



# Butters Canyon Conservancy

December, 2012

Formerly Butters Land Trust

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## *Protecting the Headwaters of Oakland's Peralta Creek*

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### Message from our President

As many of you are aware, after 10 short (?) years of life, Butters Canyon Conservancy is maturing, and has entered a new phase. Most of the lots in the Canyon proper are under protection, and our primary focus now is on two areas--loan repayment and stewardship.

We still owe \$25,000 for the last lot we purchased. The initial loan was \$60,000, and we've paid it down to the current level. The loan was initially financed by the seller, but in order to pay that off two public-spirited neighbors stepped forth and loaned BCC the outstanding amount. Our current lenders deserve to be paid back, and our fund-raising efforts are directed primarily towards that end.

Beyond that, though, our purpose is stewardship. We have an obligation to maintain the land that has been preserved. This includes annual fire clearance and the removal of downed trees, as well as the periodic removal of items that have been illegally dumped. Those of you that have helped us on Creek to Bay Days, Earth Days and canyon clean-up days can attest to the amount of work involved, and the benefits that all our efforts create.

We also have on-going expenses for insurance and taxes. As a non-profit we don't pay base property taxes, but we are obligated for some of the many assessments that you all see on your tax bills. (Please see annual budget on page 2). Through the heroic efforts of Paul Dries, our intrepid treasurer, we have managed to reduce some of those assessments, but they haven't been eliminated. Our ability to remain as stewards of the Canyon, as well as our very survival, depends on your support.

But in the meantime, you can all take a moment to bask in the success of our efforts, due primarily to your past and current support. Together, we've written a tremendous success story in Butters Canyon, one that our children and their children will be able to enjoy throughout the years to come.

