



OpenTheWaterShed.org

Open the SF Watershed's responses to the SFPUC's 12.30.14 memo on public access plans:

The PUC lays out five goals in its proposal:

1. *Switch from docent-led tours to permit system:* This would be a huge step forward, and we're very excited about this. The PUC suggests making this change once the Ridge Trail at the end of 2016. We'd like to see the PUC begin to plan for the permit system now so that the permit system can be introduced by then to the existing Fifield-Cahill Ridge Trail even if construction on the Ridge Trail is delayed.
2. *Construct a Ridge Trail along Skyline Boulevard:* We support this project and would like to see more information made available about the planning process. We would also like to see the Quarry Gate remain open for pedestrians and bicyclists so that they do not have to climb CA 92 to the Cemetery Gate.
3. *Construct the North San Andreas Trail Connector:* We support this project, but we'd like to see the PUC consider simply opening the existing paved service road that goes the same route as the planned trail, an option that would save money and allow public access much sooner.
4. *Construct extensions to the Crystal Springs Regional Trail south of the dam and south of 92:* We support these projects.
5. *Open the Whiting Ridge Trail connecting Sweeney Ridge and Montara Mountain:* This trail has been one of our highest priorities for public access because it would enable a crucial off-road connection between two well-loved open spaces. As an existing service road that is well over a mile from the nearest reservoir, it seems to raise few issues of concern for water safety. We'd like to see concrete steps taken to get this trail open sooner rather than later. The PUC seems to suggest that opening this trail would require CEQA analysis. We believe this is incorrect; no open space district in the Bay Area conducts a full EIR to open a single existing trail to the public. The PUC also says it would need agreement from San Mateo County on opening this trail. Our group is in touch with several San Mateo County supervisors and officials at the San Mateo County Parks Department and can, if necessary, help bring the agencies together.

Two goals not in the memo that we would like the PUC to consider:

1. There is an existing paved service road, a former public road, connecting the Sawyer Camp Trail, at the south end of the San Andreas Reservoir, to the Fifield-Cahill Ridge Trail. Opening this road to the public would allow trail users to reach the Fifield-Cahill Ridge Trail without biking or walking on CA 92, which is unsafe.

2. The Crystal Springs Regional Trail has a gap for bicyclists between Hillcrest and Larkspur Avenues, where bicyclists detour out to CA 35, crossing under Interstate 280 twice, each time at an uncontrolled on / off ramp crossing. This is a significant safety issue, and we would like to see the existing paved service road connecting the two sections of the trail opened to solve this problem.