING 2009



Our Commitment to the Coast

Dear Friends,

With this issue of *Landscapes*, I am pleased to reaffirm our continuing success in protecting significant coastal properties, even as we increase our activity in south Santa Clara County.

Projects large and small are expanding on the phenomenal momentum we achieved through our 2001-2005 *Saving the Endangered Coast* campaign. Much of the same kind of work remains to be done, acre by acre and step by step, along our one-of-a-kind Pacific and Bay coastlines.

With your support, we have built and replenished our revolving land acquisition fund. The fund gives POST the ability to protect highly desirable open land when it comes up for sale, a condition that may happen only once in a lifetime. The freeze on state bond funding has endangered conservation projects statewide. At Watsonville Sloughs, which you will read about in this issue, POST was able to fill the financial gap by reaching into our revolving land acquisition fund. At Bair Island, we drew on a special fund designated for restoration. In both cases we worked from financial and organizational strength made possible by generous support from POST donors.

Yet the economic conditions we now face are greatly changed. POST faces a significant shortfall in contributions that threatens to erode our ability to save land in the future. When I look out at the endless horizon from the edge of Pillar Point Bluff or catch a glimpse of a white-tailed kite hovering high above Wavecrest, it's clear that POST's work is elemental, transcendental and lasting. This year, more than ever, we ask for additional support so the special places of natural grandeur all around us remain beautiful, healthy and intact—not just today, but for all our tomorrows.

Sincerely,

Audrey Rust



The Drama of the Coast Unfolds at Toto Ranch

POST Acquires Magical 952-acre Property Near San Gregorio...



From Toto Ranch cliffs and curves step north along the San Mateo Coast.

Protecting the Coast

In a generous bargain sale concluded December 24, 2008, Kathleen Scutchfield of Woodside agreed to sell Toto Ranch to POST for \$3 million. The purchase is the result of a strong relationship with Scutchfield. Last year, she donated a conservation easement over Toto Ranch to POST. The easement, by limiting the land's development potential, also reduced its appraised value. Now she has completed a bargain sale. The difference between the appraised value and the sale price is considered a charitable gift for tax purposes.

"Highway 1 along the San Mateo Coast is a scenic thoroughfare unlike any other in the United States. The acquisition of Toto Ranch, brimming with natural resources, means a significant stretch of this road will maintain its breathtaking impact," says POST President Audrey Rust. "We are immensely grateful to Kathy for her ongoing generosity to POST. Luxury estates could have covered Toto Ranch as a result of subdivision, but thanks to Kathy's easement gift and now this bargain sale, this sweeping coastal landscape will be protected forever, avoiding any future threat of development."



© 2008 Karl Kroeber

The ranch house gate reflects the colors of its surroundings.

Pastoral Splendor

The ranch rises up from Highway 1 in a series of gentle, grassy slopes. One hilltop offers magnificent views across the San Gregorio Valley; another reveals

"It is very satisfying to know I can contribute to the preservation of a significant property within this greater coastal landscape. It also pleases me that in the future the public can enjoy it as well."

Kathleen Scutchfield



© 2005 Paolo Vescia

Kathleen Scutchfield with Bonanza at home in Woodside.

a fine view of the Tunitas Creek Valley. A succession of triangular edges jutting into a wide expanse of blue Pacific is visible from almost any of the property's high points. The bold profile of Montara Mountain frames the views looking north, while the wooded slopes of Purisima Creek Redwoods and El Corte de Madera open space preserves create a backdrop to the east.

Natural resources on the property are already protected by the conservation easement, which is now held by the Coastside Land Trust. Title to the land gives POST responsibility for maintaining these resources while looking for a new conservation owner capable of managing the property long-term.

