

February 15, 2016

Ombudsperson  
Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District  
330 Distel Circle  
Los Altos, California 94022-1404

Dear Ombudsperson,

We, the residents of Purisima Creek Road and Higgins Canyon Road, would like to inform you and the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space (District) Board of Directors about a serious safety issue at the western entrance to the Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve. The parking lot at this entrance allows parking for only 6-8 cars. This parking lot is inadequate for the amount of visitors both during the week and on weekends. As a result, the majority of visitors park illegally on the roads and dirt shoulders of both Purisima Creek Road and Higgins Canyon Road- narrow and windy roads.

The obstruction of parked vehicles essentially creates a single-lane road that two-way vehicular traffic shares with bicyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians. Making matters worse, some preserve visitors use the middle of the road, which has posted speed limits of 25 and 35 miles per hour, as a staging area to: unpack their gear, fix bicycles, change clothes, etc. In addition to endangering the public in this area, the parking violations also threaten the lives and property of residents along these roadways since response time will be substantially delayed in the event of an emergency. We were even told by David Sanguinetti, former District Operations Manager, that a Cal Fire Battalion Chief told him that when a lot of cars were parked on the roadway (roughly 1/4 mile long), responding engines would need to deploy a firefighter to direct the engines past the parked vehicles. As stated by the Battalion chief, emergency response time will be delayed.

We have taken an active role in trying to resolve the problem. Beginning in 2003 letters were sent to the District staff and Board alerting them that illegal roadside parking by preserve visitors was creating hazardous conditions. Quite a few of us have also discussed our worries and concerns with both staff and directors by email or verbally at public meetings and at the preserve. Recently, we requested that parking be restricted during replacement of the Harkins Bridge so heavy construction traffic would not make the situation even worse. This request was declined by the District, but thankfully San Mateo County Planning decided to prohibit construction vehicles from the lot and parking on the County roads.

The recent Northern California wildfires in Lake County, Calaveras and Monterey and the current El Niño predictions serve as a reminder that we too are vulnerable. These events coupled with reduced water capacity of local ponds and creeks, and the extremely dry vegetation caused by the drought, have increased our concerns about disaster preparedness. These events are also a reminder that an unobstructed access is critical not only for emergency equipment but also for evacuation, which in this rural area includes a large amount of livestock.

The District response to correct the safety hazard has been inadequate. In 2005 Craig Britton, former MROSD General Manager, responded to a letter from one concerned resident and said: "...we feel that a possible solution is to have both sides of Purisima Creek Road, south of the one lane bridge, posted with "No Parking" signs." At the time, that was a reasonable proposal as there were typically only 15-20 cars parked illegally on the road. Now it's 40-60 cars. To this date, the signs on the west side of the road have not been installed. To this date, no signs have been placed on Higgins Canyon Road north of the bridge. On some days upwards of 20 cars are parked illegally on this stretch of road. It was not until 2011, that the District finally placed 4 "no parking" signs on the east side of Purisima Creek Road and widened the shoulder to get about 7 cars further off the road but closer to the creek. District staff at the time acknowledged that this did not solve the problem entirely.

As we seek to protect our neighborhood, families and our homes we ask that the District treat this matter as one of serious importance and urgency. The ongoing hazardous roadway conditions are unacceptable. We respectfully request that the District take immediate action to eliminate the unsafe conditions created by illegal parking near the Purisima Creek Redwoods Preserve. We request at the very least that per the 2005 recommendations of Craig Britton "No Parking" signs be placed along both sides of Purisima Creek Road and Higgins Canyon Road. Further we ask that the District ensure that parking restrictions are enforced by the appropriate local agency to assure safe access and passage. We thank you for your careful consideration of this matter and assistance in making this road a safer place for all who drive it, visit the preserve, and live or own property here.

Although the District may have a mandate to provide public access to this preserve, we feel that this access should not be at the expense of our safety as local residents.

