



PENINSULA OPEN SPACE TRUST

LANDSCAPES SUMMER 1999

POST'S LATEST CAMPAIGN ACQUISITION: Mills Creek Canyon

CONGRATULATIONS! You have just added another 120 acres to the Peninsula's open space heritage. Thanks to your support, with the purchase of Mills Creek Canyon, POST has protected twelve properties, totaling 12,569 acres, through our *Completing the Vision* Campaign.

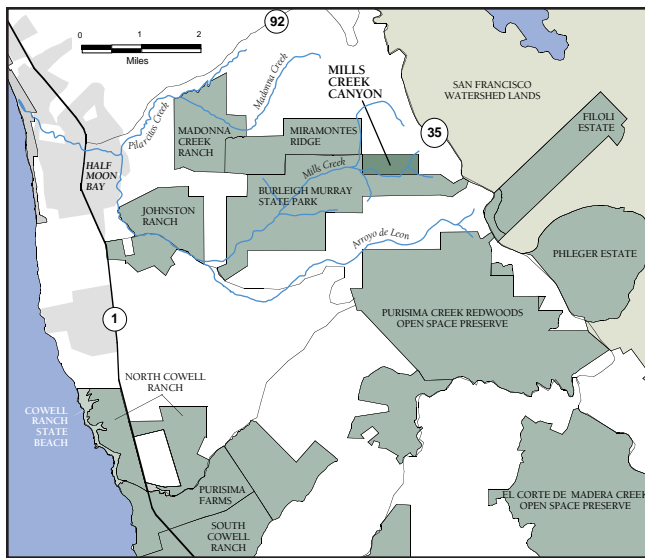
Protecting Mills Creek Canyon was fifteen years in the making. It was one of POST's first acquisition projects, and to date, the longest to complete. Sometimes land-saving opportunities rely on patience and the ongoing support of a committed community — like the Peninsula community. It was this patience and your generous support that achieved the permanent protection of Mills Creek Canyon earlier this spring.

It All Started with Windy Hill

When you drive south on Route 280, look west up toward the hills near the town of Portola Valley. The two rolling grassy hills, which stand out starkly from the surrounding forested hillsides, are part of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, POST's first project.

Much of the land that comprises Windy Hill was donated to POST in the late 1970's. POST transferred the land to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and used the funds obtained from that transfer to purchase several properties — among them, a fifty percent interest in the land we know as Mills Creek Canyon.

In 1984, POST acquired this first half interest in Mills Creek Canyon for \$40,000. It was the property's strategic location next to Burleigh Murray State Park that made this acquisition a priority. By protecting Mills Creek Canyon, we saw the potential to expand the State Park and add to the protected lands of Skyline Ridge. We could not have imagined that it would take 15 years to secure the remaining half interest in Mills Creek Canyon, and, that when we did, it would become an important puzzle piece in protecting an entire coastal watershed.



Mills Creek



Photo: Gil Davis

Protecting Land, Protecting Watershed

Situated to the west of Skyline Boulevard, and two miles south of Route 92, Mills Creek Canyon is a ruggedly beautiful area, made up of deep canyons covered with coastal scrub. Its rough terrain, while somewhat hostile to humans, is a haven for wildlife. The property offers spectacular views of the coast and its preservation protects the viewshed from Burleigh Murray State Park.

Mills Creek Canyon connects to Miramontes Ridge, purchased through our *Completing the Vision* Campaign, and the Madonna Creek Property, which was donated to POST by Mrs. Mortimer Levitt of New York City. These POST properties, totaling 1,238 acres, form the northern boundary of Burleigh Murray State Park. And, just to the south, is POST's 647-acre Johnston Ranch, under option to be purchased through the Campaign later this year.

This constellation of POST properties connects to San Francisco Watershed lands, creating a critical wildlife corridor. Mountain lions, coyote, deer, bobcats, bats, and numerous species of other birds, mammals, and reptiles now have a continuous band of undisturbed habitat to live on or migrate through. Best of all, steelhead trout, a threatened species, will have a protected freshwater spawning route back from the Pacific Ocean, via the now connected Pilarcitos Creek, Arroyo de Leon, and Mills Creek.

