

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

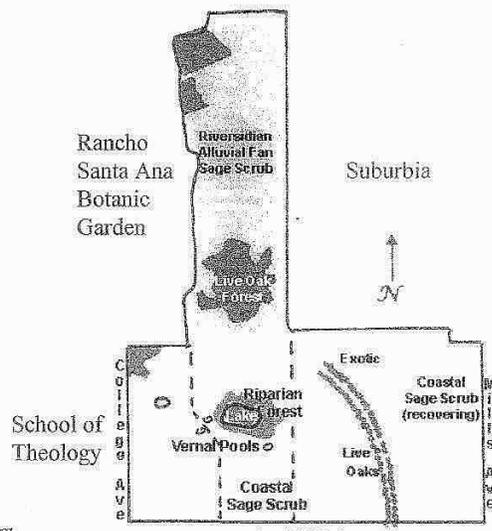
Nonprofit
US Postage Paid
Claremont CA
Permit No. 23

Return service requested

www.fbbfs.org

*“Dedicated to Education
 and the Environment”*

City of Claremont: www.ci.claremont.ca.us click on “contact us”
 P.O. Box 880, Claremont, CA 91711 City Clerk: 399-5460
Claremont Colleges: www.claremont.edu
The Claremont Courier : 1420 N. Claremont Blvd., Suite 205B,
 Claremont, CA 91711 Phone: 621-4761
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin: 2041 E. Fourth St, Ontario CA 91764



There are 3 parts to the BFS:

Owned by HMC	←	Owned by CUC	→
		Temporary protection	No protection

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?

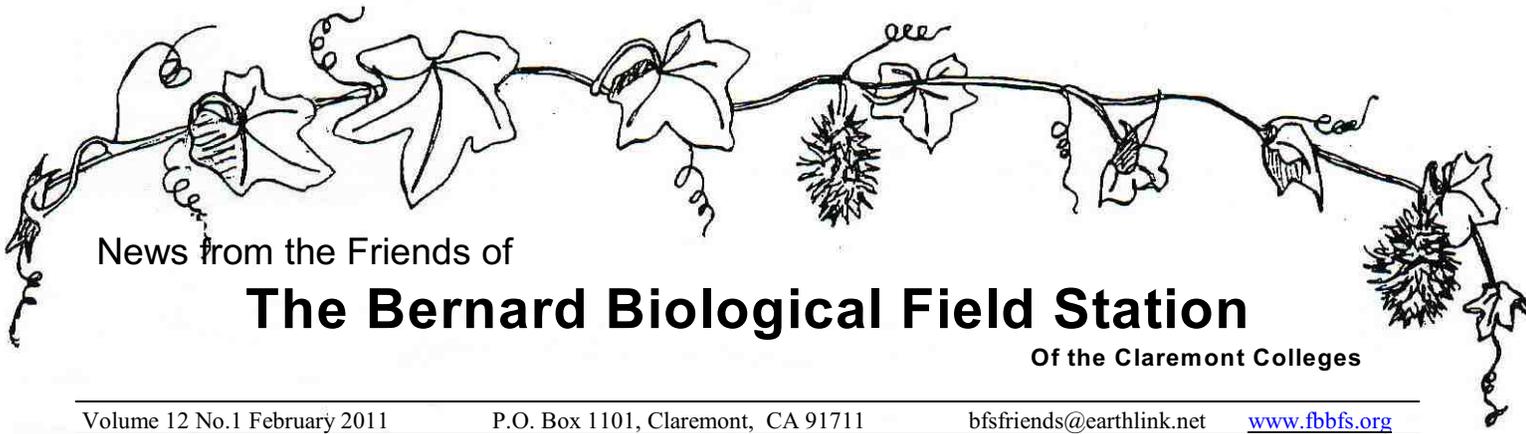
The BFS is used by Claremont Colleges faculty and hundreds of students every year, as well as by many schoolchildren from Claremont and the surrounding areas. It has also been used by college classes from as far away as Long Beach, by scout troops, and by members of the public.

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.1 February 2011

P.O. Box 1101, Claremont, CA 91711

bfsfriends@earthlink.net

www.fbbfs.org

City Council Candidate Statements Inside

Habitat preserved:

The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy has agreed to give the City \$2.4 million to buy the Cuevas property in the hillsides and add it to the Wilderness Park. This amount is being matched by another grant and together these will cover the entire purchase cost. Congratulations to CWC, the City, and everyone else who worked to make this happen!

