

## CHAPTER 4

# TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS

San Mateo County has an extensive network of recreational trails. This trail system is described in the *San Mateo County 2001 Trails Plan*. The plan's chapter entitled County Trails Design and Management Guidelines provides direction for the implementation of new trails, reworking existing trails, and trail maintenance.

### PARK TRAILS CONTEXT: REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

The trails in Huddart Park and Wunderlich Park link to other trails and together form a regional trail network serving the Midpeninsula area (Figure 9). Trails in Huddart Park link to public trails in Purisima Creek Open Space Preserve and the Phleger Estate, and to a private trail system in the Town of Woodside. Trails in Wunderlich Park link to public trails in El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District "Regional Open Space Study" map dated August 20, 1998 illustrates a concept for a continuous greenbelt in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara Counties, extending along both sides of the ridge north to south, from the San Francisco watershed lands to San Jose. An interconnecting system of trails would link the open space areas of several different agencies, including Huddart and Wunderlich Parks. The map shows potential trails linking Huddart and Wunderlich Parks routed through the California Water Service Company lands and Teague Hill Open Space Preserve.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail (BART) is a regional trail system envisioned to encircle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays on a 400-mile route along the Bay Area's ridge lands. Approximately 34 miles of trails along the BART alignment within San Mateo County are completed. The BART is endorsed by the Board of Supervisors and all the cities therein. Locally, traveling southbound, the BART enters Huddart Park from Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, travels through the Huddart Park on the Skyline Trail for approximately ¼ mile, continues south via an easement on private property and the California Water Service lands, crosses East Bear Gulch Road, continues 0.14 miles within Wunderlich Park, and terminates (at present) at Skyline Boulevard.

## **Parking**

Parking for trail access (trailheads) is currently available in numerous locations to serve Peninsula open space area. As population and use increase, open space agencies will continue to develop additional parking to meet the increased demand. MROSD is currently planning to increase available parking at the El Corte de Madera Open Space trailhead parking lot.

## **Current Regional Trails Use**

The trails in the open space areas located on the east side of the ridge (Huddart and Wunderlich Park and the Phleger Estate) are open to pedestrians and equestrians. The MROSD open space areas located on the west side of the ridge trails are open to pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists. The El Corte de Madera Open Space area in particular, is considered by many to be the premier mountain bicycling area south of Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County, where the sport was born.

## **COUNTY TRAILS USE POLICIES**

### **Bicycle and Dog Use**

By County Ordinance, bicycles are prohibited on off-road trails in County Parks except where designated. It should be noted that bicyclists are allowed to use the paved park roadway system within Huddart Park. Many bicyclists use the park road from Greer Road to Kings Mountain Road to ascend or descend the lower portion of the mountain.

Dogs are not currently allowed in County Parks. However, dogs are allowed in over 60 local, regional, and state parks and recreation areas located in San Mateo County. The County Parks Division may make exceptions to the no-dogs policy in the future with adequate study, where sections of trails in adjacent open space lands are open to dog use.

### **Bay Area Ridge Trail (BART)**

The current BART routing (subject to change as the system is further developed) crosses a very small portion of each park in the form of the “Skyline Trail”. The BART currently allows both dogs and bicycles to the north of Huddart Park and to the south of Wunderlich Park. The portion of the BART located between the two parks is open to equestrians and pedestrians only. A planning issue considered was whether or not to allow dogs and bikes to use the portion of the BART within each park. The parks currently create a broken link in the chain, whereby trail users on bicycle or with dog are not allowed to continue on the trail through the parks,

or on the trail connecting the two. Please refer to the “Regional North-South Bicycle Access” section of this chapter for a discussion of this issue.

## **REGIONAL VALLEY-TO-SKYLINE BICYCLE CONNECTION**

### **Trails Users Workshop**

Much discussion regarding the issue of bicycle use in the parks was had during the public workshops. This was also the issue most often cited on the comment sheets and in letters received. To address this issue in depth, a Trails Users Focus Group was held on March 22, 2005 with representatives of 17 trails stakeholder groups who expressed an interest in the parks. Representatives of organized bicyclists, equestrians, and hikers participated. Representatives of public agencies also participated, including GGNRA, MROSD, and the Town of Woodside. In this focus group, the local bicycling community expressed two distinct desires for allowing bicycle access on park trails:

- Access to some trails within the parks is desired for recreational mountain biking
- A safe regional valley-to-Skyline connection for road bikes and mountain bikes is desired for those who wish to access the roads and mountain biking trails located west of Skyline.

