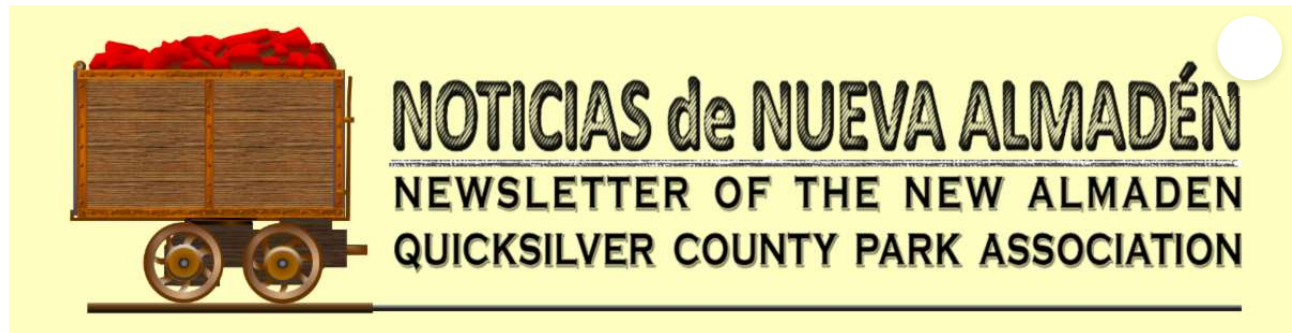


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Summer 2023

ISSUE 140

President's Message

As mentioned in our last newsletter, anniversaries are an important part of life. Whether we're marking a birthday, a wedding, or some other significant life experience, an anniversary gives us a chance to look back over the years and reflect on how the event has shaped us. Remembering the past can be an important part of understanding who we are and what we value.



