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Three miles of Bay Area Ridge Trail dedicated in San Jose

By Sharon Noguchi
Mercury News
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After six years of planning, negotiations among multiple agencies and \$1 million in construction and emergency repair work, San Jose on Saturday rededicated three miles of the Penitencia Creek Trail, a significant link in the 550-mile trail envisioned to ring the Bay Area along ridges.

"It's a milestone for us," said Mike Flaughner, the driving force in restoring the trail that runs through the Berryessa neighborhood. It borders Penitencia Creek from Toyon Avenue to Mabury Road south of Educational Park Drive. Planners expect to extend the trail one more mile toward the hills, connecting Alum Rock Park in the east to the Coyote Creek Trail in the west.

Saturday, scores of visitors celebrated the trail's renewal with a ribbon-cutting, bike rides, a bike-helmet giveaway and various walks — to watch birds, hear trail history and find bridges crossing the creek.

The trail was developed in the 1970s and ran for two miles, but suffered periodic closings due to erosion and flooding. In one section near Capitol Avenue, the creek bank had to be cut and moved to be stabilized.

Flaughner, a board member of the non-profit Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, which is spearheading and helping fund the Bay Area-wide trail, said the Penitencia trail cost about \$1 million and required 3,000 volunteer hours to restore. The trail is a cooperative venture by the city of San Jose, the Santa Clara County Parks Department and the Santa Clara Valley Water

District. With the Penitencia Creek light-rail station a 10-minute walk from the trail, and a potential BART station nearby, the trail is expected to serve as a key alternative commuter link, Flaughner said.

Contact Sharon Noguchi at snoguchi@mercurynews.com or (408) 271-3775.

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