



Welcome to your Reimagine San Geronimo Update!

Providing Respite and Recreation in Challenging Times

So many of you have reached out to The Trust for Public Land in recent weeks and months to thank us for keeping the San Geronimo trails open to the public for walking, biking, and similar passive recreational uses during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a very short period of time, it seems the entire country has come to deeply appreciate the respite and comfort that nature provides so freely. Parks, open space preserves, fresh air, exercise – these things are critical for physical, mental, and emotional health. When they are available to all, they dramatically improve lives and enhance communities. The Trust for Public Land exists to create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. We thank all of you for allowing us to deliver on our mission in the San Geronimo Valley by responsibly using, enjoying, and caring for the property.



To facilitate your thoughtful enjoyment and stewardship of the land, we have placed benches throughout the property and will be providing signs to guide use - i.e., pointing out notable trails and trail loops, outlining general property rules, and reminding us all to be respectful of sensitive habitat areas, neighbors, and other users. We are grateful to local artist Lucian A.



As a nonprofit conservation organization - and private owners of the San Geronimo property - The Trust for Public Land is excited to make cart paths and trails available to the public for social-distancing-appropriate recreational use as we develop long-term plans. In addition, we have authorized specific uses on the property such as restoration work and temporary art installations. It is important to note that permission to use this private property is contingent upon responsible use and may be denied to anyone who interferes with other authorized uses – this is to protect our ability to safely provide public access. We appreciate the responsible use and thoughtful care demonstrated by virtually all of you.

Please note: Access to a section of the property in the vicinity of Roy's Pools, including the informal entry point from San Geronimo Valley Drive, will be closed for the remainder of the summer and into the fall for the SPAWN restoration project. For public safety reasons, please do not attempt to enter this area. Public parking and easy access to the remainder of the property will continue to be available at the clubhouse location.



Getting Closer to a Vision for the San Geronimo Property

We are working in earnest to complete a [vision document](#) for the property that outlines suitable conservation and community uses, incorporates the extensive public input we have received, and serves as a guide for future owners and managers of the land. While we had hoped to release the document in July 2020, we are finding that more time is needed. We are on track to complete the document in August 2020, and will update you as soon as possible with information about the document and its presentation to the community this fall.

In our [May newsletter](#), we highlighted the restoration planning currently underway by Trout Unlimited that will underpin our vision document. We also outlined the [site-planning frameworks](#) that emerged from our year-long community engagement process. These frameworks reflect The Trust for Public Land's [mission](#), values, and conservation commitments; the community's values; and the property's real-world opportunities and constraints. They serve as guiding principles for the vision document.

In applying these frameworks, we have found many areas of consensus and compatibility with The Trust for Public Land's conservation goals. For example, there is broad support for protecting and restoring the San Geronimo Meadow parcel for salmon and other species. That area most suitably supports passive open space, low-impact trails, nature interpretation, and habitat restoration. Similarly, the Larsen Meadow parcel is highly suitable for restoration, and is well-suited to a variety of conservation-compatible recreation and outdoor activities such as multi-use trails, outdoor educational and interpretive opportunities, and regenerative land management practices such as well-managed seasonal grazing in certain areas. As many of you know, the Clubhouse parcel affords the greatest

opportunity for community-serving uses and social events, community gardens, and potentially a fire station and community center. While we will not be able to accommodate every proposed or imagined use on 157 acres of land, we are committed to protecting, connecting, and restoring this special property. *For everyone. Forever.*



Prioritizing Property Management and Stewardship

In the near term, property management remains a top priority for The Trust for Public Land. We realize that the landscape is changing – shifting from a verdant, highly manicured environment to a ‘four-season’ natural open space with spring wildflowers, tawny summer grasses, and winter wetlands. We understand that for some of you, this is difficult; for many of you, it is exciting. Transitioning from a management-intensive golf course to a natural area is a process that takes time – often several years – and involves a certain amount of adaptation as nature returns and recreational uses change. We have raised the bar, based on public input, by avoiding the use of herbicides and limiting mowing in some areas for native plant and wildflower recovery, nesting birds, and other sensitive critters. This year we have focused our limited resources on public safety (for example, removing dead trees, maintaining access ways, and prioritizing fire safety), managing weeds in sensitive habitat areas, and planning for future restoration efforts. Weed encroachment is a challenge that we will continue to address. Our restoration plans will help inform this issue in the future, and we are excited to be working with a strong partner, Trout Unlimited, on a long-term stream restoration and habitat management plan.