Grazing has been an important agricultural

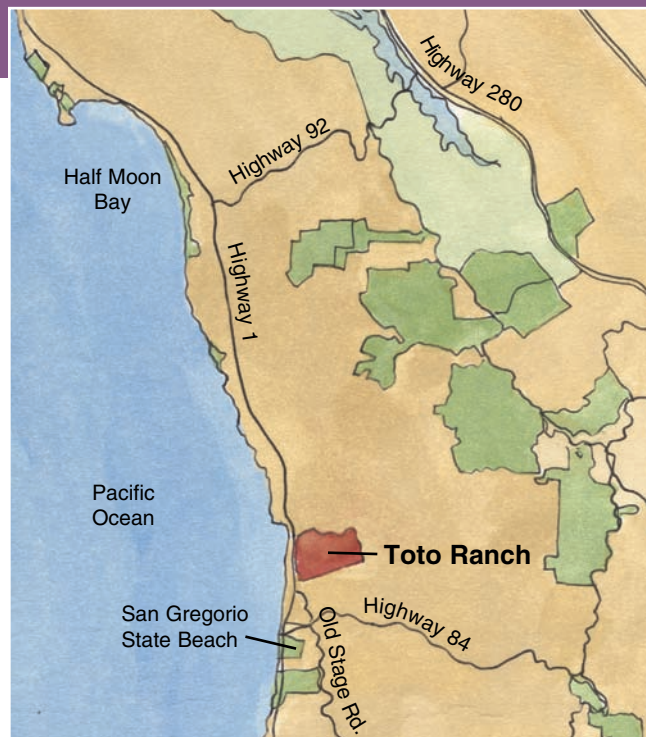
activity at Toto Ranch since the glory days of the 1860s, when Alexander Gordon farmed here. He constructed an elaborate mechanism on a cliff near Tunitas Creek, from which to load local farm products onto ships. Unfortunately, the contrivance, known as Gordon's Chute, blew away in a storm soon after construction. Even his stately ranch house was reduced to modest proportions by fire. The house remains as the center of Toto Ranch activities today.

The land has supported approximately 75 bearing cows in a cow/calf operation. A small number of sheep and goats have also been pastured there along with an assortment of rescued animals, including 15 Mustang horses, three llamas, two emus and four wild donkeys. There are also five acres of prime soil.

Abundant Natural Resources

Fortunately, only nine acres surrounding the ranch house and farm buildings are currently developed. The balance of the property is excellent habitat for a long list of native plants and animals. Bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions roam the land, and the variety of terrain—from coastal terrace prairie to coniferous forest—supports everything from threatened fish and frogs to songbirds and majestic birds of prey.

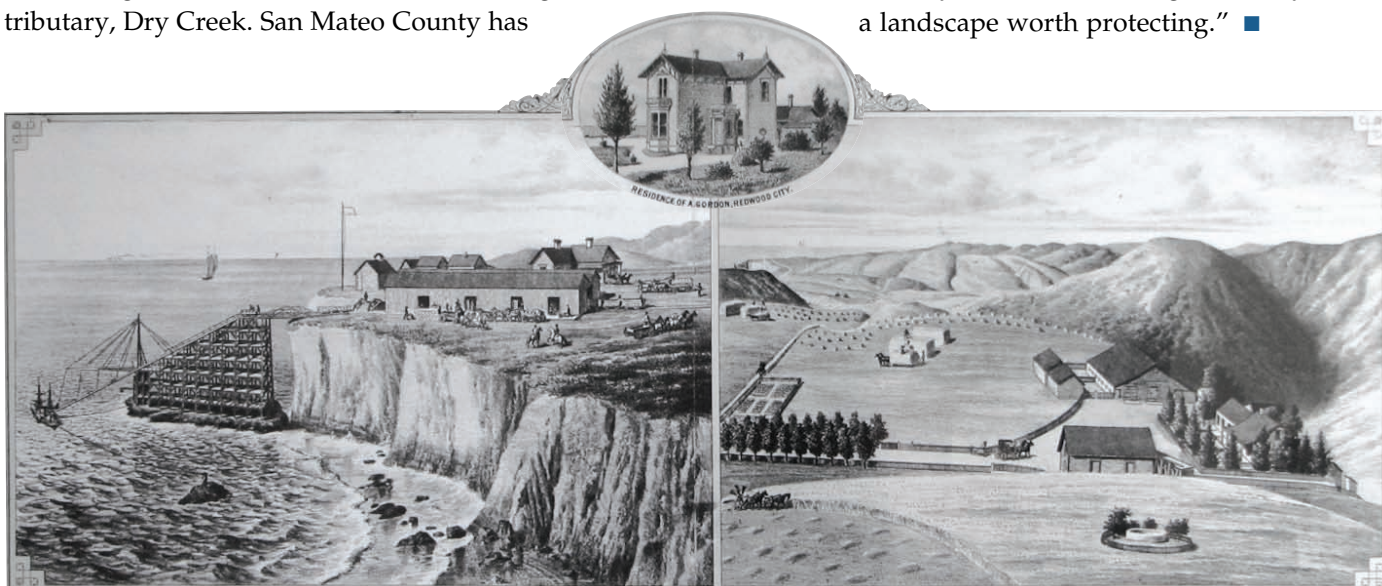
Toto Ranch has significant impact on the health of the Tunitas Creek watershed, with 1,600 feet of bank along Tunitas Creek and 7,000 feet along its tributary, Dry Creek. San Mateo County has



