LANDSCAPES
PENINSULA OPEN SPACE TRUST
Annual Report 2009
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Back to Basics

You’d think I would have many opportunities to enjoy the fruits of POST’s labor. That I would know every trail, every vista. The truth is, I spend my time at the computer, on the phone and in meetings, just as most businesspeople do. When I’m involved in touring a property for conservation, it’s usually in a vehicle, jumping out only here or there to see something from a different angle. On weekends, there are events, errands, keeping up with friends and family. About six months ago I said, “Enough already. Why am I doing this work? I need to get out on the land.”

That was the inspiration behind the “Half-day Hiking Club.” A semi-retired friend and I gather a small group together every other Wednesday at 7:30 a.m., with a plan to return by noon. From our first hike, at Skyline Open Space Preserve, I knew this was the right thing for me to do. Within half an hour, I had a smile on my face and a deep and growing sense of connection and fulfillment. This wasn’t about athletic achievement, although it certainly is a physical experience. It was about immersing myself in nature. As humans, we’re hard-wired to feel the land’s beauty and see it as life-affirming. I wanted to get back in touch with that core, primordial feeling.

After all, I knew it as a kid. I had the good fortune to grow up in a time and place where playing out of doors in woods and fields was the norm. The principal of my elementary school believed children through sixth grade should not do homework and instead enjoy nature and sports. I remember collecting and identifying wildflowers and learning bird songs as assignments. That early exposure tapped into whatever genetic predisposition I have for loving nature, and shaped the adult I would become.

Spiritually, we all own the beautiful open lands protected by POST. Your gifts make their protection possible, so that not only views and habitat and resources are preserved, but the very experience of what it means to be human and alive in the world. These lands are our common bond. It’s likely that when you and I see an open rolling meadow, grass swaying in the breeze, perhaps a few Douglas fir punctuating one of the valleys, with layer after layer of hillsides disappearing into the distance, we both know their beauty and feel the power of the scene. For me it says “freedom,” and gives my soul room to breathe. Perhaps you feel that as well.

The clean morning air. The call of a red-tail hawk. The feel of soft dirt on the trail, and the crunch of fallen leaves as we walk. The smell of morning-damp ground and yerba buena, a sage, coyote brush in the sun. The land speaks to us in so many ways, engaging all the senses. Each hike we go on, I hear myself saying, “This is the best hike ever.” And it is. Thank you for helping to make it so.
A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Opportunity Knocks

POST prides itself on readiness to act when open land can be protected. This fiscal year, despite less public and private support due to the weak economy, POST took effective action to save more than 1,300 acres. We successfully completed important acquisitions in south Santa Clara County and on the San Mateo County coast, continued to look for ways to fund necessary stewardship tasks and came to the assistance of partner organizations whose projects were jeopardized by the state bond freeze.

Much of POST’s success is due to the loyal generosity of our donors. This year, bequests provided a major source of revenue. We are deeply grateful for all this support. POST was proactive in responding to the economic environment and made adjustments to the organization and operations to reduce expenses. I wish also to compliment fellow Board members and the staff for finding the most effective uses of POST resources.

Changes to the Board this year included the addition of Jan Garrod, an expert on agricultural and open space issues in south Santa Clara County. Susan Ford Dorsey finished her term though she continues to be involved as a member of POST’s Advisory Council. We congratulate Martha Kanter, who resigned from the Board to become the new U. S. Under Secretary of Education. While we’ll miss her wisdom and sharp wit, we wish her well in achieving her goal of strengthening student achievement nationwide.

As you review POST’s major projects during the past fiscal year, I hope you will feel as proud as I do of all you have helped accomplish. This is a time of many challenges but also a time of great opportunity. Only with broad support from the many donors and volunteers we acknowledge in this issue are achievements on this scale possible.

Thank you!

Mark A. Wan
SOUTH SANTA CLARA COUNTY

The Next Frontier

With the protection of several properties this year, including Rancho San Vicente in June, POST made a major stride forward in saving threatened open space in south Santa Clara County. The Santa Cruz Mountains dominate the landscape here, rising up around the edge of south San Jose. Surprisingly, despite the growing threat of development in this stretch of hillsides, no land trust has made the hills adjacent to San Jose a priority for conservation until POST stepped forward. Today, our momentum in South County is stronger than ever as we partner with public agencies to ensure permanent protection of the region’s historic ranch lands, green pastures, rugged hillsides and panoramic valley views.

