

Brigitte Shearer

From: Ken Lien <
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 1:13 PM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: Save Waterdog Preserve

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Parks & Recreation Commissioners,

Apologies, my blank email was accidentally sent last night while composing using a different software.

In reading the Jan 13, 2021 staff report on the Trails Committee Update, I feel compelled to send you this email.

I am concerned about the reliance on volunteers for trail maintenance, especially without prior approved plans and close supervision. These volunteers have a dubious record in the past few decades, resulting in the dismal condition of Waterdog Preserve today. If we continue on the current path, we will not have a Waterdog Preserve and we will end up with a Waterdog amusement bike park instead.

Volunteers were never able to do adequate amount of maintenance to offset the damages done by their mountain biking activities. These volunteers consisted mostly of bikers that made use of the opportunity to construct new illegal trails instead of doing real trail maintenance. Berms were constructed in an arc shape to allow bikes to go around sharp corners without slowing down.

For example, the Soho Trail with berms was not constructed by bare hands in one day. Tools were brought into the park to construct it over a period of time. These volunteers legitimately brought these tools into the park under the guise of doing maintenance to construct illegal trails with features for mountain biking downhill thrills.

Berms construction requires removing the top layer of organic matters to expose the dirt layer. Mattocks and hoes are used to bust the ground up and loosen the dirt. Shovels or hoes are used to move the dirt into the turn to create a berm. Often the berm needs to be supported with the construction of a wood retaining wall. If any tree trunks, branches, roots or other vegetation are in the way, they are removed and tossed down the canyon to create wildfire hazard.

All these activities went on without the knowledge of the City or possibly with silent tacit approval. Do you know the nickname given by the bikers for Soho Trail is "Labor of Love"? This is the amount of misdirected efforts put into Waterdog Preserve. In this case, such construction activities are in direct violation of the John S Brooks land donation contract with the City.

Before Waterdog Preserve deteriorates to a point of no return, I hope you will be bold enough to stand up to special interests to save Waterdog Preserve for the future. Climate change is working against us. Vegetation is drying up and wildfires are raging. Wildlife habitats are damaged and the endangered wildlife are seeking refuge in our backyards. The number of wildlife species are reduced everyday. We cannot save the Amazon forest or the North Pole ice cap. The least we can do is to save the Waterdog Preserve in our little town.

Sincerely,

Ken Lien

Brigitte Shearer

From:
Sent: Thursday, January 14, 2021 1:55 PM
To: P&R Comm
Cc: Brigitte Shearer
Subject: Rare and Endangered SF Garter Snake in Waterdog

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Park Commissioners,

With as few as 1,000 remaining, this beauty below is the rare and endangered **San Francisco garter snake**, christened "the most beautiful serpent in North America."

It is found **ONLY** in SF and the peninsula, and needs a riparian (pond/wetland) habitat for survival.

I have seen *one* in Waterdog, and they *are documented on the General Plan Conservation Element* as present in Waterdog, but they are very rare and are protected under the Endangered Species Act (U.S Fish and Wildlife Service).

If you are not aware of this beautiful creature, and our legal obligation to protect it, I highly recommend visiting this website to fully appreciate the importance of the disappearing riparian habitat that supports the few remaining animals; <https://sfgartersnake.wixsite.com/dhsseadisc/why-should-you-care>:

Moreover I urge you to take immediate action to **close the illegally built trail**, cut by bikers, that bisects Waterdog marsh, trampling and fragmenting one of the few remaining habitats of this rare and endangered snake.

That trail violates both the existing Park Master Plan (which stipulates no development in that marsh) and the John Brooks Contract, and it contradicts the General Plan Conservation Element.

Respectfully,
Kristin Mercer



<https://sfgartersnake.wixsite.co>

<https://sfgartersnake.wixsite.com/dhsseedisc/slithering-for-survival>

Due to the rising human population in the San Francisco Bay Area in the past 100 years, the delicate wetland habitats relied upon by the snake and its co-evolved prey is not only fragmented, but in many cases destroyed.

“The habitat of the San Francisco Garter Snake is unfortunately restricted to the highly developed San Francisco Peninsula, with all known populations of this beautiful snake inhabiting scarce wetlands in San Mateo County (Miller, 2006).