designated the Tunitas Creek wetlands as requiring protection. Within their midst live endangered, threatened and special status species including steelhead trout, Coho salmon, the California red-legged frog, white-tailed kite, peregrine falcon, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, golden eagle and marbled murrelet.

"Large, intact properties offer a level of protection to the region's biodiversity not possible on smaller acreage," says POST Executive Vice President Walter T. Moore. "It is remarkable to find a property like this on the coastside, with easy access to paved roads, that has not been parcelized or disturbed by excessive building. It is truly a landscape worth protecting." ■

Etching courtesy of Kathleen Scatchfield



Gordon's Chute, an ingenious but temporary loading device, (left); the layout of Toto Ranch as it appeared in Alexander Gordon's day (right). He retired to a house in Redwood City.

POST Secures Link to Public Land with Purchase of 32 Acres in Half Moon Bay

A newly acquired 32-acre property may be small, but like an architectural keystone, the land is the essential piece at the center of 1,600 acres of contiguous open space. The property joins Mills Creek Open Space Preserve and Burleigh-Murray State Park near Half Moon Bay. POST purchased the land for \$650,000 in December 2008.

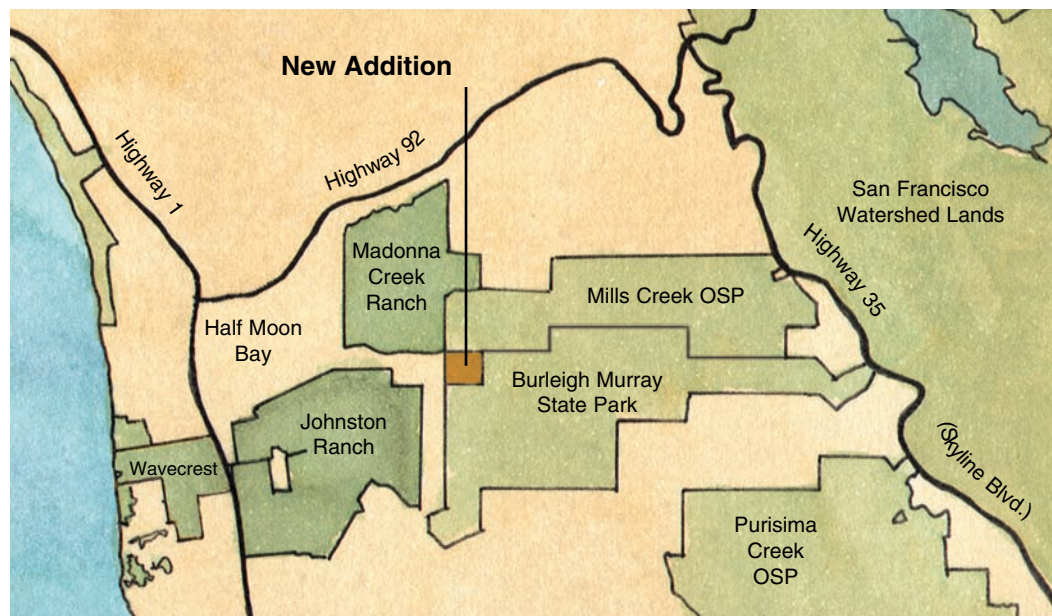
“This strategically located parcel, situated among already protected public lands, shows what a big difference even a small acquisition can make,” said POST President Audrey Rust. “Protection of this land

means that wildlife corridors and recreational trails can be connected, animals can roam freely, and people can enjoy uninterrupted views and landscapes. Purchases of this kind are an important part of our mission to protect the San Mateo County coast.”