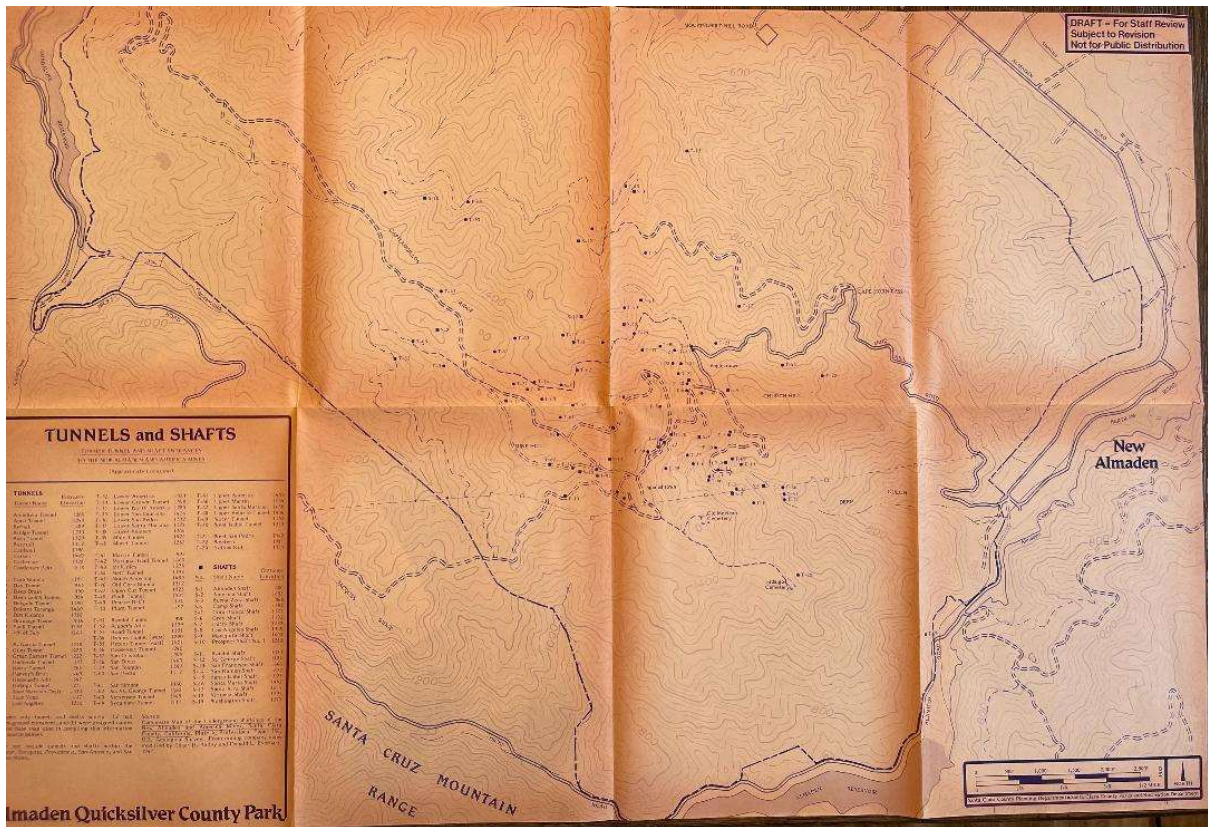


2023 marks the **40th anniversary** of the founding of the **New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association**. On July 23rd, current and past Board Members, key volunteers, and County Parks staff gathered at Pedro's in Santa Clara for brunch to celebrate NAQCPA's 40th year of serving Almaden Quicksilver County Park and Santa Clara County.



Lynda Will, Casa Grande Interpretive Park Program Coordinator, shares how much Santa Clara County Parks has appreciated NAQCPA's support over the years

Many old stories, pictures and records were shared including the map below showing the 73 tunnels and 19 shafts that were dug, which yielded gross receipts of about \$60 million dollars over its history.



NAQCPA looks forward to many more years of providing support to Almaden Quicksilver County Park as well as helping preserve the history and heritage of New Almaden.

Please see NAQCPA member drive information below if you would like to join our association or renew your membership.

Tere Johnson
NAQCPA President
408-406-3001
terenaqcpa@gmail.com

The "Big Dig" to Remove Burnt Mercury Ore Waste Continues at the Hacienda Entrance to AQ Park

