



Butters Canyon Conservancy

July, 2014

Formerly Butters Land Trust

Farewell to Paul: BCC Treasurer Steps Down

By: David Barron

It is with much sadness that we bid farewell to Paul Dries, our long-time treasurer and Board member. Paul is leaving us to live with his family in Arizona. We're not only losing a key player on the BCC team, we're losing a close and treasured friend.

Paul has been on the Board of Butters Canyon Conservancy for roughly 10 years, a period that encompasses most of our "adventures," and most of our successes. Since 2006, he has acted as our Treasurer.

At BCC, as for many small organizations, the Treasurer's job is largely hidden, and thankless. The Treasurer is usually the one person who is willing to wrestle with columns of figures, bringing fiscal order to what would otherwise quickly devolve into chaos. More than one group has foundered when it lost control of its financial information, and thus its finances.

But that has not been the case at BCC. As a result of Paul's tireless efforts, we always know exactly where we stand financially, and where we have to be during the remainder of a fiscal year. But beyond that, he has taken on the task of dealing with the county taxing authorities, trudging down to the assessor's office year after year to file the necessary exemption forms to enable us to save more than a thousand dollars each year. He has searched for more cost-effective sources of insurance, and has constantly come up with creative ideas to help make our financial house even stronger. He has faced down the mind-numbing task of filing required forms with the various governmental entities that feel the need to keep an eye on non-profits.

None of us really grasped the scope of the Treasurer's duties until Sue Duckles stepped up to replace him. In order to ensure nothing was missed, she prepared a three-page, single-spaced outline of the Treasurer's

duties. Simply reading that is enough to tire out a normal person.



Paul and Barbara Dries in their Burdeck Dr home.

But more than that--much more--Paul has been a wise and prudent voice at the Board table. He can always be counted on to attend meetings, which is no small benefit when trying to mold a quorum from a Board made up of a small handful of busy people. His advice and contributions are always well-reasoned and practical, and have helped us stay on the proper course through some harrowing times.

And it's always a pleasure to have him there. His perspective, sense of humor, and respect for other Board members has been a key reason our Board has been as cohesive and productive as it has been over the years. For me personally, his presence has been a primary factor in making my BCC experience as enjoyable and as rewarding as it has been.

I know I speak for all our Board members, past and present, in sending a huge "thank you" to Paul, and wishing him all the best.

Working with Paul: My Memories

By: Carol Bernau

I've been asked to write a personal note about Paul Dries. He is moving away and will no longer be our good neighbor and Butters Canyon Conservancy Board member. Paul has been such a strong and assuring presence on the Butters Canyon Conservancy Board and in our neighborhood, that it's hard to remember "BP-- Before Paul!" In no particular order, here are some thoughts about Paul:

An Unusual Combo: Paul is thorough and analytical, yet I'm always amazed at his creativity. I was so relieved to turn over the duties of Treasurer to Paul, and was impressed not only by his accounting and computer skills, but his enthusiasm for and attention to detail. So it came as something of a surprise to find that Paul also has unlimited creative ideas. He can be counted on to interject at any moment "Hey, what do you think about...?" and then launch into an innovative and thoughtful idea to improve things: everything from selling yard sale items on Ebay to raising money for the canyon to sponsoring a chipping party in the neighborhood.

Tireless Dedication: We still laugh about how hard we all worked on fund-raising events for the canyon. For example, we had not a clue how much work it would be to organize a neighborhood yard sale, and how the neighborhood ended up contributing about an *acre* of stuff for the sale—all at once on the morning of the sale, despite our best efforts to organize ahead of time. I managed to succumb to heat exhaustion on

the day of the sale, but nothing stopped Paul. He was active from ground zero, organizing, communicating, cleaning-up at the end, loading pick-ups to take leftover items to Goodwill, and final accounting (which we calculated amounted to about 0.01 cents an hour for our efforts, but we sure did have fun). That's just one example – there are just too many!

Patience & Kindness: Despite our differences and trials (yes, BCC has both at times) Paul always remains patient and calm. He listens to our various impassioned positions and pleas, asks probing questions, and always keeps an open mind and positive attitude.

Commitment: Paul has always been 100% committed to improving Butters Canyon. He has been there for virtually all of our Creek to Bay and Earth Days. He has contributed unlimited amounts of time and effort to his duties as Treasurer and has jumped in to play a key role in every fund-raising event. As if that weren't enough, he and his wife Barbara have contributed generously to BCC funding.

