Friends of the Bernard Biological Field Station
P.O. Box 1101
Claremont, CA 91711
The Friends is a non-profit, grassroots organization.

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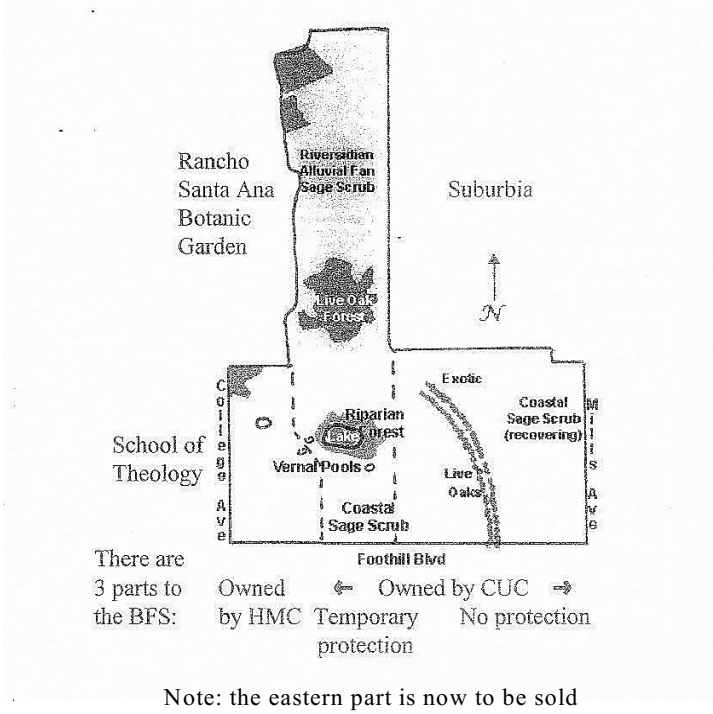


Note: the eastern part is now to be sold to HMC, Scripps and Pitzer

How big is big enough?

A field station is land left in its natural state for use in the study of complex interactions between plants and animals. The usefulness of such natural laboratories depends on size and shape. Extinctions occur frequently in small areas, due to smaller populations. The current 85 acres is just large enough to maintain reasonable stability in the existing ecosystems. Narrow shapes increase the amount of pollution by noise, air, water, and pesticides from surrounding areas, and increase the chances of competition from exotic (non-native) species, so the center bit of the BFS alone would not be sustainable.

Who uses it?

The BFS is used by Claremont Colleges faculty and hundreds of students every year, as well as by many schoolchildren from Claremont and the surrounding areas. It has also been used by college classes from as far away as Long Beach, by scout troops, and by members of the public.

What's there?

There are over 30 acres of the fast-disappearing coastal sage scrub community along with a number of species of state or federal concern.

Since much of Claremont was originally covered with coastal sage scrub, it is a fascinating window into our past.

There is a stand of oak woodland in the north where water wells up along an earthquake fault, there is annual grassland slowly returning to coastal sage scrub in the east, and there is a one-acre, man-made lake excavated in 1978 which is a sanctuary for western pond turtles displaced by development.

News from the Friends of

The Bernard Biological Field Station

Of the Claremont Colleges

Volume 12 No.3 Nov 2011 P.O. Box 1101, Claremont, CA 91711 bfsfriends@earthlink.net www.fbbfs.org

Sightings

- ✓ rounded masses of pinebush with bright green needles and yellow blooms
- ✓ mosquito fish hiding in green algae in the lake
- ✓ a shimmer of new green grass among last year's stalks in the east field
- ✓ drifts of lessingia meandering along the paths, bright with yellow daisies
- ✓ resurrection of the scalebroom from haphazard piles of leafless twigs to green stems and golden flowers
- ✓ the last of the purple california asters
- ✓ a red green lynx spider protecting her egg sac at the tip of a dead white sage infloresence
- ✓ a covey of quail noisily taking flight
- ✓ gorgeous oranges and reds on the poison oak
- ✓ masses of berries on the toyon, rapidly turning to brilliant red
- ✓ Harvester ants sealing their nests, hunkering down until spring
- ✓ children on tours, delighting in nature

Development in the Quarry

The draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed development of the quarry just east of Pitzer (the Claremont Colleges East Campus Project) is now available for comment. Pitzer and CMC plan to convert this into sports fields and parking. After mining ceased, natural habitat re-established itself as it would have after fire or flood. The report looks only at special status species and states there will be no significant cumulative effect of the loss of biological resources due to this project.

If you think that developers should be required to protect other natural habitat within Claremont or Upland as mitigation for the loss of habitat, please write and say so. Comments may be submitted until 6pm Dec 14 to Megan Irwin (mirwin@ci.upland.ca.us).