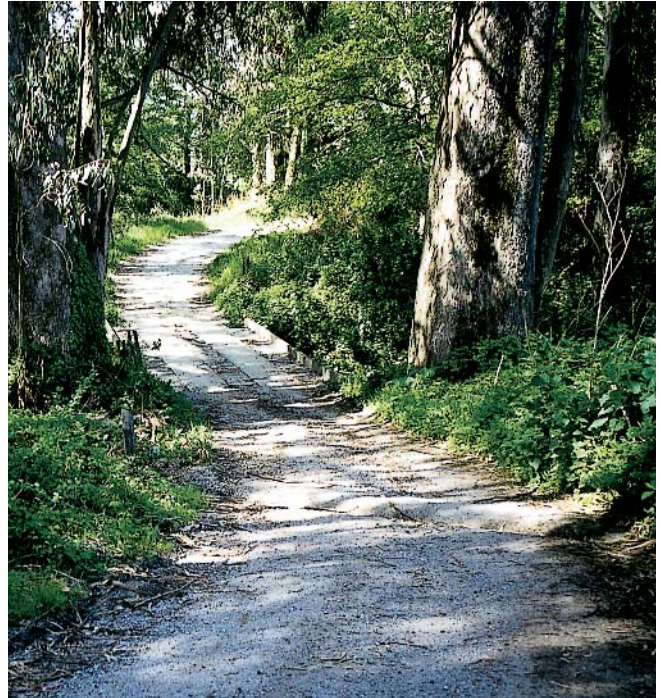


Photo: Gil Davis

Burleigh Murray State Park

MILLS CREEK: An Important Spawning Area for Steelhead Trout



Listed as a Federally Threatened Species in 1997, steelhead trout are anadromous — they are born in freshwater, travel out to saltwater and then return to spawn in freshwater.

Steelhead trout spend their first three years of life or so in freshwater, where they hatch and grow into adults. They then swim out to the sea and spend about one year there before returning to freshwater to spawn.

Unlike coho salmon, which die after spawning, steelhead trout return to the sea after they have laid their eggs. ***To reach the ocean, the steelhead travel through several POST properties including Mills Creek Canyon, Miramontes Ridge, and Johnston Ranch, by way of Mills Creek, Arroyo de Leon, and Pilarcitos Creek.***

At three miles long, Mills Creek is key to the restoration of the Pilarcitos Creek watershed. The restoration includes eliminating man-made barriers so more steelhead can get to Mills Creek.

Steelhead trout are an important indicator species. The health of the steelhead population in San Mateo County reflects the health of the coastal watershed and all life that depends on it.

*“To stick your hands
into the river
is to feel the cords
that bind the earth
together in one piece.”*

BARRY LOPEZ

Jeff Trant and daughter Lindsay

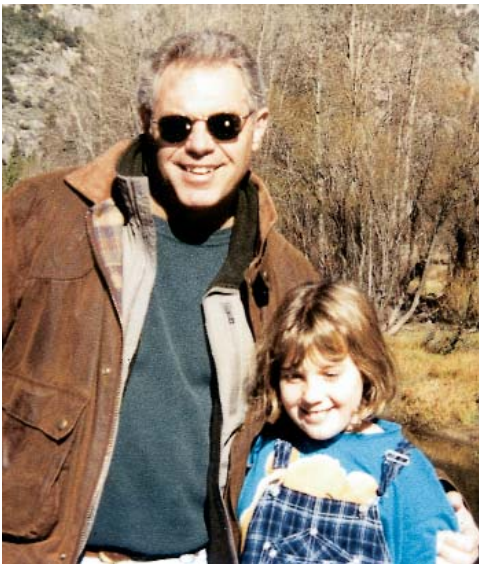


Photo: Jeff Trant

A Watershed and Rich Creekside Habitat

Mills Creek Canyon's acquisition, with its creek, canyons, and seeps of water, is an important piece of the upper coastal watershed.

The banks of the rivers and creeks provide riparian habitat, one of the richest of all plant and animal habitats. It's estimated that 42% of all mammals, 83% of amphibia, and 40% of reptile species can be found in riparian habitat. And, not surprisingly, this habitat provides the largest bird breeding area as well.

Protecting riparian habitat is critical to both humans and wildlife. The purity of water is directly linked to the protection of the lands that surround water sources. Animals require riparian habitat for water and food supplies, shelter, nesting areas and places to spawn.

Unfortunately, more than 90% of California's riparian habitat has been damaged or destroyed, due to construction of highways, dams, and housing, as well as logging and agricultural uses. Saving the riparian habitat that remains is not only a good thing to do: it's a necessity.

It Was Worth The Wait

POST's successful acquisitions through the *Completing the Vision* Campaign are transforming this upper coastal area. It was the vast tracts of protected land adjacent to Mills Creek Canyon that helped inspire the land-owner to sell the remaining fifty percent to POST. It was clear that the best use and potential value of the area would be to remain in open space. Your support of POST's campaign enabled this to happen.

