



A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING THE LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP OF CLAREMONT CANYON

## President's Message

*by Barry Pilger*

AS SUMMER TURNS TO FALL Claremont Canyon can take on a special beauty especially after our recent relatively wet spring and mild summer. A drive up Claremont Avenue, or better yet a walk onto a canyon trail, whether through Garber Park, from Four Corners to the chert, or a more ambitious hike from the Stonewall trailhead to Grizzly Peak Boulevard and back, is just what one needs to be reminded of the natural beauty that is right in our backyard. To better explore these trails, we present in this issue our new trail map, developed by board member Joe Engbeck in conjunction with Eureka Cartography. We also present our new look with a new logo and updated website, thanks to local designers Renate Woodsbury and Matt Wechsler.

The work of the Conservancy continues. Volunteers have done much in the canyon but there is more to be done. One of the areas we are seeking volunteer help is to develop an advocacy plan (opposite column) for the canyon as a whole. We want to create a single document, supported by solid research, that envisions a future for the canyon. This vision will address questions of maintaining a balance between fire safety and vegetation management, the establishment of priorities surrounding management of exotic and invasive species, and the varying management practices and priorities that differ among canyon landowners. With such a comprehensive plan in hand the Conservancy can better work with agency landowners and canyon neighbors to ensure the future of Claremont Canyon.

The year has seen progress among agencies and their work to make the canyon more fire safe. The East Bay Regional Park District board recently approved its wildfire hazard reduction and resource management plan with a unanimous vote (see guest article on page 7 by Pat O'Brien, General Manager) and FEMA has launched a new environmental review process which we hope will result in commencement of fire mitigation work on UC land in Claremont Canyon and elsewhere within two years.

As this year comes to a close we look forward to next year celebrating our tenth anniversary of the founding of the Claremont Canyon Conservancy. Much has been done by many volunteers, thanks to the support of over 500 families around the canyon. Let us build on this wonderful decade of work for the future. See you in the Canyon!

## Call for Volunteers

*from the Board of Directors*

THE BOARD IS SEEKING volunteers for the following committees to support our work.

**Policy Committee:** This fall the Conservancy's Policy Committee will start compiling an advocacy plan for Claremont Canyon that will gather together in one document all of the Conservancy's long-range objectives for the canyon as a whole.

**Nature Walk Committee:** Over the last few years, some of the Bay Area's most distinguished experts in various fields of natural history have led guided walks for the Conservancy. Volunteers are needed to help identify and recruit exciting new walk leaders, and to help conduct the actual walks.

**Stewardship Committee:** Working closely with the public agencies that own and manage land in Claremont Canyon, the Conservancy has supported the planting of redwoods, removed yellow-star thistle and other invasive non-native plants, pulled French broom, and searched out and destroyed eucalyptus re-sprouts. More of this kind of work is planned and volunteers are needed.

**Education Committee:** We need someone to organize a school program to encourage children to learn about the local canyon in our neighborhood. The ability to seek grants for this program would be highly desirable.

**Membership Committee:** We need someone with organizational skills to help with our membership programs for an average of 5-10 hours per week. Hours are flexible. Good computer skills, familiarity with Microsoft Office, and the ability to quickly learn new programs is a must. A small stipend may be available for this.

If you are interested, or can recommend someone, the Board would love to hear from you.

**The Board of Directors:** Barry Pilger, President; Joe Engbeck, Vice President; Marilyn Goldhaber, Treasurer and Secretary; Martin Holden, Jon Kaufman, Jerry Kent, Tamia Marg, Dick White, and Tim Wallace.

