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IN ESCROW: Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs President Arturo Tello (center) with Carpinteria Mayor Gregg Carty

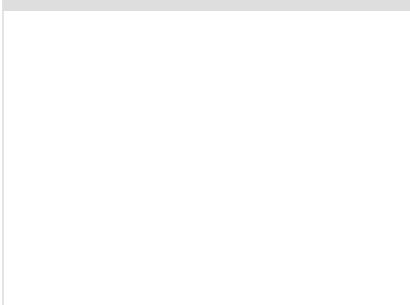
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Major New Push to Preserve Carp Bluffs

Land Trust and Citizen Group Rallying Support and Funds

Thursday, June 16, 2016
by KEITH HAMM

With a \$3 million down payment on the table, a collaboration between the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and the Citizens for Carpinteria Bluffs is now drumming up community support for the purchase and preservation of oceanfront acreage in Carpinteria. The privately owned property — known in conservation circles as Carp Bluffs III or, further back, as the Thunder Bowl racecar and motorcycle dirt track, circa

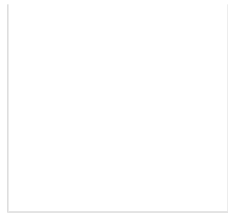
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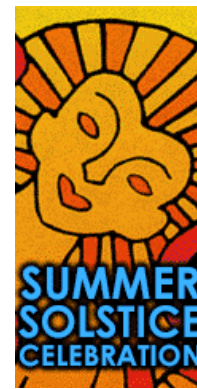


1950 — covers 21 acres east of the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve and is popular with hikers, bikers, birders, and paragliders.

To achieve their campaign goal of \$7.9 million — \$6 million for the property and another \$1.9 million to cover closing costs, initial restoration, and endowed stewardship eventually handled by the City of Carpinteria — the nonprofit groups are aiming to raise at least \$1.5 million from the community, according to Chet Work, the Land Trust’s executive director. At the same time, he added, public grants could bring in \$1 million, though winning those monies can be a highly competitive endeavor. Since entering the purchase agreement in March, the Land Trust has already received \$2.4 million in pledges, Work said. “We like to not lean on the community, but it’s not going to be easy to find the rest of what we need,” he added. “But we’re excited by how much support we’ve experienced so far.”

The property, owned by Burton Hancock Trust, is zoned for a destination resort and has been in escrow for such development several times over the years. Those efforts have failed in the face of substantial opposition from the community and conditions set by the California Coastal Commission. “When we saw a narrow point of entry [to make an offer], we jumped on it,” Work said. “This is the only property in the city zoned hotel resort,” said listing agent Kerry Mormann, a former member of the Land Trust’s board of directors. “But because of constraints, the projects just weren’t penciling out for developers.” Mormann added that the property was listed at \$6.9 million when its owner accepted the Land Trust’s offer of \$6 million.

The goal, said Work, is to preserve the property much like Carpinteria Bluff Nature Preserve, with habitat restoration, interpretive trails, and designated parking and public access. Carpinteria Parks and Recreation Director Matt Roberts said the property would provide a critical trail link connecting the eastern edge of city limits, near Rincon, all the way through town to the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve.



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