

The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

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Photo: Kirk Reynolds

A running mother pushes her child on a beautiful autumn morning in the Claremont hillsides.

CWC to Host Celebration for Two New Properties

On February 27, 2005 the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy will be hosting a celebration of the two new property additions to the Claremont Wilderness Park (see article below).

The celebration will take place at La Casita on the Girl Scouts headquarters located on the west end of Pomello. Look for further details in the mail as the date gets closer, but mark your calendars now.

Please join us in celebrating this significant addition to open space!

Two New Properties Added to City's Wilderness Park

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy is delighted to announce that the state's Wildlife Conservation Board has approved a \$1.4 million grant to the City of Claremont to purchase two key properties in the San Gabriel Mountain foothills above the city. The two parcels total 233 acres, and were added to the city's Wilderness Park in October.

The purchase is part of an ongoing cooperative effort among the Trust for Public Land (TPL), the City of Claremont, and the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy, which submitted the Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) to the Department of Fish and Game and for the WCB board to examine. The WCB's meeting was held August 12.

"We're extremely excited and pleased to see this happen," stated CWC charter board member Suzanne Thompson. "Jim Lewis from the city and Brady Moss from TPL have worked exceedingly hard on this and deserve a lot of credit, and our conservancy has played an important role, as well."

Founded in January 2000, the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy has been working closely with the Trust for Public Land and the City of Claremont over the past four years in an attempt to preserve undeveloped hillside land in Claremont.

"The strong support in Claremont for saving the hillsides is paying off," Thompson continued. "So many people in Claremont have stepped forward to help save Claremont's hillsides by donating money, helping at our events, and attending meetings. People who have hiked or biked in the foothills realize what an enormous loss it would be for Claremont if the hillsides were developed. It is heartening to see these efforts make a difference."

The two properties just approved for purchase include a 104-acre property which is adjacent to Sycamore Canyon and the Thompson Creek Trail, and a 129-acre property which abuts the southwest corner of the current Wilderness Park (see map, page 3).

The TPL, which assists local groups nationwide in gathering money to purchase

and save land, secured options to purchase the properties for fair market value over a year ago. The money that the WCB allocated last week comes from the state's Proposition 50, which was approved by voters in March 2002 and made \$750 million available to acquire and restore watershed areas adjacent to urban areas in California.

The larger of the two properties is just north of Johnson's Pasture, which the CWC considers the crown jewel of Claremont's hillsides. The area is popular with nature lovers, hikers, bike riders, and equestrian riders. The hillsides are filled with a wide variety of plant life, plus the area is prime habitat for deer, bobcats, mountain lions, rabbits, and many varieties of birds.

"While we're delighted that these two beautiful properties will now be owned by the city, our work isn't complete," continued Thompson, "We are still working to save numerous other hillside properties from development. Our efforts to preserve the hillsides will continue."

One perspective.....

Getting close to the earth helps to slow down the pace of a rushed life

Carla Jackson is a Health Educator at the five undergraduate Claremont Colleges.

I'm an infrequent world traveler, but I have had the opportunity to visit a couple of continents other than North America. My most recent trip, a few months ago, was to East Africa, where I spent three weeks in beautiful Kenya with my family.

We traveled far from the usual tourist areas and ventured deep into the part of the country that supports the largest proportion of the population. In other words, we got to experience the true day-to-day life of the people in Kenya. No fancy tourist buses for us!

What does this have to do with Johnson's Pasture and the CWC? It's my impression, from my travels to Africa and Asia, that there is something happening in these countries that most of America has lost. Moreover, I believe that this special something is innately tied to our connection with the earth.

On a daily and even hourly basis, the people of Kenya are in touch with nature. They know her rhythms, they have a deep respect for her power. Most of them make daily contact with the earth through the soles of their bare feet on the dirt, and with their hands in the soil to plant their crops or harvest their dinner. They look at the skies for signs of the rains and then again for signs of the rains' departure, so the crops will grow and they will be fed and so they will have water.

They use the other creatures of the earth to support their reliance on the earth, whether it be cattle for nutritious milk or chickens for

valuable protein. As they manage the crops, tend to the herds, collect the water, or simply travel to town, they accumulate a tremendous amount of physical activity. Additionally, because of their lifestyle, they eat the freshest foods imaginable in their most natural state. As a result, the epidemic of obesity that has spread across the globe is virtually non-existent in western Kenya.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly in my mind, the Western problem of having "too much to do" is hardly evident in Kenya. Now, these people do really have a lot to do. Ask them what their daily schedule consists of, and it usually starts with waking up around 5 or 6 am to tend to animals and field, collect water, and feed families. Then it's off to work or school for the entire day, then back home to once again tend to animals, crops, and getting families fed. Housework, repairs, and errands fill in the gaps.

Yet, throughout western Kenya, one can observe the people stopping their full days to socialize, to connect, to have a laugh and catch up on the latest news. They have time to spend on each other, they realize the importance of the social environment, and I believe that this stems from their inherent connection to nature and to the slower pace that being tied to nature requires.

Here in the U.S., few of us have herds or crops to tend to. In fact, many city folk have never seen a cow besides the once a year sighting at the Pomona Fairplex. Most people get all of their food at the supermarket, and much of this food comes in plastic sleeves, metal containers or cardboard boxes.

And hardly anyone walks anywhere. Yet so many people complain about their weight and go on crash diets that sap their strength and make them grouchy. Everyone is too busy; too busy to exercise, too busy to eat well, too busy to relax, too busy to visit with friends.