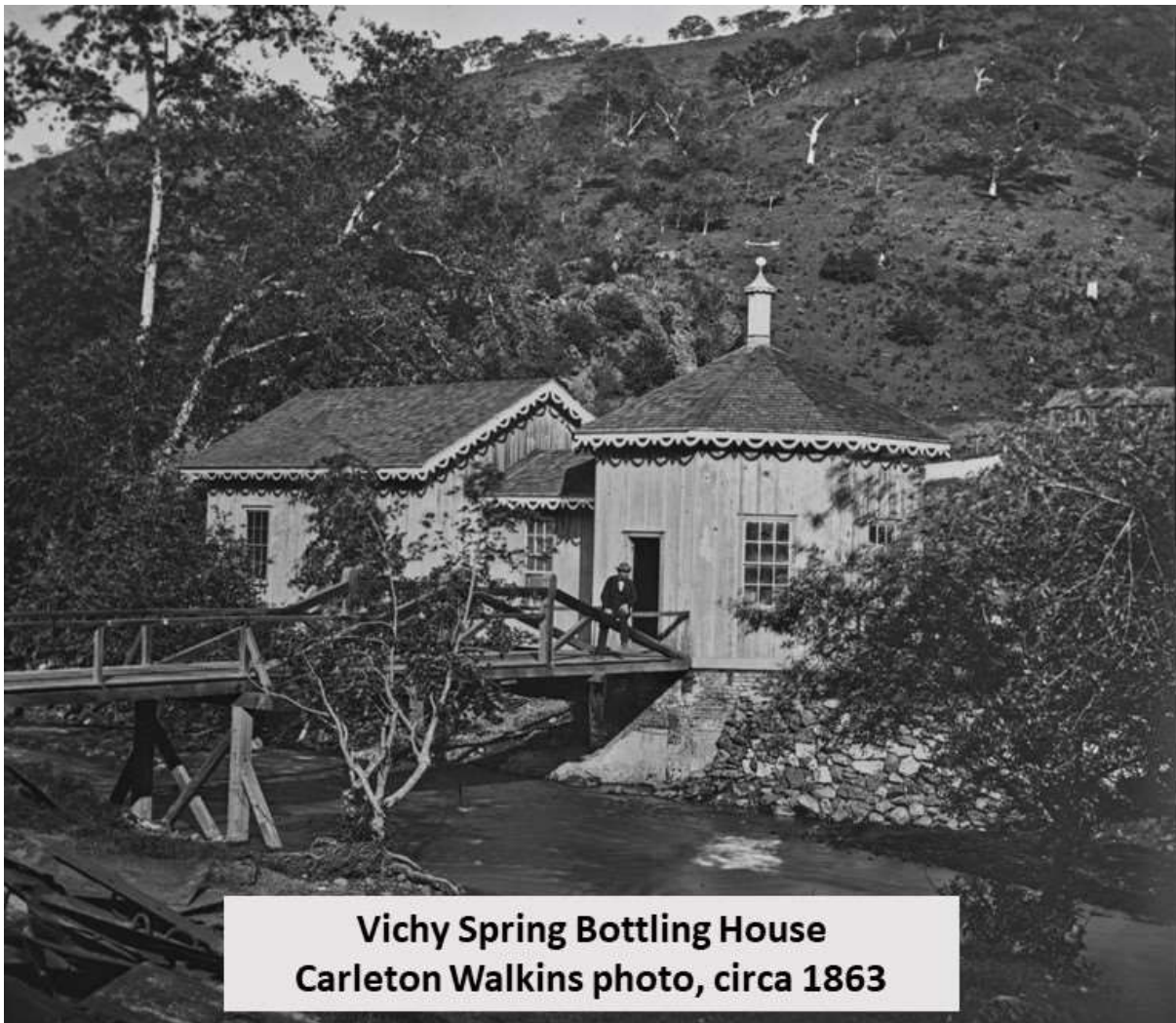
by Michael Cox

The waste is called calcines. Some say cal-sines and some say cal-scenes – take your pick. The word comes from calcination, a thermal process of heating rock to extract substances for later use. Calcines are a type of tailings, meaning after processing. Mercury mine calcines are from heating mercury ore to extract the mercury. The common ore of mercury is the mineral cinnabar, mercuric sulfide, HgS. Calcines contains trace amounts of residual mercury, both as cinnabar and other mercury compounds, including elemental mercury.

Calcines from ore roasting are not typically immediately dangerous to life and health, so why are the calcines being removed and buried? The work is being done to prevent the trace mercury in calcines from getting into fish. It turns out microbes in waterway sediments and water can take up mercury in trace amounts. The organisms can convert inorganic mercury to organic forms, typically Methyl mercury. Top-level predator fish can bioaccumulate mercury to concentrations up to a few to perhaps as much as 15 parts per million. Methyl mercury, even at low part-per-million concentrations, is thought to be dangerous to birds and to humans that are frequent fish eaters.

The Hacienda and Deep Gulch remediation project is scheduled to be completed in October. Until then, remediation areas at the Hacienda and Deep Gulch are closed. Park trails used for hauling mine waste in dump trucks, specifically the Wood Road trail and trails surrounding Mine Hill, are also closed. The San Francisco open-cut is also closed as it is where excavated waste materials are being encapsulated. Please respect the closures.

One interesting side note is that the work in the Hacienda revealed a brick well that possibly dates to 1854 or so. The well is part of the famous New Almaden carbonated soda water bottling plant and spring, called Vichy water by owner operator **Francis L. S. Pioche**.



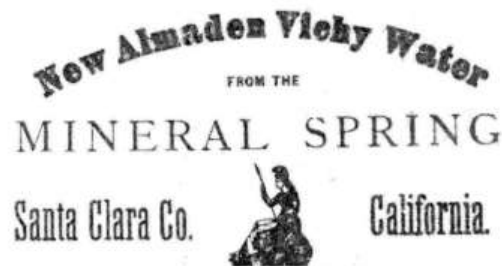
Vichy Spring Bottling House
Carleton Walkins photo, circa 1863

The soda spring is likely the site of the first commercial soda bottling plant in California, but more research is needed. It is the earliest commercial spring in the County, according to documentation in the book "Mineral Springs of Santa Clara County" by Ian L. Sanders, 2012.



Southeast Hacienda with Vichy Spring Bottling House
Carleton Walkins photo, circa 1863

According to NAQCPA Board member, **Art Boudreault**, San Francisco banker **Francis L. S. Pioche** found the spring near the current St. Anthony's church, processed and bottled it as Vichy water.



He leased 2.5 acres from the Quicksilver Mining Company for 10 years in order to bottle and market a product known as the New Almaden Vichy Water. Mr. Pioche used the name Vichy as he recalled the French spa where Parisians went for relaxation and rehabilitation. The water from the spring was bottled and distributed by the California Vichy Water Company and was advertised nationwide.

The wood parts of the well building and bottling house are long gone, but the brick well remains, though it appears to have been damaged. Some damage undoubtedly occurred during the construction of the Alamos Road bridge in the 1960s. The bridge passes over the well. The remediation work to remove mine waste from under the bridge has also damaged parts of the structure's base. Here is a photograph of the well as it stands now:



The well structure is comprised of an outer octagonal brick enclosure about 20 feet in diameter and an inner circular brick well about 5 feet in diameter. Survey stakes and flagging tape in the photo mark the inner well. The brick structures extend down to creek level. It is not known if they extend down further. The structures are filled with creek sediment and calcines. It's possible that rocks and wood visible in the center, center left, and below center are remains of the wood buildings and a rock wall.

