

The Dream of an All Weather Trail in Huddart Park Has Come True

by Don Pugh

In the last issue, I wrote about how a long-time dream of local equestrians was about to be realized thanks to a partnership between dedicated local equestrians and the County Parks Department. I am very happy to give you the following update:

The initial challenge was agreeing on a specific trail plan that achieved the desires of some equestrians for a lower loop and others for a longer upper loop to Skyline. Out of these discussions evolved the two phase plan discussed below. The next challenge was figuring out how to construct the trail. Phase 1 was 2.7 miles, and needed base rock 3" thick and 4 feet wide. This amounted to 1,500,000 pounds of base rock! We would need the entire prison population of California pushing wheel barrows for the next three years to get it installed! Consideration to buying or renting power wheelbarrows was also reviewed, but was not reasonable. Then the power of Google came to our rescue, and the Professional Trail Builders Association was discovered. We learned that there are contractors whose business is building trails, and who had the specialized equipment to work on narrow single track trails. We



interviewed three contractors and decided on Jerry Morrison and Yakima Construction. Jerry has been building trails thruout the West for 50 years in National, State and local parks, and had all the licenses and recommendations to work with public entities. Our desire was doing the construction in October, after the trail is closed for the winter, but before the rains came. His crew was finishing a job in Colorado, and were hurrying to beat the first snowstorm. The idea of working sunny California in October was appealing. Then we discovered that the excavation needed to be done by Oct 15 to comply with Fish and Game regulations.

So the next challenge was to raise \$30,000 in the next month to be able to pay for the project. Initial calls to donors convinced me we could raise the funds, so we committed to the excavation task for \$8,000, which needed to be started right away. When the word got out the equestrian community, I was overwhelmed with the enthusiasm and generosity. When we needed to make the payment to the County in December and the Mounted Patrol Foundation had the money in the bank. The final cost amounted to \$33,550.

In November and early December, the crew of 5 from Yakima worked hard on the trails. They loaded the "buggies" with a ton of base rock, and traveled upwards of 1 mile to dump the load



in a specialized hopper that spread to the correct depth and width. After some final hand grading, a 2500 pound motorized vibrating rolling compactor packed the base rock. Base rock needs 20% moisture to compact well, and there is no water anywhere near the trails. We were most fortunate that there was just the right amount of rain in October, and the moisture in most of the base rock was perfect for compaction. The initial estimates were a bit low, and the last three loads of rock were freshly quarried at Langley Hill. It did not have sufficient moisture content to be properly compacted, and so the first rains made it too mushy. We waited for a week of dry weather, and Yakima sent down Ken with the equipment, and re-compacted this section of Middle Crystal in January.

Phase 1 of this plan was completed in December 2008 and includes rocking the following trails:

- Upper Dean Trail from the Archery Road to the intersection with Crystal Springs Trail.
- Upper Crystal Springs Trail up from the intersection with Upper Dean to Richards Road, nearly to Skyline. This provides an upper loop for those wishing to go to Skyline.
- Middle Crystal Springs Trail, down from the intersection with Dean to the Campground trail at Toyon, and out to Richards Road. This provides a lower loop for those who want a shorter ride

Phase 2 is scheduled for October 2009, and will expand the upper loop to include rocking the Chinquapin Trail. The lower loop will be expanded to include Lower Crystal Springs Trail down to the bridges near Richards Road. It will also require repair of a bridge up on Chinquapin. Design and cost estimates will be done in April. Thus phase is approximately 2.4 miles and will cost about the same as Phase 1, but the ability of the County to contribute is unknown at this time. Thanks to the generosity of the equestrian community, we have a head start on raising funds for this phase, and will begin fundraising for the remaining amount in May 2009.

I want to thank everyone in the equestrian community for their incredible outpouring of support for this effort. The staff at County Parks has also been wonderfully supportive of this project. It would be good if the equestrians communicated their gratitude, and their happiness with the trail to them:



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The Mounted Patrol Foundation is leading the fundraising effort. It is a 501c3 and tax deductible checks can be sent to:

Mounted Patrol Foundation

ATTN: Huddart Park Trail Fund (BE SURE to write this somewhere on the face of your check!)

521 Kings Mountain Road
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Thank you for your support. Call Don Pugh at 650-851-8343 or email don@sandon.com with questions.

