

CELEBRATING HISTORY

The Carpinteria Bluffs

by Hattie Beresford

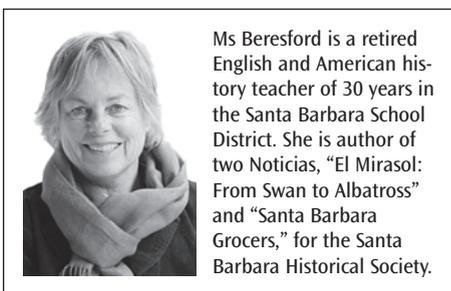


A group of supporters ranging from members, citizens, donors, and elected officials or their representatives were on hand for the formal announcement of the campaign to Save the Rest of the Bluffs

On June 14, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs spoke to an audience of supporters on the easternmost bluffs in Carpinteria. There, they announced an ambitious fundraising campaign to complete the purchase and restoration of 21 acres of oceanfront land dubbed "Carp Bluffs III."

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, has protected nearly 23,000 acres of natural and rural open space in Santa Barbara County. In Montecito, they were instrumental in purchasing Hot Springs Canyon and placing it in the public domain, negotiating a permanent trail easement for West Fork Cold Spring Trail, and creating a conservation easement for the San Ysidro Oak Woodland in Ennisbrook.

In Carpinteria, the bluff-top land, once site of the Thunderbowl race track, had been slated for development of a Bacara-like resort, a proposal that pleased some people and horrified the rest.



Ms Beresford is a retired English and American history teacher of 30 years in the Santa Barbara School District. She is author of two Noticias, "El Mirasol: From Swan to Albatross" and "Santa Barbara Grocers," for the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

Chet Work, executive director of the Land Trust, revealed that when the potential developer did not renew his option, the Trust secured the contract to purchase and preserve the 21 acres. "We saw a narrow opportunity, and we jumped on it," said Mr. Work.

In 1998, Carpinteria residents and the greater community had rallied to purchase more than 50 acres of bluffs when an oil company attempted to construct a refinery there. The result was the popular Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve frequented by walkers, strollers, joggers, bikers, and ocean-view and seal watchers.

"The City of Carpinteria has managed the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature



Chet Work, executive director of the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, speaks to supporters of preserving the easternmost of the Carpinteria bluffs

Preserve since 2000, and has done so with pride," said mayor Gregg Carty. Nor is the Preserve the exclusive domain nearby residents. Campers from the state park and residents from nearby communities make a walk or ride along the bluffs part of their regular routine.

The purchase of the new property will result in more than 2/3 of Carpinteria's bluff lands being preserved as open space. The Trust has a campaign goal of \$7.9 million, of which \$5.4 million has already been raised. Many of these generous donors attended the announcement ceremonies.

Anticipating that \$1 million could be obtained through public grants, the Land Trust and Citizens for Carpinteria Bluffs are now looking to the community and additional grants to raise the remaining \$2.5 million needed to complete the purchase,

restore the landscape, and provide ongoing stewardship.

Arturo Tello, Oak Group artist and president of Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs, presented his painting of a view from the bluffs to Chet Work to acknowledge "the man who would be doing the work." Recognizing that as a landscape, Carp Bluffs III had been heavily used and was in rough shape, Tello said, "There are no unsacred places, only desecrated ones. It is up to us to reconsecrate this land."

Tentative plans are already being formed for plant restoration and the construction of trails and viewing areas and benches. And there are exciting dreams for the future. With the addition of this parcel and the construction of a bridge over the rail line, the possibility exists of stretching the bike path from Ventura all the way to Linden Avenue in Carpinteria.

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"It is up to us to reconsecrate this land," said Arturo Tello, president of Citizens for the Carpinteria Bluffs (left), as Carpinteria City Council members Fred Shaw and Al Clark observe

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