Bicyclists cited safety as the number one reason for their requests. The closest valley-to-Skyline trail connection open to bicyclists is through the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, located approximately 3 miles south of Wunderlich Park on Portola Road. Woodside Road and Kings Mountain Road provide the only valley-to-Skyline connections between Windy Hill and Highway 92. These two roads are narrow, winding, and have limited sight distance around curves, conditions which can lead to injuries to bicyclists struck by vehicles. An off-road connection would provide the safety desired by the bicyclists.

Equestrians also cited safety as their number one concern. Shared use of trails by bicyclists and equestrians has led to accidents in which bicyclists have spooked horses and riders have been thrown, suffering injuries including broken bones. Almost all participants agreed that separate trails are necessary, and that safety is the number one concern going forward with any change in current policy.

### **Valley-to-Skyline Options**

The issue of bicycle access from valley to Skyline is a regional one. Although this issue is not within the scope of this Master Plan, several potential routes were

identified and evaluated (Figure 9). It is important to note that this effort did not constitute a comprehensive planning study. Further planning and study of this regional issue will be necessary, with the participation of many agencies, organizations, and individuals. The intent of the information presented in this section of the Master Plan is to set forth a preliminary identification of options. None of these options has been studied in depth. Other options most likely exist. The options identified to date are described as follows (numbers refer to key numbers indicated on Figure 9):

1. **Huddart – Phleger:** From Greer Road, using Richards Road Trail, Miramontes Trail, Mt. Redondo Trail, to Skyline.

*Issues associated with this option:* Bicycle use prohibition by County Ordinance would have to be changed by County Board of Supervisors. Bicycle prohibition in the Phleger Estate would have to be changed by the National Park Service. Safety concerns regarding shared bicycle/equestrian use.

2. **Huddart:** From Greer Road, using the Park Road, Campground Trail, Richards Road Trail, to Skyline.

*Issues associated with this option:* Bicycle use prohibition by County Ordinance would have to be changed by County Board of Supervisors. Bicycle prohibition in the Phleger Estate would have to be changed by the National Park Service. Safety concerns regarding shared bicycle/equestrian use.

3. **Kings Mountain Road:** Construct a dedicated bicycle-only facility (CalTrans Class 1 bike path or Class 2 bike lane) within the Kings Mountain Road right-of-way and/or on Huddart County Park land.

*Issues associated with this option:* Kings Mountain Road is considered to be a substandard highway by the County Department of Public Works. Steep topography and road cuts and fills would make construction challenging and expensive relative to other options.

4. **Teague Hill:** From East Bear Gulch Road and Woodside Road, construct a new trail through the California Water Service Company lands and Teague Hill, to Kings Mountain Road, then to Skyline on road or on a dedicated bicycle-only facility (CalTrans Class 1 bike path or Class 2 bike lane) within the Kings Mountain Road right-of-way.

*Issues associated with this option:* Requires new trail construction; Teague Hill Master Planning process required prior to consideration by MROSD; California

Water Service Company approval required; upper end of new trail would not meet Skyline due to private property.

5. **California Water Service Company lands:** From East Bear Gulch Road and Woodside Road, construct a new trail through the California Water Service Company lands to Skyline at the Skeggs Point trailhead.

*Issues associated with this option:* California Water Service Company approval required.

6. **East Bear Gulch Road:** Allow bicycles to use the existing easement for bicycle use through a cooperative agreement with the Bear Gulch Homeowners Association.

*Issues associated with this option:* Narrow one-lane road with restricted sight distances would pose a danger for bicyclists; Homeowner's Association is on record as being opposed; improvements would be expensive and difficult.

7. **Highway 84:** Construct a dedicated bicycle-only facility (CalTrans Class 1 bike path or Class 2 bike lane) within the Woodside Road right-of-way. Note: the City County Association of Governments has identified this stretch of road as the most popular bicycle route in the Midpeninsula area.

*Issues associated with this option:* Steep topography and road cuts and fills would make construction challenging and expensive relative to other options; CalTrans approval and participation required.

