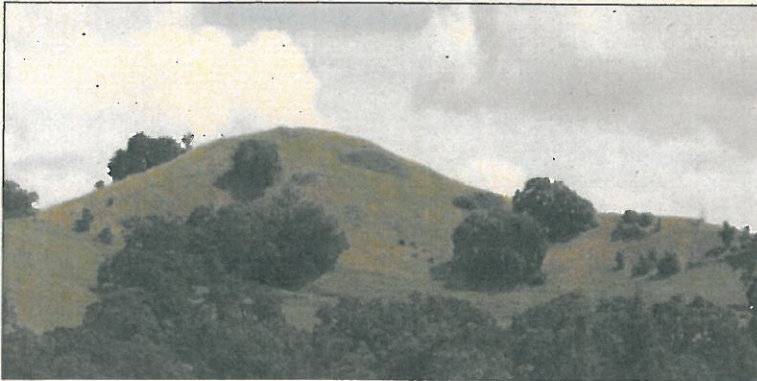


# Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation



SPRING 2010

## OUR CHANCE TO ACQUIRE LAND ON ACALANES RIDGE



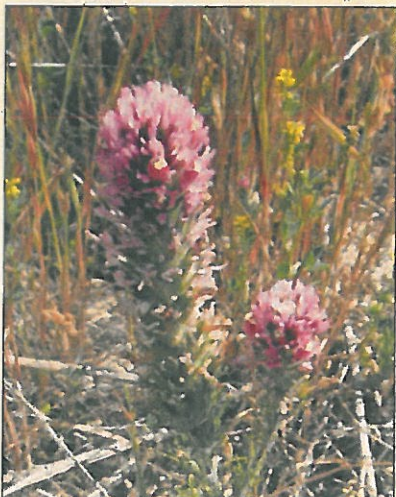
Ridge. Voters in Walnut Creek and Concord then approved a bond measure to acquire land on Shell Ridge, Lime Ridge, Acalanes Ridge and Sugarloaf. In 1991, Walnut Creek's City Council voted to acquire additional land on Lime Ridge using City funds. Open Space became a valued part of our heritage with those acquisitions of almost 2700 acres. Polls of Walnut Creek residents have consistently shown that open space continues to be one of the most valued aspects of our city. For nearly forty years we have acted when the opportunity was available to preserve open space in our community. It is time for us to act again.

You may have read that Muir Heritage Land Trust is acquiring about 22 acres of open space on Acalanes Ridge adjacent to Walnut Creek's Acalanes Open Space. The Open Space Foundation has been active in working with neighbors of Acalanes Ridge, the City of Walnut Creek, the East Bay Regional Park District and Muir Heritage Land Trust to make this acquisition happen. The Cities of Walnut Creek and Lafayette and the East Bay Regional Park district have each contributed about \$400,000 in funds provided by Measure WW which area voters passed in 2008. Muir Heritage will be raising \$450,000 to close the funding gap and to provide for future management of the property. This acquisition will be owned by Muir Heritage and open to all area residents.

This land is important to us for its unparalleled 360 degree views of central county from the Carquinez Strait to Mt. Diablo and around to the Berkeley hills, its plant and animal life and for its addition to the open space on Acalanes Ridge. The Board of our Open Space Foundation has already voted to contribute from our Land Acquisition Fund toward this acquisition. In addition, individuals have begun to pledge funds to be matched by contributions from Foundation members and others. All funds contributed will be used for the Acalanes property acquisition.

Walnut Creek has been a pioneer in recognizing the value of open space in our community and acquiring land to preserve it as open space. We started in the early 1970s with a referendum to block a massive development on Shell

We will be asking our members and other Walnut Creek residents to contribute to ensure that this acquisition can be completed and that it can be opened and managed for area residents. When we ask, please consider contributing as you are able to make this acquisition successful. If we and Muir Heritage Land Trust fail to raise the necessary funds, the property will be developed and our opportunity will be lost forever.



Images from Acalanes Ridge (left to right): Owl's Clover, Field of Baby Blue Eyes, Close-up of Baby Blue Eyes



## BOB SUZUKI, IN MEMORIAM

Bob Suzuki, a member of the Board of Directors of the WCOSF, passed away recently. Bob worked tirelessly in our open space for a number of years. He worked on Foundation projects planting oaks and suppressing invasive weeds. He experimented with new methods for planting acorns and inspected our past plantings. He worked with Walnut Creek Open Space staff as a volunteer two days a week. Bob joined the Open Space Foundation board in fall of 2008 and sincerely cared about making our open space a better place. He contributed his energy and brought his own perspective to projects and to discussions on our board. Our Open Space oak trees and buckeyes are prospering thanks in no small part to Bob's eagerness, commitment and hundreds of hours of volunteer service. Bob was a good comrade and our board will miss him greatly. Our sympathy goes out to Linda for her loss.



*Bob Suzuki worked tirelessly on projects such as Oak Seedling Watering (left), Buckeye Fencing (center) and Acorn Planting (right)*

## EARTH DAY TEAM CUTS TRAIL, LINKING LIME RIDGE NORTH AND SOUTH



This April's Earth Day brought together City staff, Open Space Foundation members, and community volunteers for a morning of trail building, among many other activities celebrating the planet. Rising from Bayberry Pond, the new trail, about a third of a mile in length, now links Lime Ridge North and Lime Ridge South by connecting with Lime Ridge Trail through a tunnel under Ygnacio Valley Road.