Originally, its habitat would have stretched south from San Francisco into the Santa Cruz Mountains, but because of human-induced habitat loss the species is now isolated to a meager fraction of their previous range (US EPA, 2010).

The principal food source of the San Francisco Garter Snake, the California Red-Legged Frog, is also severely endangered. Populations of the frog have declined 75% leaving its predators with less and less prey to sustain their own population (Kay, 1995). The boom in the invasive bullfrog populations which prey on the snake and its prey are largely because pet owners release their bullfrogs into local riparian corridors and wetland locations allowing their populations to rapidly multiply with other released pets, and leech into the niches of other native animals. In this way, the bullfrogs have affected San Francisco Garter Snake by creating interspecific competition, overeating and diminishing the California Red-Legged Frog populations resulting in

little food left for the snakes. The endangerment of the native frog had a great influence on the endangerment its predator, the San Francisco Garter Snake (Swenty, 2016)."



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Brigitte Shearer

From: Ron T
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 11:04 AM
To: P&R Comm
Subject: From Ron Tussy-Waterdog Trails and Jump Situation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hi Brigitte,

I was able to walk the Canyon Crest trail yesterday (1/19/21) at 5 PM to the jump and found that about 2 inches had been scraped off the top of this multi cubic yard jump, and not much else. The jump still is there and needs to be removed for the very reasons it violates the guidance of this open space area in that it completely alters the original terrain and creates a hazard on the steepest part of this trail where bikers are speeding the fastest. It is not a water bar. It is not a small bump in the trail. Yards of earthen material have been displaced from other parts of this trail to create this exclusively for the entertainment of more skilled bike riders. In essence, it is a landscape alteration to our open space further becoming "a terrain park" for bikers, to the detriment of all other users.

While walking up at the bottom, I encountered a downhill biker on a blind turn going at least 20 mph. He did not slow down one bit and was headed straight at me. I did not have time to throw myself out of his way so I held my arms up over my head for him to see me. He skidded his bike right up to my body and stopped. He then threw down his bike and started to verbally assault and threaten me for being in his way. I walked away, but this is an typical common occurrence from a large portion of bikers visiting our open space. I know I am only one of the many that used to walk that trail on my street (Carlmont) because of the threatening nature of bikers on walkers on that trail. I am ashamed to say I am a former bike racer. This has got to stop. The signage is ignored, only about 20% of bikers wear masks on the single track trails, and now bikers are thinking that the city wants them to have a terrain park exclusively for them, because of this terrain altered jump. It used to be that bikers and walkers coexisted peacefully on these trails. That stopped 10 years ago when the trails were altered by bike groups to be more speed friendly to bikers. I strongly urge you to take action on this terrain altered jump at your earliest opportunity. No where in all of San Mateo County parks or any San Mateo County open space does one find this kind of terrain altering jump purposefully put on trail systems. It is shameful this is allowed to happen. I welcome your response and I do want to show appreciation for the positive work to the trail that was accomplished. Thanks.

Ron Tussy
2616 Calmont Dr.

Brigitte Shearer

From: Jeremy Johnson <[redacted]@[redacted].com>
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2021 10:41 AM
To: Brigitte Shearer
Subject: Re: Drainage on Elevator Trail
Attachments: image001.png

Thanks, Brigitte!

On Fri, Jan 29, 2021, 10:33 AM Brigitte Shearer <BShearer@belmont.gov> wrote:

Jeremy

Thank you for being alert out on the trails! We've notified parks and public works staff.

Brigitte

Brigitte Shearer

Parks & Recreation Director

City of Belmont

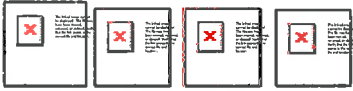
650-595-7488

bshearer@belmont.gov

www.belmont.gov/parksandrec

Belmont Parks & Recreation Department

"Enhancing the Quality of Life for the Community"



As Always, Stay Positive, the Choice is Yours!

From: Jeremy Johnson <jeremyajohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 4:03 PM
To: x-Parks/Recreation Office <parksrec@belmont.gov>
Subject: Drainage on Elevator Trail

Hi,

I've attached a picture of one of the storm drains along Elevator Trail in Hidden Valley Park. The drain is blocked enough that it's overflowing into the hill behind the houses in the valley. Any chance you could take a look?

Thanks,

Jeremy

2628 Carlmont Dr, Belmont, CA 94002

650-533-5533