

## Trails Tell Tales

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The 40 acre environmental reserve immediately upstream of the Franciscan Brother's Retreat lands, has been under BCPS stewardship for the past 3 years. In 2017 BCPS set up 7 measurement sites along the reserve loop trail to quantify how much and how quickly human use is changing this trail. Findings will help direct BCPS trail management.

For nearly 50 years I have extensively used trails in the lower end of Bighill Creek. From the 1970's until around 2010, these trails were the fading remnants of the earlier era of ranching and dairying. Around 2010 a sudden change happened. The remnant trails were rediscovered by Cochrane's burgeoning population, eager to explore a natural gem on their doorstep. Trails that had been fading into oblivion re-emerged and underwent rapid change. They widened, deepened and began to show exposed roots throughout.

In 2017 BCPS began to study the rate of change on 7 trail sites where 25' sections are annually measured and photographed. Year two of the study shows incremental increases in erosion. Certainly in places where BCPS has diverted use away from particularly exposed and dangerous sections of the trail, new diversion trails become within only weeks, obvious new trails.

Below are photos from 2017 showing sections of the trail being measured and some of the very eroded sections where diversions have been implemented. Immediately below is one of the very eroded trail sections now diverted around.







To the right, human use quickly becomes evident as a new trail is established.

To the left, the original trail shows increasing root exposure as human use intensifies.