



ETRAC Annual Report End 2022-Mid 2023

ETRAC (Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee) volunteer members have been meeting since 2000 to promote equestrian trail interests on the San Francisco Peninsula and outlying areas. We welcome new members, especially those representing other equestrian, park, and land management organizations.

The covid lockdown forced a hiatus on many projects and caused closure of a few trails from lack of maintenance.

With this document, the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee resumes our annual reporting on projects we are involved in, many of which were ongoing during the

pandemic. We are grateful that even during covid, we could still enjoy riding and caring for our horses. And although much trail work was put on hold for those two years, ETRAC members and supporters continued to liaise with the land managers and policy makers for our parks and open spaces and make sure that equestrian needs and concerns were heard.

Come work with us! If you are interested in assuring continued equestrian trail access on Mid-Peninsula trails, please contact Beverley Kane sensei@horsensei.com and visit us at <http://www.etrac-equestrian.com>

The following are some of ETRAC's projects and interests:

- **[Bay Area Barns & Trails](#)**: This organization supports many equestrian projects. The record of their 2022 accomplishments is at [https://mailchi.mp/3a5d449a76f6/our-accomplishments?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/3a5d449a76f6/our-accomplishments?e=[UNIQID]) and includes the annual Trail Challenge “Where the Trails Win.” In this contest riders from every county log their miles. The country with the most miles wins \$2500 toward trail improvement. In 2022, Marin County won the prize.
- **[Bay-to-Sea Trail](#)**: (See also Peninsula Open Space Trust in this document)
- **E-bikes**. State [Assembly Bill 1909](#), voted into law at the beginning of this year, mandated that all classes of e-bikes are allowed on all trails unless prohibited by a local ordinance. (See **Palo Alto** below.) This includes some of the more powerful e-bikes in the Class 3 category, which according can reach speeds of up to 28 mph.
- **[GGNRA](#) (Golden Gate National Recreation Area)**: The Miramontes **Trail**, which starts from Richards Road in Huddart Park, has been closed for several years because a portion of this trail fell into the West Union Creek. ETRAC continues to work with GGNRA on the erosion situation and hopes to relocate the trail to an area less prone to annual erosion. GGNRA has compiled its Environmental Impact Report, but at the time of this writing, mid-2023, has not yet made the report available for public examination.
- **Half Moon Bay Beach Trails**: Due to ongoing public objection to horse manure, equestrians have limited beach access.

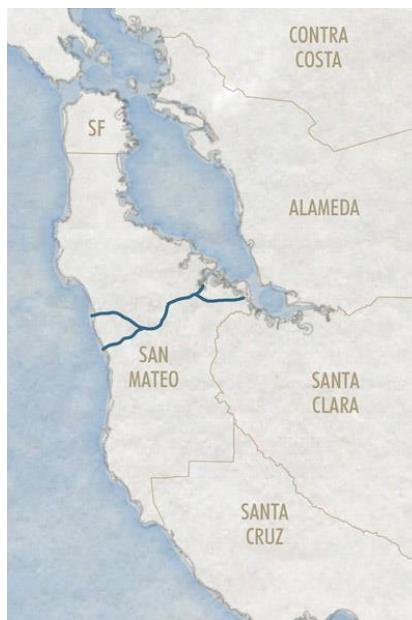
- Horses are permitted on the trail alongside the coastal trail from Venice Beach south to almost the Ritz Carlton.
- Horses are not allowed on paved sections of the coastal trail.
- Horses are allowed on the beach where the Sea Horse Ranch horses go down at Poplar Beach going south only, to as far as the tides will allow. (Sea Horse Ranch has a commercial license for beach riding along a stretch from Poplar Beach to 20 minutes north of there. They have crews that clean.)
- Horse trailer **parking**:
 - Venice Beach State Park, \$\$
 - Poplar Beach. Best designated trailer parking.
 - Wavecrest, near the end road. Might have to accommodate baseball and other community activities. Might be hard to turn around later in the day.

Equestrians must completely **clean up manure around trailers**.

- [Los Altos Town Pathways](#). Los Altos Hills Mayor Linda Swan, an equestrian advocate, is urging the Town Council to formally recognize the town's founding principles as an equestrian community. She has called for "codification" of stipulations in zoning and planning rules to ensure that equestrian pathways and properties will be protected.
- [Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District](#)
 - A pilot study of E-bikes has been implemented for paved & unpaved trails where bikes are already allowed. ETRAC is working to formulate criteria for equestrian consideration during the pilot.
 - Highway 17 Wildlife and Trail Crossings. ETRAC has worked with Directors to pursue equestrian access along the Hwy 17 wildlife/general purpose trail crossings being proposed.
 - ETRAC is actively working to make sure that equestrian access is continued in the Hawthorne Preserve in Portola Valley.

