

# Butters Land Trust

Newsletter – November 2007

## Two New Lots Acquired... But we need your help

We all have a lot to celebrate. In the last four months, we've acquired two key properties in the Canyon, numbers 14 and 17 (see timeline), making preservation of the natural areas of Butters Canyon almost complete.

Lot #17 went on the market in May and we raised over \$40,000 through neighborhood donations for the down payment on a \$100,000 purchase price.

We no sooner had we completed this transaction than Lot #14, the largest undeveloped lot in the Canyon, went up for sale. This lot had been earmarked as one of the most critical for preservation.

Once again, the neighborhood showed what we could do when we pull together. The Joaquin Miller Heights community was able to raise \$61,000 towards the purchase of lot #14, in less than six weeks. The City of Oakland helped with an emergency loan for the balance.

## Unfinished Business

But we can't forget about unfinished business. Lot 17, which we purchased in June of this year, hasn't been fully paid for. The seller took back a promissory note for \$60,000, secured by a deed of trust on the property. That note will come due in 2009. **If we can't pay it off by then, we could lose the property, as well as the \$40,000 cash (and interest in the meantime) that we've paid.** Butters Land Trust has a track record of successes; we can't let this happen.

2009 might seem a long time from now, but \$60,000 (plus \$4,200 per year in interest) is a lot of money. We need to retire our \$60,000 loan, starting today! Why waste money on interest payments when the funds can be put to better use?

Granted, this year we broke all records for fund-raising but the reality is, our neighborhood –we who most benefit from

preservation of the Canyon --is the source of funding we rely on. We've used up the Measure DD funds allocated to us, and there are no realistic grant possibilities on the horizon. So it's up to all of us who know and care about the Canyon to make sure it stays protected.

Our progress to date--6 properties owned, and 2 more under open space restriction (not counting an additional 2 lots owned by conservation-minded neighbors)--shows what we can do when everyone pitches in (see timeline).

If you can't give now, we're happy to accept pledges. Also, many of your friends and neighbors may not know about the land trust and the wonderful work we are doing. Please talk to them and encourage them to become donors. Please do what you can to help us ensure this lot stays protected forever!

## Thanks To Our Supporters

**We want to give our heartfelt thanks to all who acted so generously.**

Many neighborhood donors reached deep into their savings to make these two lot acquisitions possible.

Many others outside the neighborhood went way beyond the call of duty to help make these acquisitions possible.

## How you can help

- ☞ Complete the enclosed survey about fundraising ideas and win a prize!
- ☞ See back page for ways to donate to the land trust.
- ☞ Join us for Planting Days in Butters Canyon – November 11 and 17  
9 am – 3 pm.



## In The Beginning

Six years ago when a "For Sale" sign was erected in Butters Canyon a group of neighbors decided to try to preserve the entire undeveloped portion of the canyon. In spite of facing a daunting task complicated by lack of funds, high land prices and many doubters the founders forged forward with their vision.

Others sympathetic to the cause, including neighbors and land trust advocates who heard of our cause, volunteered to help the vision become reality. Some canyon friendly neighbors gave the Land Trust a huge boost early on with the donation of three key lots in the center of the canyon.

Although land prices appreciated during the housing boom and speculators and developers sought to buy lots previously thought to be unbuildable, the Land Trust forged ahead. Properties were acquired as they became available with support from neighborhood fundraising drives and help from The City of Oakland, through funds from Measure DD, the Bella Vista Foundation and others. Jean Quan has been a steadfast supporter of Butters Canyon and helped reserve Measure DD funds for creekside land acquisition.



## Butters Canyon Sewer Repairs Are Over!

The City of Oakland has completed repair to the sewer lines within Butters Canyon. In the past, at least once a year, neighbors would have to call the City because of leakage – yuck! – into Peralta Creek. Many of the improvements to the sewer line are not visible aboveground, however, the entire length of sewer line has been improved.

The workers used "trench less technology" (only digging one hole to access the entire sewer line) because of the sensitive habitat. The City also replaced a section of pipe that crosses the creek in the lower section of the canyon. A section of failing culvert underneath Butters Drive was also replaced and the headwall was repaired.

City staff and the contractor worked closely to protect the creek and Canyon resources while completing this important project. Several erosion control measures were in place during construction and crews were very careful about containing the work and reducing its impact.

Just this week, they have placed an array of native plants as well as biodegradable coir fabric and wattles in areas of excavation to prevent loose soils from entering the creek.

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## Butters Canyon Restoration and Long Term Management Plan

Many of you participated in meetings this year and last related to creating a Long-Term Management Plan for Butters Canyon (LTMP). This LTMP is intended to guide restoration of Butters Canyon for years to come and to protect the essential character of this unique landscape.

The Long-term Management Plan (LTMP) for Butters Canyon grew out of a series of community meetings, site investigations, and restoration proposals. The LTMP looked at the existing conditions, past restoration efforts, and the future vision for the Canyon and is based on the following six goals:

1. Reduce invasive and non-native vegetation,
2. Increase native vegetation and biodiversity,
3. Address fire safety/abatement requirements in Butters Canyon,
4. Protect the water quality of Peralta Creek,
5. Promote stewardship and community support, and
6. Increase awareness of the watershed ecosystem (plants, insects, animals, birds, and people).

The plan will be available on the Butters Land Trust website and will be a valuable tool in planning future restoration events. A restoration plan, cost estimate and specifications suitable for use in hiring an outside contractor were also developed as part of the project.

Funding for the LTMP was provided by Measure DD, the voter approved bond measure passed in 2002. The canyon's selection resulted from a prioritization process that identified Butters Canyon as a top ranked creek restoration project within Oakland.

You can help – join us on Planting Days Nov. 11 and 17!



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## Donate IRA funds by 12/31/07

Congress has provided an excellent tax incentive for charitable contributions, but you must act soon. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows individuals 70-1/2 years and older to make tax-exempt charitable contributions up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA assets to an eligible charity.

The transaction must be made by December 31, 2007, as it is not certain that this provision will be extended.

Talk to your financial or tax adviser to see if this option is appropriate for you. Now is the time to benefit from this tax incentive!

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## Include Butters Land Trust in your will

Leave a legacy of open space for your neighborhood

To remember Butters Land Trust in your estate plans, give this suggested wording to your attorney:

"After fulfilling all other specific provisions, I give, devise and bequeath \_\_\_% of the residuary of my estate [or \$\_\_\_] to Butters Land Trust, a charitable corporation (tax ID # 04-6962275) current mail address of 3039 Burdeck Dr. Oakland, Ca. 94602."

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