The report can be seen at:

http://www.ci.upland.ca.us/asp/Site/ComDev/Planning/ClaremontColleges/I.asp

The BFS:

A Short History and the Current Situation

In the 1920s, there was pressure on Pomona College to expand. Instead of Pomona getting larger, President Blaisdell proposed that more small colleges be formed. He and Robert J. Bernard set about acquiring the necessary acreage, in large part with money from Ellen Browning Scripps. She donated the land for educational use and required that it be put in a trust so that Scripps would benefit from the sale of the any of the area to new institutions. In the early 1970s, Scripps needed money and proposed to sell the portion between College and Mills to a developer. Donald McKenna raised the money to buy the land from the Scripps trust and establish the Robert J. Bernard Trust which allowed the area to be used officially as a field station (BFS) for an indefinite period but which did not protect any of the land from future development.

In 1997, the Colleges approved establishing the Keck Graduate Institute (KGI) as the 7th College and proposed to place it on the western 11.4 acres of the Field Station. The City approved the development agreement in 2000 in spite of considerable opposition from the community and was sued by the Friends for having an inadequate Environmental Impact Report for the project. At the same time, in August of 2000, the Coalition to Preserve Claremont's Character gathered enough signatures to require the City either to put the development agreement to a vote or to rescind it. The City asked the Friends and Claremont University Consortium (CUC) to work out a settlement agreement for the lawsuit, which they did. The City rescinded the development agreement and then CUC decided not to sign the agreed-upon lawsuit settlement. Several months later, a less desirable agreement was presented to the Friends. This protected about 40 acres of the BFS (the Temporarily Restricted Property; TRP, which is a narrow strip extending from Foothill to the top of the 'neck') for 50 years, unless development to the east and west of it was prevented, so the protection was in all senses temporary. CUC also agreed once again to allow educational use by the public, which had been stopped

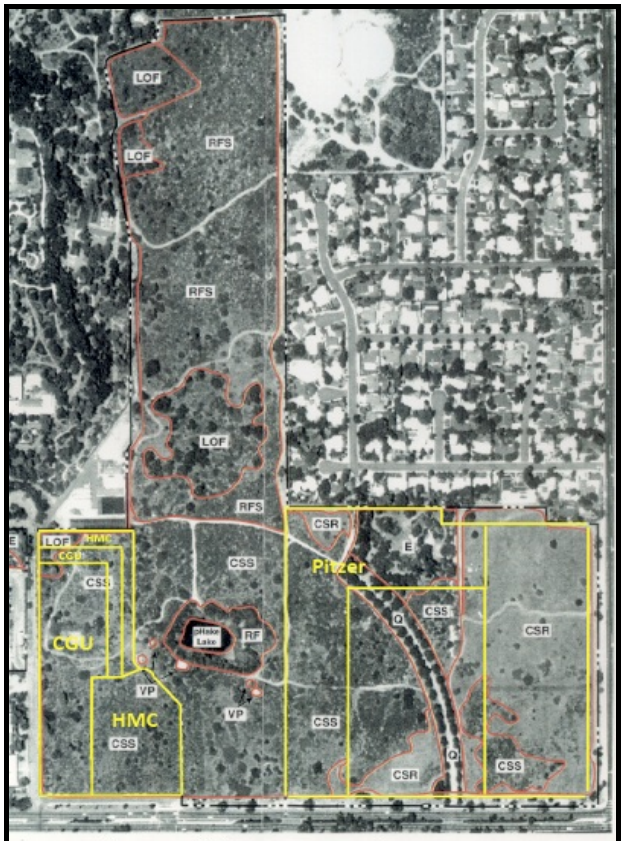
during the opposition to KGI. The settlement also required a master plan to be developed for all the Consortium-owned lands (the golf course and the portions of the BFS on both sides of the TRP--which are all part of the original Scripps Trust--as well as the quarry east of Pitzer) before any development east of the TRP could take place.

Although KGI moved to its present location on Arrow Highway in 2001, in 2004 the Consortium gave them ownership of the 11.4 acres of the BFS for a nominal sum. The land continued to be used as part of the BFS. In 2008, KGI decided to sell the land. The Colleges voted to change their previous policy and allow existing Consortium members to buy parts of the land bank. CUC proposed buying the KGI-owned part of the BFS for parking, physical plant, and dead library storage but was not able to raise the money. Harvey Mudd College bought it for a parking lot in order to conform to City parking ordinances. The ordinance was changed so the parking lot was not necessary, but HMC announced that it intended to build something eventually. HMC divided the area into four parts and sold two to Claremont Graduate University. For various reasons, two of these acres will not be built on. The entire area between College and Mills continued to be used as a field station.

