

Butters Land Trust

Newsletter – November 2008



Land Preservation Highlights

Sale of lot to City of Oakland

In April of this year we completed the sale of another lot to the City of Oakland for \$185,000, which constituted the last of the funds allocated to the Canyon under Measure DD. This would ordinarily be a huge cause for celebration, but the entire purchase price was paid right back to the City. Why? In September 2007 we acquired a key lot in the middle of the Canyon and we needed the rest of the Measure DD funds to close the purchase. The City made a short-term loan of \$185,000 to enable us to close that purchase. In effect, we had obtained the DD funds early, and this simply closed the loop by paying off the loan.

This was a milestone, though, since it did allow us to retire an outstanding debt. And it provided a quiet but satisfying conclusion to the DD funding process.

The lot the city purchased is located near the southern end of the Canyon, the next to last lot before the houses begin. The southern-most lot is still owned by a group of individuals, who intend to either develop or sell it.

Lot Swap Protects Two More Lots

This step was complicated and very significant to the mission of canyon preservation. We swapped properties--to be precise, we exchanged three parcels we owned for two parcels owned by prominent Canyon benefactors. But also in the process, we recorded a conservation easement against two of the properties and most of the third that we exchanged. So we started out with three properties protected, and ended up with four full properties and most of a fifth protected. (While preservation-minded neighbors held the two properties we received, These properties were legally unprotected. And as long as that's the case, anything can happen to a property over time.)

Our benefactors in this exchange are long-time supporters and principal contributors to the Land Trust. We send our thanks to them on

behalf of the entire neighborhood and the larger community of nature-lovers, walkers and cyclists who regularly regenerate and rejuvenate in the Canyon.

Steady Progress Since 2002

We now have a nearly unbroken line of protected properties running along Butters Drive. We've come a long, long way from the early days, when the fear of disruptive building and a wild-eyed dream of a pristine Canyon led to the creation of Butters Land Trust. Current Status of canyon lots:

- 4 lots owned by Butters Land Trust
- 3 lots sold to City of Oakland with conservation easements
- 3 lots swapped to neighbor with conservation easements

That accounts for 10 of the 13 lots that front on Butters Drive, which are of primary concern to the Land Trust.

Special Thanks Go To ...

All of you for your generous support, as well as Council member Jean Quan, and staff from Oakland's Watershed Program and Measure DD Project Management, the Skaags Foundation, the Bella Vista Foundation and employee matching funds from Chevron and Houghton Mifflin.



Unfinished Business

The Land Trust still owes \$55,000 on the \$60,000 debt we took in order to purchase Lot 17 in June of 2007. The seller took back a promissory note secured by a deed of trust on the property. That note will come due July 2009.

The Land Trust has invested a \$40,000 down payment, plus closing costs, a principal payment of \$5,000 in September 2008 plus interest payments totaling \$5,646 since June 2007.

July 2009 is right around the corner and we need to retire the balance of our \$55,000 loan, starting today!

In 2007 we broke the records for fundraising from our neighborhood, the primary 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.

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!

How you can help

☞ Complete the enclosed survey about fundraising ideas and volunteer opportunities.

☞ See back page for ways to donate to the land trust.

Canyon Yard Sale – 5/17/08

Butters Land Trust would like to thank the neighborhood for the support of many volunteers, donors and shoppers who helped make the neighborhood yard sale a success.



Goals were two-fold.

- 1) To bring the neighborhood together with an event.
- 2) To raise money to support the Land Trust.

We had a great turnout and the sale was an opportunity for neighbors to meet and socialize as well as to collaborate to make the event a success. Based on many supportive comments we've received an encore is likely.

We are happy to report that our proceeds totaled \$3,520.

Thanks To Our Many Volunteers

Volunteers helped in many ways but first we would like to thank the core committee members who met numerous times and communicated with literally hundreds of emails throughout the planning, promotion, collection, pricing, set-up and disposal phases. They are:

Elizabeth Glenewinkle
Maxine Craig
Connie Skoog
Denise King
Roberta Streimer
Polly Morris
Carol Bernau
Paul Dries

Sue Enger and Maggie Kinstle and others organized and priced donated items. Michael Johnson, John O'Shea, Craig Williams, Peter Faulk, John Donaldson and Robin Dustan and others helped in ways too numerous to list.

The most heartwarming donation came from a pair of neighborhood girls, Morgan Stone and Shelby Azkalar, who donated the \$50 they earned from their lemonade and ice stand.

Without the support of more than 35 families who donated used goods, food and beverages, and loaned tables and clothing racks we couldn't have had a sale.

Elizabeth Glenewinkle and Michael Johnson deserve a huge thank you for volunteering their lawn and driveway to collect, organize and set up for the sale. Without the use of their space the logistics of dealing with the hundreds of items ranging from large pieces of furniture and exercise machines to clothing and kitchen ware would have been daunting.



Two of our neighbors volunteered to provide music for the event. Valerie Kieser, in photo above, played the accordion and Eric Ironson set up his DJ system. When was the last time you went to a yard sale with professional entertainment?

Thanks again for making our neighborhood yard sale a success. If you are interested in helping in future neighborhood events please let us know.

Company Matching Programs

Many employers will match charitable contributions made by their employees as a way of giving back to the community. Businesses of all types and sizes have programs, so check with your employer to see whether your company can make your gift to the Land Trust go twice as far.

Donate IRA funds by 12/31/08

Congress has provided an excellent tax incentive for charitable contributions, but you must act by December 31, 2008. Individuals 70-1/2 years and older can make tax-exempt charitable contributions up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA assets to an eligible charity.

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!

Have You Thought of Including Butters Land Trust in Your Will?

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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