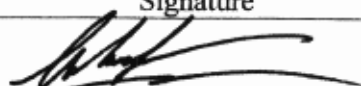
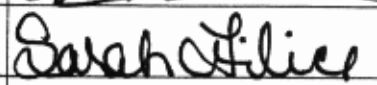
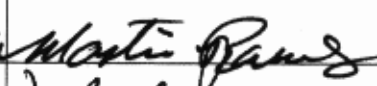
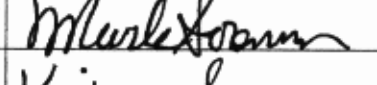

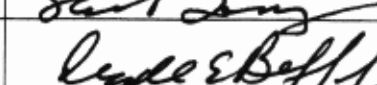
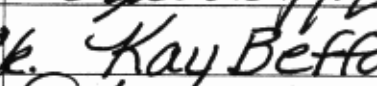
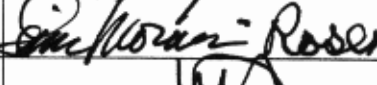
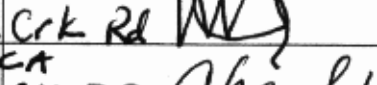
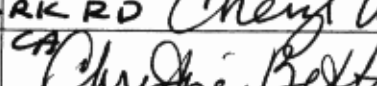
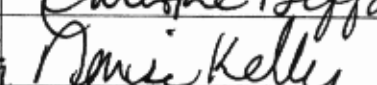
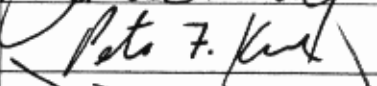
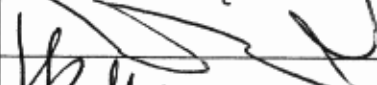
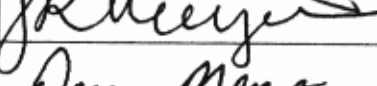
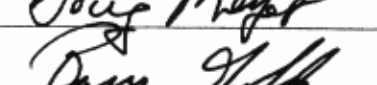
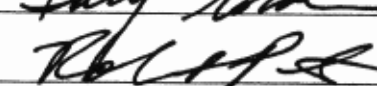
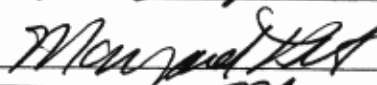

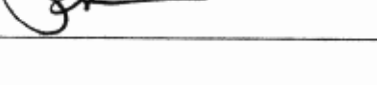



Sincerely,

Purisima Canyon Neighbors c/o  
Peter Kelly, secretary [fishbird@coastside.net](mailto:fishbird@coastside.net)  
Dave Abrevaya [woodsnob@earthlink.net](mailto:woodsnob@earthlink.net)

Cc:

Don Horsley, SMC Board of Supervisors  
Greg Munks, San Mateo County Sheriff  
Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director  
Michael Schaller, Senior Planner, SMC Planning Dept  
Paul Cole, Assistant Fire Chief, Coastside Fire Protection District-Cal Fire  
Mark Mondragon, CFPD Fire Marshal  
Joe LoCoco, Deputy Director Road Services, SMC Public Works  
Steve Abbors, General Manager, MROSD  
Brian Malone, Area Superintendent, MROSD  
Board of Directors of the MROSD

Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:

Name	Address	Signature
AL FILICE	2209 Purissima Creek Half Moon Bay, CA	
Sarah Filice	2209 Purissima Creek Half Moon Bay, CA	
MARTIN RAMIREZ	2209 Purissima Creek	
Mark Sorensen	2100 Purissim Creek Half Moon Bay, CA	
Kimberly Sorensen	2100 Purissima Creek Half Moon Bay, CA	
Sam Derry	2251 P.C.Rd	
Clyde Beffa	2510 Purissima Lx Rd	
Kay Beffa	2510 Purissima Ck.	
Tim & Rose Marie	Marichman - 1212 Verde Rd	
MIKE VELASQUEZ	1460 Purissima Crk Rd HALF MOON BAY, CA	
CHERYL VELASQUEZ	1460 PURISSIMA CRK RD HALF MOON BAY, CA	
Christie Beffa	2450 Purissima Crk Rd HMB, CA 94019	
Danni Kelly	1590 Purissima Cr. Rd. Half Moon Bay CA 94019	
Pete F. Kelly	1590 Purissima Crk Rd. HMB, CA 94019	
JOHN T. KELLY	1455 PURISSIMA CRK HMB, CA	
Karolynne Meyer	2360 Purissima Crk Rd HMB	
Doug Meyer	2360 Purissima Crk Rd	
Dany G. Meyer	2353 Purissima Crk	
Robert & Peter	2359 Purissima Crk Rd	
Margaret Peter	2359 Purissima Crk Rd	
Ramona Oskoui	2481 5th Purissima Crk Rd.	
Phil L. Bruno	2455 Purissima Crk	



**Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:**

[illegible]




**Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:**

[illegible]

**Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:**

Name / Signature

PATRICK MCKEE	/	
Barbara McKee	/	Barbara S. McKee
2169 PURISIMA CREEK ROAD		
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**Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:**

