SSA GENERAL MEETING

From the Old Growth Clear Cuts to Second Growth Sustainability - the Evolution of Our Local Forests

Presented by Bruce Baker, Licensed Timber Operator

Friday, January 31, 2020
7:00 pm - Refreshments
7:30 pm - Featured presentation

Place: Saratoga Summit Fire Station 21900 Skyline Blvd

Directions: Located on the west side of Skyline Blvd.
approximately .6 of a mile north of the intersection of
Skyline Blvd. and Highway 9.
[There is some parking behind the fire station but overflow
parking will be along Skyline Blvd. A flashlight would be
helpful.]

Please bring a sweet or savory dessert to share. SSA will provide beverages.

I welcome the opportunity to share my personal life experiences, both recreationally, and professionally in
our Santa Cruz mountains. I believe I have a unique mind set on our local redwood forest environment from
prehistorical, present and into the future. I have, as well, first hand involvement in timber harvest
operations, forest land firefighting, forest fire prevention, nature habitat restoration, and the evolution of
our local forests. I welcome all questions and comments during and or after the discussion. ~Bruce Baker
Editors Needed for the Skylines

The South Skyline Association is looking for volunteer editors for the Skylines newsletter. These two responsibilities are critical to the continuation of this newsletter which is an important communications channel for the South Skyline community. The Skylines is published once a quarter.

Editor responsibilities
The editor is responsible for setting and communicating deadlines and making a final determination about what will be published in an issue. The editor works as part of the communications team which sets guidelines and expectations for newsletter content and reports back to the SSA board to discuss progress, issues or questions.

The editor receives articles by email and distributes them to other volunteers on the communications team who help with copy editing, then sends the corrected articles to the layout editor. The editor then oversees the process of proofreading the newsletter draft and coordinates changes with the layout editor and gives direction to the printer.

Currently one person is acting as editor and layout editor. We would like to return this to a two person responsibility.

Layout Editor responsibilities
The layout editor is primarily responsible for designing the format of the Skylines. They use layout software to assemble text, photographs and other content in an easy-to-read arrangement. Currently we are using Microsoft Publisher, but other applications can be used. We are looking for someone who has some layout experience or is willing to learn. However, some experience with document design would be beneficial.

If interested contact us at ssa_activities@yahoo.com.

SPUG QUARTERLY REPORT

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement, please email propane@southskyline.org
Information is also available on our website: www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/

SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Kamps, Suburban Propane Scotts Valley, and FerrellGas. The open market price is more than $1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price. Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices SSA posts are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on a keep-full basis, not will-call service.

You are not required to pay sales tax on propane if you do not have natural gas available where you use propane. If you get your propane from Amerigas, you will need to submit a sales tax exemption form. Contact Amerigas for the form.

Those whose SSA membership has lapsed will be disqualified from receiving the benefit of the SPUG price for propane. Membership can be renewed online at www.southskyline.org membership/.
If paying by check use the Membership Application on page 3.

- January is membership renewal month -
If you wish to participate in the SPUG program, first verify your preferred propane provider will honor the SSA SPUG rate at your address. SSA does not guarantee out of boundary members will receive the SSA SPUG rate. After receipt of your application and payment, we contact the provider directly to inform them of your membership status.

If you wish to participate in the SPUG program, first verify your preferred propane provider will honor the SSA SPUG rate at your address. SSA does not guarantee out of boundary members will receive the SSA SPUG rate. After receipt of your application and payment, we contact the provider directly to inform them of your membership status.

South Skyline Association

Membership Application and Renewal Form

First Time Applying? Yes  No  (circle one)  Today’s Date:__________________________

Name(s)

Mailing Address

City ST ZIP Code

Physical Property Address

City ST Zip Code

Home and Mobile Phone(s)

E-Mail Address(es) (required)

Propane Supplier - SPUG Program

If you wish to participate in the SPUG program, first verify your preferred propane provider will honor the SSA SPUG rate at your address. SSA does not guarantee out of boundary members will receive the SSA SPUG rate. After receipt of your application and payment, we contact the provider directly to inform them of your membership status.

___ Amerigas  ___ Kamps

___ FerrellGas  ___ Suburban Scotts Valley

Volunteer Interests

SSA always needs additional volunteers. Please consider volunteering and in which areas you are interested.

___ Board Member  ___ Events Planning and Setup

___ Website Maintenance  ___ Skylines Newsletter Production and Deliveries

___ Legal Advice  ___ Member Communication and Database

___ Adopt-a-Highway Program

Special Skills or Qualifications

Summarize special skills and qualifications which you feel may be useful to our association.

Our Policies

All contact information is kept confidential. Dues are payable in January of each year and are not prorated if paid later in the year. Members must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Anyone is eligible to join regardless of property address. Members who live within the SSA boundaries are considered regular and eligible to serve on the Board, vote at general meetings, and receive a paper copy of Skylines. All members receive an electronic copy Skylines newsletter. If you are outside the SSA boundaries and must have a hardcopy, check here. (___)

Please also consider joining or renewing online at southskyline.org.

Signature:___________________________________________________________________________________

Enclose this application with your $20.00 check payable to “South Skyline Association” and send to:

SSA Membership Committee
400 Skyline Boulevard
La Honda, CA 94020
SSA Membership Payment Information

Annual renewal dues of $20.00 are payable in January of each year. If you join or renew after January, dues will NOT be prorated and benefits will expire on December 31st of every year. You may pay dues for up to 5 years. Donations to SSA in excess of the dues are always appreciated. Simply add the amount you wish to donate to the $20.00 dues amount when you pay.

Pay online easily anytime. Online payment can be made via PayPal or credit card. You will be first asked to pay via PayPal. If you prefer to pay by credit card, hit the pay by credit card option and you will be directed to the credit card options.

Renewing?
You may renew anytime without logging in using only the email address you provided when you first joined. However we strongly encourage you to log in to review and update your profile as needed each year to ensure we have your current contact information and propane supplier. If your membership has lapsed and you want to renew, use the "Renew" button. If not sure which email address you originally provided, contact membership@southskyline.org.