8. **Old La Honda Road:** Convert the existing Old La Honda Road (a County Road) to a Class 1 bicycle path. The road is currently closed due to a landslide that has blocked the roadway. (This option not shown on Figure 9.)

*Issues associated with this option:* Extensive engineering and construction expense associated with trail re-routing around landslide area.

### **Valley-to-Skyline Regional Bicycle Access**

In response to the requests of the bicycling community, and as requested by the Parks and Recreation Commission at their August 2005 meeting, Parks Division Staff and the Consultant conducted an analysis of an additional possible Valley-to-Skyline trail routing that could accommodate bicyclists in addition to other trail users. The possible trail routing is shown as option 11 on Figure 9.

The route would begin at the lower end of Huddart Park at Greer Road, follow the paved park road uphill to the park entrance on Kings Mountain Road, cross Kings Mountain Road, continue up the mountain south of Kings Mountain Road to intersect with the existing Skyline Trail (Bay Area Ridge Trail) at approximate elevation 1800, follow (use) the Skyline Trail, cross Kings Mountain Road, re-enter Huddart Park, and continue on the Skyline Trail to Skyline Boulevard.

The trail option was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the public at the March 22, 2006 commission meeting. Several hundred people attended. The option received both strong support from the bicycling community, and strong opposition from the equestrian community. Due to the large number of people desiring to speak to this issue, the public comment period was continued to the April 6, 2006 Commission meeting.

It was recognized by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parks Staff that establishment of a Valley-to-Skyline bicycle connection in this general area of the Peninsula is a complex, regional, multi-agency issue that requires more in-depth analysis and public participation than is possible given the limited scope of this Master Plan. It was further recognized that due to the significant amount of time necessary for in-depth planning and consensus-building, it would be unproductive to delay the approval of the Master Plan pending resolution of this single issue.

Director David Holland has recommended that a Blue-Ribbon Committee be established to engage in a comprehensive, County-wide assessment of trail needs including off-road bicycling opportunities. The Blue-Ribbon Committee would have the participation of all concerned stakeholder groups, including the Town of Woodside, MROSD, County Department of Public Works, CalTrans, BART Council, bicyclist stakeholder groups, equestrians, other trail users and stakeholder groups.

- The Parks Division, with the assistance of the Blue-Ribbon Committee, will update the 2001 San Mateo County Trails Master Plan. The update should study trail use by all users from a regional perspective, and provide a prescriptive action plan for future implementation.

## **REGIONAL NORTH-SOUTH BICYCLE ACCESS**

The trails in both parks connect to a larger, regional trail network. Currently, the north-south trail routing along Skyline is not sufficiently developed so as to provide off-road bicycle access. The Bay Area Ridge Trail (BART) currently serves as the north-south connection between Huddart and Wunderlich Parks (Figure 9).

This section of trail occurs within a County easement, and traverses land owned by MROSD, California Water, and private parcels. This trail section is currently open to equestrians and hikers only.

Agencies other than the County are responsible for the land located between, north of, and south of each park. These agencies include Midpeninsula Open Space District, California Water Service Company (a private company, not a governmental agency), and the National Park Service. In addition, areas of private land also occur between the two parks. Skyline Boulevard, which serves as a vehicular and road bicycle connection between the parks, is a State Route, owned by the State and operated by CalTrans.

Creation of additional and/or improved north-south trail routings would be the responsibility of the land-owning agencies. The County is willing to work with these agencies on this issue. However, detailed planning and design of a potential north-south routing is outside the scope of this Master Plan, which is limited to analysis and recommendations for Huddart and Wunderlich Parks only, and not for areas located outside of the two parks. Therefore, the County does not intend to make recommendations for improvement of the north-south routing in this Master Plan. Additional opportunities to enhance trails will be addressed in the Countywide Trails Master Plan update.