Rancho San Vicente’s 966 acres of scenic grazing land sits between Almaden Quicksilver and Calero county parks. Just minutes from densely populated Almaden Valley, this rolling terrain helps connect nearly 32,000 acres of surrounding parks and open space that provide a visual and recreational escape for millions of residents and visitors. Rancho San Vicente is excellent habitat for many native plants and animals, with a vibrant display of wildflowers each spring. The property was transferred to Santa Clara County Department of Parks this fall (see p. 43).

Though smaller in size, two additional properties protected by POST had strategic impact nearby. Earlier this year, we acquired and transferred 192 acres along the Santa Cruz Mountain ridgeline to Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. These properties, situated between Almaden Quicksilver County Park and Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve, help connect more than 8,000 acres of adjacent open space and parks, enhancing the existing network of conservation lands in South County. As word of our work in the area spreads, we look forward to reaching out to local residents and landowners to increase their awareness of POST and the benefits our land-saving work.

The Santa Cruz Mountains dominate the landscape here, rising up around the edge of south San Jose.
SAN MATEO COAST

Work Continues

Our region is defined by its magnificent coastline—its what shapes a peninsula, after all. With our 2001-2005 Saving the Endangered Coast campaign, POST championed local beaches, terrace prairies and coastal hillsides along the San Mateo Coast, establishing a long-term commitment to these lands. That work continues in earnest, as we build on the landmark accomplishments of the campaign and stay true to the promise of keeping these beloved landscapes open and preserved for all time.

Case in point: this year we moved $4 million closer to realizing the dream of incorporating 4,262-acre Rancho Corral de Tierra into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), one of the world’s largest urban national parks. Thanks to continuing efforts by POST and the Bay Area Congressional delegation—Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Sen. Barbara Boxer and Rep. Anna Eshoo, in particular—Congress awarded this latest round of funds from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund toward the purchase of this vast expanse of land near Montara. The money is the second installment made on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), which will eventually make the property the southern gateway to the GGNRA. Federal appropriations approved for Rancho Corral de Tierra to date total nearly $6 million.

Through a generous bargain sale, POST also acquired 952-acre Toto Ranch, east of Highway 1 near San Gregorio. Woodside resident and longtime POST donor Kathleen Scutchfield sold this expansive ranchland to POST for $3 million, well below its appraised value. Besides protecting the land from parcelization and luxury home development, POST will safeguard the banks of Tunitas Creek, which runs along the property’s northern border.

This year, POST transferred several properties to public ownership so they can eventually become key links in hiking trails and wildlife habitat on the Coastside. A highlight was POST’s transfer of 260-acre Bluebrush Canyon, southeast of Half Moon Bay along Purisima Creek Road, to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, which will add the land to its Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. The property will help complete a future trail corridor between Skyline Ridge and the sea. Although it is years from being complete, the trail will enable hikers to travel from the Peninsula all the way to the California Coastal Trail.
Saving land means more than just acquiring it. It means caring for the land and maintaining the characteristics that prompted us to save it in the first place. Particularly now when public agency budgets are limited and POST is likely to own land for longer periods of time before transfers can occur, more of our financial and staff resources must be devoted to stewardship. It’s an essential activity that continues to grow in urgency and importance.

When POST acquired the 478-acre Wicklow property in 2002, for instance, more than half the land was covered in invasive, non-native eucalyptus trees. The threat to residential subdivisions in neighboring El Granada was palpable. This year, POST worked with local residents, partner agencies and a contractor to clear a buffer strip between Wicklow and homes on the east side of El Granada Boulevard. We hope to begin a second phase of work, provided state and federal funds become available.

POST doesn’t typically build trails, but this year we partnered with the Coastal Conservancy to complete two segments of the California Coastal Trail. These projects presented an extraordinary opportunity to enhance public recreation on the Coastside and for POST to secure additional land protection funds from the Conservancy. At Pillar Point Bluff we completed a short portion of the Coastal Trail known as the Jean Lauer Trail. Leading up to this work, we removed hundreds of invasive exotic Pampas grass plants, then improved drainage on the land to prevent erosion. All trails at Pillar Point Bluff are now safer and more scenic for visitors who come here to take in the sweeping ocean views. At the Cowell-Purisima Trail the Conservancy also funded our trail work. The 3.3-mile trail is on POST’s former North Cowell and Purisima Farms properties, now privately owned and protected by conservation easements. This project was put on hold by the state bond freeze. POST is working with project partners to get the work back on track now that the freeze has been lifted.