**The Claremont Canyon Conservancy News** is edited by Marilyn Goldhaber and Joe Engbeck.

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*YOGA HIKERS TAKE A MOMENT to stretch and enjoy spectacular views reached from the Side Hill Trail, while Sophie the dog catches up.*

© 2010 Marilyn Goldhaber



*BIRD WALK LEADER DAVE QUADY (right) with Erica Rutherford and John Colbert look for the white throated sparrow, after hearing its call on last spring's bird walk.*

© 2010 Marilyn Goldhaber



*BOB AND SHELAGH BRODERSEN of the Garber Park Stewards take a well deserved rest after one of their many mornings of restoration work in Garber Park.*

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR FALL/WINTER SERIES in Claremont Canyon. Stewardship outings include twice monthly (first Tuesday and third Saturday) restoration work in Garber Park in the lower canyon, in collaboration with the Garber Park Stewards, led by Shelagh Brodersen; and once a month (first Saturday in November and December and second Saturday thereafter (see dates below)) for weed management and trail maintenance in the UC Preserve in the upper canyon, led by Jon Kaufman and Tom Klatt.

Dates for Garber Park are **Nov 2 & 20, Dec 7 & 18, Jan 4 & 15, and Feb 1 & 19**. Meet at the Evergreen entrance, 10 AM-noon. Dates for the UC Preserve are **Nov 6, Dec 4, Jan 8 and Feb 12**. Meet across at UC signpost 29 on the north side of Claremont Avenue, about one-half mile uphill from the Alvarado Road intersection, 10 AM-noon.

Additional outings include our nature walk series and Annual Meeting activities listed below. All events are free for both members and the general public. Please check our website or contact us to get on our emailing list for updates and additions. When venturing into the canyon, it is good to wear long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes and a hat. Vegetation volunteers should also bring gloves. Please RSVP to [info@ClaremontCanyon.org](mailto:info@ClaremontCanyon.org).

**November 6—The Berkeley Project**, 9 AM-1 PM. Cal students join with Conservancy volunteers for a morning of trail maintenance and weed removal. Includes lunch offered by *Rick and Ann's*. Meet at UC signpost 29 on the north side of Claremont Avenue, about one-half mile uphill from the Alvarado Road intersection, 10 AM-noon.

**November 14—Canyon Tour with John Swanson**, 10 AM-noon (meeting place TBD), followed later in the day by the Conservancy's Annual Meeting at the Claremont Hotel, 4-6 PM (see pages 7 and 8 for details).

**November 21—Yoga Walk along the Side Hill Trail** with Domonick Wegesin, 2-3:30 PM. Wear clothes you can move in and good hiking boots or sturdy shoes. Beginners are welcome, as are long time yoga practitioners. From the intersection with Claremont Avenue, go 0.8 miles north on Grizzly Peak Boulevard. Park near a small access road on your right. Across the street from this is the (unmarked) Side Hill Trail trailhead. Look for the parked cars of other yoga hikers.

**December 11—Bird Walk with Dave Quady**, 8 AM-noon. Join us to seek the birds that reside or winter in Claremont Canyon. Dave will also lead a special owling adventure in the wee morning hours, followed by a break for breakfast. Join us for one walk or both. Owling walk: Meet at 4:30 AM at the trailhead on the north side of Claremont Avenue, about one-half mile uphill from the Alvarado Road intersection. After a brief owling lesson we'll seek owls at a couple of locations in the canyon. Rain or high wind cancels. Daytime bird walk: Meet at the top of the canyon, at the Claremont Avenue/Fish Ranch Road/Grizzly Peak Boulevard intersection, at 8 AM. We will drive to a couple of locations to sample different habitats in search of resident and winter visitant birds. Rain or high wind cancels.

**February 20—Wild Flowers of Late Winter/Early Spring** with Lech Naumovich, conservation biologist and restoration ecologist, 10-noon. Meeting place TBD.

### Join the Conservancy:

Founding Sponsor: \$1,000 over 10 years.  
Family Membership: \$50 per year.  
Student or Limited Income: \$25 per year.

PO Box 5551, Berkeley 94705, 510-843-2226  
Email: [info@ClaremontCanyon.org](mailto:info@ClaremontCanyon.org)  
Website: [www.ClaremontCanyon.org](http://www.ClaremontCanyon.org)



“BETWEEN THE STORMS” by Fred Rowe © 2010, photo taken from the Panoramic Ridge.