On a clear day downtown Half Moon Bay and POST-protected properties at Johnston Ranch, Madonna Creek Ranch, Pillar Point Bluff and Wavecrest are all visible from the new property. Twinberry, coyote brush and lizard’s tongue grow profusely on the steep slopes, and dense coastal scrub and Douglas fir top

its ridges. All 32 acres are located within the Arroyo Leon watershed, and seasonal Leon Creek runs through the lower portion of the property.

The property provides habitat for federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species, including steelhead trout, California red-legged frogs and San Francisco garter snakes. Within the next two years POST anticipates transferring this property to a public agency for long-term protection. ■



Acquisition of a small parcel is the key to access and continuity for protected open space.

Gift Easement Completes Protection of Redgate Ranch

Greg and Amanda Jones made an important holiday gift to POST at the close of 2008. The couple donated an easement on a portion of their property for future use in developing a trail connection from adjacent Driscoll Ranch. The ranch is part of La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, now owned by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

The new trail easement covers a specific 94-acre area within the Jones’s Redgate Ranch in La Honda. They had previously concluded a bargain sale to POST of a conservation easement over the whole 624-acre property, with a pledge to donate the trail easement. ■

Another 17 Acres Saved At Pillar Point Bluff

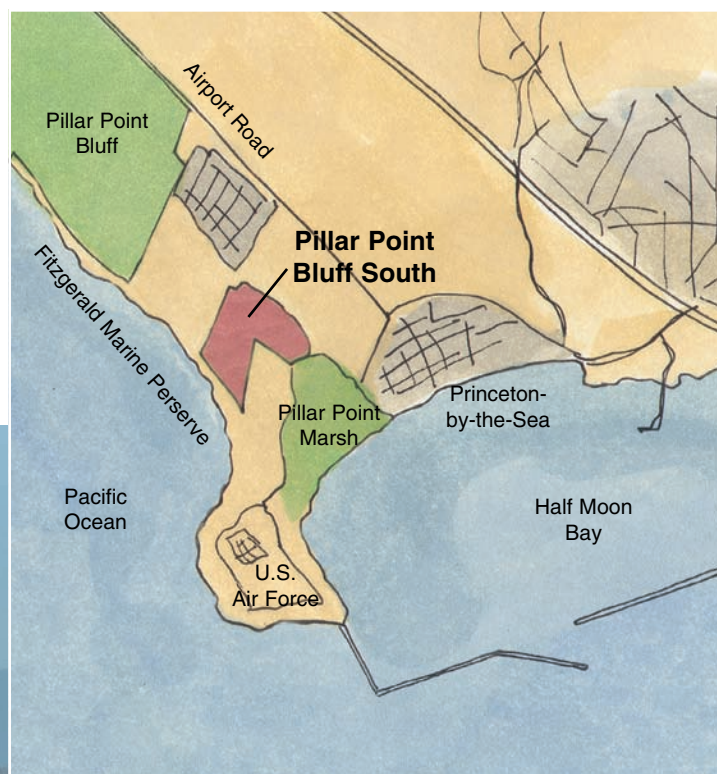
The only place with a better view of Mavericks, California's most challenging surf spot, is the ground around the United States Air Force antenna atop Pillar Point. Next door are 17 acres POST purchased on December 31, 2008. Privately owned land separates POST's 116-acre Pillar Point Bluff and the new acquisition, called Pillar Point Bluff South.

The new property doesn't just look out to sea and the Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, it sweeps down toward Pillar Point Marsh and to land owned by San Mateo County Parks. Informal trails have crossed this land for years; eventually trails will be improved and opened officially for public use.

"In the future the new acquisition may allow for an extension of the Jean Lauer Trail, a segment of California Coastal Trail completed late last year on Pillar Point Bluff," says POST Executive Vice President Walter T. Moore. "Views from the top of the bluff are spectacular, and the land is part of the backdrop of open hills visible from Highway 1 near the airport."

The new parcel is largely coastal terrace prairie, habitat considered rare and sensitive by the California Coastal Commission. "Had POST not stepped in to protect this land it might have become three home sites," said POST President Audrey Rust. POST paid the sellers, Pillar Point Preservation Partners, \$1.8 million for the property.

The land's conservation value is enhanced by proximity to the wetlands of Pillar Point Marsh, home to many native plant and animal species. ■



(left) A giant wave curls over Mavericks. POST's Pillar Point Bluff is visible through the curl.