NAQCPA and the Santa Clara County Historical Commission have worked in concert with Santa Clara County Parks to save the well and minimize damage to the well structure during the calcines remediation project. An archaeologist has been on hand to take photos of the well during the project.

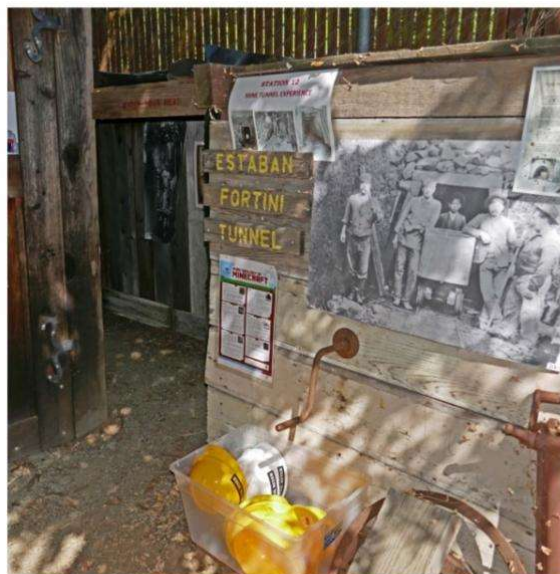
Current plans are to bury the brick well remains under fill and big rocks that will line Alamos Creek in order to prevent erosion and minimize further damage to the well structure.

NAQCPA Supports Play Like a Miner Day

NAQCPA played a big role in this year's annual County Park **Play Like a Miner Day**, held at the Casa Grande on July 29th.

The NAQCPA **'Wednesday Volunteer Crew,'** consisting of **Bruce Bartlett, Rich Robertson, Mike Boulland, Mike Cox, Scot Hayes** and **Dave Smith**, created an amazing simulated mine tunnel for kids and adults alike to get a sense of what the Quicksilver Miners experienced underground when the mines were operational.

Although NAQCPA has built faux tunnels in the past for Play Like a Miner Day, the Crew really outdid themselves this year by encasing the walls with wood and attaching pictures of Cinnabar and artifacts to create a realistic tunnel experience. They even installed an air vent similar to what the miners used, to provide fresh oxygen and keep the tunnel cooler. Everyone agreed that this year's tunnel was the best ever!



NAQCPA volunteers **Bruce Barlett, Mike Boulland, Mike Cox, Scot Hayes, Lisa Laymon** and **Ron Horii** were also on hand at the event to help make the day a great success!



Photos by NAQCPA Board member, Ron Horii

NAQCPA 39th Annual Pioneer Day

October is always a special month for NAQCPA as we gather for our annual Pioneer Day celebration. This year's Pioneer Day will be held on **Saturday, October 14th** from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at the historic Casa Grande.

**New Almaden Quicksilver
County Park Association**

**Join us for
our annual
celebration of
New Almaden
Quicksilver
mining
history and
heritage**

**Restaurant
MEALS AT ALL HOURS
SANDWICHES**

**PIONEER
DAY
2023**

**Saturday, October 14, 11:00 am
Casa Grande, New Almaden**



Join us for a fun day in
New Almaden

- Free admission
- Tour the Casa Grande
- Lunch available to purchase
- Enjoy great music
- Hear County Dignitary comments
- Hear Quicksilver Miner descendants share family stories

Entertainment provided by the fabulous '**Against the Grain String Band**'



Historic talk given by NAQCPA Board member **Veronica Jordan** about the 19th century cemeteries that once served the old mining communities

Optional tour of the **Historical Hacienda Cemetery & Memorial Park** provided by the **California Pioneers of Santa Clara County**

Please RSVP if you would like to attend to help us plan food for lunch:
<http://evite.me/VWRkxX3vK6>

NAQCPA Increasing Community Outreach

NAQCPA has increased its community outreach to promote public awareness about who we are, what we do, and to increase our membership.

We recently participated in the **County Parks Water and Wags Festival** held on May 7th at Calero Reservoir, which focused on protecting our water systems, boater and personal safety, and the value of companion animals in the community. We also participated in the annual **4th of July Festival at Almaden Lake Regional Park**.