At Cloverdale Coastal Ranches, we continue our fight against Pampas grass, an effort begun in 2001, now resulting in the removal of more than two million plants. This year only spot treatment was necessary, but another invasive exotic, Canary Island hypericum, required immediate attention. California’s largest infestation occurs on private land near Gazos Creek, and the highly aggressive, deceivingly attractive plant was gaining ground at Cloverdale. POST completed the first phase of eradication with a $20,000 grant from the San Mateo County Weed Management Area and continues to lead state efforts to eradicate the plant.
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

With a Little Help to Our Friends

POST relies on the strength and cooperation of fellow land trusts and public agency partners to save land in the most effective, strategic way. Working together, we can save many more acres and preserve the integrity of our region’s natural lands than we can working alone.

POST took quick action in December 2008 to prevent delay and additional costs from derailing an important restoration project on Outer Bair Island near Redwood City. POST purchased a 1,600-acre portion of the island in 1997 and made it part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The state bond freeze threatened to halt a cooperative project between Ducks Unlimited and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to remove the last levee separating Outer Bair Island from tidal action. POST extended a loan of $547,000 to replace bond money that had been approved but was suddenly unavailable. Subsequently the money was returned to POST.

When approved bond money was withheld by the state legislature and threatened a high priority project of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), POST stepped in to help. At stake were 95 acres of valuable farm and wetlands at Watsonville Sloughs in Santa Cruz County. Recognizing the urgent need to protect this fragile, multi-use land, we reached into our own land protection funds and provided $1.6 million of the $3.1 million needed to purchase the land. While POST temporarily took title to the land, the balance due was paid by a grant from The Nature Conservancy. In September, the state restored the bond funds designated for the project, and POST was able to sell the land back to LTSCC at cost.
It’s hard to place a value on something that has been as much a part of your life as the air around you. Yet I’m convinced that keeping large portions of the Santa Cruz Mountains pristine has helped define Silicon Valley and that underscores the importance of the work of POST.

There is something more, too. The idea of quality of life doesn’t do it justice. It’s a sense of place, something that remains constant in a world that is perpetually transformed. The local landscapes that surround us offer a point of reference, a prism that brings that world into focus. They serve as landmarks for our minds, compass points for the imagination. They shape our identity and give our lives perspective, no matter where we may find ourselves.

Growing up in Palo Alto in the sixties, during summers each day I would pedal my bike out behind Stanford. As I peered up at Skyline, the wind was in my face, and the fog hung perpetually over the Santa Cruz Mountains. It seemed that no matter how warm it was on the Peninsula, by the time I got to the top of Old La Honda Road, I would be shrouded in the mist as the redwoods dripped on me.

For almost a half century I’ve bicycled and hiked in the hills above Palo Alto. I’ve ridden Highway 1 from Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz and made my way up and down Bear Gulch Road to San Gregorio long before Neil Young fenced the road off. I skipped classes in high school to wander the trails in the then-brand new Palo Alto Foothills Park. I lived for a while in a rustic one-room cabin at the southern end of Skyline Boulevard. I have seen bobcats and mountain lions and followed their tracks while wandering through abandoned apple and pear orchards still heavy with fruit.

The Santa Cruz Mountains are a touchstone for me. I grew up here, I have celebrated birthdays here, I was married here, and again and again I find myself drawn back to a place that seems to have changed so little in five decades.

What is perhaps most enjoyable about my love affair with these mountains is that while they’ve remained constant, like a secret place or some multifaceted jewel, they gradually reveal themselves to me with each visit.

John Markoff is a senior writer for The New York Times. Considered one of the nation’s most influential computer and technology reporters, he has covered Silicon Valley for The Times since 1992. He has taught at Stanford University’s Department of Communication and lives in San Francisco.
# Financial Summary

*Statement of financial condition as of June 30, 2009*

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## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**  
**$229,505,138**
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.
Wetlands aren’t just murky marshland. They are a rich feeding ground for a vast number of birds and other animals who rely on this habitat for survival. These lands also help filter our water supply and keep our oceans healthy.

With 90 percent of California’s wetlands lost since the Gold Rush, it’s a high priority to save those that remain. That’s why POST took action earlier this year to save 95 acres at the Watsonville Sloughs, and why in September we transferred that land at cost to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC) for permanent protection.