WAVECREST


It's for the Birds


POST's 206-acre Wavecrest property in Half Moon Bay is an important piece of the coastal puzzle from a land protection point of view, but from a raptor's perspective, Wavecrest is essential. In 2001, Sequoia Audubon Society identified Wavecrest as the most important wintering ground for raptors in San Mateo County.


In December, POST donor and established bird photographer Peter LaTourrette led a small group of staff members on a walk at Wavecrest. Within two hours they saw more than a dozen species.


Among raptors, LaTourrette identified white-tailed kites, red-tailed hawks, American kestrels and northern harriers. Having an expert along makes bird identification far more certain, but even if you go by yourself, you are likely to see raptors in action at Wavecrest. A large population of voles and other rodents keeps these predator birds interested. There are rows of old trees where raptors roost and perch adjacent to grasslands and emergent wetlands that provide cover for small prey.


Raptor factors:


 Raptors are birds of prey, meat eaters that use their feet instead of their beaks to capture prey.

 All raptors, except owls, have a crop for storing excess food. The indigestible hair, feathers or shells are formed into a pellet in the gizzard and regurgitated out of the mouth. Owls cannot digest most bones, so their pellets also contain bones.

 Flight patterns are determined in part by wing shape. Raptors with long broad wings can easily glide across fields or soar on updrafts, while raptors with short, broad wings are quick and maneuverable. Other wing shapes are more suited to spectacular high-speed dives or hovering, characteristic of white-tailed kites.

 Contrary to the rules among mammals, most female birds of prey are larger and heavier than their male counterparts. This difference increases with the prey's speed and agility. The size difference allows a mated pair to "job share," meaning they hunt different prey within their territory.

 All birds of prey have exceptionally keen vision. Owls and a few others, such as northern harriers, have a facial disc that captures sound and helps them locate their prey.

 Some raptors nest on the ground; others, like white-tailed kites, nest in trees.

POST acquired Wavecrest in January 2008, with the help of a leadership gift of \$1 million from Steve Blank and Alison Elliott. We hope other donors will make additional gifts to Wavecrest to help us make scheduled acquisition payments. For more information or to make a gift, please contact Director of Major Gifts Daphne Muehle at (650) 854-7696, Ext. 317, or dmuehle@openspacetrust.org.

Sources: Peter LaTourrette and www.peregrinefund.org/explore/raptors
Photos by Peter LaTourrette.



Red-tailed Hawk



Northern Harrier



White-tailed Kite

POST Keeps Bair Island Restoration Project Alive

On December 17, 2008, the day the California bond freeze was announced, a dredging barge was steaming under the Golden Gate Bridge on its way to remove the last levee separating Outer Bair Island from the natural tidal action of San Francisco Bay. The restoration project, a cooperative effort between Ducks Unlimited and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, with funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, was approximately one-third complete. Suddenly it was in danger of coming to a complete standstill.

POST came to the rescue in January with a \$547,000 loan to replace the bond money, so Ducks Unlimited could pay contractors. (POST drew on earnings from lease income that now amounts to \$1.85 million and is dedicated to Bair Island restoration.)

Said POST President Audrey Rust, "Thanks to POST's foresight and financial strength, we were able to keep this important project moving forward. We want people to understand that POST keeps high priority projects in our sights over the long term and commits to them even after they leave our hands."

POST purchased Bair Island in 1997 in order to protect the 1,600-acre wetland as part the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Nine miles of man-made levees had made the island a dysfunctional remnant of its former self. Restoring the island to full tidal action has always been part of the long-term vision for the island. POST manages bayland mitigation funds paid by cities and commercial ventures. To date more than \$1 million has been made available for Bair Island restoration from the mitigation fund. ■



Bair Island:

- Provides a vital rest stop for migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway
- Affords a temporary or permanent home to 126 bird, 13 mammal and 63 fish species
- Helps improve regional flood control
- Acts as a buffer to rising sea levels
- Absorbs carbon from the atmosphere and thus improves air quality
- Offers a green refuge for all our senses and a lovely vantage point for looking out on San Francisco Bay



Bay water creates a riffle over the breach at Outer Bair Island, where levees prevented natural tidal action for more than 100 years.

POST Rescues Project at Watsonville Sloughs

It was just three business days before the purchase option would expire, and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) was eager to close on a project to save 95 acres of farmland and wetlands in Watsonville Sloughs. The project represented thousands of hours of preparatory work and had been endorsed by public and private agencies. Yet the State of California's freeze on bond funds put the entire deal in jeopardy. LTSCC Executive Director Terry Corwin called POST President Audrey Rust. Could POST rescue this project?