Habitat lost:

The City built the Padua Sports Park on a natural area and Pitzer College recently uprooted a large part of an area of natural habitat known as the "outback" to build a new dorm.

The approval process for each of these required very little in the way of mitigation to help compensate for the loss of the habitat. Directing that development take place outside of nesting season, replacing a few oaks or other native plants, and adding drought-tolerant landscaping will not bring back to life the plants and animals killed by grading, and will do little to re-establish biodiversity similar to that of the original ecosystem, even if it were one that had suffered disturbance at some time.

The Claremont General Plan and the Sustainable City Plan both make it clear that natural habitat is a very limited resource and that considerable efforts should be made to preserve it. One of the stated goals is to prevent its loss. Both of these projects have reduced the number of acres of natural area in Claremont, and more loss is in the works.

Our natural communities can re-establish themselves after fire and flood, and they often do the same after destruction by development if left alone.

These disturbed, regrown areas may not have quite the same complexity as areas which were never developed, but they still provide considerable resources for many native organisms, reduce water use, clean our air and provide many other benefits. One disturbed area that has regrown considerably is the college-owned quarry east of Claremont Blvd. Parking lots and sports fields are planned for it and a Draft Environmental Impact Report is currently being written. Appropriate mitigation for habitat loss here would be protecting other natural habitat in Claremont.

There are sometimes good reasons for building on a natural area but this should be taken much more seriously now than it has been in the past. Calling an area 'disturbed' and, therefore, not requiring mitigation for habitat loss does us and our descendants no favors. The City should require preservation within the City of other natural areas as compensation for habitat loss, even those of a few acres, rather than letting our natural open space resources be subjected to 'death by inches'. Write and say so.

To see pictures of the latest additions to the BFS lists, visit bfs.claremont.edu



"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."

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect"

Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

All eight candidates were invited to write for this newsletter

Robin Haulman (haulman4claremont@gmail.com)

As I walked the Bernard Field Station one recent morning, the Golden Currant was in full yellow bloom, Wild Cucumber vines with snowy white flowers were aplenty, and the White Sage was luminescent amid the other native plants. I felt transported in time, back to a simpler era, as the field station is reminiscent of the unspoiled, undeveloped California of long ago.

The preservation of open space is our legacy to our children's children. The current acquisition of the Cuevas property is a key investment in this legacy, as was Johnson's Pasture. I campaigned vigorously for the bond measure to purchase Johnson's Pasture, as I believed then and still firmly believe that we have narrow windows of opportunity to own our hillsides and open spaces. A missed opportunity is a loss for future generations.

As a red-tailed hawk soared majestically above us on the recent sojourn at the BFS, I was reminded of the need for public awareness of how important it is to protect our natural areas. Sustainability includes a mandate for preservation of open spaces, and the Bernard Field Station is not only a window into time, but an important ecosystem that also functions as a living laboratory for students. It should be maintained for perpetuity and viewed as yet another living piece of history that we protect and pass on to the next generation, so that others can walk the pathways, smell the sage, and savor a living snapshot of an undeveloped, native California.

Joseph Armendarez (armendarez4council@live.com)

In the late 1960's the Children's Center would conduct field trips to let East Barrio Kids explore plants and animals in the wild. Fortuitously, we found Bernard Station by making a wrong turn to the Botanical Gardens. It turned out to be a marvelous science outing for our kids. They were particularly fascinated by the Swallowtail larvae, pheasants, quail, and small fish in the pond. It was a wonderful experience for our youngsters.

I brought small groups of students from Our Lady of the Assumption School, Webb School and later Chaffey High School. We measured pH, oxygen content, and temperature of the water. We often took samples for use in the lab to examine the types of microscopic life in the pond. It made for great studies in populations and their environment.

Access became difficult and I have not been back in several years. I am glad to hear that it is still being used for scientific study. Congratulations for keeping it viable for your students. It would be a shame to lose such a wonderful resource. As a community member and a Biology teacher I fully support your efforts.

Opanyi Nasiali (info@opanyi.com)

I support preservation of the Bernard Field Station as an educational and community resource. Its large size makes it a valuable habitat for native plants and animals—an oasis of natural open space in a built-up urban environment.

I was born and raised in rural Kenya. My young friends and I would frequently go on “adventures of curiosity” into the equatorial rain forests where the rays of the sun barely penetrated the layered tree canopy. We listened to the many birds singing, even as we maintained vigilance to avoid creeping creatures, especially poisonous snakes. This was an environment as peaceful as it was potentially dangerous. It was an exciting and unfettered encounter with nature.