Both events provided an opportunity to meet visitors who picked up free NAQCPA shopping bags and signed up for our newsletter.



**Lisa Laymon
and Mike Cox at
Water & Wags
Festival**

**Tere at
Almaden Lake
Regional Park
4th of July
Festival**



Additionally, we recently reached out to **Leland High School** and encouraged their Principal and History instructors to invite students to attend Pioneer Day and help get the next generation educated and interested in local history.



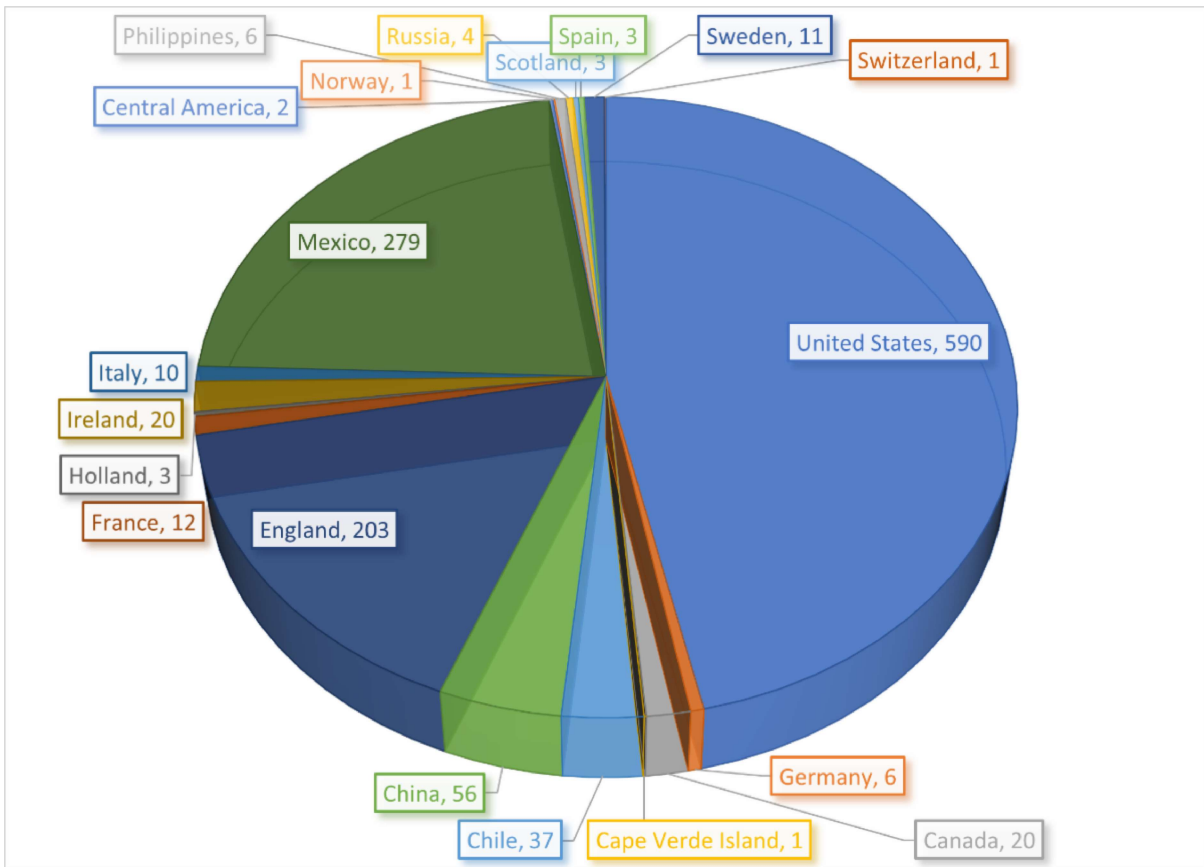
NAQCPA supports Santa Clara County Parks' initiative to make Santa Clara County's regional parks more inclusive and welcoming to all members of Santa Clara County.

You can help by taking a few minutes to complete the attached "Everyone Belongs at Parks" survey. Your insights and comments will help guide the Parks Department's future actions and improvements. Survey link:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7405442/sccparksandrecdei>

Interesting side note regarding diversity in New Almaden: Per the federal census of 1880, the Almaden Township population was 2,418, which included present-day Almaden Valley, Cambrian Park, and portions of Campbell and Los Gatos.

Of the Almaden Township population, the New Almaden portion was 1,268. The graph below illustrates where each New Almaden resident was born. Regardless of ethnic origins, all contributed to New Almaden's mining success and history.



