

Greetings from ETRAC,

This writing is to inform the contributing organizations of the actions of ETRAC this past year. In advising you of the actions, we want to inform and maintain a close relationship with equestrian organizations throughout the San Francisco Peninsula. There have been and continue to be many programs and actions that ETRAC will be monitoring and participating with in the future in the best interests of the equine community. An overview of this year's actions is presented in this writing.

Since March of this year, two ETRAC representatives have attended 1- 3 meetings per month on issues encompassing land trust and land use for equestrians. The meetings have been with MROSD (Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District) regarding MROSD acquisitions and dispersion of land and land use. MROSD's focus is now changing from acquisition towards development of their acquired lands, many of which have been closed to the public; a plus for the horse community. In order to safely and protectively open up their lands, MROSD has formed CAC (Community Action Community) to become informed as to what the public feels is a priority in their development goals. (Examples of 'developmental goals' would be; 1. protecting endangered species 2. protection of our water supply 3. educational centers 4. family camping sites 5. development of new trails 6) development of sustainable farming, etc) ETRAC, because of many years of work bringing attention to equestrian trail needs to the many government and private managers in the counties on the San Francisco peninsula, has been asked to participate in these meetings. -

Many of the MROSD land acquisitions were formerly farmlands. Now, these lands are under government (Federal-State-County rules) vs. private control that requires MROSD to make certain changes. These requirements necessitate modification of their mission statement to protect and conserve these acquire lands and their non-human inhabitants. It should be noted that lands acquired by MROSD west of highway 35 have an additional mission statement of preserving the agricultural lifestyle for future generations. MROSD wants to combine conservation and farming whenever possible. To combine all these goals, MROSD has helped many of those former ranches and farms remain by not only improving the lands to governmental standards, but also then leasing back these lands at reduced rate enabling younger ranchers to stay and work the lands profitably. This has resulted in much of the coastal views to remain as open farmlands instead of development.

Whenever possible, ETRAC has been active in ensuring that equestrians, whenever possible, are represented with easy trailer parking, gravel surfaces, tie racks, circular routes and most importantly, access to the various locations. The following are overviews of actions and information of trail development and land acquisition and issues.

North of Montara to Pacifica, the "Devil's Slide" sections of highway 1 has been closed to vehicular traffic and San Mateo County Parks is planning to open this road as a multi-use trail. While the trail is a singular "up and back trail," the views are spectacular. As a reminder, Devil's

Slide has been replaced by tunnels because of constant closures due to erosion slides. Slides may continue and force a permanent closure of this new trail. However, this Devil's Slide trail can be accessed easily from McNee State Park and from a future conceptual inter-trail connection between McNee and GGNRA's Corral de Tierra lands. ETRAC Management Committee wants to make sure that equestrians have the opportunity to enjoy these views and connections. It should be understood that this particular trail, due to the problem of erosion, its uphill grade and coastal moisture, will not have a gravel surface but an alternative surfacing which should provide better traction.

The equestrian friendly 6.7mile Crystal Springs Trail, (CST) goes south from Highway 92 along Canada road and continues west towards Huddart Park. Two equestrian friendly trails (Sheep Camp Trail and Edgewood Trail, to Edgewood Park) connect to CST. From Sawyer Trail (which equestrians can also ride, but much of it is paved) at Crystal Springs Road, a new one (1) mile segment of CST will continue south along Skyline Blvd. to Hwy. 92. This proposed trail will be made from abandoned Watershed roads and therefore will be paved. ETRAC is trying to get the Parks to roughen the surface for better riding. Future plans will allow equestrians to travel approximately 14+ mi. along the entire Crystal Springs Regional Trail which begins at San Bruno Avenue @ Skyline Blvd.to Huddart Park.

Bear Creek Stables is located at Bear Creek Redwoods OSP which is off Hwy. 17. There are areas of the Preserve that are close to the public and one area that is limited to access by permit only. Since the stable was acquired by MROSD in 2000, the stables have been operated on a month to month lease. Since 2010 there has been a study involving stables on public land (GGNRA, East Bay Regional Park and San Mateo County Parks). The results of this study will be used to draft a five year lease for the Bear Creek Stables which includes the site plan and parameters for the tenant.-

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) has been dealing with the many parks under its jurisdiction, one of which includes Rancho Corral de Tierra. The public has access to this property while GGNRA is bringing the area into compliance with other properties. ETRAC will be watching this property's planning closely since this property has several stables on this site and local equestrians love this property and GGNRA has verbalized goals of a 'equestrian presence' for this 4000+ acre property.

ETRAC has been trying to obtain information on the San Mateo County Disaster Plan as it relates to large animals. The process of getting information is very slow, especially as it relates to animal rescue on the east side of Hwy 35 of SMC. The civilian portion as it relates to animals is sketchy. The County contracts with Animal Control in relation to small animals, but not large animals. Animal Control does not have the funds nor resources to care for, transport or shelter large animals. West of Hwy 35, Coastside Large Animal Evacuation Unit (CLAEvac) has people trained to help transport large animals and has various locations designated as sites for possible sheltering. Another group, CERPP (Citizens Emergency and Response Preparedness Program) is located in the Woodside Fire Protection District and leads the large animal disaster plans in this

area. They are trained in large animal rescue and have sites designated for sheltering. They have information to help you prepare for an emergency/disaster involving your animals. Their web site is: [info@cerpp.org](mailto:info@cerpp.org).

