

A Sunday Walk on the Pogonip

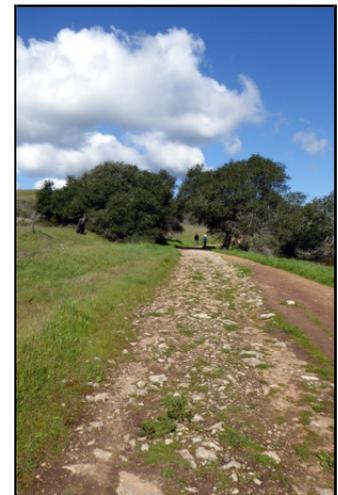


Looking down the Lookout Trail from the Spring Trail

February 26 was a beautiful Spring day following the rain, so the three of us went for a walk on the Pogonip. There were many others on the Spring Trail, out to get some exercise, breathe the fresh air and enjoy the wonderful day.

Shortly after leaving the Spring Street entrance is this historic remnant stretch of the old road, which the Cowell family had paved with stones. It's like a typical rural road in Ireland, and if you walk on it, you get a nice foot massage. Most folks walk on the dirt to the right of the old stony road, but it feels good to walk on the stones.

Not far from this stony path is an eroded stretch of road that because of the erosion and the steepness of the slope, has gradually become wider and wider as people have walked to avoid the erosion and the exposed rocks. See the photo below.



Old road remnant



Road erosion

The original road was once in the depression shown in the very left part of this photo.

On the next page is another photo, showing the first of four bicyclists we met on our walk. This little fellow was coming along with his mother. We stopped and told the mother that bicyclists were not permitted on the Spring Trail. She had no idea that bicyclists were not permitted, as she had seen no sign or other indication to that effect. She thanked us and headed down with her son and dog to the Spring Street entrance.



A young bicyclist

On the left is the young bicyclist. On the right is a photo of an erosion gully, not far from where the young bicyclist was photographed, that was repaired a few years ago. The soil on the slope below Coolidge Drive is quite erosive, and if we recall correctly, this gully was repaired as a result of an agreement between the City and UCSC.



Repaired erosion



Unrepaired erosion

On the left is one of a few erosion gullies that has not been repaired. This eroded gully, like the others, extends far down the slope toward the San Lorenzo River. On the right is a sign at the top of the Lookout Trail that has been present for several weeks (at least since December 25) and has been marked with graffiti. The down tree (and the sign) could be removed.



Trashed sign

TRAIL BLOCKED BY DOWN TREE NEAR POGONIP CREEK TRAIL FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 425-5160

The historic watering trough, near the crossing of Pogonip Creek by the Spring Trail, has unfortunately recently received this ugly graffiti. This trough, by the way, is quite interesting. It was originally fed by Pogonip Creek, which flows at a remarkably steady rate throughout the year, during both the rainy wet season and the dry summer months. Note the notches in the corners of the trough (not visible in this photo). These were cut to be at about the same elevation as the water in the spring box where the creek emerges, about fifty feet upstream from the trough. A pipe (made of redwood we've heard) allowed water to flow from the spring box to the trough, so that when water was drunk from the trough, the trough would fill again, perhaps overflowing slightly, thus keeping it clear and fresh throughout the year. This clever arrangement avoided the need for the common float valve usually present in such troughs. It would be a real attraction if this functionality could be restored.



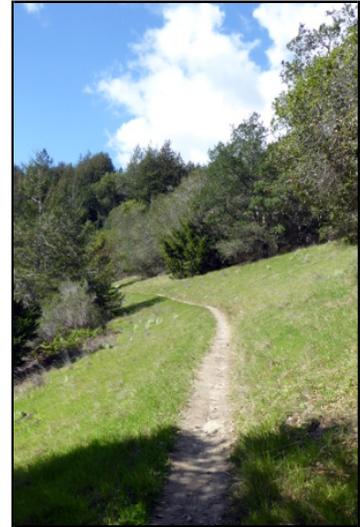
Historic watering trough



Two unleashed dogs

We saw several dogs off-leash, two of which are shown at the left, next to Pogonip Creek. (The darker dog is barely visible.) We also walked down the Ohlone Trail.

At the right is the upper portion of that trail, which, owing to its modest slope, is in good shape. Farther down, however, where the trail steepens, it is badly eroded, as shown at the left below.



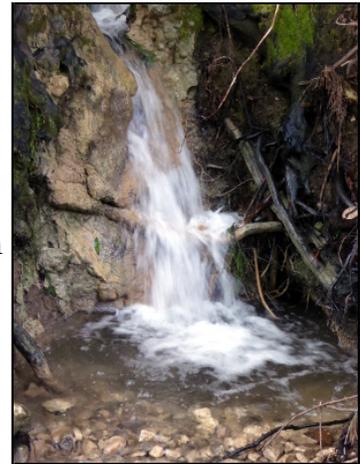
Upper Ohlone Trail



Lower Ohlone Trail

At the left is the lower Ohlone Trail, which is badly eroded, and needs repairing. At the right is the waterfall of Redwood Creek, one of the several spring-fed creeks that emerge within the Pogonip from the large aquifer above. Like Pogonip Creek, this stream flows year-round, although somewhat fuller in the rainy season than in the dry season.

We then walked on down the Spring and Rincon Trails. . .