Thanks to the expertise of the POST staff and the strength of our revolving land acquisition fund, which donors help build, POST was able to exercise the option and take ownership of the land on January 8. The acquisition is a strategic first step in a restoration plan by LTSCC that will one day enhance 500 contiguous acres of highly threatened coastal sloughs.

Experts declare the farmland in Watsonville Sloughs the most expensive and productive agricultural land in California. The sloughs also make up Santa Cruz County's largest freshwater wetland.

To restore the sloughs to health for people and wildlife, LTSCC will work to:

- protect farmland from urban expansion, flooding and subsidence;
- improve water circulation and groundwater recharge; and
- reduce waterborn pesticides, sediment and pathogens.

"We were shocked to learn that this project, the funds for which had already been voted on and approved, would be compromised so quickly," said POST President Audrey Rust. "The funding freeze has left every conservation group in California with obligations

© 2009 Stephen Slade



Keeping development at bay is essential if farming and wetlands are to survive at the mouth of the Pajaro River in Watsonville.



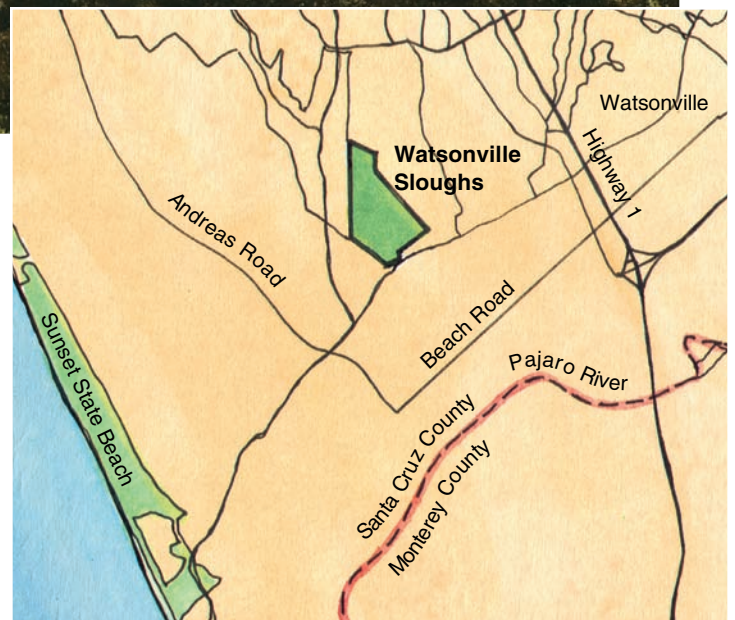
Farmland is an endangered resource in California, even in Watsonville where it is expensive because of its high productivity.

they have to renege on. That, coupled with the absolutely essential need to protect this farmland and slough habitat, moved us to act. We are thrilled to be part of a swift and creative solution to an otherwise impossible situation."

POST donors make our revolving land acquisition fund possible, and the fund allows POST to act quickly and take risks when priority properties are at stake. POST paid a total of \$3.1 million for the Watsonville land. Of that money, \$1.5 million came as a grant from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The source of the TNC grant was a fund previously established by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to protect high-priority habitats on California's Central Coast.

When funding to LTSCC is restored, POST will sell the land back to them at cost. In the meantime, LTSCC will assume all management liabilities and lease the agricultural land to the current operator, Matulich Farms, which works with tenants to grow organic strawberries on a portion of the land.

"We are trying to protect this land the smart way—before a development plan is on the table and protection becomes even more expensive," said Corwin. "This purchase is an important step toward



containing the persistent march of urbanization that threatens to swallow up open space and productive agricultural land in the Pajaro Valley."

According to Christina Fischer, TNC's Monterey Project Director, the sloughs are rich in irreplaceable natural resources. "The Nature Conservancy recognizes that coastal freshwater wetlands like the Watsonville Sloughs provide unique, essential habitat for rare native plants and animals, and may serve as a critical natural buffer as global warming and rising sea levels impact our coastal area," she said. "We applaud the outstanding efforts of POST and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County to protect these important resources." ■

Mark Wan Named POST Board Chair

Mark Wan was elected Chair of POST's Board of Directors. A distinguished venture capital specialist, Mark has brought a great deal of experience in business and entrepreneurship as well as a passion for the outdoors to POST since joining the Board in June 2003.

