

Protecting Potrero Meadow's Special Habitats

Potrero Meadow provides a lush open area amidst the forest canopy to the north of Mt. Tam's iconic peaks. Surrounded by steep trails, the meadow is bookended by the popular Potrero and Rifle Camp picnic areas. Small braided channels and depressions support a diverse array of aquatic plants and animals, making this rare wet meadow a destination for botanists and hikers alike.

The health of this once-vibrant wetland has declined due to the spread of weeds, wear and tear from heavy visitation, and poorly placed roads and trails that cut through the meadow, changing its hydrology and increasing erosion, sedimentation, and maintenance costs.

This project will re-align existing trails so that they circumnavigate the wetland, creating new vistas and areas for reflection. Laurel Dell Road, which now drops into the meadow, will be re-routed outside of the wetland allowing for habitat revitalization.

The trailhead at Rifle Camp will be moved slightly north and tie into a new alignment that hugs the meadow's upper edges. The service road and picnic area at Potrero Camp will be moved to the upper edge of the forest. Added amenities include a new composting toilet and well-placed picnic tables with extensive views across the wetland.



Creating a few strategic new trail alignments will open up breathtaking new views of Potrero Meadow and protect the plants and animals that live there

CONNECTING MEADOW AND OAK WOODLAND HEALTH

The north and west edge of Potrero Meadow is ringed by oak woodland that has been severely impacted by Sudden Oak Death (SOD).

The proposed Tamalpais Lands Collaborative Forest Health and Resiliency Project (see associated prospectus document for this project) will test a range of treatments in SOD infested areas that balance carbon sequestration with the need to reduce wildfire risk, sustain wildlife habitat, prevent soil erosion and weed invasion, and maintain the tree canopy.

Pairing the habitat restoration and visitor access improvements at Potrero Meadow with the establishment of one of these test plots would enable project managers to leverage the staff, equipment and funds of each project.

Because this section of ailing forest is located in such a highly trafficked area, a research plot here would also prove an invaluable opportunity for public outreach and education.



A study plot testing ways to manage Mt. Tam's forests in the face of Sudden Oak Death at Potrero Meadow will offer unique public education opportunities

KEEPING IN CHARACTER — POTRERO CAMP RESTORATION



New picnic tables will replace old and decaying ones

From the 1920s until the 1960s, Potrero Camp was part of a network of camping and gathering destinations for hikers. Today, it is a rest point and picnic area for those traveling on the Kent or Bernstein Trails or the Laurel Dell Service Road.

Flanked by deep green meadow and mixed forest, and punctuated with

rows of azaleas along the stream, the camp offers a sheltered space of respite.

This project will maintain the camp's rustic and historic character while creating a more sustainable picnic area within the adjacent wooded landscape. Historic elements (concrete pads and saddle racks) will remain

in place, and their story will be included on a new interpretive kiosk.

New picnic tables will be installed on rustic stone pads, with one remaining in its historic high spot adjacent to the log bridge. Additionally, a new, wider log bridge will be constructed to replace the existing one, which is undersized and decaying.

NEW PATHS: POTRERO CAMP TO RIFLE CAMP TRAIL RE-ROUTE



The re-routed trail will offer new, sweeping views of the meadow like the one pictured here

The re-aligned trail from Potrero Camp to Rifle Camp will offer new, sweeping views of Potrero Meadow by guiding visitors through the forest-meadow edges. By navigating through the trees and higher grasslands,

the trail experience will offer a new perspective while protecting sensitive meadow habitats.

The trail will meet the Lagunitas-Rock Springs Fire Road just above Rifle Camp, where a new composting toilet will be tucked away and two new picnic tables installed in the adjacent forest edge. Redundant trails will be removed, and their footprints will be restored.

The Laurel Dell Service Road passes through the southern edge of the wet meadow, cutting off the wetland's natural hydrology. The road will be re-routed, and the new path designed with improved drainage to prevent erosion and reduce maintenance costs. The footprint of the current alignment will be restored to meadow or forest as appropriate.

MEADOW RESTORATION

Potrero Meadow is a seasonal wetland—a dynamic environment that fosters a high level of plant diversity, and provides vital food and shelter for numerous creatures. Wet meadows like this also perform important ecosystem functions similar to other wetlands, including water-quality improvement, flood regulation, water storage, and carbon sequestration.

Potrero Meadow has also historically supported a variety of water-loving grasses and wildflowers that proliferate in the highly fertile soil. Today, a significant portion of the meadow's hydrology and its flora have been altered by invasive weeds, which have dramatically reduced the abundance of several rare plant species—

including the Mt. Tam thistle (see Rare Plant Program prospectus).

Meadow restoration will include preventing the spread of weeds into uninfested areas, converting weedy areas to diverse wetland habitat, reducing the spread of saplings into the wetland, and restoring the its natural hydrology.



Invasive grasses and trees are encroaching on Potrero Meadow's native plants

FUNDING NEEDS

\$2.25 MILLION

THIS FUNDING WILL SUPPORT:

\$872,000

Road and trail decommissioning and realignment (including small bridges)

\$153,500

Picnic area amenities, removal of old toilets, and installation of new ones

\$750,000

Ecological restoration and monitoring

\$30,000

Sudden Oak Death treatment test plots

\$438,000

Community engagement, project management, surveys, contracting, and permits

The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative is a partnership of the Marin Municipal Water District, National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin County Parks and Open Space District, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Lend a hand! To find out how to volunteer or donate, contact Matt Leffert at mleffert@parksconservancy.org, or (415) 561-3069 or visit parksconservancy.org/tlc



MARIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT



POTRERO MEADOW
www.parksconservancy.org/tlc