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Title: Save Mount Diablo Protects Second Volcanic Dome on Marsh Creek

Images: please follow this link to a selection of hi-res images.

<https://www.yousendit.com/download/T2djT0NWT01sMHhqQThUQw>

Captions and Credits: At bottom

Save Mount Diablo's newest acquisition—Marsh Creek-VI—builds on the California State Parks and Recreation Commission's recent designation of Cowell Ranch as "Marsh Creek State Park" on January 27th. The new name is a nod to John Marsh, Contra Costa County's first American settler as well as to one of Mount Diablo's most important resources- Marsh Creek. The creek is the second longest least disturbed creek in Contra Costa County, making it a critical wildlife corridor. Marsh Creek-VI, acquired for its segment of Marsh Creek, has several other resources, including an unusual volcanic dome.

The new purchase is adjacent to two of Save Mount Diablo's protected properties. Although it will be a number of years given the State budget before the new Marsh Creek State Park is open to the public, Save Mount Diablo has been working on its own program protecting Marsh Creek parcels upstream from the new State Park.

Marsh Creek –VI, the second volcanic plug dome that the organization has preserved in the past 6 months, is located just 900 feet upstream from the first dome property, Marsh Creek-V. Marsh Creek – VI contains a lovely, high-quality 250 foot section of the creek, a known habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog, several rare plant species including Contra Costa manzanita, the endemic Mt. Diablo Globe lily and the unusual fragrant, citrus-like hop tree, as well as the uncommon volcanic rock rhyodacite within its 6 acres.

The neighboring Marsh Creek-IV property is in its third year of restoration to re-create the "riparian" or streamside woodland already existing at the new Marsh Creek-VI. Marsh Creek-VI is rich in many ways. With some slopes greater than 45 degrees and unusual rock outcroppings the property possesses amazing views, particularly of Mount Diablo to the west, and is highly visible from both the Marsh Creek Springs event site and from adjacent Marsh Creek Road, a Contra Costa County's General Plan designated "Scenic Route."

A large pink house is one of several buildings on the property. A large, highly visible deck, overhanging the Dark Canyon section of Marsh Creek from the top of the steep dome, detracts from the area's natural beauty. "Save Mount Diablo is currently evaluating what to do with the buildings although the structurally unsound deck will be removed," said Seth Adams, the organization's Land Programs Director. Many people may already be familiar with Marsh Creek-VI, given how visible the house and deck are, overlooking the canyon.

Once mortgaged for \$929,000, Marsh Creek-VI was bank-owned and preserved by Save Mount Diablo for \$395,000. This is the seventh parcel under 10 acres acquired by the organization in the last year. Save Mount Diablo, which transfers properties to park agencies for long-term management and public access, will probably own Marsh Creek-VI for many years. "Given the economy, Save Mount Diablo has to hold properties longer, but this has been a great time for us to preserve land", explained Ron Brown Save Mount Diablo's Executive Director. However, Julie Seelen Advancement Director for the organization says that is why your help is more important now than ever. "Because of the generous support of our donors Save Mount Diablo has been able to acquire multiple parcels in the past two years. Their ongoing support will be crucial going forward as more opportunities to preserve land come up."

First Hike on Marsh Creek-VI

Be among the first to see the new property. Seth Adams, Save Mount Diablo's Land Programs Director will lead a tour of Marsh Creek-VI and adjacent Marsh Creek IV on Saturday, February 25th from 10 am to noon. The tour is less than a mile in length; look forward to beautiful sections of Marsh Creek, amazing geology and one short climb to spectacular views. Visit SaveMountDiablo.org for more details.

Summary

Who: Save Mount Diablo, non-profit organization in Walnut Creek, CA

What: Save Mount Diablo purchased its second volcanic dome property, Marsh Creek – VI upstream from the new Marsh Creek State Park.

Where: Marsh Creek-VI is located at the western mouth of the narrowest point of Marsh Creek Canyon known as “Dark Canyon.”

When: First Public Tour on Saturday, February 25th from 10 am to noon.

Why: Marsh Creek – VI contains a lovely, high-quality 250 foot section of Marsh Creek, a known habitat for the threatened California red-legged frog, several rare plant species including Contra Costa manzanita, the endemic Mt. Diablo Globe lily and the unusual fragrant, citrus-like hop tree, as well as the uncommon volcanic rock rhyodacite within its 5.74 acres.

How: Save Mount Diablo purchased the bank owned property for \$395,000. This is the seventh parcel under 10 acres acquired by Save Mount Diablo in the last year. Save Mount Diablo, which transfers properties to park agencies for long-term management and public access, will probably own Marsh Creek-VI for many years due to its location and the down economy. In the meantime Save Mount Diablo will remove unsound structures and restore habitat on the property.

Events: Save Mount Diablo will lead a tour of Marsh Creek-VI and -IV on Saturday, February 25th from 10 am to noon. There is more information about the properties and tours at SaveMountDiablo.org.

Captions and Credits:

1. The “twin” volcanic domes, Save Mount Diablo’s Marsh Creek-VI in the foreground and Marsh Creek-V behind. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com.
2. The flowing waters of Marsh Creek, the second longest, least disturbed creek in Contra Costa County and a critical wildlife corridor. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com.
3. Marsh Creek-VI’s unusual geologic make-up and steep slopes support endemic plants like the Contra Costa manzanita and Mount Diablo Globe lily as well as this unusually fragrant citrus-like hop tree. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com.
4. Marsh Creek-VI’s steep slopes possess amazing views, particularly of Mount Diablo to the west, and the property is highly visible. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com.
5. Save Mount Diablo will remove a structurally unsound deck, on its new Marsh Creek-VI property, that overhangs the canyon, seen here from the organization’s adjacent Marsh Creek-IV property. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com.
6. A map of Save Mount Diablo’s properties near Marsh Creek with properties crossed by the creek solid red. By Save Mount Diablo.

Save Mount Diablo is a non-profit 501(c)(3) conservation organization, which has been preserving lands on and around Mount Diablo and educating the public to the mountain's natural values since 1971. Preserved lands have increased from 6,788 acres in one park to more than 100,000 acres in 40 parks and preserves. Save Mount Diablo continues to preserve, defend and restore the remainder of the mountain for people and wildlife to enjoy. Contact: Save Mount Diablo, telephone: (925) 947-3535, fax: (925) 947-0642, 1901 Olymptic Blvd., Suite 320, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; www.SaveMountDiablo.org

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