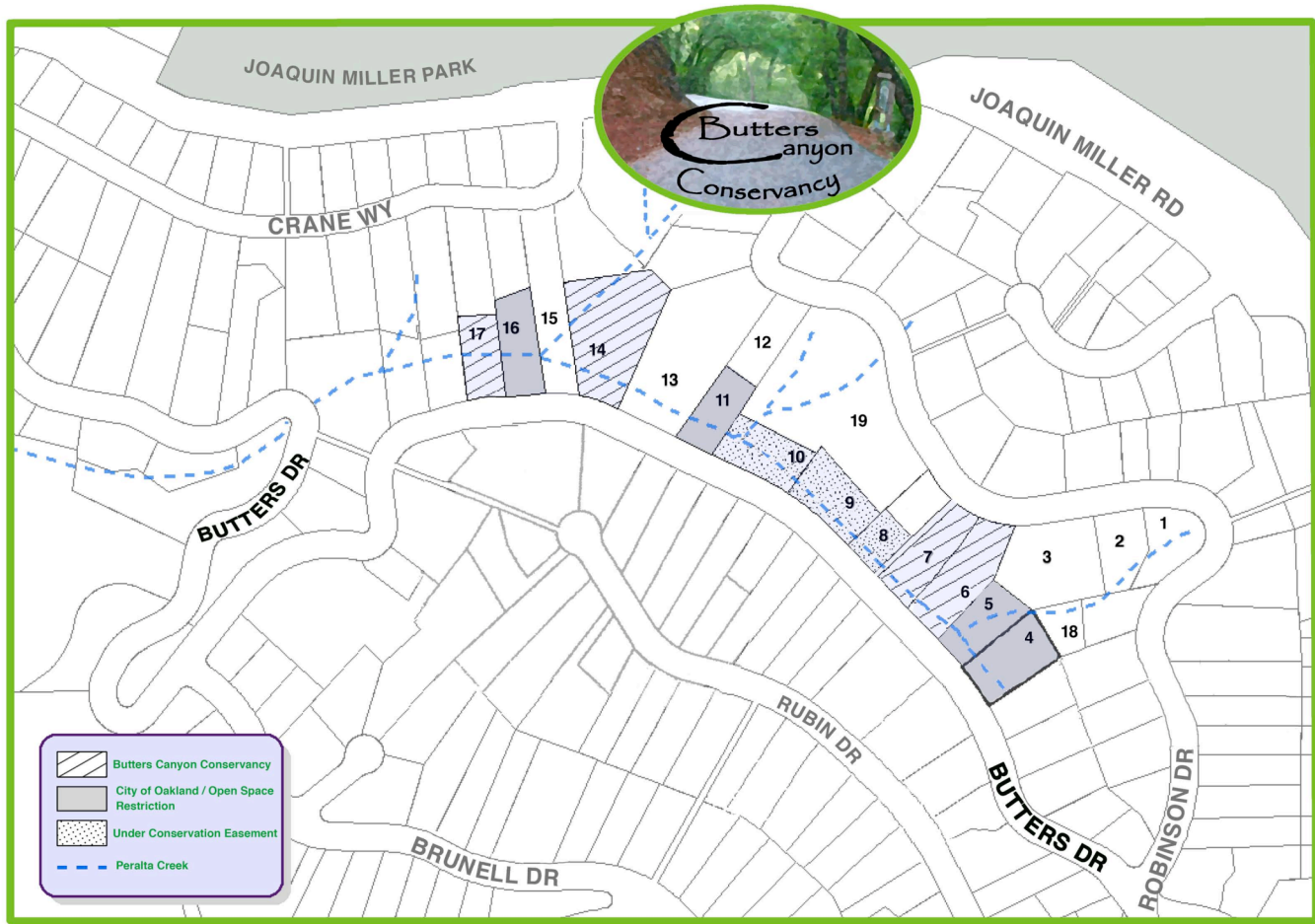
*David Barron*

### National Night Out in Butters Canyon

On August 7 over 85 neighbors and friends assembled in Butters Canyon for National Night Out. A balmy evening, a fabulous pot-luck spread and even locally produced wine and beer made this a very special neighborhood event! If you could not make it this year, we hope to have you join us next August for this wonderful chance to meet your neighbors and make new friends.

*Sue Duckles*





# Butters Canyon Conservancy

0 75 150 300 450 Feet



## Butters Canyon Conservancy 2012 Budget

*Paul Dries, Treasurer*

INCOME	Donations	
	Businesses	\$1,000
	Other non profits	\$450
	Individuals	\$6,725
	Employee match	\$500
	<b>Total donations</b> (Calendar year ending 10/31/2012)	<b>\$8,675</b>
EXPENSES	Insurance	\$1,400
	Debt interest (\$25,000 outstanding balance)	\$1,000
	Property tax (2012-2013 tax bill)	\$1,211
	Administration & general	\$150
	Printing	\$350
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,111</b>
	Net income	\$4,664
	Debt payment target	\$5,000
	<b>Cash remaining</b>	<b>\$-436</b>

## Butters Canyon needs your help! Volunteer!

We need your help to maintain the canyon. Volunteers for workdays such as Earth Day in the spring and Creek to Bay Day in the Fall are always needed. Do you have ideas for Canyon activities or fund-raising? Nothing can be done without committed volunteers. We need new board members and additional volunteers for flyer distribution.

### Donate!

As detailed in the Budget, even when we pay off existing loans for land acquisition, we still have annual costs to pay, including taxes on each parcel, and insurance. Our treasurer has worked hard to bring costs down, but we still have to pay our taxes!

### Remember BCC in your will!

"I give and bequeath to Butters Land Trust, Federal tax identification number 04-6962275, currently located at 3039 Burdeck Drive, Oakland, Ca 94602, (the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate or the proceeds from the sale of property I own by my estate located at \_\_\_\_\_) for its general purposes."





**Kaia, Ruby and Leka Dobbs**

## **CANYON TALES: One Family's Butters Canyon Experience**

In April 1998, Leka Dobbs was living in Berkeley and contemplating moving to the country. Pregnant with her first child, she wanted a quiet home in a wooded setting in which to raise her child. Then she heard about a home for sale on Brunell Drive and made her first trip to the Joaquin Miller Heights neighborhood. After looking at the house, she walked around “the loop” and was amazed to discover Butters Canyon for the first time. She immediately decided to buy the house. Fourteen years later, she’s still happy to be living with the canyon in her “backyard.”

The canyon has meant many things to her family: a respite from the heat during her two pregnancies; a place to take quiet “night walks” to calm her two daughters when they were toddlers; and a spot to enjoy shimmering trees and pungent leaves on rainy days. It was there that they observed owls and bobcats, heard the howl of coyotes, and picked blackberries for pies.

When asked what they think of the canyon, her children have a lot to say. Ruby exclaimed, “I couldn’t live without it!” For them, it is a place of mystery and discovery. Kaia vividly described a recent canyon hike with the “neighborhood posse of kids,” who found a gigantic fallen tree blocking the path. After much discussion about what to do, they decided to forge ahead and made a valiant effort to climb to a broken treehouse to get around the tree. After scraping their knees and scuffing their shoes while scrambling up the steep hillside, they realized that the only way out was to go back the way they had come. In the waning afternoon light, they trudged home through the slippery grass and blackberry bushes.

