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Kiwanis contribute to clearing Lamorinda trails

By Sophie Braccini



The hidden entrance of the connector trail. Photo Sophie Braccini

Away from the public eye, the parks and recreation departments of the three Lamorinda communities, along with community groups, are now working on the creation of a Lamorinda Trails Challenge, a concept to get the communities moving and exploring. But the project has prerequisites, such as a comprehensive mapping system - something the agencies are close to completing - the creation of connector trails, and the clearing of existing ones. This summer, Moraga Valley Kiwanis has undertaken the cleanup of a key segment for the connection of the Lafayette and Moraga trails.

Next to the border of Moraga and Lafayette, along Moraga Road, on the east side lies the vast expanse of the Palos Colorados property and its promise of trails over 100 acres of open space. On the west side, hidden behind bushes was the entrance of an inconspicuous trail leading to the Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail.

One bright Tuesday morning at the end of July, a group of Moraga Kiwanians joining with East Bay Trail Dogs, and the Friends of Lafayette Trails formed a group of about 15 people eager to make a difference. After parking their cars on Via Granada, the volunteers opened their trunks and grabbed serious tools.

The group of six Kiwanians had been corralled by Larry Beans, an avid hiker who is also part of Trail Dogs, a group of volunteers who maintain trails throughout Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Beans had told the six that they should be ready for brushing, weed abatement, tread work, or raking leaf litter off the trail and that there could be some poison oak. The Trail Dogs' president, Carol Lane, was there as well; she is an experienced trail cleaner who noted that they might even have to cut some big tree branches that day.

The morning went fast for all the volunteers, and by noon the half mile of trail leading to the Reservoir Rim Trail had been completely cleared. The trail entrance, on the west side of Moraga Road, is now much more noticeable, although no sign is posted - something that the Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department staff said would be corrected.

Beans said that the volunteers had fun, engaged in physical exercise, and added that one fellow Kiwanian told him he wanted to hear more about the Trail Dogs. Beans, who is also a member of the Orinda Hiking Club, has been a Trail Dog for seven or eight years. He says he has loved it, doing cleanup or even carving new trails every Tuesday morning. He has made many friends over the years and he says he does not need to go to the gym anymore. The Moraga Kiwanians have volunteered with the Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department several times, including on Fish Ranch Road. Beans says that they welcome new projects.

For information about Moraga Valley Kiwanis, visit www.moragavalleykiwanis.org, or for East Bay Trail Dogs, visit www.eastbaytraildogs.org.

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