

THE *Highlander*

Jan. - March 2026

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

RBDA Public Meeting

Managing Outdoor Recreation Growth Surrounding Bonny Doon

Wednesday, January 28th, 7:30 p.m.

Virtually via Zoom

Bonny Doon has always been blessed with spectacular beaches and beautiful forests. There are now new recreational areas directly surrounding us: San Vicente Redwoods, Cotooni-Coast Dairies National Monument and very soon, the Rail Trail. These areas are drawing more visitors than ever and impacting these outdoor spaces in many ways, including increasing demands on agencies responsible for the management and maintenance of public safety.

Join us to hear presentations by representatives of the Santa Cruz County Parks Department and Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, two key agencies involved in the management of these areas. The speakers will discuss their plans for addressing the challenges of management and maintenance, law enforcement, and public safety at the various recreation sites. They will also discuss the new Davenport Public Safety Center which will serve as a multi-agency, one-stop hub that will strengthen emergency response and services for North Coast and Bonny Doon communities.

The presentations will be followed by a question-and-answer session so bring your questions and concerns to share with the speakers.

[Virtual Meeting Log-in Instructions can be found on page 4](#)



Rebecca Hurley

Rebecca Hurley, Santa Cruz County Parks Deputy Director, has dedicated more than two decades to County Parks, beginning with her involvement as a youth participant and advancing through a wide range of roles in youth recreation, special events, aquatics, and park operations. She has served in leadership positions in multiple divisions and major capital improvement projects, while also playing an active role with the California Parks and Recreation Society at both district and state levels. She brings extensive professional training and education and is widely recognized for her achievements, mentorship, and collaborative leadership. She is deeply passionate about providing high-quality parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities to the community she grew up in.



David Madison

David Madison, Deputy Sheriff, has been employed by the Sheriff's Office since 2017. During this time, he has worked both in the jail and on patrol. Currently, he is assigned to the Community Policing Bureau servicing Boulder Creek, Bonny Doon, and Davenport. He is on our County's Bomb Team as a Bomb Technician and he also participates with the County's Search and Rescue Team.



Justin Cummings

Update from Supervisor Justin Cummings
Supervisor Cummings will join us to provide the latest information on county issues and his work on our behalf.

Davenport Public Safety Center Opens, Enhancing North Coast Public Services

After years of limited local government presence on the North Coast, a new multi-agency facility in Davenport is bringing county services closer to residents of Davenport and Bonny Doon. The Davenport Public Safety Service Center – or Community Service Center, as it may ultimately be named—had a soft opening on December 19, with a grand opening planned for spring 2026.

Located at 450 Hwy. 1 in the historic Forester's Hall, the center represents an innovative approach to agency collaboration by housing multiple agencies under one roof. "It's more than a sheriff's substation," explains Trina Barton, Special Assistant to Third District Supervisor Justin Cummings. "It's more of a community feel. It's a community service station where residents can have public safety and other needs met. The concept is that this is a multi-agency, one-stop shop."

The facility is made possible through a partnership with Bonny Doon resident Claudia Webster, who owns the building and is renting it on a five-year lease to the County of Santa Cruz at a very reasonable rate. Both Supervisor Cummings' office and Noel Garin Bock, President of the Davenport North Coast Association (DNCA), expressed gratitude to Webster for making the space available.

A Long-Awaited North Coast Presence

A Sheriff's substation was initially set up in 2017 in the Davenport Volunteer Firehouse, but that location lacked visibility and accessibility. In April 2025, Bock

met with Barton to identify potential spaces for a more visible facility. "I was hoping by making a station more prominent, it would work as a deterrent to the people who speed through Davenport," Bock explains.

Planners selected the old Forester's Hall for its visibility and location on Highway 1 next to the Roadhouse parking lot. Webster's willingness to rent the property at a favorable rate was crucial to making the project financially viable.

A Collaborative Model

What distinguishes the Davenport center is its deliberately collaborative design. The facility brings together representatives from county, federal, and nonprofit organizations:

- The Sheriff's Office will have workspace for the sheriff's deputy assigned to the North Coast and Bonny Doon beat
- Third District Supervisor Justin Cummings will have an office for himself and staff
- SC County Parks will have space for a ranger
- The Bureau of Land Management is working to secure a desk for staff managing the Cotooni-Coast Dairies National Monument
- Sempervirens Fund will also have space for staff

California State Parks has also been discussed as a potential partner, though those arrangements have not yet been finalized.