- A new **water trough** is in place for equestrians at **Mindego Hill** in Russian Hill Open Space Preserve.
- **Sears Ranch Road** and **Driscoll Ranch** have trailer parking access to Driscoll & lower La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve. Trailer parking is available at the Event Center parking lot by permit only.
- **Southern Skyline Blvd. Ridge Trail Extension.** A 6-mile trail is being proposed to extend south of Hwy 92 to the edge of the Phleger Estate with access to equestrians, hikers, and bikers 7 days/week with a parking lot at the proposed Hwy 92 trailhead.
- **Razorback Trail and Lost Trail** have been closed to horses until 2024. Mudslides in the area were cleared for hikers this season but the ground is still too soft for the weight of the horses. The trail begins off upper Alpine Road and meanders with multiple switchback turns to Skyline Road. It is reachable via Eagle Scout Trail along the Corte Madera creek. Horses can cross the upper Alpine Bridge and arrive at the trailhead, however there is no parking.
- **[Mounted Patrol Foundation](#).** ETRAC continues to work closely with the Mounted Patrol Foundation on trail-related projects. **Don Pugh** represents MPF on the ETRAC Steering Committee.
- **[Palo Alto e-Bike Ban](#).** As of early 2023, the city of Palo Alto has banned e-bikes on non-paved pathways within its jurisdiction. This includes commute routes in the Baylands as well as multi-use trails in the Arastradero Preserve.
- **[Peninsula Open Space Trust \(POST\)](#).** POST's key equestrian-related project is the **[Bay to Sea Trail](#)**, a 40-mile trail connecting the baylands east of Redwood City with the Pacific Ocean via the Santa Cruz mountains. This ambitious project targets a completion date of 2037. ETRAC is part of the consortium that includes:
 - California State Coastal Conservancy
 - California State Parks, Santa Cruz District
 - City of Half Moon Bay

- City of Redwood City
- Coastside Land Trust
- Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge
- Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA)
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)
- County of San Mateo



Proposed Bay to Sea Trail

- **Portola Valley Town Trails:**

- ETRAC Co-chair, Mary Hufty, was elected to the PV town council on the slogan “Putting the Neigh Back in Neighbor.” Congratulations, Mary!
- The Portola Valley Trails and Paths Committee continues to work with Stanford, Portola Valley Planning and the Westridge Architectural Supervising Committee maintains 10 miles of publicly available equestrian trails within the Westridge Developments on the development of the trail system on the proposed Stanford

Wedge development on the Alpine Scenic Corridor with potential trail connection between Arastradero Trails and Shady Trail along the historic Alpine Canyon Trail.

- Equestrian endeavors and open spaces may have to give way to housing. In meeting new state requirements to provide a quota of housing units of all types, Portola Valley has submitted a Housing Element to the State which includes two horse boarding facilities, Alpine Rock Ranch, Isola Stables, and one Town-owned open space, Dorothy Ford Open Space along Alpine Road Scenic Corridor to be replaced with high density housing on the environmentally sensitive Los Trancos Creek Riparian Corridor. Portola Valley is actively looking for alternatives to enhance its agricultural businesses and rural ambiance.
- El Mirador remains closed to the Woodside Trail Club (and all trail users) for another season.
- **San Mateo County Parks**
 - Town Creek Bridge, Pescadero Park. The winter rains and winds have done major damage to the trails and bridges in all the San Mateo County Parks. Pescadero Creek County Park, essential for trail riding from Jack Brook Horse Camp, has been hard hit, with major damage and blockage to the recently built bridge over Towne Creek. The Parks staff, with volunteers from ETRAC, are able to begin work as of September 15th. ETRAC Steering Committee Member, Mike Bushue, the designer and builder of the bridge, has volunteered to once again lead the carpentry crew to do the bridge repairs.