Joining?
To join first make your dues payment via PayPal or credit card. After you complete your payment you will be taken to a registration page to create your member profile. DO NOT close down our website after only making payment or your account will not be created. After registering, you will be sent an email with a link allowing you to create a password. Please create a password if you want to update your profile to change any information. After payment and registration are complete SSA automatically contacts your propane provider to alert them to your membership.

Updating your profile?
For security reasons you must log in to see your registration profile. To log in enter your email or create a password. To create a password, click on the Lost Your Password link and follow the instructions. If you have not provided SSA with your email or have a new one, you will need to provide your email address to membership@southskyline.org.

Prefer to pay by check?
Use the application form on page 3 of this Skylines, or download a form from our website at http://southskyline.org/wp-content/uploads/SSA_Bylaws.pdf. Mail the completed application along with a check ($20.00 for each year) for the annual dues payable to "South Skyline Association" and mail to 400 Skyline Boulevard, La Honda, CA 94020.

If you have EVER been a member, use the "RENEW" button. DO NOT use the "JOIN" as you are already in the database and it will fail.

For more information and to renew online go to southskyline.org/membership/
What the SSA Board is Doing

By Debra Born. Membership Chairperson

2019 was busy for our SSA Board as we concluded our first 50 years and celebrated that event. Otherwise it was more or less business as usual. This included arranging speakers and venues for quarterly General Meetings, organizing other special events, communicating with members about the SPUG program, renewing, and those interested in joining. We are always working with SPUG providers to update prices; administering our grant program; writing, publishing, and distributing the Skylines newsletters; creating and managing our budget; and acting and engaging the community on issues affecting our members. Currently, we are recruiting members to replace Board members stepping down in 2020.

2020 is expected to be another busy year. Starting in January we establish our annual budget and review grant applications. Grants will be then awarded to local community organizations. We’ll be receiving renewals (thankfully mostly online) from our approximately 2,150 current members as well as applications from those wanting to join. At our January General Meeting we’ll be electing and orienting those new Board members. Website improvements are always on our to do list so it is more user-friendly and informative. New meeting topics will be discussed and events planned. On-going and new community issues will require action. And there is always the next issue of Skylines to be writing and issuing.

AND WHAT YOU AS MEMBERS CAN DO…

♦ Attend our January General Meeting – offer to serve on and vote for new Board members.
♦ Suggest to our Board engaging speakers and topics for General Meetings or special events.
♦ Volunteer for one of our committees: Newsletter; Event Planning; Adopt-a-Highway.
♦ Write articles about local events, history, issues, plant and animal life for our newsletter.
♦ Work with our webmaster to facilitate website improvements and updates.
♦ Let the Board know if you have skills or ideas to help build and improve our community.

We look forward to seeing you at our January meeting or later in the year!

SSA Board Elections - Candidates Needed

The annual SSA Board Elections will take place at the SSA General Meeting on January 31 at 7:30 pm. (See page 1.)

Board members whose terms are up in January 2020 and are running for another term are: Barbara Bekins, Ruth Van Sciver, Rich Lee, Evan Dellor, Michael Rowe, and Dick Schwind.

Outgoing Board Members:
Two board members, Kristin Anderson and Maura McNamara have decided not to run for another term and Guy LaLonde has resigned. Guy hosted our summer general meeting, Kristin served as Treasurer and managed the important SSA grant program, and Maura was in charge of organizing our fun events such as line dancing classes. They have all worked hard for the South Skyline Association for many years, and we thank them very much for their time and talents.

At this time we do not have any new candidates on the slate to replace the three people who are leaving.

If you are a South Skyline resident and would like to volunteer some time to help on the SSA board please contact Michael Rowe at rowe517@gmail.com or 408-872-1775.

The purpose of the South Skyline Association is to foster a sense of community spirit, to keep residents and property owners informed of public agency actions or other items of concern in the South Skyline sphere of influence, to protect the rights and represent the interests of the residents and property owners of our area, and to engage in various projects to enhance the unique South Skyline environment.

Reprinted from Skylines 2004

A South Skyline New Years’ Toast

When winter rains pound through the trees at night
May your power stay on and your lights burn bright;
When cold raging winds over mountain tops blow
May your family stay warm and your SPUG rates low;
When wild pigs rut in the garden and raccoons get in the trash
May the beauty of nature touch you and poison oak not give you a rash.

~Patti Begley
South Skyline FireSafe Council

Is Your Home Safe from the Threat of Wildfire?

Attend a presentation on Home Hardening
By John DeLong

Recent California fires have taught us new lessons on the need for a full program of defense around each home. The South Skyline FireSafe Council invites you to attend one of our two presentations on Home Hardening. Home Hardening is the process by which you can help make your home more resistant to devastation from a wildland fire. Learn how embers travel long distances during fire storms and where your home is most vulnerable.

The presentation starts with how homes burn, reviews the need for defensible space, introduces the new five foot noncombustible zone, and reviews design vulnerabilities starting with your home’s roof and works down to the ground reviewing best practices to improve personal and structural safety.

The presentation includes many photos of homes showing Do’s and Don’ts. We will leave you with a process of how to prioritize defense projects around your home and how to plan a course of action.

Choose one of these two presentations:
Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 7 PM to 9 PM at Las Cumbres Community Center at 18260 Las Cumbres Rd, Los Gatos.

Thursday, March 5, 2020, 7 PM to 9 PM at MROSD Skyline Field Office Conference Room at 21150 Skyline Blvd near the intersection of Alpine/Page Mill Rds.

Space is limited, so please register in advance at ssfsc.outreach@gmail.com

TAKE A HIKE...