Many thanks to **Charlie Cox** for providing graph statistics



Remembering Our Beginnings

As we celebrate NAQCPA's 40th anniversary, we hope you will enjoy **Kitty's** reflections from NAQCPA's first anniversary.



QUICKSILVER COUNTY PARK NEWS

Newsletter of the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association

ISSUE #3

January 1984

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO US !

February 1st marks the first anniversary of the founding of the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park Association. One year ago on that date, approximately fifty people met at the Forbes Mill Museum in Los Gatos to explore the possibility of establishing a formal organization to help promote the protection and enhancement of the historical, recreational, and natural resources of Almaden Quicksilver County Park. The result was the formation of this Association.

This first year of our existence has been both challenging and gratifying. For a new organization, with limited financial resources, I believe we have had a very successful first year. We owe these successes to the concern and hard work so many of you have put into this organization and its various activities.

During this past year, we have played a significant role in improving the maintenance of the trail system within the Park. More than fifty people turned out last spring for our first annual Trail Day, at which we helped repair some of the storm damage done by last winter's storms. Subsequently, through the efforts of the County Parks staff and our Association's Trails Committee, additional culverts were installed along the Randol Trail and the roads were graded to reduce potential trail damage this winter.

Significant progress has also been made toward increasing public awareness of the important historical, recreational, and natural resources within the Park. Slide presentations to community organizations, articles in local newspapers, organized tours of the Park, events like our monthly meetings and our first annual Almaden Quicksilver Pioneers Day, publication of the Association's newsletter, and plain, old-fashioned word-of-mouth publicity have helped spread the word about Quicksilver Park and our Association. In less than a year, our fledgling organization has grown to more than one hundred members. We hope to more than double that number during 1984.

Recently, we have been participating in the public hearings of the County Parks and Recreation Commission to determine County parks acquisition and development priorities for the next five years. Among our highest priority recommendations was the reconstruction of the mine office on the former reduction works site at the New Almaden entrance to the Park. This building would serve as a much-needed park ranger office and visitors center for the Park.

As we begin our second year, we particularly want to thank County Parks Director Larry Norris and his staff for the cooperation and support they have given us during this past year. We look forward to continuing our close relationship with them in the future.

Finally, I want to thank all of you who have joined the Association and have contributed your time, energy, and money to its activities. Your continued support is essential for Almaden Quicksilver County Park to reach its full potential as one of our County's finest and most unique parks.

- Kitty Monahan, President -



Update on Kitty's Trail

The County Parks Trail Naming Committee and Parks & Recreation Commission unanimously approved renaming the Yellow Kid Trail, in Almaden Quicksilver County Park, after Kitty.

Final review will occur at the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting on August 29. Here is an excerpt from the County Parks report to the BOS:

"The Department recommends renaming to Kitty Monahan Trail, which meets criteria guidelines of the Naming Parkland Policy and recognizes in memoriam her association with the New Almaden area for a long period of time and distinguished involvement relating to parks or park service. Kitty Monahan worked significantly with County Parks for nearly 50 years. She moved into San Jose's New Almaden neighborhood in 1972 and fell in love with the open space and historic land in that area. By the mid 1970's, she was known as the unofficial "Mayor of New Almaden" due to her advocacy and preservation efforts. Kitty left behind a long list of accomplishments, most notably a pivotal role encouraging the County to purchase the 4,163-acre Almaden Quicksilver County Park in 1976."

We will provide an update of the BOS meeting outcome in our next newsletter.

Support your NAQCPA Family

NAQCPA is the oldest park association in Santa Clara County. Established in 1983, NAQCPA exists to promote the protection and enhancement of the historical, recreational, and natural resources of Almaden Quicksilver County Park.



Membership fees and donations subsidize our Quarterly Newsletter, annual Pioneer Day, and many special projects we undertake throughout the year to enhance Almaden Quicksilver County Park for generations to come.

The COVID pandemic impacted our ability to communicate with our members and track membership dues. For those who have not renewed their NAQCPA membership in the last year, we would greatly appreciate your renewal fee of \$15.

You have the option to contribute online: [Online Giving](#) or click the button below to access a form you can print and mail with your contribution check:

Membership and Donations



- Santa Clara County Parks Events: [Parks Upcoming Events](#)
- New Almaden Community Club, *Almaden Day*, **Saturday, September 9**
- NAQCPA 39th Annual, *Pioneer Day*: **Saturday, October 14**

Contact Us:

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A California 501(c)3 Corporation

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New Almaden, CA 95042

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