A Good Friend: And finally, Paul is the kind of person you know you can count on. I value the time I've spent in Paul's company and gosh, will I miss him. In fact, I'd like to imagine that, one fine day I'll be walking Baxter the yellow lab down Butters into the canyon and once again run into Paul coming up the road, walking his dog. We'll meet, chat, laugh, and I'll go away feeling good.

SPECIAL OFFER to BCC DONORS

- ★ Make a donation to BCC today and have a 2014 "Chinook Book" hand delivered to you (while supplies last).
- ★ Chinook books retail for \$20 each and contain coupons for everything from Bay Area food markets, organic foods, cafes, restaurants, nurseries, bike stores, bookstores, pet stores, and on and on.
- ★ Send your check NOW to the BCC Treasurer and receive your valuable Chinook Book!

New BCC Address

c/o Sue Duckles

BCC Treasurer

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I spent a quiet morning with Paul recently to learn how he found his way to Joaquin Miller Hights over thirty years ago and why he devoted so many years to the Conservancy. A mechanical engineer, Paul lived in San Francisco and worked on Chevron's information technology team, developing software for financial reporting

Paul Dries: Dedicated Neighborhood Friend

By: Bev Pachner

systems. Although he liked city life, he was also drawn to the East Bay, as bus trips to Oakland took only 15 minutes, quicker than the daily commute from his SF apartment to Chevron's offices. His real estate agent introduced him to Joaquin Miller Hights, which Paul described as a neighborhood that was "not easy to find and one that you would not simply wander into." A lifelong hiker, he was excited at the prospect of living near Joaquin Miller Park and local regional parks. He bought his charming home on Burdeck Drive in 1982 and began walking regularly in Butters Canyon, enjoying its beauty and serenity.

In 1987, he married Barbara. She and her son and daughter moved into the Burdeck home. One year later, Paul and Barbara's son Andrew was born. Over the years, they enjoyed the canyon and local parks together. When Paul retired in 2002, Barbara continued to teach nursing at Samuel Merritt University. In 2011, she joined him in retirement, giving them more time to enjoy their four grandchildren.

Paul walked Butters Canyon daily with his dog, Scruffy, meeting many neighbors in the peaceful

canyon. Retirement gave him the flexibility to use his extensive skills to support issues important to him. A believer in thinking globally and acting locally, Paul became more active in neighborhood land conservation. When Priscilla Stuckey, who lived on Butters Drive, founded "Friends of the Last Wild Canyon", a precursor of the Butters Canyon Conservancy, Paul added that organization to the list of environmental organizations he supported.

As the City of Oakland tried to curtail subdivision of larger lots in our neighborhood by rezoning, Paul circulated a petition supporting rezoning, walking from door to door to gain support. When he knocked on Carol Bernau's door, he found an ally and a new friend. He later attended City of Oakland Planning Department hearings to state his case in support of rezoning.

Carol invited Paul to attend Butters Land Trust board meetings. He was impressed by the dedication and amount of time that everyone put into the Land Trust. The group worked well together, so when Paul was invited to join the board, he accepted and took on the job of Treasurer.

Paul spoke of how much he enjoyed being on the board, making many good friends. He appreciated their generosity in supporting the Conservancy and was inspired by their creative leadership in promoting land conservation as well as a sense of community.

As I walked home from Paul's house, I reflected on how fortunate our neighborhood has been to have such a good friend and devoted conservationist hard at work for so many years. Thanks in no small part to Paul's efforts, we can all continue to enjoy our peaceful walks in a very special wild canyon. Thanks, Paul!

Get to know your neighbors! Celebrate National Night Out!

Tuesday, August 5, 7-9 pm

Across from 3514 Butters Dr.

Bring: Your family, dish to share for 8 or more: main dish, salad or dessert, beverages, eating utensils, folding chair.





Butters Canyon Conservancy

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This picture was taken in
Butters Canyon last winter.

Anyone who likes to walk in
our canyon knows this is a
continual problem. Please
report illegal dumping on
public streets to the City of
Oakland: 615-5566.

Don't let your trash end up in our Canyon!!

If you hire someone to dispose of anything, insist that they bring you a receipt from a licensed dump. Alternatively, contact Waste Management to arrange for a free bulky waste pick-up. Also, to dispose of hazardous waste check the following website: www.household-hazwaste.org.

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