Tarwater Loop
By Kim Borick

One of the nicest hikes in our big backyard is the Tarwater Loop where local history, geology and redwood ecology merge in an often forgotten piece of Pescadero Creek Park. The best way to hike this loop (especially on a warm day) is counter-clockwise, taking the Tarwater Trail DOWN and coming back UP via the shaded Shingle Mill Trail. Along the way you’ll pass an old garage and orchard; remnants of a former ranch known for its cheese production. The single-track trail eventually empties onto fire road. Here, make a short detour to the right where you can investigate the “bubblin’ brew” aka naturally occurring oil seeps of Tarwater Creek.

Returning to the Tarwater Trail fire road, the creek will be on your right as you proceed along a mile of mostly level ground. The junction with the Shingle Mill Trail is a left turn heading uphill and a return to single-track trail. Presently the forest opens and you’ll see a section of old steam engine and timbers, evidence of milling operations that continued in this area up into the 1960s. The redwood forest has reasserted itself here; it is a peaceful spot to stop for lunch or snack. The trail widens as you head back up hill and offers one last rewarding stop to admire a huge redwood tree that some locals refer to as “The Saguaro” due to its unusual growth. This is definitely a Kodak moment for you and your hiking companions.

Having done this 4.7 mile hike many times over the years there is beauty and something of interest in all seasons but use caution following rain as the Tarwater Trail gets some muddy-slick spots. The elevation change is approximately 700’ and hiking poles, if used, are helpful. The trails of this loop hike are limited to hikers and equestrians only – no bikes or dogs are allowed. Pack a paper map and Plan ahead – this is a more primitive piece of the park with no restrooms, water, or picnic facilities.

To reach the Tarwater trailhead From Skyline/Alpine Road: Head west down Alpine; at junction with Portola State Park Rd. TURN RIGHT to stay on Alpine Rd. Continue down the hill towards the vineyards approximately .3 mile to Camp Pomponio Road and turn left. Proceed carefully down the narrow road, keeping to the left. The road dead-ends at a small parking lot at the trailhead. Happy Trails!
Happy New Year! The first issue of the year is always a good time to look back at last year.

Thankfully, statewide, 2019 was a quiet fire season: about an eighth of the total acreage of 2018. Locally, for the one-year period ending October 31, we were requested for service 206 times, about 10% more than 2018. The distribution of various incident types is shown here: This represents 455 individual responses, quite a lot for a small team. The team also did over 2100 hours of training.

I spent the entire year on the bench, recovering from an injury. After 459 days, I finally returned to service on November 7. It’s good to be back.

Promotion!
I am delighted to announce the promotion of Doug Aumack to the rank of Volunteer Captain. Doug’s contributions to the department are many: serving as president of the Fire Department Advisory Commission, spending many days each year proctoring at the volunteer fire academy and driver/operator classes, and running our vehicle maintenance program. In my absence this past year, Doug took on additional responsibilities, including planning most of the team’s training drills. Congratulations to Doug on this well-deserved promotion!

Firefighter Spotlight!
In the spotlight this month is 2019 fire academy graduate Tyler Knapp. Some of you may already know Tyler – he’s a State Parks Ranger in Santa Cruz County, including Castle Rock and Big Basin and other state parks. Tyler is originally from LA County: he finds it interesting that there are so many volunteer fire agencies in this county seeing as there are few in LA. His sergeant is a volunteer fire captain with the town of Felton. He became interested in the State Parks program for vegetation management control burns, and determined he could connect the dots by signing up as a volunteer with South Skyline. Tyler is a doer, and enjoys “helping the community rather than just living in it”. Welcome!

Recruiting for 2021
Would you like to join Tyler as a volunteer firefighter in your community? As I mentioned in the last issue, we are already looking ahead to 2021. We really need to find several new local volunteers to start building the future Company 29. Watch our website for announcements about upcoming recruiting events.
CASTLE ROCK STATE PARK CONSIDERING CHANGES TO TRAILS - YOUR INPUT NEEDED

UPDATE: DEADLINE FOR PUBLIC INPUT: FEBRUARY 1, 2020

State Parks is considering several Change-in-Use (CIU) requests to allow mountain bikes on previously designated hiking and/or equestrian trails in Castle Rock State Park.

Castle Rock State Park Encourages the local community to submit comments, questions or concerns as they consider these changes!

Please submit them in an email to trails@park.ca.gov with the title “Castle Rock Road and Trail Management Plan” by February 1, 2020.

BACKGROUND

The California State Parks officials in Sacramento are developing a Castle Rock State Park (CRSP) "Road and Trail Management Plan" (RTMP) for the park’s system of roads and trails. In this planning, they are evaluating one or more Change-in-Use (CIU) applications along with other items such as new and improved trailheads, trails, and roads within CRSP.

Castle Rock State Park has hosted two forums to solicit input from the community and other interested parties in the greater area on trail management. A Castle Rock Road and Trail Management Plan Open House was conducted on 1/29/19 at the Saratoga Fire House. A wide range of trail users’ input was received at this meeting.

CRSP also hosted a smaller Stakeholder Workshop at the Henry Cowell Mountain Store on 8/15/19. The Stakeholder Workshop was focused on the road and trail management plan as it relates to the potential trail change-in-use (CIU). The workshop participants included groups and individuals representing different types of trail use, mountain bikers, equestrians, local landowners, and state park staff to facilitate a manageable, focused meeting to brainstorm different ideas.

The information obtained from this meeting, along with public comments, trail evaluations, and park staff input, will be used to evaluate CIU requests. Once a preliminary determination has been made for each request, there will be an additional opportunity for the public to comment prior to the final approval of any CIU requests.

More information on the background, process, comments, etc., can be found on [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28392](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28392).

SSA Grant Applications 2020

Do you need financial assistance for a program or project that supports our Skyline community?

Individuals, students, teachers, groups, and organizations are eligible for South Skyline Association grant funding from $500 to $10,000.

Click [here](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28392) for more information and the application or check our website under "Events": [southskyline.org/events](https://southskyline.org/events)

The deadline for submission has been extended to March 31, 2020.

Local Ham and CERT Members Respond to PSPS

by Lisa Short Chupity

October was a busy month for our local CERT members and Ham radio operators.

