

Thank you for this award – I am truly honored!

I'd wanted to give a half-hr. talk on what lead me to become an environmentalist, but then I learned there wouldn't be a place to show the PowerPoint presentation.

As an aerospace engineer, I'm not sure I can talk without a laser pointer and bullet points, but let me try to make a few quick comments.

I want to acknowledge the many individuals and organizations that have helped over the years.

First, I'd like to thank my wife, Liv, who did more than her fair share of the household chores and child-rearing so that I could be free to attend the all-too-many meetings.

There was the Los Gatos Creek Streamside Park Cmte, founded in 1975 by Don Hebard and Rod Diridon.

I got involved soon thereafter when our first son was born: I wanted the trail to be done by the time he learned how to ride his bike.

Don taught me a lot about trail advocacy, including the need for tenacity and dedication: we're still working on that Trail!

Don Weden had his Inter-Governmental Council Trails & Pathways Cmte: it was a great place for a newbie like me to learn all about the various trails across the region.

Don presented an excellent explanation of the regional trail system: think of a wagon wheel, with the Bay Trail as the hub, the Ridge Trail as the rim, and the various creek trails as spokes – it's a wonderful vision.

I got to serve on another stream cmte: San José's Coyote Creek Long-Range Land Utilization Task Force, along w/ Garnetta Annable et al.

There I learned that sometimes one has to fight city hall: the support staff back then really wanted a golf course in the middle of the park chain where we wanted trails and riparian habitat: we were told we had to write & submit

our own Cmte Report to Council: we did; we won; and now a golf course coexists with a trail and a broad riparian corridor.

BTW: that report served as the basis for San Jose's Riparian Corridor Setback Policy -- development guidelines for 20 years -- now being reaffirmed, enhanced, and codified in the Envision 2040 update.

There was the effort to Master Plan the Los Gatos Creek Trail, sponsored by Councilmember Nancy Ianni and chaired by Virginia Holtz.

After some years of progress, we in our neighborhood noticed that the City seemed to be losing momentum in implementing the Master Plan, so we decided to spur them on by doing some of it ourselves.

As the Willow Glen Neighborhood Assoc., we won a grant to do an Urban Stream Restoration Project to restore a native riparian habitat, thereby implementing a part of the Master Plan.

Rod Diridon and Zoe Lofgren were pivotal in getting the County to be our cosponsors;

and the Santa Clara Valley Water District let us use their land:

all we had to do was get the State to change their environmental rules that had been requiring the Water District to annually plow their land and dump herbicide on it.

After two years of negotiations with the neighbors, the City, the County, the Water District, the State Dept. of Water Resources, the State Dept. of Fish & Game, and the US Corps of Engineers, we managed to set a statewide precedent for "Advanced Mitigation": plant and enjoy the trees now, and claim mitigation credit when needed at sometime in the future.

The \$60,000 grant got us a 10-acre park:

we organized a total of 200 volunteers who planted a thousand native trees and shrubs.

Blanca Alvarado appointed me to the County Parks & Rec. Cmsn, where I was privileged to work w/ Cmsnrs Bob Levy, Kitty Monahan, and Garnetta; Director Lisa Killough, and others.

There's the Guadalupe River Taskforce, where I met Leslee Hamilton;

Citizens for a Livable San Jose, w/ Mile LaRocca and Helen Chapman;

Save Our Trails, and Taisia McMahon; and a quite a few others: I'm only given 5 min. for my talk!

One reason I want to mention them all is to show that this isn't all done by any individual – there's an entire support team out there.

It's like tag-team: when you get tired and near burn-out, you can "tag" others to continue the effort: that's how the Three Creeks Trail overcame the initial indifference and objections and after 10 years is now well on its way to implementation.

By being involved, you get to meet the most interesting people and work with them on quite rewarding projects:

it's a lot more fun than just sitting at home watching reruns on TV.

Some projects can go on for a long time: my kids are thru college now and the Los Gatos Creek Trail still isn't finished: it's gotten so that now instead of bike-paths, I've started advocating for wheelchair ramps! ;-)

But it's not always a lifetime endeavor: sometimes even a single meeting can make a difference.

Read the public-meeting notices in the papers:

I once saw a notice about a CalTrans mtg. on designing a freeway interchange for Hwy-17 at Lexington.

At that meeting, there were lots of discussions about Alternative 2a vs. 3c, or whatever;

I asked about how bicyclists from the creek trail were supposed to cross that new road.

When they answered: "go 2 miles down the hill on the shoulder, twice around a cloverleaf and 2 miles back up the other side", they quickly realized that they needed a better solution, and that's why there's now a frontage trail up to the Bear Creek overcrossing.

You don't always win, but you won't win if you don't try.

I do recognize that these are hard financial times and budgets are constrained.

Still, it doesn't cost much more to plan to do things right: a facility designed with the dumpsters by the alleyway and the employee lounge facing the creek costs about the same as if they were designed the other way to.

A local developer received approval to cut down all the large trees on a lot where he was building a house.

After an informal discussion, literally over our dining room table, he sketched out some ideas on a napkin and said, "you know, if I move the pantry over by 18", we can save this tree".

That tree was featured in the sales brochures, & the house sold for \$2.4M.

Be sure to study the projects that are now being planned: the various Housing Projects & Shopping Centers, the baseball stadium, sewage treatment plant, BART, High-Speed Rail: these and many other plans quite possibly may be built, perhaps years from now when the funding is better, and, for decades to come, we will have to live with the results of any mistakes & oversights, and can enjoy the well-planned facilities, preserved setbacks, and restored habitats.

So: Be involved: you can help shape the future!

Many thanks for this Environmentalist Award!