On July 26, 2011, the City Council approved a lot line adjustment to the area east of the TRP to divide it into three 12-acre parcels. Two days later, the Colleges announced that Pitzer would buy the part next to the TRP which contains the Infirmary and the outdoor classroom for a new institute, and that the other two parcels would be bought by Scripps and HMC for future development.

During 2010, the Colleges agreed that Pitzer and Claremont McKenna College could buy the quarry for parking and sports fields--the draft EIR for that is now available for public comment (see article on front page). No plans for the golf course, a part of the original Scripps trust that has never been in educational use, have been publically suggested. Since no master plan for the golf course, quarry, or BFS has been forthcoming, the Consortium may well be in breach of the lawsuit settlement.

As of this writing, only 5 acres of the BFS are truly protected (the two mentioned above on the west side and three acres in the "neck" which are protected in the original Scripps Trust). If CGU, HMC, and Scripps build out the parts they acquire, and Pitzer does not, the area used as a field station will be reduced by about 38%, which will have serious effects on teaching, research, and sustainability.



The parcel divisions as of August, 2011.

To see this with the divisions in color,
go to FBBFS.org, and choose 'Other Writings"

The longer the perimeter of an area, the more likely it is to be affected by the neighboring properties in terms of noise, air, water, and pesticide pollution and invasion by garden species. You can see that the TRP has a lot of edge compared to the area inside it, and that with the addition of the oddly-shaped Pitzer parcel, although the acreage of the protected portion is greater, the shape is even worse. If the BFS is reduced to just that area, then not only will hundreds of thousands of organisms die outright, but whole populations will soon vanish due to increased competition for the remaining resources.

BFS Director Sought

The Colleges have finally agreed to find a permanent director for the BFS. If you or someone you know might be interested in applying, please visit the BFS website (bfs.claremont.edu) for information on requirements.

Toyon, California Holly

Heteromeles arbutifolia

by Mark Acuna

This small evergreen tree has long, leathery, dark green leaves with small teeth along the edges. Groups of small white flowers appear in summer, followed by bright red berries which are a major food source for birds and small mammals. Californians call it Toyon or Holly Berry (giving Hollywood its name). The Tongva called it Ashuwet.

The Tongva celebrated the cold times of "Achocheva" throughout the greater Los Angeles Basin when they withdrew into their homes and told stories to their children. It was the great season of mending, learning and withdrawal from the outer world into the spiritual world of "Coyote Tale" time. In spring the world would renew itself and the people would celebrate. But now in the cold times, in the months of "Whistling Wind" and "Cold and Last Hunts" the people rejoiced in the harvesting of the red berries of Toyon which brightened the cold dark days of winter for the Tongva as they do for those who pass by the entrance to the BFS.

Toyon provided food, medicine, tools, dye, and ornaments. The bark and the leaves made a tea for stomach pains, produced a seasonal tonic and a wash for infected wounds. Mashed leaves were applied to sores. Pulverized flowers were steeped to make a medicinal tea which the women drank. The berries produced a dye, as did the bark which was used to dye fish nets. The berries were eaten fresh, roasted, or boiled and baked. Fresh berries made a refreshing cider. Wood was turned into fine arrows, awls, wedges, scrapers, spoons, mashers, and stirrers, and hair sticks decorated with Flicker feathers for the men.

California Ebony Tarantula

Aphonopelma eutylenum type

This new addition to our invert list is a male fall-breeding California native. These tarantulas were once quite common in the flatlands of southern California, but their numbers have been reduced greatly by development and farming. They are still common in most coastal sage scrub communities, and it appears we have a remnant population at the BFS. Tarantulas have eyes of course but mostly get information about their surroundings through touch using sensory hairs. These can detect vibrations of the air caused by the movements of their prey and can "smell" chemicals in the air. Tarantulas not only seek prey, but are prey themselves: large wasps called "tarantula hawks" seek the spiders, paralyze them, and lay eggs in their bodies.

If threatened, New World species can throw off hairs from their abdomen which can be very irritating, especially to the noses of animals which may sniff them. Although they do have venom and can bite like all spiders, it is very rare for them to cause serious injury to people. The males only live for a few years and may travel quite a ways seeking a female. Females may live for decades. Each will lay eggs in a silk sack in her burrow and turn them regularly for six weeks or so to prevent damage. She will also defend them aggressively–a good Mom!

"A tour of the property readily convinces visitors of the importance of keeping such a beautiful expanse of land, shrubs, and trees for scientific purposes ." Robert J. Bernard in "An Unfinished Dream"