Three separate incidences prompted the call from La Honda Fire Chief Ari Delay for CERT and Ham operators to staff the District Operations Center (DOC) at the La Honda firehouse in six hour shifts, 24 hours a day, until power was restored by PG&E. As well as PG&E’s PSPSs, Comcast and AT&T were affected as well, impacting local communications and internet. Verizon was not affected. There were no immediate communication or community emergencies during these shutoffs.
You come around a corner and there it is:
- A car crashed into a PG&E pole
- A motorcycle rider down on the highway
- A bike rider smashed into the mountain side
- A hiker down on a mountain trail

What should you do?

SSEPO is organizing a “First Arrivers” workshop to talk through / walk through the steps to take when you are the first responsible person on the scene of a mountain accident.

SSEPO Board members Dr. Rich Lee, Peggy Wargo, Judith Watson and Frances Mann-Craik are organizing the workshop, which we hope to hold in the Spring at Jikoji Zen Center.

Following is an outline of the workshop. If you have special experience or skills to add to our workshop-creation team, please let me know. Also, send me a note if you would like to be on the sign-up list for more information. manncraik@gmail.com

First Arrivers Workshop & Training Class for SSA Neighbors 2019 / 2020

Background:
- SSA Neighbors are often the first responsible people on the scene after a friendly tourist, or a neighbor, has an accident – on the highways and on the trails.
- Emergency Services often take a long time to arrive – recently 40 minutes for a crash on Highway 35 and 90 minutes to get to an injured hiker on John Nicholas Trail.
- The SSA Community is well supplied with trained CERTs and helpful neighbors.

Objectives:
- Provide a workshop to equip locals to manage a local emergency – from their arrival on the scene until emergency professionals appear.
- Workshop in the Spring for SSA residents – Jikoji has volunteered their facilities.
- Trunk-bag of “First Arriver” tools

Workshop Content

1) Steps to take, as first arriver, as “Incident Commander” of the situation
   a. Safety
   b. First aid
   c. Call out to Emergency – who to call; how to tell them where you are
   d. Traffic control
   e. What to do when emergency help arrives

2) Role playing / demonstration – three scenarios
   a. Car crash into tree
   b. Mountain biker down on trail
   c. Motorcycle / bike crashed on Highway

If you have special experience or skills to add to our workshop-creation team, please let me know. Also, send me a note if you would like to be on the sign-up list for more information. manncraik@gmail.com

First Arrivers Workshop time and place:
Saturday, March 21
2:00 to 5:00 pm
Jikoji Zen Center
12100 Skyline Blvd

To find a list of very helpful Emergency Services and local Emergency Communication phone numbers and websites go to the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness website at:

https://www.ssepo.org/preparation.html
Sunset Ridge Road Newly Recognized as Firewise USA Site

Lynn Sestak

In August, Sunset Ridge Road achieved national Firewise USA-recognized site status. Sunset Ridge Road is a private road community of 10 single family homes, in a wooded ridgetop area located in the Santa Cruz county portion of 95033 area code. Through significant tree and brush clearing, neighborhood camaraderie and wildfire evacuation education, our community reduced wildfire risk to our neighborhood.

The Firewise USA program helps educate people to adapt their homes and property to living with wildfire risk, and encourages neighbors to work together to help reduce wildfire danger. Obtaining recognition helps to establish communication and build goodwill with the local firefighting community, and creates greater collaboration amongst neighbors.

Our journey began with a wildfire evacuation event almost 2 years ago. In the dead of night on October 16, 2017, our neighborhood awoke to the sounds of sirens and explosions in the canyon below, as we witnessed huge flames working their way up the valley towards us. One could almost see the hair standing up on the back of our necks. This was the Bear Fire. Several sheriff and CAL FIRE personnel arrived to communicate a mandatory evacuation. All households present evacuated for three days, not knowing if we would ever see our neighborhood intact again. We are eternally grateful to CAL FIRE and all emergency services who helped contain the fire and protect our area of the mountains, allowing us to safely return home.

The Bear Fire, and the tragic events of the Paradise Fire in 2018, helped motivate me to volunteer with the Santa Clara FireSafe Council, to work on wildfire risk reduction programs in the 95033 mountain area. Firewise USA coaching is one of those programs, and I was encouraged to learn the process by helping my own community obtain recognition.

There are six primary steps to this recognition process: Form a committee, complete a wildfire risk assessment, create an action plan, conduct an education event, meet minimum investment for community hours or dollars, and submit an online application through the Firewise USA portal.

Our small committee gathered neighborhood data and completed the first portion of the wildfire risk assessment. CAL FIRE Captain Steven Morris provided the second part of the assessment during an on-site visit with crew members in July. Next we developed a multi-year action plan based on recommendations from Captain Morris. For example: clearly mark turnaround locations on our road for emergency vehicles, and trim touching tree canopy over our road.

The next component of Firewise USA recognition is community education. We fulfilled this requirement by holding a Wildfire Evacuation Workshop for our community members. This event was provided by Santa Clara County FireSafe Council’s Eugenia Rendler, where she walked us through potential wildfire risks common around our homes, and provided us with go-bags and checklists for evacuations. We were also blessed with three CAL FIRE members for a Q&A session.

The Bear Fire and other recent fires also motivated our community to be very proactive with tree and brush clearing along our shared road, and to create significant defensible space around each home where practical. We organized several road work parties during 2019, where community members collaborated with chain saws, chippers, tractors and elbow grease to reduce wildfire access issues along our road. As a road association, we also voted to employ Huerta’s Tree Service to remove several large trees along the first mile of our road. This combination of person hours of community work, and investment in professional tree services put us well above the minimum required investment quota. This addressed the fifth component for Firewise USA recognition.

The final step was to submit an application to Firewise USA through the portal at https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA. After submitting our application in July, we received approval towards the end of August. The NFPA then sent us two large plaques to share our news with our area: Sunset Ridge Road received Firewise USA recognition. The encore step in this process was to celebrate! If you have any questions, or would like to learn more about Firewise USA recognition for your 95033 community (in either Santa Clara or Santa Cruz county), you can email lsestak@sccfiresafe.org or education@sccfiresafe.org.