JEFF TRANT *Attorney for Open Space*

POST thanks Jeff Trant, an attorney specializing in real estate law with the firm of Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich and a member of our Board of Counselors, for his help in protecting Mills Creek Canyon. Jeff negotiated the purchase of the remaining 50% of the property, enabling us to take ownership of the entire 120 acres.

For more than five years, Jeff has worked with POST on a pro bono basis. He has been instrumental in protecting several properties including Purisima Farms, strategically located between the North and South Cowell properties protected by POST in 1987, and the Water

Lane Properties in Pescadero, which helped to restore important marsh habitat. An avid hiker, outdoorsman and Bay Area native, Jeff says that he enjoys being able to balance his activities in real estate development with protecting open space.

Like each member of our Board of Counselors, Jeff leverages POST's reach and ability to protect our local landscape. We are grateful for his generous involvement.

If you are an experienced real estate, tax or estate planning attorney and would like to join POST's Board of Counselors, contact Walter Moore at (650) 854-7696.



PENINSULA OPEN SPACE TRUST THE SIXTH ANNUAL

Wallace Stegner Lecture Series



POST'S LECTURE SERIES HELPS PRESERVE OPEN SPACE

POST's 1999 Wallace Stegner Lecture Series was a great success! Thanks to the generous series sponsorship of Ambassador Bill and Mrs. Jean Lane, POST was able to continue its wonderful tribute to Wallace Stegner, while inspiring audiences and raising funds for land conservation. Without the Lanes' continued support, this series would not be possible. POST also thanks The Mercury News for its continued generous support as our media sponsor.

This year four very different and dynamic speakers participated in the series: Theo Colborn, Robert Redford, Galen Rowell, and Ann Zwinger.

We appreciate their participation and are delighted that the Wallace Stegner Lecture Series continues to attract such notable conservationists and artists.

In addition to Ambassador Bill and Mrs. Jean Lane, POST thanks the Re:Fund, Network Associates, and Sand Hill Advisors, Inc. for their support of individual lectures. POST is also grateful to all of you who attended the lectures in support of Peninsula open space.

Plans for next year's lecture series are already in the works.... we'll keep you POSTed!

Counterclockwise from top: Robert Redford and Mrs. Mary Stegner, Wallace Stegner (1909-1993), Robert Redford and Bill Lane.

A Bair Island Gallery

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN O'NEILL



Great Egret



California Clapper Rail



Mallard Ducklings



Black-crowned Night-heron



Black-necked Stilt



Canada Goose Goslings



Great Blue Heron

You Did It!

Bair Island's preservation is now secure. Thanks to POST donors, who understand the importance of this vital wetland, Bair Island will be protected in perpetuity as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

In March, POST achieved its private fund-raising goal of \$5 million. When added to the federal and state funds already in place, the cumulative individual contributions enabled POST to conclude the \$15 million financing of Bair Island.

POST is now working with the California Wildlife Conservation Board and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to transfer the land into public ownership for management and restoration.

POST supporters' generosity has ensured a healthier San Francisco Bay and the preservation of critical bayland habitat for hundreds of wildlife species.

San Francisco Bay's Wetlands:

- Help to improve air and water quality
- Protect lands from flooding
- Provide a home for an abundant array of wildlife
- Provide habitat for several endangered and threatened species
- Stabilize shorelines against erosion

POST IS CHOSEN AS BENEFICIARY OF AN IRA

By André La Fleur



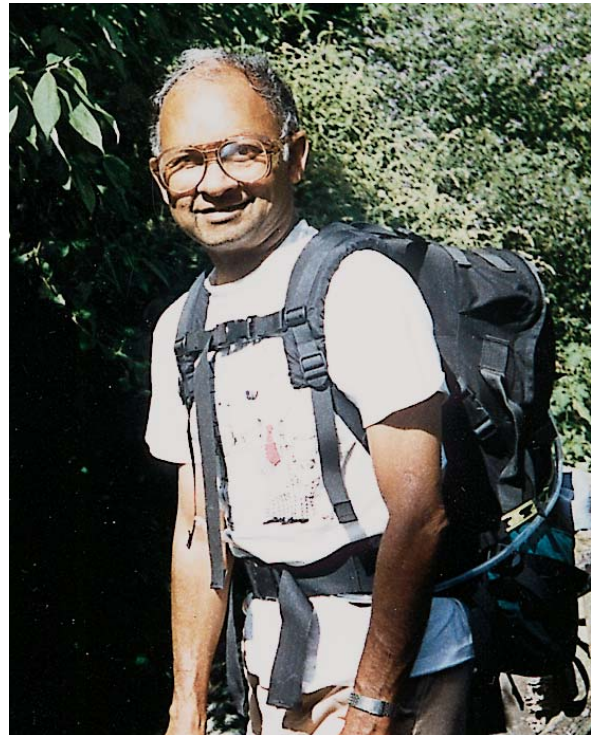
We received a welcome call recently from a man who was interested in naming POST as a beneficiary of his Individual Retirement Account (IRA). As a professional money manager, he was well aware that retirement assets can be taxed very heavily when they are transferred to heirs. He was also aware of the valuable tax benefits available to people who donate their retirement assets to qualified nonprofit organizations such as POST. But that is not why he called us. Dinesh Desai just loves open space — and was impressed by POST's reputation and land-saving track record.