Mark's professional life has revolved around the needs of healthcare companies during their start-up phase. Formerly a general partner at Brentwood Associates, he helped found companies such as General Surgical Innovations, Odyssey Healthcare and Perclose Medical. In 1993, he co-founded the healthcare investment fund Three Arch Partners, where he has continued to search out new healthcare firms, often assuming temporary operating responsibility and managing key functions during a company's early



© 2005 Paulo Vescia

Opportunities

"On the opportunity side, it may be that more open space properties will become available, and POST must be ready to respond," Mark says. "This is true not only along the coast, but in south Santa Clara County, where POST is the most experienced private organization capable of protecting large, undeveloped properties."

An avid sports competitor, Mark likes to run the trails on POST-protected Windy Hill or ride his

"It is an interesting time to be in a leadership position, given the impact of the current economy on fund raising. There are definitely going to be challenges and opportunities ahead."

years. Residents of Woodside, Mark and his wife, Lisa, were co-chairs of POST's 2005 "Under the Harvest Moon" dinner, a benefit for our *Saving the Endangered Coast* campaign.

Challenges

"Because POST is such a talented organization, I am excited about working more closely with Audrey [Rust] and the staff," says Mark. "It is an interesting time to be in a leadership position, given the impact of the current economy on fund raising. There are definitely going to be challenges and opportunities ahead."

Of the challenges, Mark explains, "I'm concerned that our public partners are going to have more limited resources to acquire properties from POST. It means POST will have to hold and manage properties even longer now, and ongoing support from our donors will be more important than ever."

bike in the Tunitas Creek area. Properties along Skyline Boulevard are favorite haunts.

Part of Mark's motivation for supporting POST stems from his experience growing up in Orange County at a time when there was no local organization like POST to acquire open land when it was for sale. The strawberry fields and orange groves of his youth, he says, became housing tracts and strip malls. By getting involved with POST, he saw an opportunity to prevent a similar conversion from happening here.

"Mark sits on many boards and management teams," says POST President Audrey Rust, "and we have benefitted greatly from his help. He clearly understands the impact our work has on the future sustainability of our region, and he knows what could happen if we let the moment pass. At this critical time, I am heartened to know we have such an effective voice for the land guiding POST." ■

Donna Dubinsky Joins POST Board of Directors

It has been many years since I first learned about POST, but the mission resonated with me immediately,” says new POST Board Member Donna Dubinsky. A resident of Portola Valley and Pescadero, Dubinsky is regarded as one of the driving forces behind the rise of PDA (personal digital assistant) and “smartphone” technology. She currently serves as CEO of Numenta, a Menlo Park company that creates software inspired by the algorithms of the human brain.

“POST is very pleased to welcome Donna to the Board,” says POST President Audrey Rust. “She brings enormous energy and good humor to the Board along with her well-tested business savvy. She exudes enthusiasm and interest in our mission and will be invaluable in helping us find new ways to reach out to supporters in Silicon Valley and beyond.”

High-tech Pioneer

Donna’s rise to prominence as an entrepreneur coincided with the coming of age of the computer industry, particularly the appearance of handheld personal computing devices. After stints at Apple and its software subsidiary Claris, she co-founded Palm, Inc., with computer design visionary Jeff Hawkins. In 1996 they introduced the popular PalmPilot. Their association led to the founding of Handspring, which in 1999 developed the next generation PDA, the Visor, and later on Treo, the successful smartphone. Subsequently Handspring and Palm merged into Palm, where Donna served on the board of directors until recently.

Donna sits on the board of the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, founded by her husband Len Shustek, another successful technology entrepreneur, and on the board of her undergraduate alma mater, Yale University.

Outdoor connections

An experienced hiker in rugged outdoor environments from Mt. Kilimanjaro to Patagonia, Donna made her first contribution to POST almost 20 years ago. Her favorite POST properties are found near the family’s home in Pescadero. “I feel honored to be invited to join the board of an organization whose accomplishments and methods I thoroughly admire,” says Donna, who looks forward to learning a great deal about the whole realm of land conservation. ■



© Numenta

“I feel honored to be invited to join the board of an organization whose accomplishments and methods I admire.”

