

The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

July 2007

Johnson's Pasture is saved!

Ending months of uncertainty and negotiations following the successful passage of Measure S in November, the City of Claremont and the owners of Johnson's Pasture finally reached a \$11.5 million purchase agreement on June 12.

With the City set to take ownership of the 183-acre 'crown jewel' of Claremont's hillsides, the deal also culminates more than seven years of effort by the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy to save this particular parcel.

Measure S, a \$12.5 million bond measure, passed with a 72% positive vote on last November's ballot, providing the funds for the City to purchase Johnson's Pasture. The purchase delay centered around the price, with the owners siding with one appraisal and the City with another.

In addition to the Measure S money, the City will also receive monies from the state of California, LA County, The Claremont Colleges, and the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

"I feel so grateful to all the CWC supporters who believed that this was possible from the very beginning," said Suzanne Thompson, CWC Board Chairman and one of three original founders of the CWC. "They wrote letters, attended meetings, helped at events worked in the campaign, and gave generously because of their love for the Pasture. All that support in the community sent a clear message that the people of Claremont wanted to save this special place.

"The group that came together to pass Measure S also deserves a lot of credit. We are celebrating today because of the dedication and hard work of the Measure S Committee and all the people in the community who displayed signs, talked to their neighbors, called and walked precincts, supported the campaign, and voted Yes on S. It was a great show of community unity.

"I was ecstatic to hear that the papers were finally signed and Johnson's Pasture will be there forever--as



Photos by: Beverly Speck

This dirt road winds through the rolling hillsides of Johnson's Pasture. The city recently reached a purchase agreement on the 183-acre property.

habitat for native plants and animals and as a connection with nature for the rest of us," continued Thompson, who helped found the CWC in January 2000 after Johnson's Pasture was threatened with development. "Every day in Southern California and throughout the US, we lose so much of our natural heritage to bulldozers and earthmovers, as yet more shopping malls and housing developments are built. It gives me great hope that a community of people who care put their passion into saving one place of natural beauty and wonder in their community. And we did it!"

"I am very pleased that we have come to an agreement," stated Claremont Mayor Peter Yao in a city press release. "But I am even more pleased that our community has come together and has demonstrated our commitment to achieve the common goal of preserving the hillsides for this generation and future generations to enjoy. The City Council and I would like to thank everyone in the community for helping to make this happen. It is moments like this that make me even more proud to be a part of the Claremont community."

According to the city, the purchase process, including the issuance of bonds and the real estate transaction, should be completed by mid-September. The property will then be added to the City's Wilderness Park, expanding the hillside park to nearly 2000 acres.

Thank you, Claremont, and all who have worked so hard to make this happen!

News & Notes

- CWC's own **Suzanne Thompson** is being honored as Claremont's 'Honored Citizen' in the 2007 Fourth of July Parade. Joining her in being honored are **Ginger Elliott**, Executive Director of Claremont Heritage ('Grand Marshall'), and **The Friends of International Students of the Claremont Colleges** ('Honored Group'). Look for them in the parade!

- The **Claremont Wildlands Conservancy** (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all. Please visit <http://www.claremontwildlands.org/>

CWC Looks to Future Hillside Acquisitions in Claremont

To all of you who have supported Claremont Wildlands Conservancy as we have worked to save Johnson Pasture and successfully acquire other hillside properties, we send our deepest appreciation for your continuing support. You have our assurance that we are staying focused on our goal of preserving all of Claremont's hillsides as open space. In this notice we would like to share some important land acquisitions by other groups preserving property on the western edge of our hillside area and describe some challenges we are facing in other areas.

Last year, Los Angeles County, working with Trust for Public Lands, added some 40 acres to Marshall Canyon Park in La Verne from properties it acquired on the eastern boundary of the park and the western edge of Claremont's hillside area.

Additional proceedings soon to be finalized will add 143 acres in the northwest area of Claremont's hillsides, contiguous with both our Wilderness Park to the east and the Marshall Canyon Park to the west. The La Verne Conservancy, working also with the Trust for Public Lands, has acquired 22 acres on the southwestern edge of our hillside area, extending the southern edge of Marshall



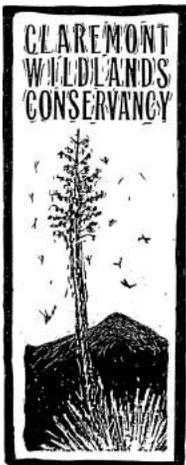
Canyon Park. These acquisitions bring us closer to our long-term goal of achieving a wildlife corridor from the hillsides of Claremont westward – perhaps as far as Monrovia or beyond.

With money available at the state level for open space preservation from the recently passed State Proposition 84 bond measure, we hope to receive funds for acquiring additional properties along the corridor. One of the properties of interest is the 158 acres immediately east of Johnson's Pasture. Not only is CWC interested in its acquisition, but we would also like to see some resolution to the problem of the owner's illegal bulldozing, which flattened hilltops for future development and added dirt and rocks to an important stream in the area. We can also report that developers have approached the City expressing an interest in a forty-acre site to the immediate northeast of Webb School and north of the Baptist Church at the end of Towne Avenue.

While we celebrate the successful completion of negotiations between the City and the owners of Johnson's Pasture, we have not lost sight of our overall goal—to preserve all of Claremont's hillsides. And with your support, we will succeed.

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