You can find additional information at https://sccfiresafe.org and https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA.
Western Swordfern Thrives on Moisture

By Sarah Schoen

Of all the types of ferns in coastal California, western swordfern (*Polystichum munitum*) is perhaps the most widespread. Along Peters Creek in Long Ridge, the plants are especially large, bringing to mind the times of the dinosaurs.

The perennial, evergreen fern grows ½ to 8 feet from an underground rhizome. The rhizome is short, vertical and scaly, with fine, shallow roots. Fronds grow straight up, then curve downward. Fronds are made of orange, bristly stipes (stems) up to ¼ of the length, followed by dark green, pinnately divided dark green leaves.

Individual leaflets (pinnae) are lance-shaped with serrated edges (*munitum* is from the Greek for “armed with teeth”). At the base of each pinna is a projection, like the hilt of a sword. The hilt is one of the most distinctive features, allowing easy identification of the plant.

Like almost all ferns, western swordfern reproduces through an alternation of generations. The plant we think of as the fern has rows of round, orange sori, arranged along the underside of the frond. *Polystichum* is from the Greek for many rows, referring to the sori. Each individual sorus is made up of structures called sporangia, which contain thousands of microscopic spores. When ripe, the spores are released and distributed mainly by wind. They can travel very far from the parent. Spores land in the soil and germinate into an inconspicuous “plantlet” – a gametophyte called the prothallus. This tiny organism has no leaves, stems, or roots, but is a thin green membrane, often heart shaped and ½” or less across and attached to the soil with filaments. The prothallus has both male and female organs. Based on genetic diversity, in swordferns the prothallus usually crosses with another prothallus, producing a new sporophyte, or fern.

Western swordferns prefer moist woods, high nutrient soils, and shady slopes or flats. In our area they are usually associated with Douglas-firs and redwoods.

Swordferns love moisture, and their shallow roots make them susceptible to dry weather. Ecological studies in redwood forests have used individual swordfern change in size from year to year as an indicator of drought stress of the overall plant community. Still, swordferns have adaptations that allow them to survive in slightly drier locations than some other ferns. The pinnae are somewhat leathery to retain moisture. The plants can also collect water through their fronds on foggy days. Although uncommon in nature, the plants can reproduce vegetatively from buds on their rhizomes. And the xylem, which transports water from the roots to the fronds, has evolved to be less likely to form air blockages (embolisms) during times of dryness. This keeps the fronds hydrated and living longer.

Swordferns are important to many animals. In our area, they are browsed by black-tailed deer and sawfly larvae. They also provide habitat for a number of bird species, including chestnut-backed chickadees, red-breasted nuthatches, and Oregon juncos.

Native Americans throughout the swordfern’s range utilized the plant. Ohlones ate the rhizomes, boiled or baked in coals. Just to our north, the Coast Miwok used the fronds to thatch structures. A number of tribes in Washington State and British Columbia, where swordferns are more common, had different uses, depending on the tribe. These included making an infusion from the stipes as a wash or chewing fronds as a poultice to treat sores, chewing young shoots or fiddleheads for cancer of the womb, chewing and swallowing the raw plant to treat sore throats and tonsillitis, and making a poultice from the sorus to treat burns.

Western swordfern is found from southern Alaska south along the coastal range to Baja California and inland to Idaho and Montana. In California, it is also found in the Sierra foothills, below 5200’.
Letters to the Editor . . .

These following letters are the opinions of local residents who live in the South Skyline area and do not necessarily reflect a position of the South Skyline Association (SSA).

In Opposition to Mountain Bike Trails in Castle Rock State Park

Mountain Bikes in Castle Rock State Park?
Engage!

We are writing to encourage the Skyline community to voice your opinions on an important local issue.

Castle Rock State Park (CRSP) has received numerous Change-In-Use (CIU) requests from the Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz (MBOSC) and Silicon Valley Mountain Bikers (SVMTB) organizations. These organizations have collaborated in highly organized efforts to gain full-time mountain bike access to ALL of the major trails in CRSP.

A vital voice missing in this process are the people who use these trails for hiking and activities other than mountain biking. Send Emails ASAP! By December 31st, 2019 is best!

Why this matters: Most of the trails in CRSP were designed for hikers and, as they currently exist, are not suitable for high impact activities such as mountain biking. To make these hiking trails “mountain bike ready” they would have to be widened, fortified, and otherwise modified for such use, thereby losing their most vital qualities as intimate, natural forested trail designed for gentle pursuits.

The Castle Rock State Park General Plan permits bicycles only on the service road to the Castle Rock Trail Camp. This decision was made in large part to protect the fragile and environmentally sensitive ecosystem. [www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/cr_final gp_no_maps.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21299/files/cr_final gp_no_maps.pdf)

There is considerable alarm about the potential environmental damage and loss of the beautiful hiking experience of these fragile hiking trails.

It’s important to note that there is no lack of local destinations to go mountain biking. Nearby parks, including Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Sanborn County Park provide at least 175 miles of mountain biking access on trails. They offer an extensive and wide variety of bicycling experiences.

What can I do?
Please help ensure that CRSP remains a low-impact, peaceful setting. Send emails and let State Parks know how you feel about sharing the trails with mountain bikes in Castle Rock State Park.

The deadline for public input to State Parks is in the February/March 2020 timeframe. We are asking you to give your comments and questions by December 31, 2019 to ensure that you are included in the process to develop the Park’s recommendations.

PLEASE SEND EMAILS to “trails@parks.ca.gov” with the title “Castle Rock Road and Trail Management Plan.”

More information on the background, process, comments, actions taken to date, etc., can be found here and below: [www.parks.ca.gov/CastleRockRTMP](http://www.parks.ca.gov/CastleRockRTMP)

Thank you for your support. Whatever your opinion is, it is valuable!