## Claremont Canyon Trail Map

CLAREMONT CANYON is one of the largest undeveloped canyons on the western side of the Oakland /Berkeley Hills. An oak/laurel forest covers much of its 500-plus acres; grassland and *Baccharis*-dominated scrub thrive on the warm, dry, south-facing slopes. Near the main watercourses in the upper canyon, coast redwoods were planted to replace some of the nine thousand fire-dangerous eucalyptus trees that were removed by the University of California during the last few years. Plants of special interest include the rare western leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*) and oracle oak, the latter thought to be a hybrid of black oak and interior live oak, neither of which now occur in the canyon. Wildlife is abundant, including birds of many kinds from hawks and owls to hummingbirds. They can best be seen by walking the trails that make it easy to explore the canyon on foot. Using Claremont Canyon trails, serious hikers can reach the National Skyline Ridge Trail, which runs north-south along the crest of the hills, connecting to Tilden Regional Park to the north and to Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve to the south. Spectacular vistas of San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate, Mount Tamalpais, and many Bay Area cities can be enjoyed from overlooks within the canyon.

Claremont Avenue follows roughly the same route as the old Telegraph Road, which was built in the nineteenth century alongside the nation's first transcontinental telegraph line. Starting in the 1860s, horse-drawn wagons and stage coaches used the narrow, unpaved road through the canyon. Between April

1860 and October 1861 Pony Express riders occasionally used the road on their 1,900-mile-long trips between St. Joseph, Missouri and Oakland, California. Today, Claremont Avenue climbs up through the canyon to Grizzly Peak Boulevard at Four Corners (elevation 1,308 feet). Fish Ranch Road then continues down the other side of the hills to connect with State Highway 24 and the cities of Contra Costa County

Springs and small seasonal streams drain the slopes below Grizzly Peak to form Claremont Creek, which makes its way down through the canyon to the vicinity of the Claremont Hotel. At that point, Claremont Creek crosses the Hayward Fault and flows out onto the broad relatively level plain of the east shore flatlands to join Temescal Creek before reaching San Francisco Bay.

### Trails in the Canyon

The Panoramic Ridge Trail is the most popular trail in Claremont Canyon. Sometimes referred to as the East/West Trail, it begins at the Stonewall Road entrance to Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve, and climbs steeply for about a half-mile, enabling hikers to enjoy spectacular vistas of almost the entire San Francisco Bay Region. The trail then levels out as it runs easterly for a half mile along the crest of Panoramic Ridge before beginning to climb steeply once again. At that point, Side Hill Trail angles off to the right, traversing an undisturbed south-facing slope that features a wonderful array of spring and early summer wildflowers as it climbs gently to reach Grizzly