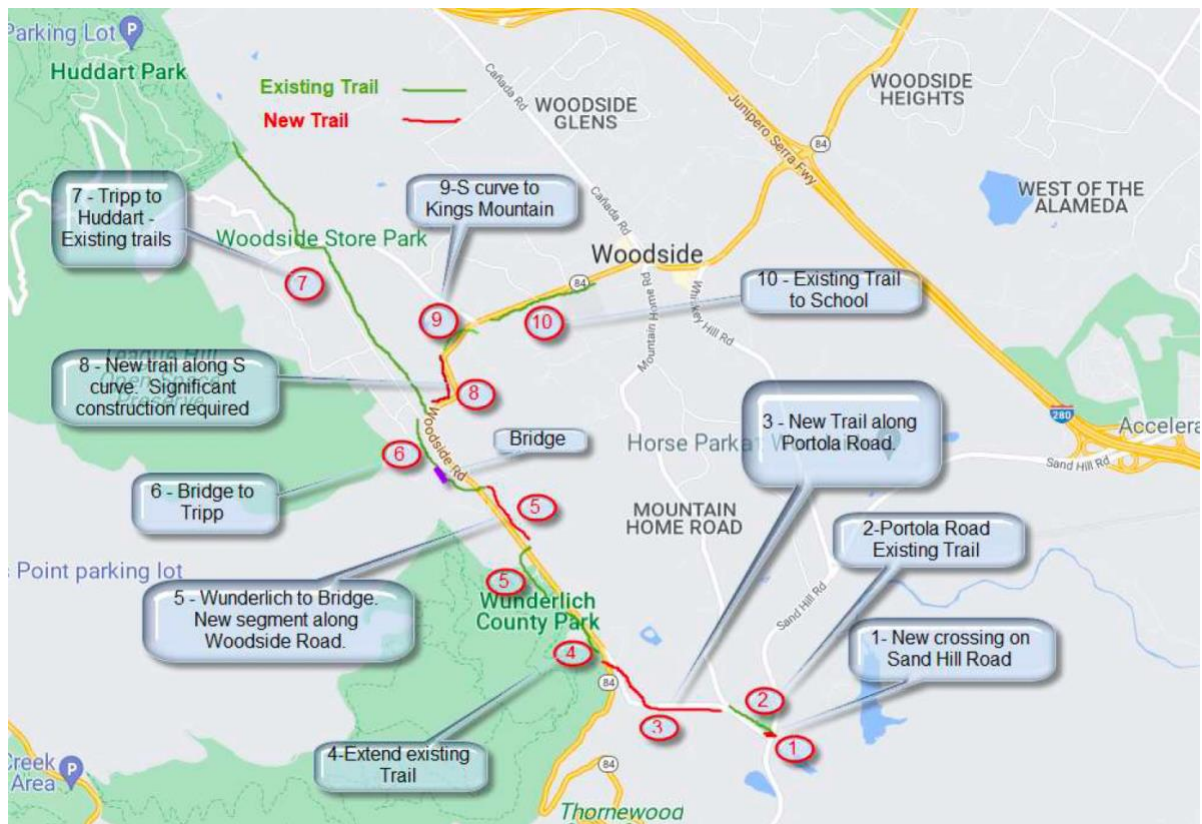


Damage at Towne Creek Bridge, Pescadero County Park

- Due to previous and impending fires, Sam McDonald Park rangers are working to clear underbrush and will continue to do so with possible temporary trail closures. Dog access continues to be explored and implemented in some parks. Pescadero Creek Park still has trail closures, but Jack Brook Horse Camp is now open and ready for sign-ups.
- Richards Road, beyond the bridge that goes up to Raymundo Road. This service road was completely washed away by last winter's storms. It is due to be reengineered to return to its former route, but it will be probably next year (2024) before this is completed.
- Last winter's storms wreaked havoc on many of our beloved SMC Park trails. Let's all be patient, as the Park Rangers and our trailwork volunteers have a lot of work to do!
- See also, San Mateo Country Horsemen's Association in this document.
- **[San Mateo County Horsemen's Association](#)** has continued to sponsor trail maintenance and repair on our adopted trail, the Clarkia Trail, in Edgewood Park, Redwood City and on equestrian trails in other county parks. SMCHA holds twice yearly trail work-play days, the most recent, May 2023, in the East Meadow Picnic Area of Huddart Park. To volunteer for trail work, contact Beverley Kane, sensei@horsensei.com

- **Woodside Town Trails:**

- A new trail, the Woodside West Trail, is being pursued by the Woodside Trail Committee. It will be a complete connector that will allow both pedestrians and equestrians to walk and ride from Whiskey Hill Rd to Sandhill-Portola Rd to Woodside Rd, back to the Town and from Sand Hill Road to Wunderlich Park, and then on to either Huddart Park or the Elementary School. Below is a rough sketch of the proposal. Some bicycle improvements in the form of wider bike lanes or pull outs are also proposed. The project is still a year out from being studied. It will be a five year project for all the segments.
- Woodside is also very fortunate to have a very responsive Town engineer, Sean Rose, who is very responsive to the needs of equestrians. If you know of a Town trail that needs attention or a driveway that needs scoring, please contact Sean Rose srose@woodsidetown.org



Proposed Woodside West Trail Additions (red)

Happy Trails, Everyone!

The ETRAC Steering Committee:

Mary Hufty, co-chair

Beverley Kane, co-chair

Lucia Mokres, secretary

Faye Brophy, treasurer

Jennifer Basiji

Mike Bushue

Rick DeBenedetti

Ellie Ferrari

Adeline Forrest

Rob Krensky

Mark Lindberg

Don Pugh

Tanya Rebarchik

Jerry Wittenauer