-- A group of concerned South Skyline Residents

__________________________

Here’s an example of an email you can send to “trails@parks.ca.gov” if you oppose the new CIUs to Castle Rock State Park trails. (continued on page 13)

Dear State Parks,
I am a frequent visitor to Castle Rock State Park. My family, friends, and I love hiking, running and rock climbing there. We are so grateful and appreciative of all of the time and resources that are devoted to maintaining our beautiful green spaces!

I have recently learned that CRSP is considering opening up all of their major trails to mountain biking use. I am deeply concerned about this course of action.

Many, if not most, of the trails in nearby county and open space district parks are already open to bicyclists. Nearby parks, including Midpeninsula Open Space District and Sanborn County Park provide at least 175 miles of

Continued on page 13
mountain biking access on trails. They provide an extensive and wide variety of bicycling experiences. Unfortunately, it has been my experience that once one of these trails is open to biking it becomes unpleasant for use by hikers. Most avoid it, creating a de facto closure to hikers.

The Skyline to the Sea Trail and most other trails were designed for hikers and, as they currently exist, are not suitable for mountain bikes. Were they to be modified or fortified for such use they would lose their most vital qualities as intimate, natural forested trail designed for gentle pursuits. California State Parks, by law and custom, maintains the highest environmental standards which mandate changes to trail access be adopted only by demonstrating such changes do not threaten the agency’s core values and responsibilities. I contend that opening the Skyline to the Sea Trail and other CRSP trails to mountain bikes would constitute such a threat.

Thank you,
[Your Name and Town]
[Contact info suggested but optional]

In Favor of Mountain Bike Trails in Castle Rock State Park

Open Letter to the South Skyline Community

I am writing this as a matter of 30 years personal experience hiking, climbing, mountain biking and horseback riding in the South Skyline area which may not represent the opinion of either the South Skyline Association board of directors or the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization leadership. It appears that the heated discussions on this issue are approaching the fervor of those over politics and gun control.

In March of this year, the SSA board meeting was held at Dick Schwind’s house with a main topic to discuss our position on the CRSP “CIU” plan as it pertains to mountain bikes on park trails. Most of the board attended the meeting and discussions went back and forth about the pros and cons of mountain bike use on some of the CRSP trails. At the conclusion of the meeting, it came to a vote as to the elements of the letter that would be written to the CRSP trails on behalf of the SSA board endorsing the idea of opening Skyline to the Sea trail to mountain bikes on alternate days if the trail could be made safe for that purpose. The vote was not unanimous but did reflect the majority.

In August 15th there was a meeting at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park seeking interested input into the future of trail use in CRSP. Much of the discussion at that meeting was on the prospect of which, if any, current or future trails in CRSP may be suitable for multi-use (hikers, bikers and equestrians). About the same time, some residents who live on the HWY 9/ Skyline to the Sea trail corridor voiced strong opposition to the original SSA letter, demanding a retraction. A group consisting mostly of these residents drafted a rebuttal letter that had some very negative statements against mountain bikers, which were deleted before the final draft. The revised letter was sent to the planners for CRSP trails, reversing the position of the SSA board and not recommending mountain bikes on the Skyline to the Sea trail. However, one statement remained which survived my objections:
"Unfortunately, it has been our experience that once one of these trails is open to biking it becomes unpleasant for use by hikers. Most avoid it, creating a de facto closure to hikers."

Personally, I do not believe this statement reflects the experience of everyone in the SSA community or even on the SSA board. I have seen no data to accurately support this, although this experience was brought up during the discussions regarding the writing of the rebuttal letter with specific references to the John Nicholas Trail in Sanborn County Park, which is most likely the basis of the above statement. As avid hikers/bikers/equestrians on MROSD and Santa Clara County Parks trails for over 30 years, no one in my family, neighborhood or peer groups in any of these activities has experienced a sense of "de facto" trail closure, except official seasonal closure of trails in Long Ridge to all users except hikers.

With respect to gathering data on actual conflicts versus perceived conflicts, there are few studies in existence a couple are posted on the website of the Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz stating that the perception of unpleasant and dangerous encounters between mountain bikers and hikers and equestrians did not coincide with the reality of actual events.

http://mbosc.org/mtb-impact-faq_social/


As to the issue of trail erosion from mountain bikes as well as all human impacts on trail use and nature, here is the most cited (and thorough research) article:


Granted, there are some who dislike mountain bikers, and always will. It makes sense that the strongest opposition to mountain bikes comes from those who live near the Skyline to the Sea trail, where every mountain biker is riding illegally. Hence the majority of their experience is with the “criminal element” which does not represent the majority of mountain bikers.

My point is to make it clear that mountain bikers as a group are not a bunch of critter-killing vandal hooligans and I take umbrage when they are portrayed that way in the process of influencing policy. I also take umbrage when they act in a way that gives people reason for that opinion. Aside from what the majority of the SSA Board may think (or maybe they do) I would still like to see some means of riding a bike safely off-pavement from HWY 35 to Waterman Gap. Most appropriately via a separate “flow” trail downhill and possibly uphill—only via an improved (also for emergency vehicles) portion of the Saratoga Toll Rd. I am interested in discussing this with anyone privately, or via some other forum.

Regards,
Rich Lee MD. Medical Director, South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization and Board Member, South Skyline Association

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**Castle Rock Park, Bicycles, CalTrans and Greenhouse Gases**

Greetings, my name is Dave Anderson and I have been an SSA board member for over 5 years now. **I am writing not in my capacity as a board member but as a concerned resident and member of SSA. The views expressed here are my own.** In part this is because it is my belief that this issue is too contentious for the SSA to take a single position and claim to have looked out for the interests of our whole community. In greater part it is because I can speak more freely on the matter in an unofficial capacity.

NOTE: As SSA Webmaster I have set up the SSA events page here [http://southskyline.org/events/] as a space where other members have an opportunity to voice their opinions. If you are an SSA member and would like to post an article on the subject please submit your text to webmaster@southskyline.org If you would like to offer me personal feedback you may contact me at ssa.road.reports@gmail.com Please note that any article will be prefaced with a brief disclaimer noting that the views expressed are those of the author alone. Articles maybe rejected for profanity, incivility or other inappropriate content.