A score of trail builders, inspired by Walnut Creek Councilman Bob Simmons, coordinated by WCOSF Board member Joe Stadum, and trained by Open Space Ranger Art Janke and Open Space Maintenance Worker Chuck Wall, worked diligently to cut the new trail. Stadum, who helped plan and coordinate the work, also organized and led two pre-work days to ready the site for Earth Day.

Simmons, who was sidelined with a dislocated shoulder, says that "building the trail in

this small but very pretty drainage benefits both the wildlife that use the riparian area and the people wanting to explore the land around Bayberry Pond."

Ranger Art Janke called the event "a huge success. Thanks to the hard working volunteers we were able to build nearly a quarter mile of trail in a single morning, exceeding our expectations. Thanks to everyone involved." Follow up work by Janke, Stadum, and team put the finishing touches on the new trail.

## OPEN SPACE MANAGER'S REPORT

The 2010 – 2011 school year will see the return of school history tours at Borges Ranch in the Shell Ridge Open Space. Beginning June 1 schools in Walnut Creek may make reservations for programs starting in September. The reservation period opens for schools outside of Walnut Creek on September 1. School tours cover Walnut Creek and ranching history from 1900 to 1946. Rangers will guide students through the historic buildings and share stories of life on an early 20<sup>th</sup> century ranch. Program content correlates to state curriculum standards. The Walnut Creek Open Space has long provided education programs to young students which help them connect the area in which we now live with the the lives of pioneer families who helped develop the region.

A program taking history back even further is the new Ancient Ways event held at the Sugarloaf Open Space on Saturday, August 14 from 10:am until noon. You can try your skill at tossing the Atlatl or throwing the rabbitstick. Crafts and games include making and spinning an acorn top, playing stick dice or making simple crafts from cattails and tules. Enjoy a family day at Sugarloaf by bringing a picnic lunch to enjoy following the competition. Plan to enjoy your Open Space this season and reconnect with the great outdoors.

*Dan Cather*



## Second Planting Season at Bayberry Pond

This winter we concentrated on establishing shrubs in the two areas designated for chaparral, the northeast corner and the back side of the dam. We planted nearly 60 shrubs of four species – California sage, black sage, toyon, and monkey flower. We also scattered seeds of several other varieties but have seen no results. There are numerous volunteer coyote brushes in addition to those planted last year.

Another of our objectives this year was to increase the tree cover. Inside the fence we added willows and cottonwoods near the pond and put in two more elderberries and half a dozen buckeyes. Between the enclosure and the Bayberry entrance the volunteers planted a dozen or so oaks and buckeyes to create a grove and extend the area of improved habitat to the firebreak.

The grass seedlings that were planted the first winter are thriving. So is the area we planted grass and flower seeds on top of the dam. The diversity leaves something to be desired but the numbers are impressive. Unfortunately our attempts to grow other species of flowers from seeds this winter failed, and the grass plantings were so sparse we'll probably have to interplant the area next year.

The pond vegetation is recovering from last year's deepening. There is more algae and a good crop of native rushes. One day we watched two pairs of mallards feeding on the pond for most of the morning, which was encouraging. Another good crop of toad and tree frog tadpoles is thriving; we can see and hear the adults in the native grass. Another snake and several birds have been added to our species list.



*Western toads mating. There were long ribbons of toad eggs in the pond. Cover for the babies was much better this year both in the water and on shore.*



*Three approaches to planting: A year-old toyon from a gallon can (left), tiny sage seedlings from a six-pack (center), and broadcasting sage seeds (right).*

## Moving into the Nursery

In the last newsletter we reported that we had completed the construction of the nursery fence and gates and the main part of the irrigation system under the direction of Don Mount, a local contractor who generously offered to help us. Since then we have been working with Don on the facilities that will make the nursery usable.

Our first step was to lay and level concrete blocks for the foundations of the plant beds. We used salvaged pallets for the bases. Next we built frames of lumber and hardware cloth to protect our plants from being eaten by the local wildlife. These frames were placed on top of the pallets. Don installed the timers and individual irrigation fixtures for each bed. All the essentials were now in place.

At last it was moving day! We brought in the plants we had and to our surprise, they filled two of our six plant beds – more than we had expected. We celebrated the milestone by setting up temporary work tables and potting up some of our new seedlings.

Although the nursery is usable now, it is not finished. We still have to build the soil bin, set up the tool shed, and create shade for both workers and plants.



*Images from left to right: 1) Aligning and leveling the last row of blocks. On the right, a finished row with pallets in place. 2) Building the plant frames. It took one to staple, two to keep the hardware cloth aligned and taut, and one to steady the frame. 3) Unloading plants from Don's big truck at the nursery.*

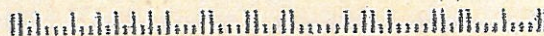


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## Yes, I want to help protect and preserve Walnut Creek's Open Space

We invite all who share this goal to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Memberships and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. There are numerous areas where you can help. If you are interested, please leave a message at 925-939-6610, drop us a note or email, or visit our website at [www.wcosf.org](http://www.wcosf.org).

### I would like to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email (*we never share*) \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills I am willing to share \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like to volunteer!

\_\_\_\_\_ Oak Restoration Project  
\_\_\_\_\_ Native Grasses  
\_\_\_\_\_ Quail Habitat  
\_\_\_\_\_ School program

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