

Caroline Hernandez

From: Christal Niederer <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:50 AM
To: OSA Clerk
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Directors re: Coyote Ridge Open Space Preserve Public Access Planning

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi,
My name is Christal Niederer, and I'm a biologist for Creekside Science. We are under contract with SCVOSA to conduct Bay checkerspot butterfly (BCB) monitoring, as well as multiple rare plant and vegetation monitoring projects.

I would like to record a concern that public access be closely regulated, by patrol more than just signage. This is because of the large number of sensitive species found on the property, the ease of going off trail because the property is largely (short and grazed) grassland, the vulnerability of the property to invasive species invasion, the entitlement people feel to accessing specific areas they had visited before on docent led hikes, and the current situation of heavy open space usage during the pandemic.

I was working on the ridge May 13, 2020, a day that was open to the public. There was plenty of signage to stay on the trails, but people consistently were wandering off trail in the serpentine grassland habitats. We even observed (and photographed) people picnicking among federally endangered Dudleya outcrops, with BCB scattered on the ground, too cold to fly away as people passed. The average hiker will not be able to identify all the sensitive species throughout their life cycle, nor understand how temperature or life cycle stage can affect the likelihood of trampling BCB. Signs don't work to keep people on designated trails. (I'm also assuming people who entered the property that day were briefed at the gate of the staging area by a staff member or docent about the importance of staying on the trail.)

Opening up this property to the public will certainly lead to negative impacts on the resources SCVOSA intends to protect. Signage is important, but doesn't lead to the level of compliance needed. I would like to see the Authority ensure that patrols are plentiful so that negative impacts are minimized.

Thank you for your consideration.
cn

--
Christal Niederer
Creekside Center for Earth Observation
[REDACTED]
Los Gatos, CA 95031
www.creeksidescience.com
[REDACTED]