I reflect on my Kenyan experience to make the point that we in Claremont are very fortunate to have a community that values open space as a natural resource. We have managed to acquire and preserve significant tracts of hillside land. The passage of Measure S – the bond for purchasing Johnson's Pasture - with more than a seventy percent plurality reinforced once more our community's commitment to open space preservation. The acquisition now under way of the 150 acre Cuevas property is further testimony of the importance our community places on preserving open space. The undeveloped chaparral and hillside reminds me of the “bush” where I grew up. It's not rainforest, but it provides the same opportunity for personal renewal and encounters with nature and its continued presence and health helps strengthen our ecosystem. I am gratified that my work to pass Measure S resulted in preservation of that natural resource for future generations.

The Bernard Field Station and the hillsides to the north are complementary. My opinion is that the need for open space will only increase. The solutions to the challenges of growth by the Colleges will be found in the land already

developed and in the less sensitive land to the east. As a council member, I would ensure that these types of solutions, which are consistent with our new general plan, received favorable treatment by the City.

Sam Pedroza (sam@sam4claremont.com)

Four years ago, I stated that the protection of open space and sustainable management of our environmental resources were priorities of my campaign. Those issues remained priorities in my work these past four years as a councilmember and resulted in significant achievements for Claremont. Thanks to the recent grant agreements to acquire the Cuevas/Gale Ranch property and the reopening of Sycamore Canyon, The Claremont Wilderness Park is well on its way to over 2,000 acres of permanent hillside open space. In October of 2008, the city council adopted the Claremont Sustainable City Plan, which in partnership with the citizen driven Sustainability Task Force, will guide key city decision-making in the following areas: Resource Conservation; Environment and Public Health; Transportation; Built Environment, Open Space, Land Use and Ecology; Housing and Economy; Outreach/Education and Implementation plan.

In regards to the Robert J. Bernard Biological Field Station, I continue to believe that natural open spaces in urban areas are scarce and should be treated as gems of our community. The Field Station is a gem and should be available for study by students who will become our future biologists and other professionals.

My approach to the relationship between the city and the colleges, often referred to as Town and Gown, is not to focus on past issues but to work for a better, symbiotic relationship. I will continue to work with the colleges to identify opportunities to develop other properties, such as the college-owned pit, before seeking changes to the Field Station. Much like our successful efforts with the Claremont hillsides and the sustainability plan, the key towards protection of our environment is partnerships. I will work to partner with the Friends of the BFS, the Colleges, and the city to continue my goals of protecting our natural open space.

Jay N. Pocock (SUPERIOR36@aol.com)

Claremont values its open spaces and the citizens investment in open space through donations, grants and bonds. Over the years I have grown up in the city we had far more open space to wonder as a kid. The groves throughout the northeast part of Claremont were great areas to hike through while going into the north end hill area. Now all these are filled with homes. I remember Thompson creek trail and the canyon above Higginbotham (now closed). Johnson pasture, Padua. We have far less open space currently and its nice to see that we have preserved (at large costs)open areas in the north end. Leaves me to the point of BFS. This CUC property I believe should be open to the public like Rancho Santa Anna botanical gardens and connected to it as a walk through park with multiple entrances/exits. This could be a highly utilized area within simple walking distance for many people. I believe is was set up as open wild land to avoid property tax liability and now the CUC has positioned themselves to change it back to developable land for expansion. (this is their land) but it also comes with responsibility to the citizens. If it is to be converted back to developable land (it is their right) we should not stop them but help pursue a % of open space to the public and collect back property tax liability to the public.

Rex Jaime (rexforclaremont@gmail.com)

Claremont is fortunate to have natural open spaces available and it's important we understand the value. Places like the Bernard Field Station (BFS) preserve local biodiversity, giving us a living laboratory and a historical record of our environment. It provides local students of a variety of levels insight into nature in general, as well as an opportunity to study an environment that is becoming rarer in the world as time passes. As long as we have these open natural spaces we benefit from its processes and we can continually learn how the elements of our environment adapt. Having this knowledge, we can better utilize the landscape our city inherited and understand the benefits of a healthy balance of wild and urban space. Biodiversity plays a direct role in regulating the chemistry of our atmosphere and water supply, among other things. Rapid changes in the environment, like the destruction of habitats or intrusive construction, increase the probability of extinction of species. This will likely have a domino effect of consequences we may not fully understand. Once we decide to eliminate these natural spaces, there's no looking back. Once it's gone it's gone.