Name / Signature

Oscar Braun	/	Oscar Braun
ANDREA BRAUN	/	Andrea Br
1589 Higgins	/	
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**Signatures of residents on Purisma Creek and Higgins Canyon Roads:**

Name / Signature

Amy Ramsey	/	SR
James Ramsey	/	James Ramsey
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Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

GENERAL MANAGER  
Stephen E. Abbors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Pete Siemens  
Yoriko Kishimoto  
Jed Cyr  
Curt Riffle  
Nonette Hanko  
Larry Hassett  
Cecily Harris

June 8, 2016

Peter Kelly  
1590 Purisima Creek Road  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Dave Abrevaya  
2700 Purisima Creek Road  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Dear Messrs. Kelly and Abrevaya and Purisima Canyon Neighbors,

Thank you for your letter of February 15, 2016. I apologize for the delay in responding, as the District has been implementing some organizational changes and reassigning responsibilities. I realized we had not yet replied when I received your May 18<sup>th</sup> follow up inquiry. The District understands that parking on Purisima Creek Road has been of concern to our neighbors.

The District agrees that the parking lot at the intersection of Purisima Creek Road and Higgins Canyon Road is not sufficient to hold all of the visitor vehicles that use the preserve. As a result, the District has evaluated alternative solutions to address the limited onsite vehicle capacity. However, our site analysis concluded that we could not obtain the required permits to build a new parking lot in that location.

In October 2009, District staff met onsite with San Mateo County planners to evaluate the site and discuss the planning and permitting issues and constraints that affect the area, which lies within the Coastal Zone. County planners expressed concerns regarding the feasibility of obtaining permitting clearance to expand the parking lot given its location within the coastal zone and its close proximity to the creek.

Recognizing the potential permitting constraints, District staff concluded that a discussion with the Coastal Commission was necessary to understand whether or not the area is considered riparian habitat or whether it lies within the riparian buffer. To begin these discussions, District staff presented a preliminary conceptual design for an expanded parking lot to the Coastal Commission in the fall of 2010 that minimized impacts to native vegetation to the maximum extent feasible. At that time, Coastal Commission staff stressed the need for a riparian survey to determine the precise limit of riparian vegetation and riparian buffer in relation to the conceptual parking lot design. District staff then proceeded to contract with Coast Range Biological to perform a riparian survey. The riparian survey results were submitted to the Coastal Commission in February 2011 as part of a pre-application project review. Coastal Commission staff indicated the permanent conversion of riparian red alder forest to a parking lot would likely preclude approval of a permit application for the project.

After we determined that the construction of a new parking lot was not feasible we looked for what we could do to minimize the congestion on Purisima Creek Road. In 2011, as you mention in your letter, after consultation with County Roads and the San Mateo County Fire Marshall, we added 4 additional no parking signs to ensure only one side of Purisima Creek Road was used for parking. We also moved a roadside fence with a neighbor's permission to allow more area within the road right of way for parking. District rangers are authorized to enforce parking violations of the posted signs. In general, there has been good compliance with the posted signs.

The District has also looked at the site to see if placing no parking signs on both sides of the road for a certain distance might be effective. However, there is no nearby point along either road that widens out enough to provide better parking. If parking were prohibited on both sides of the Purisima Creek Road, it would just push the parking farther down the road.

It was brought to my attention in September of 2015 by Mr. Abrevaya that he had checked with San Mateo County and the section of Purisima Creek Road signed no parking had not been officially designated as a "no parking zone." This was the first that we were aware of that oversight and we have submitted a parking restrictions request form to the county and the proposal is scheduled to go before the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors at 9 am on July, 12, 2016.

The District has also taken several additional steps to minimize the impact of parking in the area. We do not issue large group permits for that area that require parking and we have followed up with tour bus providers that have staged along the road to discourage such use. We have also increased our monitoring of the road parking conditions. Rangers have reported large numbers of on street parking of up to 40+ cars. In general, the roadway has been easily passable for emergency vehicles with the exception of a couple of reported instances of poorly parked cars. The District also has long term plans to provide additional parking for the preserve on Verde Road, which should reduce the number of vehicles parking on Purisima Creek Road.

Even with additional parking at Verde Road, the beauty of the creek and surrounding redwoods will always be a draw for visitors to try to park in this area. While the ideal solution would be to have a larger parking lot, the existing parking situation is manageable. The District will also evaluate any nearby properties that come up for sale for their suitability for purchase and use as a parking area. Thank you for your input.

Sincerely,  
Brian Malone

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Malone', written in a cursive style.

Land and Facilities Services Manager