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Davenport Public Safety Center Opens

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This collaborative vision aligns with that of the DNCA's Bock, who serves on the North Coast Facilities and Management Planning group. She points out that "communication and coordination among the multiple landowning entities" was part of that group's goal. The new sheriff's substation could be a terrific asset for the various agencies who are working on the north coast to have an opportunity to coordinate and share plans.

Current Operations and Public Safety Impact

The Sheriff's Office began using the facility two to three days a week following the December 19 opening. Other agencies have not yet established regular schedules, though Barton indicates that "next month will have a more set schedule."

For public safety, the center provides the first dedicated workspace for the deputy assigned to the North Coast and Bonny Doon beat. Previously, deputies had no local facility between calls and either remained in their patrol vehicles or made the long drive back to Santa Cruz or Boulder Creek. Having a local workspace means deputies can spend more time in the community. For Bonny Doon residents, this should mean improved response times and a more consistent law enforcement presence.

The Force Multiplier Effect

The real potential of the Davenport center lies in enabling cross-agency collaborations:

Fire preparedness and response: When County Parks, the BLM, the Sheriff's Office, and the Supervisor's office are all in the same building, coordinating evacuation routes, fuel reduction projects, or emergency communication becomes far easier.

Trail planning and public access: As new trails open at Cotooni-Coast Dairies and County Parks expands facilities at Wilder Ranch, having these agencies in the same building facilitates coordination on parking, traffic impacts, and community concerns.

Land use and conservation: Having the Supervisor's office, Sempervirens Fund, and federal land managers in close proximity could streamline discussions when issues arise involving private property adjacent to public lands.

This model recognizes a reality that rural communities understand well: bureaucratic divisions don't reflect how issues actually present themselves on the ground. Wildfire does not respect jurisdictional boundaries.

Having a community space where multiple agencies can collaborate will make coordination more efficient and impactful.

Implications for Bonny Doon

For Bonny Doon, the center represents a meaningful improvement in access to county services. While not close to upper Bonny Doon, Davenport is more accessible to lower Bonny Doon than Santa Cruz for many residents.

The center's most immediate impact will likely be felt in public safety. Given Bonny Doon's experience with wildfire and our community's reliance on effective emergency response, this enhanced local presence should be beneficial.

Beyond law enforcement, the center's collaborative structure could benefit Bonny Doon in less obvious ways. Our community sits at the intersection of multiple jurisdictions and land management agencies—the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve, Wilder Ranch State Park, and the Cotooni-Coast Dairies National Monument. Having representatives from these entities working in the same building could help address coordination challenges that can complicate projects and delay solutions.

The facility also signals that North Coast communities deserve better access to services and that rural areas require creative approaches to service delivery.

Questions and Next Steps

Several questions remain about hours of operation and how the public can interact with these agencies. Bock raises important practical concerns. "The building needs proper signage so it can be seen as a viable resource," she notes.

She also points out that "Davenport is desperate for a community meeting space, even though there is limited meeting space due to the current configuration with cubicles and desks." Could the center serve both as a workspace during business hours and as a community meeting space evenings or weekends? Given Bonny Doon's similar lack of accessible meeting spaces, this is worth exploring.

As the center establishes its operations, there may be opportunities for community input on how it can best serve North Coast needs. We encourage residents to take advantage of the center's services and to provide feedback to Supervisor Cummings's office and participating agencies about how well it's meeting community needs.



It's Time to Renew Your RBDA Membership (Or join for the first time—or make a donation!)



We invite all Bonny Doon residents to join the RBDA and help us continue to make a real difference here on Battle Mountain. For more than 60 years, the RBDA has represented, and advocated for, the Bonny Doon community. We are your neighborhood organization, and we help make your voice heard to the many different agencies, public and private, that work on issues and legislation that directly affect us here in Bonny Doon. Our volunteer board members donate countless hours researching issues, writing articles for *The Highlander* and organizing public meetings on topics important to all of us.

In 2025 we hosted:

- A fascinating talk by Chris Wilmers (Santa Cruz Puma Project) on mountain lions and their habitat
- A great presentation by Gray Hayes (Birds of the North Coast) with many photos provided by our neighbors!
- Updates on the Rail Trail progress and the newly opened Cotooni-Coast Dairies National Monument
- A public meeting on technologies available to improve crucial internet and cell service in Bonny Doon

Our Action Alert email list notifies residents when urgent issues require immediate community response. This effort proved very effective during the low-income camping (LICA) regulation hearings, when Bonny Dooners showed up in force at the County Supervisors' meeting—and helped defeat the proposal.

We mail *The Highlander* to every household in Bonny Doon, not just our members, because educating and informing our entire community is central to our mission.

When we come together as a community, we all win!