Through a partnership with LTSCC and partial funding from The Nature Conservancy in January, POST provided $3.1 million in funding and temporarily took title to rare wetlands and critical farm fields at the heart of the Watsonville Sloughs, Santa Cruz County’s largest expanse of freshwater wetlands. “POST stepped in to rescue this project at the request of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County,” said POST Executive Vice President Walter T. Moore. “At the time, their public funding from the State Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board was on hold due to California’s state bond funding freeze. Now that the money has been restored, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County can move forward with their initiative to preserve the Watsonville Sloughs and buy this land from POST.”

**Vital Habitat, Fertile Farmland**

Located west of Highway 1, the land, formerly known as the Cheung Ranch, includes important wildlife habitats adjacent to some of the most valuable and fertile farmland in California. The site’s coastal wetlands help maintain water quality in Monterey Bay and provide unique habitats for native plants and animals, including five federally listed species and 16 state-listed species of special concern.

POST’s transfer to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County was part of LTSCC’s larger acquisition in September of a total of 440 acres at Watsonville Sloughs. Adjacent to 350 acres of protected state and federal land, the transferred land helps create an 800-acre expanse of uninterrupted open space in the sloughs. LTSCC will lease the agricultural portion (52 acres) of the land it is buying from POST to organic farmers, as it has done since January through a management agreement with POST. LTSCC will continue to use the lease revenue for its stewardship, restoration and education work.

**Partnering for Success**

POST paid for the 95-acre acquisition through its donor-supported land fund as well as a $1.7 million grant from The Nature Conservancy funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to protect high-priority habitats on California’s Central Coast. “We’re so grateful to POST and The Nature Conservancy for keeping this project alive and waiting out the nine-month funding delay with us,” said LTSCC Executive Director Terry Corwin. “The Watsonville Sloughs have long been considered a high priority for conservation. Now that bond funds are available again, we can complete this campaign to preserve essential wetlands, farm fields and water quality in our community.”
In just five short months, the natural wonderland of south San Jose’s Rancho San Vicente has gone from threatened landscape to permanently protected parkland, thanks to POST’s acquisition of the property this summer and now its transfer to Santa Clara County Department of Parks.

This fall, POST sold the 966-acre ranch at the southern tip of Almaden Valley for inclusion in adjoining Calero County Park. POST purchased the property in June for $16 million and sold it to County Parks for the same amount.

Santa Clara County Parks Adds Rancho San Vicente

Rancho San Vicente is a key link between Almaden Quicksilver and Calero county parks, with the potential to connect more than 31,000 acres of surrounding open space and parkland. Prior to POST’s purchase, the developers who owned Rancho San Vicente hoped, at various times, to build up to 300 residential units, an 18-hole golf course and 16 large private estates on the property. Under County Parks ownership, the land will be preserved forever within the protected greenbelt that rings Almaden Valley and the South Bay. The land will help connect habitat for migrating wildlife, preserve serpentine soils for spectacular wildflower displays, and eventually provide easy access for outdoor recreation to residents of south San Jose and beyond.

County Parks is now in the process of planning future public recreation on Rancho San Vicente. Such access will take time to develop, and the property is not yet open to the public. POST donors who wish to experience this classic California landscape up close will be able to take advantage of docent-led tours next spring led by POST and County Parks staff. Stay tuned for more information!

Egan Junior High Makes $1,000 Gift to POST

A recent gift of $1,000 from the Egan Junior High School Green Team in Los Altos gave POST more than a much-needed contribution—it was proof that young people are taking sustainable living seriously.

To raise money, students sold T-shirts and designated proceeds from a dance. “As a student body we wanted to do something positive for the Bay Area, and our idea was to donate to POST,” explained Greg Davies, advisor to the group. “The Green Team is a small group of students with daily responsibility for such things as recycling and composting materials during lunch. Each student in the 500-member student body is required to serve one week on the Green Team.”
Cloverdale Restoration Receives Stimulus Funds

A four-part restoration plan at POST’s Cloverdale Coastal Ranches in Pescadero is the only project selected by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to receive stimulus funding from their Sacramento office. Staff announced the $55,000 grant in April 2009.

“The grant is a tremendous boost to work begun when POST acquired the property in 1997,” said Jeff Powers, project manager for Cloverdale. “At 5,777 acres, the ranch has tremendous stewardship needs, more so because management practices of the distant past left much of the land in poor condition. Using a combination of volunteer and contract labor, POST has worked hard to improve the land’s scenic and habitat value.”

The grant provides for additional restoration and repair of two small ponds, both of which provide habitat for threatened California red-legged frogs and endangered San Francisco garter snakes. In addition the grant covers a prescribed burn on 320 acres in an effort to enhance grasslands around the ponds, which also affect the viability of these species.