- Creation of a new BART alignment open to bicyclists located on the west side of Skyline Boulevard was strongly supported by all user groups at the Trails Users Workshop. The trail alignment would utilize a combination of existing trails in the Purisima Creek and El Corte de Madera open space areas. The alignment would also require the dedication of a trail easement through a short section of private property. The County should work with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, MROSD, and interested bicycling organizations to investigate the establishment of this route. Should this not be feasible, the feasibility of establishing a section of the BART within the State Highway right-of-way on Skyline Boulevard should be studied. This portion could be a bike lane on a widened roadway surface, or a bike path separated from the roadway. This option would require CalTrans involvement and approval, and may be difficult to achieve due to the existing topography and significant redwood trees lining the roadway.
- Future development of the Bay area Ridge Trail leading north from Huddart Park would create a regional north-south multi-use trail, which presumably would be open to bicyclists. The likely routing between Huddart Park and Highway 92 is located on the east side of Skyline Boulevard, largely located on lands owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.
- The County should work with MROSD and the BART to develop safe crossings of Skyline Boulevard between Huddart Park and Purisima

Creek Open Space Preserve, and between Wunderlich Park and El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve. Crossing improvements must be coordinated with CalTrans for any work within the State right-of-way.

## **LOWER HUDDART - WUNDERLICH TRAIL CONNECTION**

An opportunity may exist to connect Huddart and Wunderlich Parks via a new trail located lower down on the mountain than the north-south connection described above. Such a trail would be constructed across land owned by California Water Service Company and MROSD. The following recommendation is made for future study:

- The County should work with the MROSD, California Water Service Company, and interested community members to investigate the establishment of a new trail connection from East Bear Gulch Road to either the Huddart Park entrance at Kings Mountain Road, or to connect with the Kings Mountain Trail (Figure 9, key number 9). This trail would traverse the lower portions of Teague Hill, and would be feasible only if the MROSD master planning process for Teague Hill adopted this idea. An easement across Cal Water land would be required. Allowable use (hiking, bicycling, and or equestrian) would be at the discretion of MROSD and Cal Water, and would be established during the master planning process.

## **OFF-ROAD BICYCLE USE WITHIN THE PARKS**

As stated earlier in this chapter, County ordinance prohibits off-road bicycle use and dog use within Huddart and Wunderlich County Parks. Other than the possibility of establishing an east-west trail in the undeveloped portion of Huddart Park as described elsewhere in this chapter, the Master Plan recommends no change in this policy, based on several reasons:

- *Safety*: Unlike most other open space areas located on the Peninsula, Huddart Park and Wunderlich Park are heavily used by equestrians. Both bicycles and dogs can create conflicts with equestrians who may suffer injury. Historically, illegal bicycle and dog use has created significant safety issues that have resulted in serious injuries to horseback riders. Therefore, separation of use is important.
- *Preservation of equestrian use in the Woodside area*: Huddart Park and Wunderlich Park, along with the Phleger Estate, constitute the only significant open space areas on the Peninsula in which equestrians do not have to compete for trail space with bicyclists. As such, these areas are unique resources for the equestrian community. Equestrian use is an important part of the history and culture of the Woodside and Portola Valley areas. One of the broad goals of this Master Plan is to ensure the continued equestrian presence in this area. Practically speaking, once trails are opened to mountain bicycle use, the equestrians find

themselves opting out of using those trails due to conflicts and safety concerns. For example, there is little equestrian use of the trails in the MROSD open space areas located on the west side of the ridge, primarily out of concern for safety, whereas prior to the advent of the mountain biking as a recreational activity, equestrians routinely used these trails. Dogs on trails also pose issues for equestrians, as occasionally dogs that are uncontrolled by their owners can bite or spook horses.

- *Preservation of the semi-wilderness character of the parks:* In addition to equestrians, hikers and trail runners also appreciate the relative peace and quiet afforded by these semi-wilderness areas located close in to an urban population. Fast-moving mountain bikes and dogs which are not controlled by their owner can be upsetting to other trail users and to wildlife.
- *Resource conservation:* Huddart and Wunderlich Park lie within the San Francisquito Creek Watershed, which has been designated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as a sediment-impaired watershed. The San Francisquito Creek Watershed Assessment Study prepared by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority identified the roads and trails in the upper watershed as significant sources of sediment. Sedimentation of the creeks would be increased with the addition of bicycle use of the trails, due to the ruts created by tire tracks that in turn channel rainwater and create gullies in the trails. Dogs who are uncontrolled by their owner can venture off trail and disturb wildlife.
- *Other nearby opportunities for mountain bicycling:* The Peninsula has numerous nearby areas that are open to bicyclists, including the many MROSD open space areas, Sawyer Camp Trail, the San Francisco Bay Trail, and others. In contrast, few areas are effectively available for equestrian use. Huddart and Wunderlich Parks are unique assets, and can not be expected to be all things to all people.