The more members we have, the stronger our community voice and the more effectively we can advocate for you. Bonny Doon residents are a passionate and diverse group, with many different views on the issues in front of us, but the RBDA is here to draw us together to fight for the ones that really matter.

Thank you for renewing your membership—or joining us for the first time—and for any additional donation you're able to make. Your support helps keep Bonny Doon the special place we all call home.



Yearly dues are \$20 per person/household. Visit our website at RBDA.us or scan the QR code to join/renew by credit card. You can also drop a check in the pre-paid envelope enclosed, if you prefer. If you are a multi-year member, please consider an additional donation to support the RBDA's good work.

Thank you for supporting us, we can't do it without you!

Unrestricted Recreation Harms Wildlife

By David Rubin, RBDA Chair

Editor's Note: : The following op-ed was previously published in Lookout Santa Cruz on November 20, 2025.

Mickey Rush's Lookout op-ed (Nov. 4, 2025) argues that existing trails should be open for public access immediately because "Life is short". He objects to the way that Land Trust of Santa Cruz County manages San Vicente Redwoods. We disagree on both points.

The Trump administration wants the Bureau of Land Management to only consider "productive uses" (grazing, logging, and extraction of fuels, minerals, and other resources) when making decisions regarding public land use. Rush's worldview is more enlightened than the Trump administration's, in recognizing the value of recreation, but both perspectives fail to value preservation. They prioritize a human-centric view of nature, with value derived from extraction of products or instant gratification of human activities.

Not everyone shares such a worldview. Some people—including some donors to land-preservation efforts—prefer that a portion of preserved lands remain unused by humans—reserved for wildlife habitat, species diversity, or as a buffer against climate change. In his 1960 "Wilderness Letter", Wallace Stegner wrote: "We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."

Recreation is not a benign activity. In their 2020 paper "Can Our Outdoor Enthusiasm and Nature Coexist?", Mitrovich and colleagues wrote: "An increasing body of evidence is emerging that indicates non-consumptive recreational activities like hiking and biking, which don't involve harvesting of resources, can have harmful effects on species, their habitat, and efforts to protect them." In a more extensive 2016 meta-analysis, ("Effects of Recreation on Animals Revealed as Widespread through a Global Systematic Review"), Larson and co-authors reported that recreation had a negative impact on wildlife in more than half of 274 published studies worldwide.

In the Santa Cruz Mountains, Chris Wilmers and his group of puma researchers at UCSC found that mountain lions' fear of people results in lions fleeing their kill sites when humans are nearby, possibly requiring the lions to kill up to 50% more deer a year due to reduced feeding time at kills. This stresses the animals by requiring greater energy expenditure. The Puma Project has also documented that mountain lions typically require a buffer of at least 600 meters (~2000 ft) from human activity to site nurseries to raise their kittens. In a 2019 publication, ("Fear of humans as apex predators has landscape-scale impacts from mountain lions to mice") Suraci and colleagues reported: "Our results confirm that, even in the absence of changes in human infrastructure (e.g. buildings, roads) or habitat fragmentation, increased human presence can impact large carnivore movement by inducing antipredator responses". In other words, people

on trails—not just the trails—have a quantifiable negative impact on mountain lions.

Noise isn't the only negative impact of recreation on wildlife. Access on authorized trails also leads to construction of unauthorized trails, which often aren't as well designed to inhibit erosion as official trails. Trail access also facilitates illegal camping and campfires.

Rush objected to the Land Trust's management of San Vicente Redwoods. In our opinion, however, the Land Trust's management is exemplary. In their presentation at a public meeting of the Rural Bonny Doon Association, Bryan Largay explained that their trail system was designed to minimize habitat fragmentation by leaving large swaths of the park free of trails, while strategically concentrating multiple trails nearby (but out of sight of each other). Because the Land Trust is a private organization, it has the flexibility to close trails when they are too wet (as they did twice in the past few weeks). Largay also explained that the permit system (that Rush objects to) allows the Land Trust to block access for specific users or classes of users who violate rules. In contrast, managers at Wilder State Park seem to be unable to prevent unauthorized trail-building or prevent access during wet weather.

Land-preservation organizations and public agencies have responsibilities other than providing access. Some land is valued for its natural, historical, or ecologically important qualities, and human intrusion often conflicts with that. Most of the properties that have been saved from development in Santa Cruz County took many hours of lobbying, organizing and fundraising by people trying to preserve them in their natural state, with recreation (sometimes) as an additional motivation. The main intention was not to create a wonderland for bikers, although biking was usually seen as a healthy activity and a good way to get the public to appreciate nature, but the advent of electric bikes, online maps of unauthorized trails, and promotion by the biking and tourism industries have led to crowded trails. Opening a property to recreation, especially biking, comes with a cost to the landowner. Monitoring, signage, and trail maintenance are expensive, and often the funds are not available.