A long-time local resident and avid long-distance walker who has made headlines in recent years with his marathon treks, including a coastal walk from Oregon to Mexico, Mr. Desai is very interested in protecting the beauty and accessibility of the Peninsula's remaining open spaces. His wife Joy shares his special love for the land and participates in these marathon walking adventures.

Like most people, Mr. Desai's time and energy have been focused mainly on his family and business. Recently retired, he is now making more time to get involved with organizations like POST to help ensure that the hills and forests he and his family care about will be protected for the future.

"Living on the Peninsula, I feel extremely fortunate to have access to a vast network of public parks and open space with many miles of hiking trails. For this I am indebted to the people who had the foresight to preserve these open lands. One way for me to repay this debt is to support organizations like POST with my time and money."

DINESH DESAI



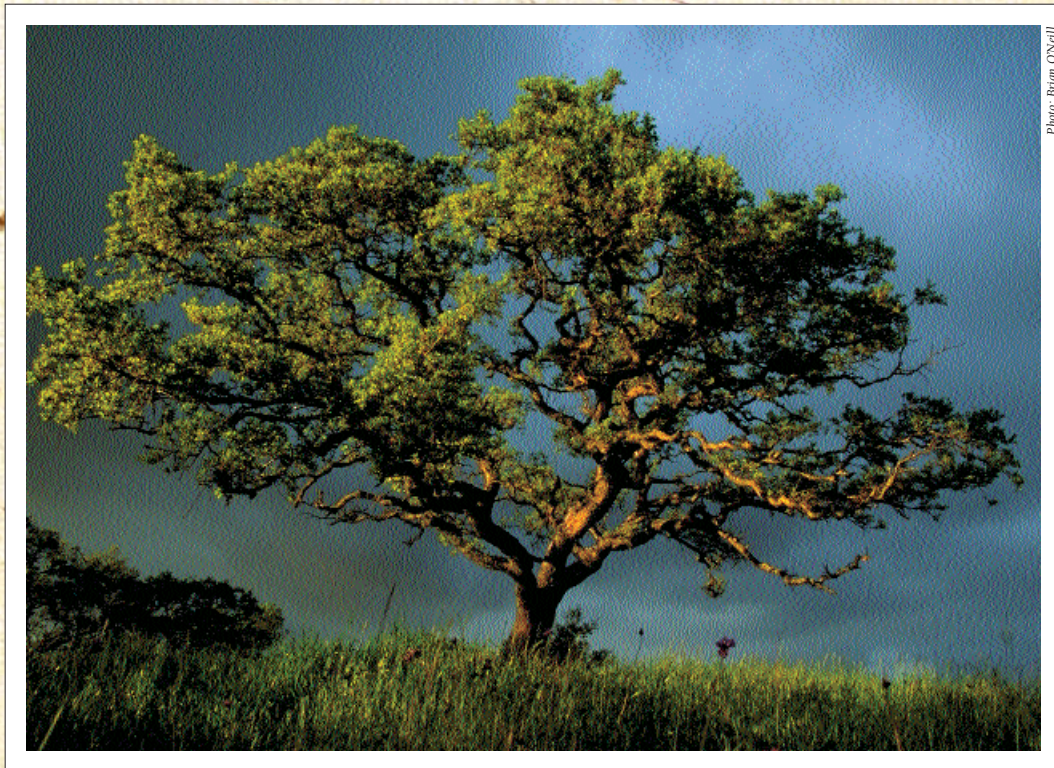


Photo: Brian O'Neill

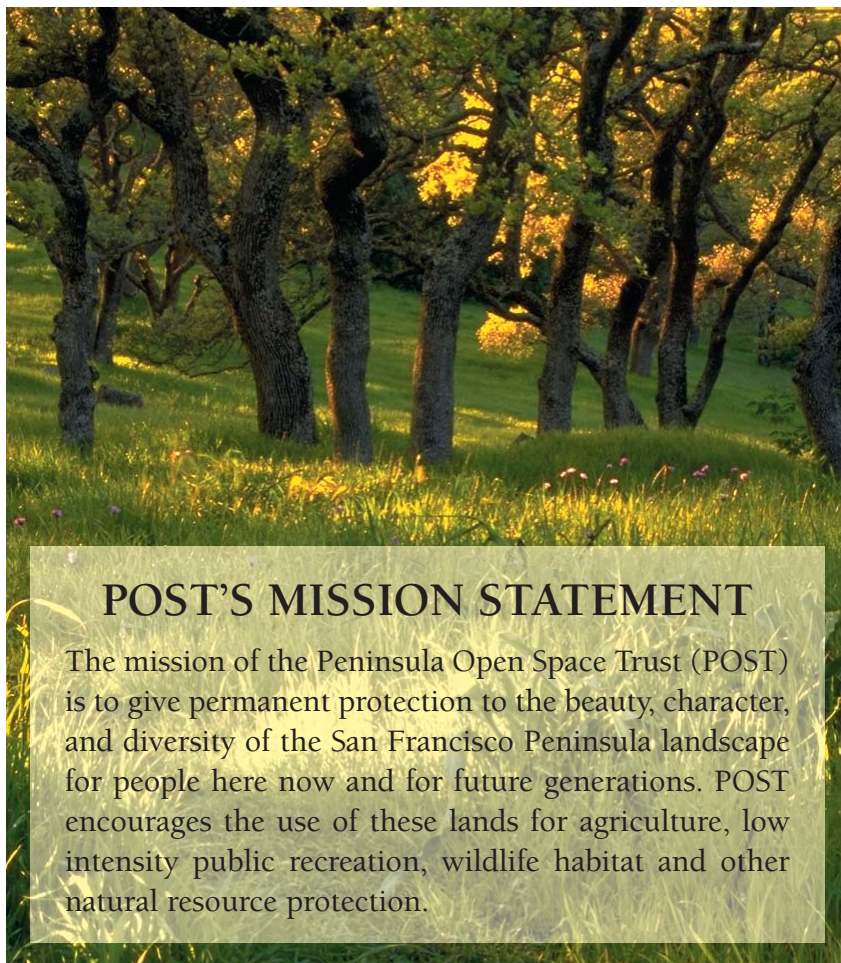
As a member of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, a group that is dedicated to opening the remaining 184 miles of the 400-mile recreational trail that links more than 75 parks and open spaces in nine Bay Area counties, Mr. Desai is taking five weeks this summer to hike the entire trail route, including the not-yet-established sections. The purpose of his journey is to raise awareness and money for completion of the trail. Mr. Desai generously pledged to match sponsors on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to \$25,000.

"POST also plays an important role in the completion of the Ridge Trail: one of our long-term goals is to complete the connections on the Skyline Ridge Corridor through which the Ridge Trail passes. We wish Mr. Desai well on his noble journey," said POST President Audrey Rust.