## TRAILS STANDARDS

The San Mateo County 2001 Trails Plan contains standards for the planning, design, and management of County trails. These standards should be followed during maintenance and improvement of any trails within the two parks. Trails in Huddart Park and Wunderlich Park are unpaved, and are of two types.

### Single Track Trails

Single track trails are intended to be four feet in width to allow enough space for two hikers to pass one another. A five foot by five foot passing area should be provided every 400 feet to allow for horses and hikers to safely pass one another. All single track trails in Wunderlich Park and most single track trails in Huddart Park are open to both pedestrians and equestrians. Most single track trails in

Huddart Park are open to both user groups, with the exception of the Chickadee, Redwood, and Bay Tree Trails located in the lower portion of the park, which are open to hikers only.

### **Service Roads**

Service or fire roads are intended to be 12 feet wide. All service roads are open to use by both pedestrians and equestrians.

## **HUDDART PARK TRAILS**

### **Existing Conditions**

Huddart Park offers numerous trails, some for horseback riding and hiking, and some for hiking only. Trails run along gulches and creeks, others offer outward views of the countryside, and all traverse unique hillside habitats.

Service roads trails include Richards Road Trail, Summit Springs Fire Trail, Archery Fire Road, and Campground Trail. Together, these service roads form a loop which accesses most of the park area and which may be used for park maintenance, emergency vehicles, and fire fighting.

The Chickadee Nature Trail is a 3/4-mile long fully accessible trail that accommodates users of all capabilities. Horses are not allowed on this trail. The trail traverses three predominant plant communities, coastal redwood forest, mixed evergreen forest and chaparral. This area was severely disturbed by logging and grazing, and many signs of disturbance remain, in contrast to the environment presented by the more moist redwood forests located further up the mountain. The trail offers an experience of the ongoing natural re-establishment of the mature forest that existed before the impact of logging and grazing on the peninsula.

The trails system in each park is well maintained by County Staff, in spite of the operating budget reductions that have occurred over the past three years. Erosion remains an issue to be addressed on an annual basis (see Chapter 6). Where trails cross drainages, culverts typically carry water below the trail. Most of these culverts are in poor condition and are poorly placed, such that downcutting of the streambed occurs at the outfalls. Chapter 6 provides specific recommendations for improving park storm drainage facilities.

### **Crystal Springs Trail Entrance**

The Crystal Springs Trail currently enters the park via an easement on private property which is 20 feet in width. The County has transferred the easement to the

Town of Woodside, who has assumed responsibility for bridge repair and trail maintenance.

### **Parking for Trail Access**

Huddart Park currently provides parking for trails access in the lower portion of the park. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District provides limited parking at the Purisima Creek trailhead, located directly across from the upper end of Huddart Park on Skyline Boulevard. Because Huddart Park visitors use this parking area, a safe crossing of Highway 35 should be studied.

### **Recommendations – Huddart Park Trail System (Figure 10)**

#### *Valley-to-Skyline Bicycle Trail Connection*

- See section earlier in this chapter for discussion and recommendation.

#### *Trail Closures*

- The Archery Fire Road should be removed and revegetated due to excessive erosion caused by the exceptionally steep gradient. The road is a major source of sediment, with Park Staff reporting creation of one-foot-deep gullies every year. In some places, the roadway surface has eroded six to eight feet below original grade. The road should be re-graded, planted with native vegetation, and fenced and signed at the upper and lower ends to discourage continued use. A new trail should be created to provide for lost trail connectivity. Access to the waterline and pressure reducing stations located on the road would be provided by new lateral service roads connecting to Kings Mountain Road.

#### *New Trail Connections*

- Once the Archery Fire Road is taken out of public service, a new single track trail should be constructed from just below the archery Range to the Chinquapin Trail, to maintain a continuous trail network.
- A new short stretch of trail should be established at the 1720-foot level to link Chinquapin and Crystal Springs Trails, thereby creating additional loop route options. This would also reduce the amount of cross-country and cross-creek hiking in the vicinity where the two trails are within a few hundred feet of each other. This trail would require a new bridge over McGarvey Gulch, and should be out-sloped and surfaced with base rock.
- The Bay Tree Trail (hiking only) should be extended to Sequoia Day Camp.
- The Chickadee Nature Trail should be connected to the Redwood Nature Trail to provide for a longer hike option, and the existing bridge on the Chickadee Trail replaced as a high priority project to address safety and functional concerns. These trails should also be enhanced with new interpretive exhibits, signposts, and other features to bring

the trails up to modern nature trail standards. The plant communities should be actively managed and improved to provide for greater educational value.