Our planet is on the brink of catastrophe, in part due to the belief of some people that they have the right to exploit any resources they see as profitable or enjoyable. Rush endorses this belief with his call to immediately open trails/fire/logging roads to recreation. In contrast, we believe that recreation is not a right, but a privilege, and not always a benign activity. Land managers must value not only extractive uses and recreation but also value benefits that aren't human-centric.

I've been hiking for 66 years (including 100 miles last month), and I've never seen hikers collide. The collision problem is caused by too many bikes—not too few trails. To reduce collisions without more intrusion into wildlife habitat, bikers should slow down.

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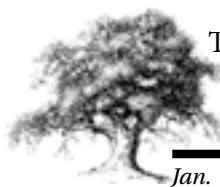
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Bonny Doon's voice in preserving our special quality of life, The Highlander, is mailed free 4 times a year. RBDA Public Meetings are usually held the second Wednesdays of January, April, July and November. We encourage you to participate. Send correspondence to The Highlander at the above address.

Access the RBDA on the Internet at:

www.rbda.us

E-mail us at:

board@rbda.us

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Jan. 28 RBDA Public Meeting: Managing Outdoor Recreation Growth

Zoom Meeting Participation

Zoom Meeting Instructions:

To join by internet:

- 1) go to <https://zoom.us/join>
- 2) Enter the Meeting ID. **886 6788 9848** and Click join
- 3) Enter passcode: **750696**

To join by phone:

- 1) Call **+1-669-900-6833**
- 2) When prompted enter the Meeting ID. **886 6788 9848**
- 3) When prompted enter passcode: **750696**

Three RBDA Board Members Are Up for Election

The election will be held at the public meeting at 7:30 p.m. January 28. In accordance with the RBDA Bylaws (www.rbda.us/who-is-the-rbda/rbda-bylaws), nominations were made at the November public

meeting. The January meeting will be open to anyone who wants to attend, but as specified by the Bylaws, only active RBDA members (people who have paid their membership dues) are permitted to vote for the board.

Candidate Biographies

Cyndy Cote is a 50-year Bonny Doon resident where she and her husband raised a family of three sons, two of whom still live in Bonny Doon. She has worked in the health insurance industry, managing a claims processing center, and in education, retiring from Bonny Doon School as the Assistant to the Superintendent after 32 years of service. She has served on several local boards including the Bonny Doon Preschool Board and the Bonny Doon School Parent Volunteer Board. She currently serves as the secretary on the Ladies of Bonny Doon Club Board. Cyndy has admired the dedication of the Rural Bonny Doon Association in keeping our "Little Slice of Heaven" the special place it is and when a vacancy on the board was announced in 2025, she volunteered to fill the position of Treasurer until the next election. She looks forward to continue the work with the current and incoming board members as well as community members.



Cyndy Cote



Mike Kubo

Mike Kubo has lived in Bonny Doon since 2016 when he, his wife Kendra, a former RBDA board member, and their daughter moved to Braemore from the Westside of Santa Cruz. A graduate of UCSC, Mike has had a 23-year career as a research scientist/lab manager at NASA Ames Research Center and now works for San Jose State's Chemistry Department as their lead instrument technician. Mike brings two decades of non-profit board experience to his service on the RBDA, most recently serving on the Pacific Collegiate School Board of Trustees as PVA Chair, Vice President, and Board President since June 2024. Mike always wants to stay involved in community service and is looking forward to serving on the RBDA, especially after his term as PCS Board Chair expires in June. If elected, Mike wants to serve on the RBDA to keep Bonny Doon rural, both for the inherent value of our natural resources and as a peaceful and beautiful place to



Eric Orlas

Eric Orlas I have just completed my second year as an RBDA board member and enjoyed the opportunity to meet and work with my neighbors. I look forward to continuing to serve on the board and work with the community as we address the issues and challenges life presents to us while we maintain the best of Bonny Doon. I am a retired software executive who spent over 35 years in a variety of roles in different sectors of the industry. My wife and I discovered Bonny Doon by chance in 1988. We discovered the strikingly beautiful environment of land and ocean and a marvelous community of people. I was told that Bonny Doon was nicknamed Battle Mountain because there is always some hot issue being debated there. People don't always agree, but they do work together for the common good. I have seen this in action many times over the years as issues have arisen around land use, changing community needs, and natural disaster emergencies.

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