We are extremely grateful for Mr. Desai's extraordinary generosity and vision. Planned gifts enable POST to ensure that the land we are protecting today will be cared for in the future as well. Thank you, Mr. Desai, for protecting our open space.

If you would like information about including POST in your will or other estate plans, please contact André La Fleur at (650) 854-7696 ext. 22.





POST'S MISSION STATEMENT

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

Rancho Cañada de Oro

Not Currently Open to the Public

Peninsula Open Space Trust has received several reports of people trying to visit Rancho Cañada de Oro. While this property will eventually become public land, it remains in private ownership and is not yet open to the public.

The enthusiasm of POST supporters for Rancho Cañada de Oro is most appreciated. However, we ask for your patience until the purchase, transfer, and public use planning are complete.

This issue of Landscapes is sponsored by Rudy Metz in honor of Allen E. Smoll's 80th birthday. Allen is a life-long conservationist and has been a loyal POST supporter for the past twenty years. Happy Birthday Allen!



Landscapes

Landscapes is published quarterly by the Peninsula Open Space Trust
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POST is a nonprofit California corporation and is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to POST are tax-deductible.

Edited by Janet Curtis
Designed by DiVittorio & Assoc.
Printed by Bofors, Inc.

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*"Tracing rivers to their
fountains makes the most
charming of travels.
As the life-blood of the
landscapes, the best of the
wilderness comes to their
banks, and not one dull
passage is found in all
their eventual histories."*

John Muir

Cover photos: Gil Davis

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Peninsula Open Space Trust

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*A land conservancy for the
San Francisco Peninsula*

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