The Dobbs family treasures the canyon’s beauty and tranquility as well as the adventures it offers. Experiencing the canyon on a daily basis has made them appreciate the value of land and stream conservation. For them, the canyon “makes the neighborhood,” a sentiment echoed by many of their neighbors.

*Bev Pachner*

## **LOCAL HEROINE PUBLISHES BOOK**

*Book review by  
Carol Bernau*

Many neighbors may recall meeting Priscilla Stuckey and her savvy canine companion Sapphire walking in Butters Canyon, organizing canyon cleanup days, and urging neighbors to help preserve Butters Canyon in the days when rampant development threatened its tranquility and beauty.

Priscilla devotes an entire chapter of her recently published book, **Kissed by a Fox and Other Stories of Friendship in Nature** to her experiences founding Butters Land Trust (now Butters Canyon Conservancy) and everything it entailed: working with the neighborhood, environmental and creek organizations, and how her experiences at our little section of Peralta Creek helped to solidify her belief in the sacredness of the natural world.

Priscilla’s book is a personal meditation on the connections between nature --- both living and inanimate—and other humans. Her book is not only inspired by her experiences with Butters Canyon, but also by ancient philosophers, poets, natives, and naturalists. She recently gave a reading at A Great Good Place for Books in Montclair, which was well attended. A copy of her book may be purchased there. This is a good book if you want a rich, thoughtful read. A book you can read slowly, savoring each chapter. Here are two excerpts (about Butters Canyon, of course, and its preservation being a small miracle):

“We were trying to practice what many cities worldwide have long known: that plots of wildness scattered throughout neighborhoods increase the quality of urban life. In an ideal city, every resident has walking access to some place, however small, where nature gets to do its thing in gardens or parks or along rivers or creeks, where the urban roar is muted by trees and vegetation, where human “improvements” do not dominate the field of vision. In our tiny shaded Oakland canyon, people could enjoy a few moments of solitude, which meant not being alone but trading the ubiquity of human noise for the company of bay trees and titmice and trickling water. Under the canyon’s sheltering canopy of bay trees, we walked and breathed and listened and enjoyed.”

“The final price tag for preserving all those lots? Nearly a million dollars—some of it raised from donations and used to purchase lots held in the land



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## BICYCLISTS SUPPORT BCC

Bicyclists from around the Bay Area enjoy the beautiful roads connecting Burdeck-Butters-Robinson while avoiding the traffic and steepness of Joaquin Miller. I was one of those bicyclists in 2001 and learned of the efforts of what was then called Butters Land Trust to protect the area along Butters Drive from further development. I joined the Land Trust as a Board member and have been working toward the preservation of the route known as BBR for the past 10+ years. That year I went to my Bike Club, Grizzly Peak Cyclists (GPC), and proposed that GPC donate to Butters.

Every year GPC makes donations to bicycle-related non-profit organizations and causes out of proceeds raised from the Grizzly Peak Century, an annual ride (not race) of 62 or 107 miles held in May. I was pleased when the committee voted to award Butters \$500 in 2001. Since then GPC has continued to support BCC. The Donations Committee met this year on August 27, 2012 and awarded BCC \$500. This brings the total amount GPC has awarded BCC over the past 11 years to \$4,675.

*Dolores Apton*

## LOCAL HEROINE (cont. from p. 3)

trust's name, some received through city bond funds, set aside for urban creeks, and some raised to purchase conservation easements for protecting creekside stretches from development. They [Butters Canyon Conservancy Board and supporters have] scrabbled, bargained, and negotiated for that million dollars and along the way won tens of thousands of dollars in grant monies. To this day neighbors continue to hold annual canyon cleanups and creek restoration workdays."

### **Butters Canyon Conservancy Board of Directors**

David Barron, President  
Carol Bernau, Secretary  
Paul Dries, Treasurer  
Dolores Apton  
Sue Duckles, Newsletter Editor  
Robert Faber  
Eric Ironson

### **Butters Canyon Conservancy**

3039 Burdeck Dr.  
Oakland, CA 94602  
510-318-6348 (David)  
[www.bcconservancy.org](http://www.bcconservancy.org)  
[butterslandtrust@aol.com](mailto:butterslandtrust@aol.com)

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Oakland, CA 94602