#### *New Connector Trail*

- A new roadside path should be extended from the park entrance parking lot to the lower Oak Area, adjacent to, but separated from, the park road, to provide for safe pedestrian access along the road and to facilitate pedestrian movement between the popular group areas.

#### *All-Weather Single Track Trails*

- The Crystal Springs Trail, Chinquapin Trail, and portion of the Dean Trail should be improved with  $\frac{3}{4}$  - inch minus base rock to provide an all-weather hiking and riding loop. This is a stated priority according to Park Staff.

#### *West Union Creek Crossings*

- The County should work with GGNRA and the Town of Woodside to identify a crossing location to allow users of the Town of Woodside's Flood Property trail to access the park. The Town and property owners support the concept of building a new bridge to cross the creek from the private property into the park.
- Install split rail fencing and educational signage along the creek to discourage equestrians and individuals from crossing the creek or playing in the water.
- Discontinue the practice of allowing multiple crossing points and entrance into the park from the private trail system located on the opposite bank. Develop an acceptable park entry utilizing an existing or new bridge or culvert. The Town and property owners support the concept of building a new bridge to cross the creek from the private property into the park.

#### *Bridges*

- All park bridges should be evaluated for structural soundness and estimated lifespan. The bridges are of timber construction, and many likely will require replacement during the 20-year planning horizon. The bridge at the far end of the Chickadee Nature Trail has failed and is currently closed off.

#### *Roadway Crossings*

- Formalized pedestrian crossings should be provided on the park road to accommodate pedestrian movement throughout the park (see Figure 4 for an illustration of recommended crosswalks in the lower picnic areas).

#### *Park Trail Entrances from the East*

- Work with San Francisco PUC and GGNRA to develop a new trail entrance utilizing an existing service road, the existing Miramontes

Trail, and a new short connector trail between the two. This new entrance would require at least three new bridges across West Union Creek.

- Work with the Town of Woodside to allow a portion of the private trail from the Flood property to be used by the public. The property owners support the concept of building a new bridge to cross the creek from the private property into the park. The bridge would require a gate on the park end to control public access to the private property.
- The County should coordinate with the Town of Woodside to replace the existing bollards located at Raymundo Road and Crystal Springs Trail with a gate that is more easily operated by parks maintenance staff for safety purposes.
- The county has transferred the Crystal Springs Trail easement to the Town of Woodside, and they have assumed responsibility for the trail maintenance and bridge repair. The crossing of West Union Creek shall be maintained open until the bridge has been determined to be unsafe, or the Regional Water Quality Control Board or California Department of Fish and Game require County Parks to take mitigating action related to sedimentation and erosion.

### *Trails Design*

- A trails analysis should be conducted to identify those sections of trails with greater than 10% slope, and recommendations made to rework the steep sections of trails where appropriate and desirable. In general, few trail sections are greater than 10%.
- The Crystal Springs Trail easement from Raymundo to West Union Creek has been given over to the Town of Woodside, who will maintain the trail and assume responsibility for repair of the bridge that crossed the creek and enters the park.
- When the bridge is proposed to be replaced, County Parks will work with the Town of Woodside and private property owners to ensure the bridge facilitates crossing by both equestrians and pedestrians.

## **WUNDERLICH PARK TRAILS**

### **Existing Conditions**

Wunderlich Park offers numerous trails for horseback riding and hiking. Trails run along gulches and creeks, others offer outward views of the countryside, and all traverse unique hillside habitats.

The trails system in each park is well maintained by County Staff, in spite of the operating budget reductions that have occurred over the past three years. Erosion remains an issue to be addressed on an annual basis (see Chapter 6). Where trails cross drainages, culverts typically carry water below the trail. Most of these

culverts are in poor condition and are poorly placed, such that downcutting of the streambed occurs at the outfalls. Chapter 6 provides specific recommendations for improving park storm drainage facilities.

## **Recommendations – Wunderlich Park Trail System**

### *New Trail Connections*

- A new trail connection should be created between the Alambique Trail at the 200-foot elevation, and the Skyline Trail at the 1900-foot elevation. The length of this trail connection would be approximately 1200 feet, and the average gradient less than 10%.