0 0.25 0.5 miles

# UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

CENTENNIAL DR

Mather Grove

U.C. Botanical Garden

JORDAN TRAIL  
LOWER  
UPPER

PANORAMIC EAST

DWIGHT WY

DWIGHT PL

PANORAMIC WY

REGIONAL Marston House

GELSTON ST

CANYON

Clark Kerr Campus

CLAREMONT

BICYCLES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN CLAREMONT CANYON REGIONAL PRESERVE

John Garber Park

CLAREMONT AVE

RISPIN DR

SILER PL

Alvarado River

BERKELEY

DERBY ST

BELLROSE AVE

TANGLEWOOD DR

STONEWALL RD

EVERGREEN LN

ALVARADO RD

ALVARADO RD

OAK

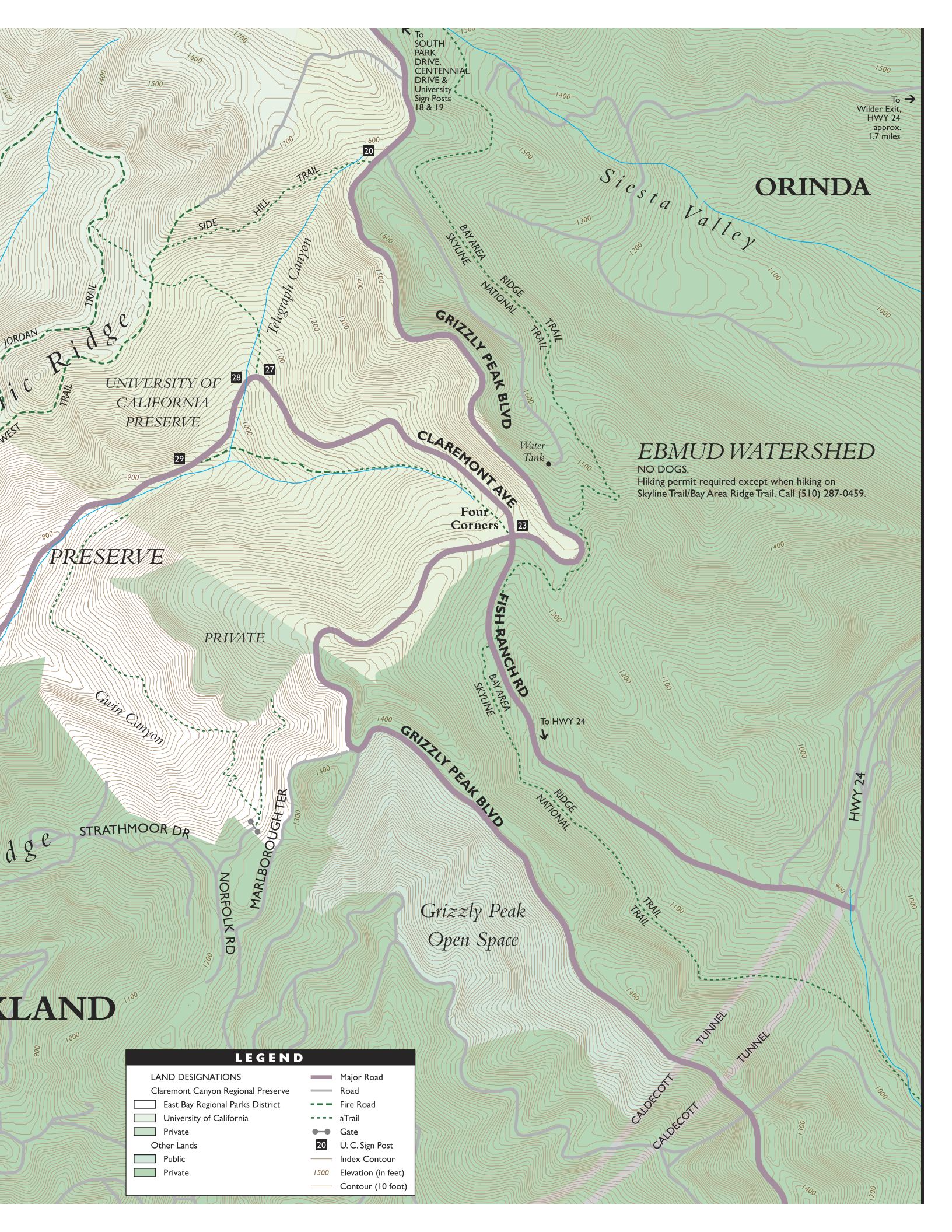
ASHBY AVE

CLAREMONT AVE

ALVARADO RD

TUNNEL RD

Vicente Canyon



To Wilder Exit, HWY 24 approx. 1.7 miles

To SOUTH PARK DRIVE, CENTENNIAL DRIVE & University Sign Posts 18 & 19

# ORINDA

Siesta Valley

## EBMUD WATERSHED

NO DOGS.  
Hiking permit required except when hiking on Skyline Trail/Bay Area Ridge Trail. Call (510) 287-0459.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESERVE

PRESERVE

PRIVATE

Grizzly Peak Open Space

### LEGEND

LAND DESIGNATIONS	
	Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve
	East Bay Regional Parks District
	University of California
	Private
	Other Lands
	Public
	Private
	Major Road
	Road
	Fire Road
	aTrail
	Gate
	U. C. Sign Post
	Index Contour
	Elevation (in feet)
	Contour (10 foot)

