President’s Report  by: David Barron

2015 has been another year of quiet success for Butters Canyon Conservancy. Unlike our early years with their sporadic (but often intense) drama, our current phase is one of calm, deliberate action. Rather than being forced to react quickly and frantically to threats to the Canyon, we are much better able to plan ahead and carry out our goals.

A high point of this year was our mortgage shredding party this spring. (Yes, normally you burn mortgages, but we thought it would be irresponsible to burn anything near the Canyon, especially during a drought year.) Jean Quan and her husband Floyd Huen were in attendance, as were a number of elated neighbors, children included. The ceremony marked the elimination of BCC's outstanding debt, freeing up funds for other purposes.

As of now, those purposes are fire clearance and selective restoration. We are now in the process of creating a plan to remove some of the larger dead and hazardous trees. That will have to be handled professionally, as it will go well beyond what we can do with neighborhood volunteers.

Other high points of the year included Earth Day and Creek to Bay Day, when we had good turn outs to help us haul out brush and try to reduce some of the fire danger. And we hosted National Night Out in the Canyon, which brought scores of neighbors out to meet and greet each other. Not only does the Canyon offer natural beauty and a rare oasis of serenity in the urban environment, it provides a place for all of us to come together. Please join us next year for these annual events, and help us preserve our common treasure!

What Legacy Would You Like to Leave?  By: Carol Bernau

The other day I was meditating while walking Baxter the yellow lab in the canyon. I was thinking of how many years of work (eleven plus years!) so many of us have put into preserving Butters Canyon for future generations. For me, personally, it began with the mantra, “Think globally; Act locally.” But now, as I begin to experience more “senior moments”, there is another reason. Thinking over my life, my work for the canyon is something I can be proud of and thankful for. I can think of all the people – friends, neighbors, dogs, horses and bikers – enjoying their brief sojourns here. I’ve met my neighbors, made good friends and met people who share a common interest. And I’ve broadened my horizons by working with grantors, public agencies, environmental groups, and dedicated volunteers from various walks of life.

So, recently, in one of those rare moments of tackling our “long-term to-do” lists, my husband and I drew up our will and considered what legacy we would like to leave. Butters Canyon Conservancy was high on our list of people and things we want to support after we are gone.

Not all of us are able or willing to do this, but are you aware of some of the ways you can give through your estate that don’t involve a will? Board members are available for personal meetings to help you make a decision about your giving level. If you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your donation, please contact us: (see box on this page).

It is only through efforts of so many that we have come this far. Accomplishing our goals requires sustained attention and community support.

Contact us:
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What legacy would YOU like to leave? (cont.)

Not all of us are able or willing to leave a legacy for Butters Canyon in our will, but are you aware of some of the ways you can give through your estate that don’t involve a will? One way is to use a retirement fund or insurance policy to make a simple beneficiary designation through your plan administrator. If you leave your IRA, 401(k) or other qualified plan to a family member, he or she will likely pay income tax on your gift. When you leave retirement assets to BCC, because we are a 501c3 nonprofit organization, BCC won’t pay income taxes on the gift, and it isn’t subject to estate tax. Furthermore, you can designate the Conservancy as a primary beneficiary to receive a percentage of your plan (or the whole amount).

Sound complicated? There are numerous other ways to contribute to Butters Canyon. These include:

- Donate to Butters Canyon Conservancy today. It’s tax deductible!
- Pledge to contribute monthly to BCC
- Donate miscellaneous stocks which you were planning to sell; there are excellent tax advantages to doing so
- Make a donation through your company’s charitable plan and double your impact with your company matching program
- Donate your time and opinions. You can get involved as a volunteer or board member. You might:
  - Join in canyon and creek clean-up and restoration efforts
  - Distribute newsletters and event postings
  - Write grant proposals for funding or Give us your ideas and suggestions

Creek to Bay Day: A Two-fer! By: Dolores Apton

That’s what twenty or so neighbors and friends enjoyed on September 19th on Creek to Bay Day. We had two goals: 1) Prepare for El Nino and 2) Fire prevention. The last time we experienced serious storms was the winter of 1997-98, when the state was literally drenched. Although arriving late, those storms left 17 people dead, caused half a billion dollars in property loss with more than 2,000 dwellings destroyed or damaged, and forced thousands to evacuate their homes for weeks.

Every major waterway rampaged over its banks flooding hundreds of homes and turning roadways into lakes*. Scientists say this winter is almost certain to deliver an El Nino at least as strong. By clearing the creek bed of dead limbs and debris we helped prepare for a possible similar scenario this year.

The drought has also increased the need for stepped up fire prevention. After four years of drought our trees are weakened and susceptible to disease. So, we spent a lot of time removing small dead trees. With the help of a gigantic dumpster provided by the City of Oakland, we were able to remove hazardous limbs and even whole trees that were dry and liable to ignition by a careless match or lightning strike.

We also enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new people from different areas of Oakland. Several people who bike or jog around Butters Canyon saw our posters and joined us in cleaning up the canyon.

Butters Canyon Conservancy provided snacks and coffee for all to enjoy, the weather cooperated, and I speak for the entire hard-working team that this was at least a Two-fer, maybe a home run!!

*Oct. 11, 2015 SF Chronicle “Preparation or panic? Anticipating El Nino”
Walt and Judy Anderson: Life on the Edge of Butters Canyon

By: Bev Pachner

Walt and Judy Anderson have lived on Butters Drive for 57 years. Like many who live near the canyon, they discovered this neighborhood by chance. An auto mechanic who worked at the Flying A Station at the bottom of Joaquin Miller Road, Walt was asked to deliver a car to Mrs. Vincent on Butters Drive. Although he and Judy lived in a one-bedroom apartment near Lake Merritt, neither had ever heard of Butters Drive. When Walt reached Mrs. Vincent’s home, he was surprised to find a beautiful, wild canyon and homes scattered sparsely on quiet streets and cul-de-sacs amidst fields and horse farms. He noticed a “For Sale” sign on the house across the street, so he and Judy made an offer immediately and moved in shortly thereafter.

They raised three sons, who explored the fields and canyons with their pals. All of the hillside families with children knew each other. Residents who did not have children tolerated the neighborhood gang well, including Ed Burke, who shared his marvelous steam engine. The children played on “Pansy Hill,” covered with wildflowers, hiked Butters Canyon, and ran along the pathways that crisscrossed the hillside. Walt and Judy’s oldest son was in the first kindergarten class at Carl B. Munck School. Every day, the neighborhood children would walk down Brunell to Klamath, turn left to cross the footbridge near the secluded cabin, and wander down Crestmont to school.

Over the years, Walt and Judy made close friends here, including many firemen. Although more houses have been built and existing homes expanded to accommodate growing families, they have enjoyed getting to know new neighbors and feel that they have had the best neighbors ever.

They like the eclectic mix of architectural styles of the homes here and are pleased that horse farms remain an important part of the neighborhood. Every day deer silently meander past their house and leave marks on trees by rubbing their antlers. Over the years Butters Drive has become increasingly popular with bicyclists, grateful for its shade and shelter, and who sometimes stop to talk. Both Walt and Judy have artistic leanings. Walt is a skilled woodworker while Judy is a painter. In their home there are many fine examples of their unique work, including a table Walt designed using a brass anchor as a base. Walt and Judy are thrilled that Priscilla Stuckey and others (Including Judy and Walt) worked together to establish Butters Land Trust in 2001. Ongoing support of the Trust will ensure that future generations will also enjoy its peaceful beauty, just as Walt and Judy have.
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Mortgage Free!!!

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