

The Battle for the Saddle

The main ridge of San Bruno Mountain descends northward into a gentle range of foothills that curve back toward the San Francisco Bay, an area known as the mountain's "Saddle."

The Saddle was at the heart of the battle over development on San Bruno Mountain in the 1970s. As the most level and accessible portion of the mountain—and with panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay and "The City by the Bay"—it was both "the guts" of the Crocker Hills development proposal and the desired epicenter for a much sought after regional park for the people of northern San Mateo County.



The Crocker Hills proposal had strong backing from trade unions during a time when many construction workers in San Mateo County were facing unemployment or underemployment.

Pro-development forces demonstrated their support loudly at public hearings and rallies.

The Coalition of Concerned Citizens of San Mateo County, a business-friendly group, criticized the Save San Bruno Mountain Committee as "no-growthers" whose "overzealous" environmental opposition cost jobs and economic benefits.



Hard-hats and dump trucks rally for Bruno Mt. project



PRO-DEVELOPMENT FORCES ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF THE LITTLEST PEOPLE

On March 18th, 1976 the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted 3 to 2 to retain the Saddle of the mountain as open space—a victory for park advocates like the Save San Bruno Mountain Committee and a disappointment for pro-development groups.

The vote significantly reduced the scope of the Crocker Hills development, blocking 5,420 of the proposed 7,655 residential units. However, it did allow for building on other portions of San Bruno Mountain, namely its northeast ridge and southern slopes.

The battle over the Saddle set in motion the process of park acquisition that led to the formation of San Bruno Mountain State and County Park by the early 1980s. After nearly 150 years of private ownership, over 2,000 acres of the mountain became public land.