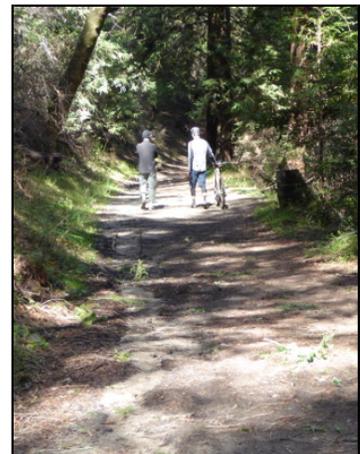


Redwood Creek falls



Uninformed biker

. . . where we encountered our second mountain biker. We talked with him to let him know that bicyclists were not allowed on the Spring Trail. He was from San Francisco, and totally uninformed, so he was quite willing to walk his bike back down the trail toward the intersection of the U-con trail and the Emma McCrary trail, where he had come from, and where bikers **are** permitted.



Biker willingly leaving



Gate wide open

We then walked on down, and discovered that the gate across the Rincon Trail, just above the connection with the U-Con Trail, was wide open. It is normally closed, so we closed the gate, and in the process, discovered that the gate, which



We closed the gate

has sagged since its installation, is difficult to close because the closing bars don't match the holes in the post, and one must lift the gate in order to close it properly. (The gate should be repaired.) There is a sign before the gate that says "NO BICYCLES", but perhaps it was not noticed by our San Francisco bicyclist, especially since the gate was open.



MBoSC advertisement

On or near the kiosk at the intersection of the Rincon Trail with the U-Con and Emma McCrary trails were these two signs. While we recognize and appreciate the contributions of Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz in helping



MBoSC advertisement

with the design, construction and maintenance of both the Emma McCrary and U-Con Trails, such advertising in a public open space is not appropriate, and these signs should be removed.



Two more bikers

Finally, on our way back up the Rincon Trail and the Spring Trail, we met these two young bikers, coming down, so we talked with them. Like the bikers we had met previously, they were also unaware that bicycles were not permitted on the trail. We encouraged them to continue on down, since the U-Con Trail intersection was only a short distance. They were quite willing to follow our advice.

Concluding thoughts

In the preceding pages we have noted and illustrated both a few of the unusual features of the Pogonip Open Space and the obvious situations that cry out for repair or more attentive maintenance. Any new construction for mountain bike trails and parking lots is premature. We should work to maintain what exists.

It remains the conviction of Friends of the Pogonip that the first priority of the City should be to remedy the insufficient supervision and maintenance to date on the Pogonip, to increase ecological restoration and natural resource protection on the Pogonip (as the existing Master Plan provides), and to carry out all mitigation measures mandated in the final Pogonip Master Plan EIR of June 1988. (See our letter, submitted at the joint meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council on February 7, 2017.)

In other words, Fix It First.

Beyond supervision and maintenance, we strongly encourage emphasizing the educational component of the Pogonip. What comes to mind immediately are the remarkable geological features that could be described, either on display boards or in the brochure that is distributed. The Pogonip lies in the Ben Lomond fault zone. The Ben Lomond fault is responsible for the path of the San Lorenzo River, and there is excellent evidence of the fault adjacent to the Spring Trail. The geology is also responsible for the many springs that give rise to the streams that flow steadily through the Pogonip.

Additional topics suitable for display boards are numerous, such as wildlife and plant species present within the Pogonip, and the rich history of the Santa Cruz Greenbelt lands.

The Pogonip Open Space is a community treasure. We should take better care of it. Friends of the Pogonip will continue to contribute to that goal. We maintain a website at <http://PogonipWatch.org/>, and welcome contributions to it. Both this document and our letter mentioned above are available on the website.

Sincerely,

Celia and Peter Scott, for
 **Friends of the Pogonip,**
March 6, 2017.

March 9, 2017—Response from Parks staff:

Following our presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission of the above original piece on March 6, we received today a kind and thoughtful note from the long-time Parks staff member Meta Rhodeos. She writes these words:

I was forwarded your concerns regarding Pogonip and I wanted to update you on a few of the items.

The graffiti was removed when we were notified on 2/28 and the trail tree blockage will be addressed in the next two weeks. I met with a contractor and we have a plan to clear the trail and rehab of the surrounding area...it is a VERY large fir tree that needed to be addressed once we passed through the wet season.

The signs posted by MBoSC were placed so that the upcoming volunteer days in Pogonip are well attended and that people knew who to contact to sign up. I have spoken to the group about what is considered appropriate signage for such events.

As for the gate being open, I have spoken to staff regarding the need to have this repaired; this should be able to be done by the end of the month.

I wanted to also take the opportunity to let you know that I have been in touch with Dave Roe and Bill Reid at UCSC regarding re-establishing our partnership. The primary focus that Bill spoke of was French Broom removal but he seemed to be open to having their stewardship group be involved in other projects. On April 8th there will be a volunteer trails repair project happening on the UCon Trail; Bill has offered the assistance of the stewardship group.

I would be interested in opening up a conversation regarding the Friends of Pogonip group; how we (the City) could work towards having the group more engaged in volunteer projects. What would be the best approach to getting the word out to the membership that volunteer projects are available? Help is needed and possibly having a few scheduled trail days on the calendar. Food for thought.

We wrote back to Meta to thank her for her note, and to let her know that we (Celia and Peter) had previously scheduled a Sierra Club-sponsored morning walk on the very day (April 8) that the volunteer trails repair project for the UCon Trail is set to occur.

Our morning walk starts at 9:00 AM from the Spring Street gate, and we told Meta that if she knew of any others who would like to join us they would be most welcome, and that of course we would be happy to lead similar walks in the future for the Parks Department or for any other group.

Please join us for our walk!

We also wrote that we were interested in working to be more involved in future volunteer projects, and that we would check with others of the Friends of the Pogonip group, and get back to her with any ideas for ways to proceed.