Along the GGNRA owned bluffs on Hwy 1, just south of SF County line, are Mar Vista and Palo Mar Stables. These facilities have existed for decades & represent the few remaining sites which offer affordable rental horses on the Peninsula. They also have public boarding. Although often foggy, their locations offer great beach riding and access to riding through Golden Gate Park. Recent issues threaten closure of these facilities and that would be a real loss. ETRAC will monitor these stables closely.

Although not part of GGNRA, but still of interest to many riders, is Golden Gate Park. Although the riding in the park is in need of upgrading, there are still many good short trails to ride through the park. There is also an equestrian field at the west end of the park. (Bercut Field). Currently a member of ETRAC is working with SF Recreation and Parks department to upgrade Bercut Field and the nearby equitation field as well. A revised map showing the riding trails through the Park is also being pursued. This is an ongoing process and it is hoped to provide equestrians with better knowledge, understanding and riding opportunities in the Park.

Regarding California Parks, an ETRAC representative recently attended a talk by Retired Marine Major General, Anthony Jackson, new head of CA State Parks. General Jackson's recent tour of Ca. State Parks showed them to be in poor condition. He clarified recent reports of money 'stolen' by his department and said that it was fully returned and falsely reported as to the amounts stolen (only \$20 vs \$50 million short). He also informed attendees that our taxes helped to pay for only 1/4 of his department's operating costs. The remainder has to be raised or accomplished through volunteerism. Since the 1990's, the property size of the California parks has almost doubled but the budget has remained the same. So to counter this imbalance, he hopes to increase park use by upgrading parks, increase volunteerism, increase private funding, institute energy saving measures, partnering with other business to increase revenue and increase appreciation for all the current parks staff that have worked so short-staffed. As equestrians, we can help preserve our continued presence through our conscientious efforts when we ride in the parks and open spaces. Please know that trail access is decreasing because of increased costs for trail maintenance for horse use and public protests over manure presence. To help decrease maintenance costs: Don't ride in the same path which will form a trough that water will rush down and deepen; ride along the entire width of the trail, not just one section. If your horse(s) urinates or defecates, try to go off the trail whenever possible and not in the stream/creek etc. Be sure to pick up after your horses at your trailers, and interact with the public to educate them about horses and manure (horse manure is basically harmless to humans). Be an Ambassador for the parks. Always remember to say "thank you" when hikers give way to you. A small gesture can have a huge impact. Don't be afraid to let children pet your horse. That small gesture may produce a future equestrian.

Another important 'win-win' for equestrians is the continued equestrian access to the Driscoll Ranch Event Center (DREC). (This center has been used to put on training events, trail trials,

rodeos, training clinics and equestrian group trail rides.) ETRAC's CAC involvement has helped tremendously with securing the positive outcome of the newly acquired DREC by MROSD.

Since its creation in 1972, MROSD has been focused on securing an open space green belt to prevent its development (currently over 62,000 acres). With all these lands, development priorities are varied: from trail creation, preservation of flora/fauna, creation of teaching centers and preservation of the farmlands and their historic use, to name a few. MROSD has had no experience with managing anything like the DREC. The agency initially decided to close the event center until they could figure out how to handle this new venue. However ETRAC not only was there to protest this decision, but also worked closely with MROSD to help them be open to its continued equestrian access.

ETRAC sees a golden opportunity to show governmental agencies how united and passionate equestrians are about their trails, equestrian activities, equestrian friendly event centers and the equestrian heritage. That is why ETRAC is spear heading a grass-roots effort to partner with MROSD to secure matching funds towards replacement arena panels, for the DREC arena, which have been sold by the previous owner. By **MANY EQUESTRIANS** donating small amounts (\$5-10+) towards this effort, MROSD will look at the number of interested parties donating. These numbers will represent the strength of the influence of 'equestrians' to governmental agencies. (Government agencies look at 'numbers' since they represent 'the public') Please send your checks (made out to "MROSD" and with notation for "DR Arena Panel Fund") to Mike Bushue, 2243 Semeria Ave., Belmont 94002-1521 by Jan 15, 2014. Anything over \$40 is tax deductible

In conclusion, many of us have said or have heard that this is the last generation to ride horses in the Bay Area. Like many other issues confronting us, we cannot take things for granted. If each one of us volunteers or donates to continue our equestrian heritage and makes a commitment to help when and where we can, trail riding will be here to stay.

Remember, if it was easy, everyone would be doing it. Gratefully accept responsibilities associated with equestrian undertakings. Remain upbeat and positive and life will reward your efforts.

Happy Trails,

Mark Hawthorne