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SAN MATEO
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Boots on the Ground

June 2025

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Flooding by Design & Water When It Counts





Remember the project that restored Butano Creek to spill across the land when it is full? The new floodplain on the right side of the photo provides habitat for wildlife while reducing flooding downstream that harms the community. But wait- there's more! We built a new pond (on the left) to store winter water and eliminate the need to draw from the creek when it is low. This land now provides prime conditions for salmon year-round while providing farmers with the water they need to grow crops. Check out this [drone video](#) and learn more about this conservation story on [NPR's All Things Considered](#) and [KQED's Morning Report](#). Many thanks to our partners at Fifth Crow Farms, Peninsula Open Space Trust, and NOAA Restoration Center.

Cleaner Creeks, Cleaner Beaches



Want to help protect local creeks and beaches? Join us for two annual community science events to monitor water quality: **Snapshot Day (July 12th)** and **First Flush** (the first big storm of the year, typically in November). Register for [Snapshot Day here](#) and learn more about [First Flush here](#). Curious about local water quality and how scientists and volunteers are helping protect the environment and public health? Check out the [webinar on local water quality](#) we did for Coastside Land Trust.

Wildfire & Forest Health





It's a wrap! We restored **450 acres in Butano State Park**, which was hit hard by the 2020 wildfires. Key ecological processes that were part of how the forest evolved had been removed from the landscape for over a century. Our work replicated these processes for a healthier forest, thriving biodiversity, and resilience to drought, pests, and fire. It also paved the way for a 150-acre prescribed fire in the park by State Parks and CAL FIRE to boost habitat, store more carbon, and protect nearby communities.

Speaking of community safety, we cleared overgrown vegetation along 2.7 miles of steep, narrow roads in the **Middleton Tract**, a remote area known for its history helping to stop clear-cut logging. The work makes it easier for residents to evacuate in an emergency as well as maintain their community water system. Stay tuned for future updates on the **19-mile fuel break around La Honda** that is nearly complete.

The **Neighborhood Chipper Program** helps residents create defensible space with free curbside chipping in wildfire-prone areas. You cut the brush and we chip it. Just pile it at your curb or designated drop-off spot on your neighborhood's scheduled day. A mobile chipper crew does the rest! [Click here](#) for dates and locations.

Did you miss the [Wildfire on the Coast webinar](#)? Coastside Land Trust hosted us to talk about local wildfire, habitat, and climate resilience. Learn how fire has shaped the region, how local practices stack up, and what's next to reduce wildfire risk while protecting monarch butterflies.

Water Security for a Community in Need





Dozens of homes in the small, rural area of Loma Mar depend on a local creek for water. In this water stressed region, every drop counts. The RCD collaborated with the community to develop water storage and fix leaks, improving **community water security**. We recently updated their pipelines to work with tanks we installed in 2019. The final step is for landowners to connect to the new system. Bonus: the improvements to water conservation keep **more water in the creek for salmon** and steelhead trout that need it.

Big Things on Small Farms



We're proud to support local farms as stewards of soil, water, and wildlife. Since 2022, we've brought over **16,000 tons of compost to 60 farms** to improve soil, conserve water, and reduce erosion. [Click here](#) to sign-up. With funding from California Department of Food and Agriculture, we are **upgrading irrigation systems** on five farms this year, installing tools such as soil moisture sensors and solar panels to cut **18.7 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions** per year and save over **1.3 million gallons of water** per year.

We also wrapped up "Regenerative Grazing 101," an 8-month long workshop series

for farmers, ranchers, and land managers to bring **regenerative grazing practices** to **over 118,000 acres of rangeland**! It was not only educational; it was fun and a great collaboration with TomKat Ranch, Point Blue, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and FarmLink.

Doug's Soiled Shorts

Short films
about
soil health



Yes, you read that right! “Doug’s Soiled Shorts” are here to help you discover the wonders of soil. Doug is our soil expert, and he is excited to share his knowledge with you about compost, microbes, and all things soil health. Check out [the first of the series](#) on our [Instagram](#)- where Doug gives a run down on the importance of soil structure.

Photos from the Field



[Click here](#) for **recent photos and videos**: habitat survey on Butano Creek, chatting about floodplain benefits, workshop for regenerative ranching, and more. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) for regular updates!

Welcome Aboard



Denise Phillips- Associate Director

Denise is passionate about community organizing with decades of experience with environmental nonprofits, education and social work. She chaired and served on numerous boards for local educational programs, environmental protection and recreation, and reproductive health. As a Master Food Preserver, she teaches classes about safe food preservation. Originally from St. Louis, Denise earned her degree in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University and then studied restaurant management at The Restaurant School in Philadelphia. She's lived on the San Mateo County Coast for over 30 years where she and her husband have raised both of their children.



Troy Guy- Director

Troy is a retired fisheries biologist and the current caretaker of his family's third-generation plumbing business. He studied marine and freshwater fishes across the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, and collaborated with the commercial fishing industry to reduce bycatch of seabirds in both hemispheres. When he is not screwing pipes together, he can be found collecting data as a volunteer on local studies or exploring patterns of biogeography and natural history with his family. He is proud to live and stay connected to conservation efforts in Pescadero where his great-great grandparents emigrated from the Azores in the early 1900s.

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