CLAND

HWY 24

To HWY 24

Four Corners

Water Tank

MARLBOROUGH TER

NORFOLK RD

STRATHMOOR DR

dge

Jordan Ridge

WEST

JORDAN

TRAIL

TRAIL

TRAIL

SIDE HILL TRAIL

Telegraph Canyon

GRIZZLY PEAK BLVD

CLAREMONT AVE

FISH RANCH RD

GRIZZLY PEAK BLVD

CALDECOTT TUNNEL

TUNNEL

TUNNEL

BAY AREA SKYLINE RIDGE NATIONAL TRAIL

BAY AREA SKYLINE RIDGE NATIONAL TRAIL

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BAY AREA SKYLINE RIDGE NATIONAL TRAIL

Peak Boulevard at about 1,600 feet elevation. The trail intersects Grizzly Peak Boulevard about .8 miles north of Four Corners.

An equally interesting but less well-known trail begins at the end of Norfolk Road (very limited parking) and continues down through Gwin Canyon on the south side of Claremont Canyon. At present, this trail dead-ends on the slope above Claremont Creek though the Conservancy is working with the East Bay Regional Park District to extend it all the way down to and across the creek and then up the north side of the canyon to intersect with the Panoramic Ridge Trail.

A couple of fire roads on University land in the upper canyon are open to hikers. One veers off from Claremont Avenue about .5 miles above Gelston Road at U.C. signpost 29 directly across the road from the dramatic, orange-hued, vertical layers of a geological formation known as Claremont Chert. The trail continues up the bottom of the canyon all the way to Four Corners.

run down through Gwin Canyon from Norfolk Road, cross the creek, and climb back up to the top of East-West Trail on Panoramic Ridge with its magnificent vistas of both urban and natural scenery. The Gwin Canyon Trail already exists; the rest of the cross-canyon trail is still awaiting formal approval and construction by the East Bay Regional Park District.



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*HIKERS PAUSE FOR A CLOSER LOOK at the ground during a “botanizing ramble” into Gwin Canyon.*

© 2006 Marilyn Goldhaber



*THE SIDE HILL TRAIL with California natives blooming in spring.*

Farther up Claremont Avenue at signpost 28, another university-maintained fire road climbs up a steep slope to the top of Panoramic Ridge where it’s easy to cross over into Strawberry Canyon and connect with the Upper Jordan Trail.

Two short trails run through John Garber Park in the western-most part of Claremont Canyon (not far from the Claremont Hotel). One trail in this rustic, heavily wooded, 13-acre city park enters the park from Evergreen Lane (off Alvarado Road). Another trail enters the park from the end of Rispin Drive (off Claremont Avenue). Both entry points are in residential areas, are unsigned, and have very limited parking.

The network of trails in Claremont Canyon is a work in progress—and we invite your ideas. The Conservancy’s long range plan calls for development of a walking trail right up the bottom of the canyon parallel to Claremont Avenue and Claremont Creek. The plan also calls for a mid-canyon trail that will

### The Claremont Canyon Conservancy

The Conservancy was organized in 2001 to reduce the risk of wildfire while protecting and restoring natural landscape values in Claremont Canyon and making the canyon easier for pedestrians to explore. Incorporated as a non-profit 501c3 organization, the Conservancy has a membership of about 500 individuals and families, most of whom live in or near the canyon.

The Conservancy does not own land. Instead, we fulfill our mission by working with those public agencies and private parties that do own land in the canyon, especially the East Bay Regional Park District, the University of California, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, and the City of Oakland. A few acres of land along the western edge of Claremont Canyon are in the City of Berkeley though the city does not own or manage any land in the canyon.



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## **EBRPD—Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan, an update**

*by Pat O'Brien, General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District*

ON APRIL 20, 2010 THE PARK DISTRICT Board of Directors unanimously approved the Park District's Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan and its accompanying EIR. The approval followed six years of hard work by staff, consultants, natural resource specialists, planners, cooperating agencies, and the public, and will pave the way for important fire hazard reduction work to begin in Claremont Canyon and several other East Bay Hills regional parks.