Ithuriel's Spear



Yarrow

Native species photographed on the property.

More immediately, we have hired fire expert Carol Rice to prepare a fuel management plan for the entire property, and we are already implementing Carol's preliminary recommendations. We will share this fuel management plan with the community when it is completed in August. We are also working closely with the Marin County Fire Department (update below) and our property manager on fuel management priorities, and will continue with targeted mowing this year. As part of improving fire safety and resilience on the property, we recently had the large wood pile in the property's maintenance area removed (with thanks to Fahy Tree Services for their efficiency and focus in managing this effort!), and removed several dead and dying pines along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. We have left a few logs standing and on the ground to provide habitat for the smaller species among us – notably, native pollinators, which depend on old logs for their homes, and western fence lizards, which can reduce the prevalence of Lyme disease in tick populations.



Pine tree logs provide support for important habitat.

Before and after images below of recent wood pile work in the maintenance area.



Concurrently, we are working on a three-year invasive species management plan, which will guide our work in 2021 and beyond. This plan will be professionally developed, with important groundwork provided by our new academic intern, Aidan Bergman. Aidan is a San Geronimo Valley native and Drake High School student, who is enrolled in the SEA-DISC academy. He is helping us document native and invasive species on the property, and develop best management practices. We have seen native and endemic species return over the last year, and it is important that we implement a thoughtful plan that allows native species to flourish while also addressing problematic species such as thistle and Harding grass.

Aidan's work on species mapping will help us identify interactive stewardship opportunities for the community. The valley is already doing great work in this regard – we are so grateful to the Broom Service, and many others, who have voluntarily pulled broom and weeds on the property. We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge these hardworking, humble heroes.



Broom Service member Mel Wright hard at work on the property.

Acknowledging the Marin County Fire Department

The Marin County Fire Department continues to use the former clubhouse for administrative and emergency planning purposes during the pandemic. When the Department reached out to The Trust for Public Land in March 2020, seeking work space for administrative staff to spread out and practice responsible social distancing (for everyone's safety), we were quick to open the clubhouse doors for their temporary use. Since then, we have gained as much as we have given. In addition to providing a reassuring presence on the property, the Fire Department has supported our efforts to develop a fuel management plan for the property, created defensible space around the clubhouse building, and cleared the parking lot of weeds and overhanging tree limbs. Going forward, they will continue to assist with fuel management activities throughout the property. While we all hope for a return to normalcy in the near future, we are happy to provide Fire Department staff with a home in the meantime. Like you, we are deeply grateful for their tireless efforts on the front lines and throughout the community to keep us safe and secure.



Seasonal firefighters help clean and organize the former clubhouse for Fire Department staff



Firefighters cleared weeds and trimmed trees in the parking lot adjacent to the former Clubhouse.

Now that fire season is upon us, we encourage you to [register](#) with the San Geronimo Valley Emergency Readiness Group (VERG) - a network of valley organizations and residents working together to manage wildfire response and other crises. When you register with VERG, your contact information is given to a coordinator in your neighborhood, who will reach out to you with information and assistance in the event of an emergency. Your coordinator will also send information up to village captains who will then contact the Marin County Fire Department. We are honored to be working with VERG to identify ways to include the San Geronimo property into the valley's emergency response plans.

**Thank you for your time and ongoing stewardship of the San Geronimo property.
Until next time, be well and be safe!**