The grant also covers continued removal of non-native, invasive Pampas and Jubata grass on approximately 2,500 acres as well as removal of non-native, invasive Canary Island hypericum from 550 acres.

POST Acquires 21-Acre Property in Half Moon Bay

In October, the City of Half Moon Bay transferred ownership of a 21-acre property near the junction of Highways 1 and 92 to POST.

POST acquired an option to buy the property in 2004 in order to assign the option to Half Moon Bay. Using a $3.1 million interest-free loan from POST, the city was able to buy the property that year from Nurseriesmen’s Exchange for future use as a community park. Unable to pay back the loan, the city sought alternative funding sources. After five years, when none of the alternatives came to fruition, POST agreed to take title to the property.

“We’re disappointed that Half Moon Bay has not been able to move forward with a community park on this land,” said POST President Audrey Rust. “POST took a special interest in seeing this property protected because it is a key link in connecting the wild open lands east of Half Moon Bay to downtown and the coast. We usually focus on rural lands, but when this property became available, and the city asked for our help, we knew they needed to act more quickly than they could alone. In taking title to the land now, POST can help relieve some financial pressure on the city. At this time, we’re working to determine future possibilities for the land.”
By taking advantage of a matching gift program, you may double or even triple your contribution to POST. Some employers also match gifts made by retirees, spouses or board members.

Ned and Jimi Barnholt made a major gift and pledge to POST during our coastal campaign. Their gift was matched by the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, where Ned is a board member. The match gives POST extra land-saving power, more so than just the original generous contribution.

For help with matching gifts, call POST at (650) 854-7696 or see your human resources administrator. We acknowledge you and the company for the match. For more information, visit: www.openspacetrust.org/matchinggifts.

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On September 29, POST donors and their families enjoyed a perfect day at Bolsa Beach. Master Sand Sculptor Kirk Rademaker arrived with buckets, shovels and hand-tools to add special techniques to native talent for playing with sand. Walks & Talks are open to donors of $500 or more. 

(Left) Doug Lusk and daughter Zoe work together on their castle. (Below left) Mary Suzanne Shreve and daughter Veronica with Isabelle and Josh Gross watch a tower take shape under the skilled hand of Master Sand Sculptor Kirk Rademaker. (Below) A wing of the finished castle.
Richard Preston
Monday, February 8, 2010, 8 p.m.

In his book The Wild Trees, bestselling author Richard Preston tells the spellbinding story of scientists Steve Sillett and Marie Antoine, who found a lost world in the redwoods of California—dangerous, hauntingly beautiful and unexplored. The author of seven books, including The Hot Zone, The Cobra Event and The Demon in the Freezer, Preston has won both the American Institute of Physics Award and the National Magazine Award. He will give a slide presentation about the unique and fragile habitat found high up in the redwoods, the world’s tallest trees.
Paul Theroux
Monday, March 1, 2010, 8 p.m.
Sponsor – Sand Hill Advisors

Prolific and profound, author Paul Theroux is one of modern literature’s most respected chroniclers of the expatriate experience in places as disparate as Malawi, Honduras and Eastern Europe. His novels and travel books shimmer with unique observations told in compelling detail. Audiences respond to his witty, acerbic asides and the depth of his understanding of world literature. Spend an evening with a master storyteller as he takes you on a journey through personal revelations in exotic locales.

Vinod Khosla
in conversation with KQED’s Michael Krasny
Monday, April 26, 2010, 8 p.m.

Celebrated venture capitalist and “green” entrepreneur Vinod Khosla was co-founder of Daisy Systems and CEO of Sun Microsystems. He is now engaged in launching new businesses devoted to solar power, biofuels, geothermal energy, low-carbon building materials, water treatment and desalination. He joined Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers in 1986, then formed Khosla Ventures. Since 2004, he has funded a wide range of traditional as well as emerging clean technologies. He will share observations on the intersection of high-tech business and the environment in conversation with acclaimed interviewer and radio host Michael Krasny.
Whether you walk, run, ride
or just look at open land from a distance, you benefit from its presence.

Making a year-end gift to POST helps ensure the natural integrity of our region and creates a legacy of environmental quality for the future. Your contributions protect habitat, maintain sources of clean water, keep agricultural land in production and provide places for recreation.

As the year draws to a close, we thank you for your past contributions to POST and ask you to give generously again to safeguard our treasured shared open spaces.

To make a gift to POST, go to: www.openspacetrust.org/contribute or call POST at (650) 854-7696.