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Title: Save Mount Diablo Adds to Morgan Territory: Two Transfers to the East Bay Regional Park District

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

<http://www.yousendit.com/download/T2dlcXI0R0ZHa1A1SE1UQw>

Captions and Credits: At bottom

Morgan Territory Regional Preserve is growing larger as two of Save Mount Diablo's properties are transferred to the East Bay Regional Park District in the next few weeks. Both Moss Rock, 20 acres acquired in 2010, and Joseph Galvin Ranch, 62 acres acquired in 2003, will be added to the Preserve thanks to funding from the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy. Both parcels have lovely stretches of Marsh Creek, critical habitat and a wildlife corridor for both common and rare species such as California red-legged frog. The Mount Diablo globe lily and Diablo sunflower, both endemic, or limited to the Mount Diablo area, have been found on the properties as well.

Joseph Galvin Ranch, marked on Morgan Territory Road by two white bridges, is especially rich in biodiversity given its mosaic of habitats including the creek's riparian vegetation, chaparral, grassland and blue oak woodland. Moss Rock, which is surrounded on three sides by protected land, will remove the threat of development from the area to maintain uninterrupted oak-bay woodland rising from the creek into Mount Diablo State Park. These resources make the lands a high priority for preservation. Their locations make the properties excellent additions to the Park District. Both the habitat and locations make the parcels fantastic for recreation. "We are very pleased to be able to acquire these lands that are strategically located adjacent to existing preserved lands, allowing us to link existing and future trails and habitat corridors," said EBRPD Board President Beverly Lane. "The Galvin Ranch parcel, about 61 acres of pristine habitat, is especially beautiful."

Save Mount Diablo secures land when opportunities arise, thanks to the support of individual donors, then restores them until a long term managing agency, like the East Bay Regional Park District, can add them to their park system often with the help of public funds, like those of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy. "The Conservancy is happy to work with Save Mount Diablo and East Bay Regional Park District to protect these valuable properties. They help achieve a fast start in implementing the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan, which is designed to balance endangered species protection with future growth" said John Kopchik, Executive Director of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, which provided much of the funding in this case.

Even though the properties were bargains, both properties' values have declined steeply since they were originally acquired by Save Mount Diablo. The organization is passing along discount to the public. "The transfers represent a small donation to the Regional Park District. We want the public to have access as soon as possible" explained Ron Brown, Executive Director of Save Mount Diablo. "Future generations will be able to enjoy all of the beauty of Mount Diablo's natural lands including its flora and fauna."

Hike the properties before they are transferred

Although the properties have transferred to the East Bay Regional Park District they will not be open to the public until management plans are in place. Save Mount Diablo will lead guided hikes on Moss Rock Sunday, January 29th, and Joseph Galvin Ranch Saturday, February 4th for a last sneak peek. Visit SaveMountDiablo.org for more details.

Summary

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

What: Save Mount Diablo transferred two properties, Moss Rock and Joseph Galvin Ranch, to East Bay Regional Park District.

Where: Both properties will be added to Morgan Territory Regional Preserve east of Mount Diablo.

When: Transfer finalized in January 2012

Why: Both parcels have lovely stretches of Marsh Creek, critical habitat and wildlife corridor, supporting endemic plants and likely several threatened species such as California tiger salamander. Joseph Galvin Ranch is unique in its mosaic of habitats including chaparral, grassland and blue oak woodland allowing the land to support wildlife requiring more than one type of habitat.

How: Save Mount Diablo preserved and restored the properties to turn over to a park agency for long-term management and public access. The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy provided funding to transfer the land to East Bay Regional Park District.

Events: Save Mount Diablo will lead guided tours on the properties, Moss Rock on Sunday, January 29th and Joseph Galvin Ranch on Saturday, February 4th, at 10:00 am. There is more information about the properties and tours at SaveMountDiablo.org.

Captions and Credits:

1. A rock in the Marsh Creek bed covered in the brightly colored moss from which the property gets its name. By Scott Hein, www.heinphoto.com
2. A map of Moss Rock and Joseph Galvin Ranch in relation to Mount Diablo State Park and Morgan Territory Regional Preserve. By Save Mount Diablo.
3. A seasonal waterfall feeding in to Marsh Creek on Joseph Galvin Ranch. By Brad Heckman.
4. An endemic Mount Diablo sunflower on Joseph Galvin Ranch. By Brad Heckman.
5. Endemic Mount Diablo globe lilies have been found on both properties. By Brad Heckman.
6. Marsh Creek, a critical wildlife and recreational corridor, flows through both parcels. By Brad Heckman.
7. A view of Mount Diablo from Joseph Galvin Ranch. By Brad Heckman.

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 Olympic Blvd., Suite 320, Walnut Creek, CA 94596;

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