### *All-Weather Single Track Trails*

- Bear Gulch Trail and Alambique Trail should be improved with ½-inch minus base rock to provide an all-weather hiking and riding loop.

### *Fire Access Improvements*

- Several improvements on the park's service road system are needed to enable California Department of Forestry and Woodside Fire Department fire fighters to gain access to the interior areas of the park and effectively operate. Fire fighting equipment can not negotiate the small radius on the first turn on the Loop Trail. Therefore it is recommended that a new trail connection be created to connect the Alambique Trail with the Loop Trail. Turnarounds and safety zones should also be created along the park's service roads. These recommendations are discussed further in Chapter 9.

## **Parking for Trail Access**

Because the size of the Wunderlich Park parking lot effectively limits the number of park visitors, and the parking areas are filled to capacity during high-use periods, increasing the size of the lot is needed to accommodate the existing and increasing numbers of trail users. The plan to increase the capacity of the Wunderlich Park parking lot is discussed in Chapter 3. It would also be desirable to develop a parking lot at Skyline Boulevard, at the top of the park. However, the configuration of the access/egress to East Bear Gulch Road and Mountain Meadow Drive, both of which are private roads, does not provide sufficient space for a lot on park property.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District- is currently investigating the potential to construct a regional staging area on the El Corte de Madera Open Space property above Wunderlich Park. This staging area would be accessed from Highway 35 and would provide approximately 70 vehicle parking spaces. If constructed, the facility would provide convenient access to Wunderlich Park's upper trails, which now are only accessed by a long uphill hike. A safe crossing of Highway 35 would be a key consideration in the development of the staging area.

## AMENITIES

### Water Sources

Water sources along the trails are needed for both people and horses. Due to problems with West Nile Virus, horse watering troughs are not a viable option. Most of the old troughs have been removed from the parks. Instead, hose bibs (spigot) should be installed at appropriate intervals along the trail network where possible in each park. The spigots should be self-closing to avoid the possibility of being left on by park users, either inadvertently or maliciously. Equestrians would need to bring horse bags to be filled from the spigots.

Huddart Park has sufficient domestic water lines that would provide most of the necessary connection points. Wunderlich Park lacks water lines except at the Folger Stables. To provide additional water sources for horses, the feasibility of acquiring an agreement to use the private water system in Wunderlich should be investigated. This water source would be non-potable (not fit for human consumption).

A source of potable water for people should be installed at the top of each park. Skyline Water District has lines running along the Skyline corridor that could serve as sources.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Install self-closing hose bibs along park trails where feasible.
- Install potable water sources at the upper end of each park.

### Benches

In general, both parks have a lack of benches or other seating along trails. These amenities are desirable for lunch stops and for rest stops. Many people can not hike for long distances without stopping to rest, but are capable of walking substantial distances by using bench seating at suitable intervals. While it is not practical to install benches at regular intervals along the entire length of all trails, benches should be provided at regular intervals within ½ mile of each trailhead to provide at least a 1-mile round trip hiking opportunity for those needing bench resting stops. In addition, benches should be provided at logical points deep within the trail system, to provide opportunities for resting and eating lunch. Benches should be placed in locations with scenic qualities, at points of local interest, viewpoints, and at the end of long uphill stretches. Benches should be sited at locations with sufficient space so as not to crowd the trail and cause congestion.

*Recommendations:*

- Install benches at regular intervals along the first ½ mile of each main trail.
- Install benches deeper within the parks to provide resting spots.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Trails in “outdoor developed areas” are not strictly subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or State Title 24 requirements for accessibility, because they occur in semi-wilderness outdoor recreation areas. General guidelines that address accessibility in remote areas and steep terrain have been developed over the past 10 years. As described in Chapter 2, these guidelines are currently being reviewed and updated by the Access Board, an independent federal agency. The County Trails Plan contains guidelines for accessibility of trails. According to these guidelines, the trails in Huddart and Wunderlich Park are classified as falling under the “Difficult Level of Access” accessibility zone, because they are built on natural slopes greater than 20%. According to the guidelines for this zone, the maximum running slope is 12.5%, with a maximum ramp gradient of 15%. A “ramp” gradient is required to have one level landing area for each six feet of elevation gain.