To place me in context with this issue, I have lived within 20 miles of here my whole life, enjoyed Castle Rock Park for most of my life, and about 8 years ago have come to live on Highway 9 a stone’s throw from the Skyline to the Sea Trail. I have spent a significant part of my youth doing trail maintenance in El Corte de Madera Creek Preserve back when it was private property, along with other adjacent pursuits including hiking, biking, photography, etc.

By now most of you will have heard of the Castle Rock State Park Change-in-Use plan: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28392](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28392) Much of this information has been available since the 2010 general plan was published ( [https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1324/files/CRSP Draft Trails Plan.pdf](https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1324/files/CRSP Draft Trails Plan.pdf) ) Part of what is causing this to come to the fore again is that parts of this plan were contingent on the construction of extra parking — which has now been completed and christened “The Kirkwood Entrance”. Per the Draft trails plan there are 11 trail plans that were expected to change with the completion of that parking area.

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Letters to the Editor . . .  
Continued from page 14

So now we find ourselves with a deadline of Feb 1, 2020 to get our input to trails@parks.ca.gov (really best to think of it as 1/1/2020) and the FUD I’m hearing around this is epic. Don’t get me wrong — while I do personally agree that bicycles should not be allowed to “spoil” the park I don’t think total exclusion is the only viable option. Clearly most of the trails are not suitable for the thrill-seeking rider.

To the point: Essentially my very own personal opinion/position is that the Superintendent should open only the Saratoga Toll Road and Beekhuis Road to bicycle traffic. This would provide a peaceful, safe route around the most dangerous parts of Highway 9 with a possible escape route. This toll road runs from near 35 along 9 to well below the 15mph hairpin South of 236 and the narrow twisty section beyond that.

The route is easy to see schematically on p.31 of the 2010 Draft Trails Plan. From there you can find it easily enough in other maps in that document.

It must be noted here that this is essentially a service road for much of its length. The toll road was completed in 1870 and carried the heavy transport of the time, and mixed traffic for generations afterward. It is still frequented by heavy trucks and equipment. This road is not fragile, in need of fortification, or likely to fall victim to “high impact activities such as mountain biking”. It looks nothing like the videos of for example the John Nichols trail which have been presented as strawman arguments against all bicycle access. It’s a working road.

Also note that the 2010 draft trail plan already states in section 3.3.4.2 that the Saratoga Toll road and Beekhuis Road will be “considered” for bicycle access (among 7 others). No mention is made here of any fragility of these roads or any need for improvements. Personally, I would like to see only the Toll Road and Beekhuis considered, and not modified for high speed bicycling but maintained as fire trails/access roads.

My reasoning for this is articulated well enough in this email that I posted to the SSA board on this subject on April 10, some emphasis added (sharp-eyed readers will note that this was my position at a date prior to the contentious SSA letter that was rescinded, and I still stand by the words):

As of this writing, there are no good bicycle routes between Saratoga Gap and Big Basin, San Lorenzo Valley, etc., except for Highway 9, which is extremely dangerous for bicycles, especially traveling uphill. Please consider opening up some route, preferably via one or more of the old toll roads, so that bicyclists can travel between these areas without grave risk to life and limb. Current alternatives are to travel many miles north to Alpine Road, through La Honda and San Gregorio or many miles South to Bear Creek Road which is no safer than Highway 9.

Caltrans claims the following in its Class IV Bikeway Guidance document ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/stp/dib/dib89-01.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/design/stp/dib/dib89-01.pdf)):

> It is the goal of the State to increase the number of trips Californians take by bicycling, walking, and other forms of active transportation in order to help meet the State’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, improve Californians’ health by helping more people be active, and stimulate the economy. Bicycle facilities are a vital part of the transportation infrastructure that is used by many to commute to and from work and other destinations and provide alternatives to vehicles that otherwise would transport citizens across California’s roads and highways.

The west side of Highway 9 in this area consists of private property including over 7,000 acres of Timber harvest land that is off-limits to the public. The east side of Highway 9 is mostly private property except for Castle Rock Park. This process of determining allowable usage for this public resource( CRSP trails) is the last chance we have in the foreseeable future to create a route which may help to achieve the goals set out by the DOT, goals which many of the local residents support in broad terms.

To put it as plainly as possible, saying “no” to this proposed usage of the toll road is saying that you don’t want a safe, environmentally friendly alternative to travel by car through this corridor.

It is true that there are many other places to ride bicycles in the Santa Cruz mountains. CRSP is unique in that it has the potential to serve as the only safe through route for many miles around. Whatever is done it should undergo periodic review so it can evolve as new factors or new understandings come into play. I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this.

Continued on page 16
If you don’t agree, please make your voice heard at trails@parks.ca.gov

The point is, if you feel strongly about this issue, now is the time to be heard.

Dave A.

Below is a template you can use to help craft an email to you can send to trails@parks.ca.gov if you happen to agree this is the most pressing change needed, or craft your own to suit what you need to say.

Dear State Parks,

[Introduce yourself, mention which area parks you frequent and how you travel between them]

I have recently learned that CRSP is considering what trail usage is appropriate for mountain biking use. I want to weigh in on this because it seems to be a highly polarized issue and I am not finding my voice in either of the extremes presented. These extremes seem to be either “maintain status quo” or “gain access to more than is truly reasonable”.

I would like to see a bicycle travel corridor off the highway and suitable for a broad age and skill range opened up between Saratoga Gap and San Lorenzo Valley/Big Basin.

Highway 9 alongside the park is unsafe for bicycles, even with the recent changes. This is especially true uphill, more so for children.

There are many terrific parks, trails and other potential destinations for bicycles that are only practical to travel between via car or truck. Please open this vital corridor so we can travel between these parks without needing to burn fossil fuel to do so.

