



REGIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION N E W S L E T T E R

November 2005

RPA Board Members

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HULET HORNBECK TRAIL DEDICATED IN MARTINEZ ON HIS 86TH BIRTHDAY

Remarks at Trail Dedication, October 14, 2005

By John Steere (Environmental Planner and Advocate, Former RPA Board Member, and
Nephew of Hulet Hornbeck)

Few of us step out on our life's journey and proceed with such keen purpose as Hulet Hornbeck has done and continues to do. Few of us have lived our lives with such unerring devotion to protecting open space. His devotion to this cause has resulted in a string of parks and trails that transform the geography of the East Bay and the way we all think about it.

parks and trails at a time when few others dared to image such things.



It is appropriate *geographically* –because it is a threshold, that we have gathered here in this place to dedicate a trail to Hulet, for this is where the whole interior of California funnels through the delta and Carquinez Strait to enter San Francisco Bay. We're talking about twin forces of nature here: the Sacramento River and Hulet. Hulet has lived his life on a kind of threshold, creating bonds between nature and the human community during a time of extremely rapid and profound change—the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Hulet recognized the East Bay Region's need for a system of regional

It is altogether fitting from an *historical* perspective as well that this dedication should take place right here, for this place is virtually surrounded by the ghosts of pioneers. Juan Bautista DeAnza blazed a trail to this part of Alta California during the 1770s, and was followed by hundreds of new settlers. A century later, John Muir, the pioneer conservationist, took up residence just a few miles up the road. His love of nature and his commitment to the conservation movement was a torch he held high throughout his life. In the 1960s Hulet picked up that torch and carried it forward with courage and unwavering commitment, acquiring land for regional parks and developing regional trails that connect people to parks and communities with one another while serving the pedestrian, the bicyclist, the runner and hiker alike. Hulet recognized and enjoyed his role as

(continued page 2)

(Hornbeck)

pioneer. In 1971 at the first National Symposium on Trails he said: "Urban trails will materially assist in the re-creation and enhancement of our urban living environment. This therefore is the time of opportunity for trails. Recreational trails must play a vital role in the new city." These remarks were made 35 years ago at the dawn of the trails movement, before there were regional trails, before there was funding for urban trails, before the value of such trails was generally recognized...

There is a spiritual saying, "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning." Hulet is an exemplar of this aphorism. His relatively few crusty, wry and astute words have been backed up by a mountain of deeds. Almost 49,000 acres of regional parks, shorelines, and reserves were created under his leadership at EBRPD from Briones, to Martinez Shoreline, to Las Trampas, Morgan Territory and Miller Knox. His mountain of deeds read like first ascents: establishing the framework for and setting aside of Skyline Regional Trail along the spine of the East Bay Hills (1972), the first national recreational trail on non-federal lands; the Lafayette Moraga Trail (1976), one of the first urban rail trails connecting communities; the Contra Costa Canal Trail (1970), the first multi-use, inter-urban trail system along a water conveyance system. These are just a few. The scope and breadth of this work is exhausting to contemplate, just as it would be to walk through in a brief period. Either or both would take a dedication of years, if not decades, to truly appreciate.

I suspect that Hulet's twin passions for maps and explorers have much to do with the trajectory of his life path—from his first profession as navigator on one of the earliest B-17s to fly and fight in the Pacific Theatre in WWII, to his ultimate profession

as a land negotiator for over two decades with EBRPD, and then on his own. Whether navigating a path over the South Pacific for bomber squadrons in 1942 before the birth of radar, or blazing a course for multi-use trails throughout our state for the past three decades, he has been charting a unique course for others to follow. And we have indeed followed him because he has tapped into something that makes profound and transformational sense personally, psychologically, and collectively. Connecting our communities with trails was a simple and yet radical notion of his that has transformed our experience of where we live and who we are.

In dedicating this trail for Hulet, we are really honoring his whole vision of urban and regional trails. As touchstones for our health and sense of community they help us know where we live and help bring us together—getting us out of our cars and the invisible boxes we live in to experience ourselves in a green world without walls

Many more happy trails to you, Hulet, on your birthday!

Regional Parks Association proudly congratulates Hulet on this well-deserved honor and continues to be blessed by his presence on the RPA Board. The dedication of a segment of the Carquinez Strait Scenic Trail was a marvelous occasion: perfect weather, delicious lunch and a gathering of Hulet's family and friends numbering near 100. Check out the trail beginning at the Nedjedly Staging area where an excellent pictorial panel acknowledges Hulet's accomplishments. Well done, East Bay Regional Park District!

PARK DISTRICT RESPONSE TO SIBLEY LUP COMMENTS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTING

The East Bay Regional Park District has now circulated its response to comments regarding the new Land Use Plan for Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve. Although it fulfills the Park District's legal obligation to respond to comments from the public, it does so in a legalistic, mechanical, and technical manner that is at once boring, defensive, and largely irrelevant to the real concerns voiced by the Regional Parks Association, The Sierra Club, Golden Gate Audubon Society, and others. The proposed group campground that was originally intended to accommodate up to 300 people has been reduced in size. Under the revised LUP, the campground will be right in the middle of the preserve, but serve "only" 150 people. Bicycle use has been restricted somewhat, and there are other fairly minor modifications. All in all, however, the response document lacks idealism and any persuasive indication that the Park District cares about the intrinsic natural and cultural values that caused members of the public to call for preservation of Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve in the first place. No date has yet been scheduled for a hearing before the EBRPD Board.

RPA BOARD APPOINTS

CARROLL WILLIAMS

The RPA is pleased to announce that it has appointed Carroll Williams to fill a vacancy on its board. He is a retired Forest Service Scientist and adjunct professor emeritus in the College of Natural Resources (CNR), University of California, Berkeley. As a Project Leader in the Forest Service Carroll led several

teams of scientists examining the interactions of insects, pathogens, fire, and human activities on the health of western coniferous forests and the balsam fir-white spruce, northern hardwood forests in eastern United States and Canada. After nearly forty years with the Forest Service, Carroll joined the Berkeley CNR faculty in 1988, developed and taught various courses on the conservation and health of the different forests and woodland ecosystems in California. He retired in 2003. In addition to teaching, Carroll was twice elected to the Berkeley School Board and served from 1977 to 1983. In 1991 he was appointed by the Board of the East Bay Regional Park District to fill the seat vacated by Mary Jeffords. Carroll's concerns now lie in restoration of the oak woodlands and native grasslands in the Bay Area, and the health of the various creeks they contain. We welcome his enthusiasm, scholarship and expertise. His appointment to the RPA Board will be up for confirmation at the Annual Meeting in April.

RPA, EBRPD and the Bay Area have been saddened by the deaths of two people whose profound influence for many years was instrumental in securing thousands of acres of shoreline parklands. Both Richmond residents and long-time RPA members, Jay Vincent, 93, died in May, and Lucretia Edwards, 89, died this October. Lucretia was often called the "Mother of Richmond's shoreline parks." She also saw to it that East Brother lighthouse was saved from demolition. Jay worked for the preservation of land that became

Miller-Knox, Marina Green, Peninsula Park and open space on the end of Point San Pablo. Both these wonderful people cared deeply about the land and fought with intelligence, grace and tenacity to secure it for public access. RPA extends its sincerest sympathy to Lucretia's children, Hannah, John, and Barnaby, and to Barbara Vincent, Jay's wife and to the entire families of these very special people..