What, I ask, are we too busy doing? I won't even attempt to answer that question here, but I will say that by having wide-open wilderness spaces available to us, we can begin to get in touch with nature again. Seeing the change of seasons in the wildflowers, grasses, and even the wild animals (if you're lucky enough to spot them), help people slow down, breathe a breath of fresh air, and observe the environment around them.

And, it is my hope that such an experience will spark an interest in slowing down the pace of life, so exercise and the consumption of foods from the earth become a way of life, and so people begin to have a little more time for one another. I do see it happening in Claremont,

with the protection of open spaces, the creation of the farmers' market, and the preservation, development and expansion of the already existing village, which truly serves as the town center.

The next step is to continue to preserve space, not to develop it. And, to view our existing developed areas to see how they can be improved to be safer, friendlier, and more community enhancing. Our physical and mental health will benefit!



Photo: Kirk Reynolds

New plant growth continues to flourish in the Claremont hillsides after the Fall 2003 fires.

The Post is the newsletter of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

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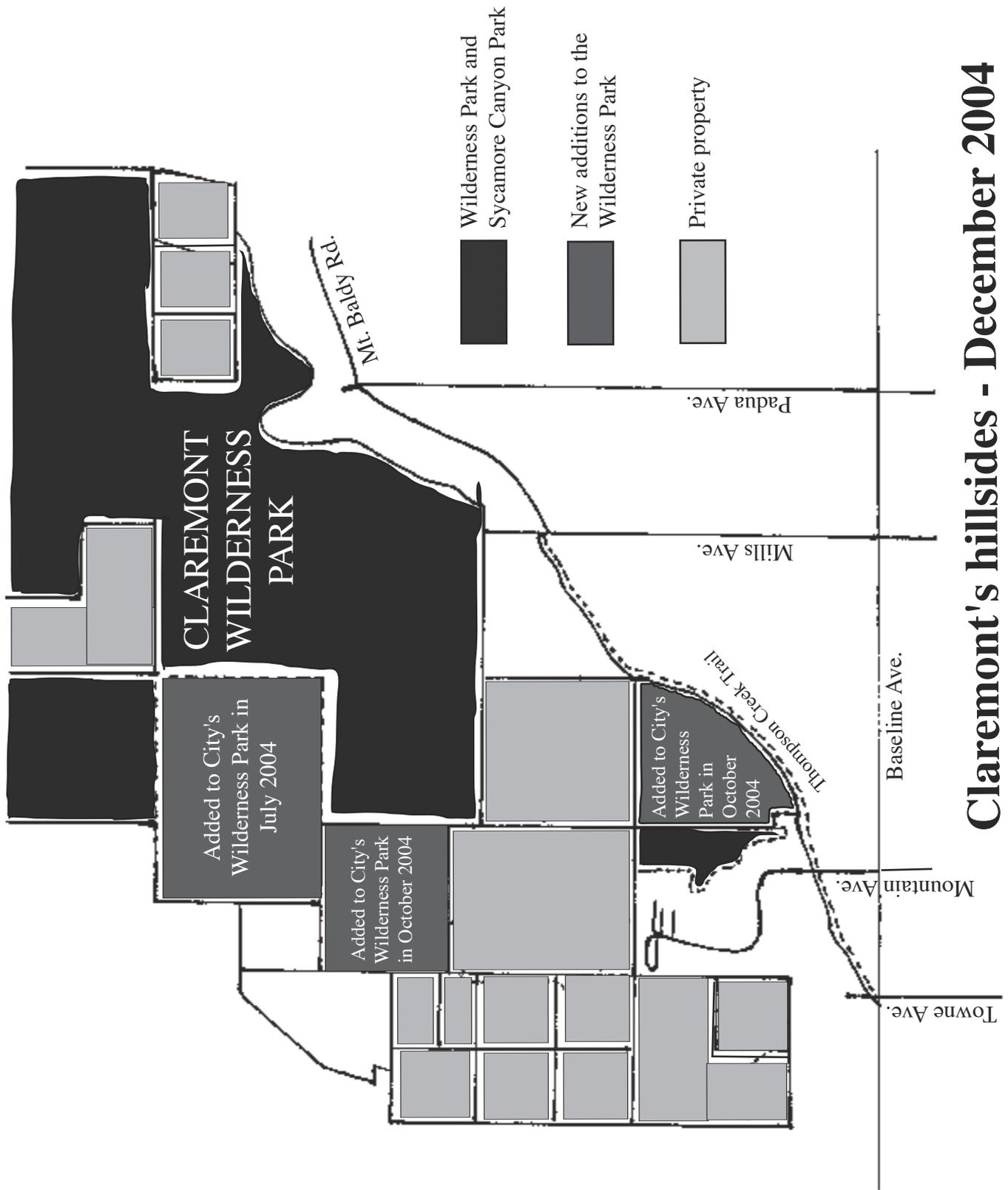
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HELP US SAVE THE CLAREMONT HILLSIDES

Instead of charging annual dues, CWC relies on your continuing generosity to fund our work to save the Claremont hillsides.

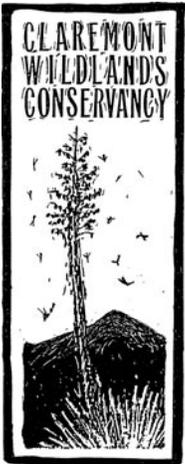
Please remember the conservancy in your giving plans. A donation envelope is enclosed. Donations are welcome at any time!



Claremont's hillsides - December 2004

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The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all.

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy: Committed to Preserving Claremont's Hillsides



This view from early December 2004 looks north from Johnson's Pasture.

The trees and grasses are coming back after last year's wildfires.

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy continues to work hard to preserve the hillsides.