Wildfire hazard reduction and fuels management issues are nothing new to the Park District. In fact, we've been involved in at least half a dozen fuels management plans since the District's 1936 "General Fire Plan" decried the dangerous fire conditions created by past fires and frosts in the eucalyptus and pine plantations, and outlined the need for fuelbreak construction and maintenance. A Blue Ribbon Commission in 1982, the East Bay Hills Vegetation Management Consortium in 1995 following the Tunnel Fire, and numerous individual park land management plans have described the dire need and effective ways to address the mounting accumulation of forest fuels that could contribute to future fire disasters. After each plan was finished, a good start was made to address the hazardous fuels along the interface between our parklands and our urban residential neighbors. But each time, for a variety of reasons, our commitment and focus waned.

So what's different this time? First, we have a better understanding of what needs to be done to reduce the flammability of our wildlands in the East Bay Hills, and how to do it. We're learning from our past successes and failures, what we're now calling "adaptive management," and making it a cornerstone of our future hazard reduction work. Second, our staff and our Board understand more than ever before, the absolutely critical commitment we must make to regular maintenance of the fuels treatments we undertake. And we have made that commitment. Third, where past planning efforts have been conducted on an individual park and rather piecemeal basis, this time we took a more holistic, ecosystem-wide approach to the planning and environmental analysis. And, finally, as promised to the voters in 2004 in Measure CC, we placed a special emphasis on protecting and where possible enhancing natural resources such as plant and wildlife habitats, soil, watershed and air quality, and cultural resource values during fuels treatment activities.

All this was not without controversy. Some citizens expressed concern over our proposed use of herbicides to control eucalyptus stump sprouts that often defeated past fuelbreak construction efforts. Others asserted that this

was simply a native plant restoration plan in disguise and would even increase the potential for devastating wildfires in the future. Still others claimed it would cause environmental destruction and production of greenhouse gases on a scale never before seen in the Bay Area, and they have launched a lawsuit. But we have a strong, science-based plan of action backed up by a solid, CEQA-compliant environmental analysis. We have a committed team of fire, stewardship and operations professionals that have demonstrated they can get the job done well. Just as important, we have the unanimous support of our Board of Directors. So, as we move forward, I am confident that we will warrant the public's trust in reducing wildfire risks in Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve as well as in our other regional parklands in the East Bay Hills.

## **November 14 Annual Meeting At the Claremont Hotel**

*by Marilyn Goldhaber*

MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS are invited to the Claremont Hotel for the Conservancy's ninth Annual Meeting (see back page). We will review our work and future plans for the canyon and think about what we can do to commemorate our tenth anniversary next year. Bring your ideas. Our keynote speaker will be John Swanson, Assistant Fire Chief of the East Bay Regional Park District. John has been with the District since 2007 and now plays a key role in region-wide fire safety planning and implementation. Prior to coming to the District, he worked 33 years with the U.S. Forest Service, directing programs in fuels, timber and fire management in Oregon, California and Nevada. He is an expert in large fire suppression having served many years on regional and national Interagency Incident Management Teams.



*ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF JOHN SWANSON (in helmet) is seen meeting with Conservancy members in 2008 to review wildfire safety issues in Claremont Canyon.*

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*CAL STUDENTS volunteer for  
"The Berkeley Project" (page 2).*

## THE CLAREMONT CANYON CONSERVANCY

SUPPORTING THE LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP OF CLAREMONT CANYON

**MEMBERS, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS,** *Please join us ...*

**Sunday, November 14, 2010, 4-6 p.m.**

**The Claremont Hotel**

### ***Annual Meeting***

Reception	4:00 p.m.
Presentations	4:30 p.m.
Open Forum	5:30 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: John Swanson, Assistant Fire Chief  
of the East Bay Regional Park District

*Complimentary wine bar and refreshments. Bring a friend or neighbor.*

**RSVP:** [info@ClaremontCanyon.org](mailto:info@ClaremontCanyon.org) or call 510-843-2226