The Skyline to the Sea Trail and some other trails in the park were designed for hikers and, as they currently exist, are not suitable for mountain bikes. That much is obvious to the most casual observer. Please don’t conflate such fragile trails with access roads as the anti-bicycle extremists have been doing.

California State Parks, according to the policy Appendix F of the 2000 CRSP General Plan, should be making any trail that could be described as a dirt road 60 inches wide or better accessible to bicycles, absent extenuating circumstances as outlined in that Appendix. I contend that opening only the Saratoga Toll Road Trail and Beekhuis Road trails to mountain bikes would satisfy both the need for a transportation corridor as well as serve to satisfy the policy expectation that at least some park roads be accessible to bicycles.

Thank you,

[Your Name and Town]
[Contact info suggested but optional]

A Tip for Local Beekeepers

If you are a beekeeper worried about pesticides being sprayed in the area of your hives, registering with the BeeWhere platform for GIS hive location tracking seems like a smart option.

This registration enables communication efforts between beekeepers, pesticide applicators, and county agricultural commissioners to reduce pesticide incidents with bees. These Crop Management tools will interface with BeeWhere to access the general number of hives within a mile of the site when an Agricultural Pest Control Adviser is considering a pesticide for crop management and allow applicators to contact beekeepers for notification purposes. Your beehive locations are not shared with anyone outside the California Agricultural Commissioners staff.

For more information go to https://beewherecalifornia.com/
Community

SC4 Amateur Radio Club welcomes those interested in amateur radio for emergency communications and neighborly talk. License is free. Simple exam: No Morse code. We offer classes. Our next class is April 7-8. Please contact Peter Chupity at Kl6FAO@arrl.net. Visit www.sc4arc.org or write: SC4ARC, PO Box 237, La Honda, CA 94020

Free Fire Fitting for those in the South Skyline Fire & Rescue primary response area. This 2-1/2 inch fitting will allow the connection of a fire hose to your water supply and can be utilized by the fire department to access the water necessary for fire suppression. Please visit http://southskylinfire.org/ for more information under the “Help us help you” section.

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Dave Warter Mortgage Advisor 650-618-3619 bayareamortgages.com. I am passionate about creating a better loan process, serving happy clients, and building a foundation for financial success. This allows me to provide my clients with competitive rates, tailored financing solutions, and an efficient loan process focused on communication. Call or email me for a free consultation.

Dog Days- Award Winning Dog Training Group Classes-Monday evenings OUTDOORS GIFT CERTIFICATES – great for any dog owner! Private In Home Lessons Please call 650 851-5500 (Best) or Email: Dog.days@comcast.net

For a Free, no Obligation Solar Consultation from your mountain neighbor, please contact David Morgan dmorgan@simplysolarcalifornia.com (408) 348-5781. Simply Solar is a local Northern California company installing North American made panels.

Services

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Janice Compton, CPA, welcomes JB Compton, EA to her Tax Practice. JB has been an Enrolled Agent (licensed by IRS) since 1997, retired from the IRS as an Engineer in March with 14 yrs of service. Call Janice (408)354-4451 or email janicecpa@verizon.net

Learning Strategies One-on-one tutoring in your home by qualified educators. K-12, all subject areas including test prep ISEE, HSPT, SSAT & SAT, Contact Learning Strategies, www.creative-learning-strategies.com or email victoriaskinner@creative-learning-strategies.com or call 650-747-9651 for a free phone consultation.

LOOK NO FURTHER! We are the caretakers who will give you peace of mind and unparalleled service. Integrity, trust and hard work are our core values. Strong, healthy couple with years of experience in security, housekeeping and property caretaking. Call Marc Henderson 320-808-9158

Pineda Tree Service Inc. A local and reliable business that specializes in crown thinning & cleaning, hazardous tree removal, poison oak removal, and property cleanup, 24/7 emergency. Free estimate Insured and bonded. CSL#991767. Phone: 650-208-2734 Email: pinedatreesvicelinc@gmail.com

Portola Valley Farmers’ Market Every Thursday, year-round 2-6pm (2-5pm winter) Weekly farmers’ market brings local fruits & veggies, eggs, meat, fish, bakery & specialty foods, crafts and ready-to-eats. 765 Portola Road, PV at town center in front of the Historic Schoolhouse. www.pvfarmersmarket.com

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When placing an ad: Please limit each ad to 45 words.

Email ads to: skylineseditor@yahoo.com
Next deadline: March 9, 2020.

Classified Ads are free to SSA members. Membership is $20 per year. The online SSA membership application is at www.southskyline.org
SSA 2017 CALENDAR

SSA General Meeting - Friday January 31, 2020
at Saratoga Summit Fire Station • 7:00pm

Board Meetings will be held on:
January 9
February 13
March 12

For locations and more information contact
Michael Rowe rowe517@icloud.com • 408-872-1775

Current SSA Board Members

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Anderson</td>
<td>Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>Website, Public Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristen Anderson</td>
<td>Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patti Begley</td>
<td>Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>Skylines, Website Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Bekins</td>
<td>Highway 35 - Rocky Creek</td>
<td>Secretary, Public Safety/Water, Website Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debra Born</td>
<td>Alpine Road</td>
<td>Membership Chair, SSFC, Web Comm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evan Dellor</td>
<td>Rosemary Lane</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rich Lee</td>
<td>Portola Heights</td>
<td>SSEPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maura McNamara</td>
<td>Waterman Gap</td>
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<td>Jerry Parsons</td>
<td>Las Cumbres</td>
<td>SSEPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Rowe</td>
<td>Highway 9 – Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Van Sciver</td>
<td>South of Black Rd.</td>
<td>SCMEPA</td>
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<td>Guy LaLonde</td>
<td>Highway 35 - Rocky Creek</td>
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<td>Dick Schwind</td>
<td>Highway 35—North of Hwy 9</td>
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Board positions are available. Contact Michael Rowe if interested — rowe517@icloud.com

Skylines Ads and News Articles: The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is March 9, 2020

Skylines is published once a quarter: January/April/July/October
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