Your honorary and memorial gifts to POST create a lasting tribute to friends and loved ones by helping to protect the beauty, character and diversity of the San Francisco Peninsula and Santa Cruz Mountain range.

If you would like to make a tribute gift, please call Jennifer Tucker, Annual Giving Manager, at (650)854-7696.

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Djerassi Sculpture Tours

The Djerassi Resident Artists Program (DRAP) will be open to the public from April through October for their annual sculpture tours. Thanks to a conservation easement obtained by POST, the pristine beauty of this private 580-acre ranch is preserved in perpetuity.

Visitors can choose between two types of guided tour: a "Director's Tour" led by Executive Director Dennis O'Leary (\$45 per person) or a "Two-Mile Tour" led by DRAP staff (no charge). Both tours include a selection of more than 40 sculptures created by visual artists during the program's 28-year history.

Advance reservations are required for both types of tour.
Call DRAP at (650) 747-1250 or visit <http://www.openspacetrust.org/activities/tours.html> for more information.



Three Hills © 2006 David Nash. Photo courtesy of DRAP



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Recognize someone special and protect treasured open space with a tribute gift to POST.

Tribute gifts are the perfect way to commemorate a special occasion such as a birthday, wedding or anniversary, or to memorialize the life of a loved one. POST sends a beautiful card to your honoree or to the person's family to recognize your kind gesture. Honorees will be listed in our next issue of *Landscapes*, and donors of tribute gifts will receive the publication for one year.

There are three ways to make your tax-deductible tribute gift:

1. Visit www.openspacetrust.org

2. Call (650) 854-7696

3. Mail your gift to:

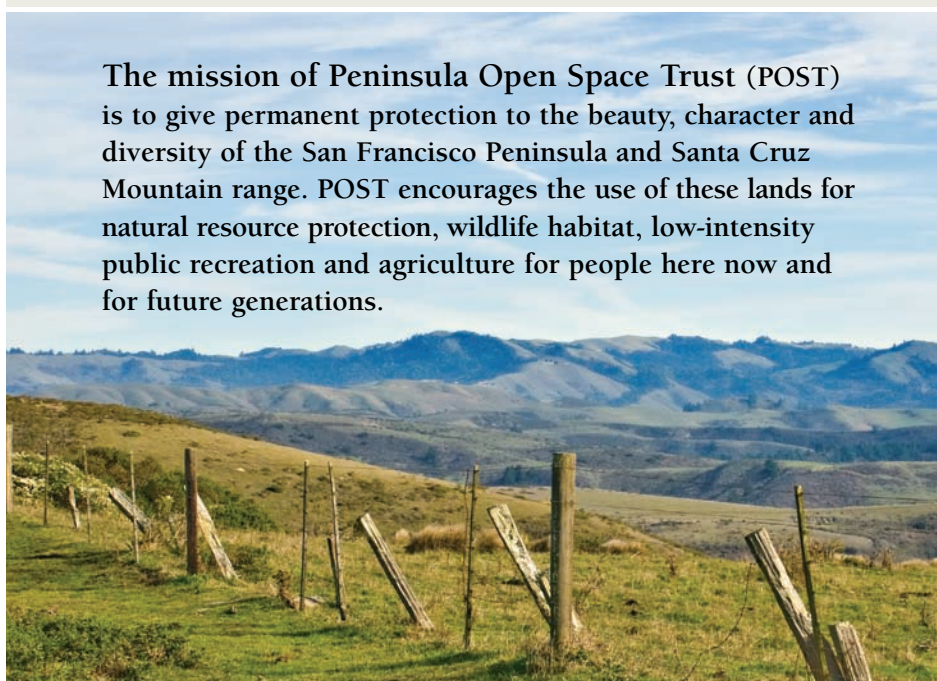
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Please provide the following information:

- The name of the person you wish to honor
- Contact information for the person who should be notified of your gift
- Your name, address, phone number, payment information and gift amount

Honor your friends and family today while protecting local landscapes people can explore, experience and enjoy forever.

The mission of Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) is to give permanent protection to the beauty, character and diversity of the San Francisco Peninsula and Santa Cruz Mountain range. POST encourages the use of these lands for natural resource protection, wildlife habitat, low-intensity public recreation and agriculture for people here now and for future generations.





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Courtesy of Ed Begley, Jr.



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