



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***AUTOMOBILES TO CEDE ACCESS TO NILES CANYON ROAD TO HIKERS, BIKERS FOR A DAY
ROAD CLOSURE FOR RECREATIONAL ACCESS, COMMUNITY MEETING ON TRAIL PROPOSAL***

Following decades of public requests for improved recreational access to historic Niles Canyon in southern Alameda County, County leaders will offer a unique opportunity on **Sunday, October 11**, when Niles Canyon Road will be closed to automobiles to allow hikers and bikers to travel the scenic roadway and examine a proposal to build a new public trail through the Canyon.

To make way for **“The Niles Canyon Stroll and Roll,”** automobiles will be barred from a 6.4-mile stretch of Niles Canyon Road between Old Canyon Road in Fremont and Main Street in Sunol **from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, October 11**. The closure will include a **Community Meeting between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.** in which technical experts will be available at both ends of the roadway to answer questions and take public input on the trail proposal.

The day-long closure of Niles Canyon Road to automobiles coincides with the completion of a feasibility study examining options for a paved, 10-foot-wide trail for pedestrians, bicyclists and possibly equestrians through the picturesque Canyon between Fremont and Sunol. The study lays out three possible trail alignments through the Canyon, each with its own set of advantages and technical challenges. Agencies involved in the Niles Canyon Multi-Use Trail project – including Alameda County, the Alameda County Transportation Commission, the East Bay Regional Park District, Caltrans and local water districts – will participate in a Community Meeting during the day to provide information about the opportunities and challenges posed by the proposal.

While funding has not been secured for the project, it is hoped that the trail could be supported by State and federal funds and Alameda County’s Measure BB transportation sales tax.

Proposals for a public trail through Niles Canyon date back to the 1970s, driven by the fact that its breathtaking is accessible only via Niles Canyon Road, a winding two-lane portion of State Highway 84. Bicyclists have repeatedly called for a trail due to safety concerns related to sharing the narrow roadway with automobiles. Recreation enthusiasts point out that hiking access to the Canyon is limited, and that a trail would provide a vital link between trail networks in the Tri-Valley and Alameda County’s bay-front corridor.

Alameda County Supervisors Richard Valle and Scott Haggerty, who represent communities at both ends of Niles Canyon Road, have led an effort over the past year to push the project forward as increasing vehicle and bicycle traffic has served to exacerbate safety concerns.

Valle said safety issues and limited public access to the scenic Canyon go hand-in-hand in making the trail project a priority for his district. “Tri-City residents have known for a long time that Niles Canyon contains some of the East Bay’s most stunning scenery and is ripe for exploration,” Valle said. “Today, more people than ever recognize the beauty of the canyon and the increasing numbers of hikers and bicyclists who go there make this trail project more important than ever.”

Haggerty, an East Bay leader in transportation issues, says a Niles Canyon trail would be a big step toward completing an interconnected network of trails throughout Alameda County and the entire East Bay. “Opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation are at the top of the list in terms of what our residents want,” Haggerty said. “This project provides us with a rare opportunity to respond to the community’s wishes in multiple ways.”

Go to Supervisor Valle’s website, www.acgov.org/board/district2, to learn more about the Niles Canyon Multi-Use Trail proposal and the October 11 road closure and community meeting.