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Moraga police officers approved to carry Naloxone

By Nick Marnell



Officer Fabiola Hernandez displays the lifesaving kit used by the Moraga PD. Photo Nick Marnell

Moraga Chief of Police Jon King announced at the Aug. 22 town council meeting that his officers have been approved by the emergency medical services director of Contra Costa Health Services to carry and administer Naloxone, medication used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

According to CCHS, opioid-related deaths rose from 42 in 2013 to 53 in 2016. "That translates into one death per week in Contra Costa County in 2016 due to opiate overdose," said CCHS Director Anna Roth in a statement. "Death related to opiate use is all the more tragic because it is preventable."

Properly administered, Naloxone can prevent an opioid-related death. Moraga police officers have been trained on the procedure, the amount to administer and the potential side effects, including victims who may vomit upon resuscitation. King said that three officers in the field will carry Naloxone kits, with one kit remaining in the police station.

Firefighter-paramedics of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and

the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District also carry Naloxone, but police cars are more likely to arrive to an emergency scene before a fire engine, and administering the drug to a patient in those early minutes or seconds can be the difference between life and death.

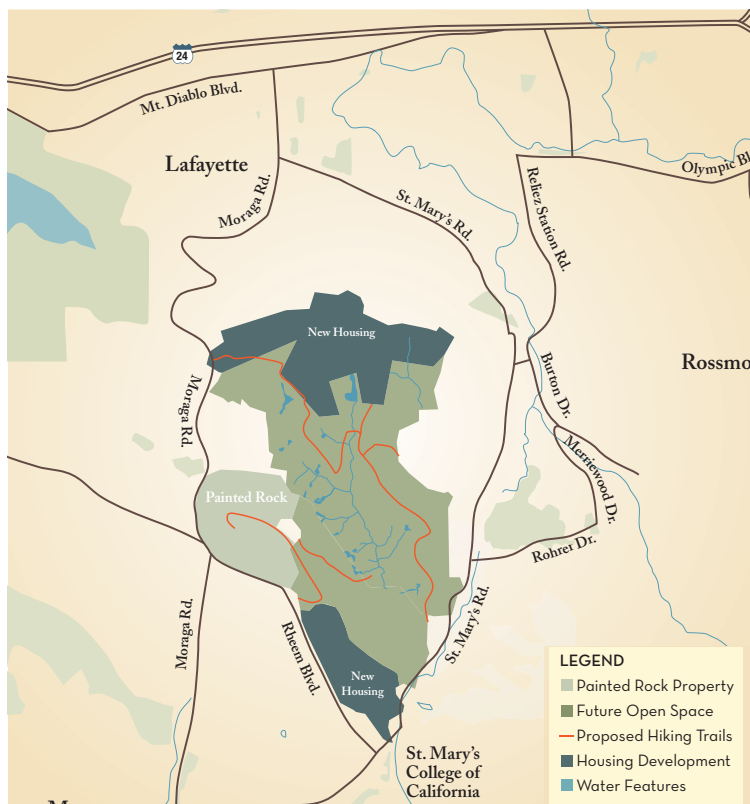
"If we're wrong, we won't hurt anybody," King said of administering Naloxone to a patient with overdose symptoms who did not need the drug.

CCHS requires that all officers receive refresher training on the use of Naloxone, the police department must report every use of the drug to the county EMS agency and the department must also submit an annual deployment report to the agency.

In 2017, the Lafayette Police Department became the first in Contra Costa County to authorize its officers to administer Naloxone. According to Police Chief Mark Nagel, Orinda police will receive training in the use of the drug once the Sheriff's Office schedules the classes.

A campaign to preserve Painted Rock

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Linus Eukel, the trust's executive director, adds that this specific piece of property shares boundaries with the Palos Colorados and Rancho Laguna properties, each with vast expanses of preserved open space and planned trails. He explains that the JMLT will start working on a trail plan and appeal for volunteers to carve it. He expects the preserve to open to the public in the spring of 2020. If all goes according to plan, Painted Rock will be a free recreation resource, opening a portal to miles of multiuse

trails, ponds, streams, windswept grasslands, unparalleled views of Mount Diablo and the rolling hills of central Contra Costa, all within a few minutes walk from homes in the heart of Lamorinda.

But before the deed is done, the trust needs to raise the money it has promised. The \$2 million purchase price is due May 31. Eukel explains that half of the money has already been raised, thanks to generous donors from Moraga, Lafayette, Orinda and beyond. Cabaniss adds that members of the Moraga com-

munity had already been giving money to JMLT, but that the recent acquisitions of Carr Ranch, and now of Painted Rock have ignited their interest and generosity.

Eukel is sensitive to the fact that the Bay Area is under tremendous pressure for more housing. He describes how Marin County started undertaking the task of preserving its open space long ago and that now 75 percent of the land is protected, concentrating housing in the more urban downtown areas. He adds that Contra Costa and Alameda counties are still far from reaching a level that he feels is necessary for the sustainability of the local fauna and flora, including wildlife corridors, but that the trust, treading tenaciously on the footsteps of its namesake, is proud to contribute to what he calls a moral duty to the future generations of Californians.

"Other than cattle ranchers who have grazed herds on these hills for decades, few people – even longtime residents who drive by daily on busy streets below – have experienced this beautiful landscape or enjoyed its remarkable vistas," notes Eukel. The JMLT has already acquired over 3,000 acres of open space in Contra Costa County. Contributions to the Painted Rock campaign can be directed to jmlt.org; the trust will be present at the Moraga Pear and Wine festival on Sept. 22.

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