



CVA Action

The Newsletter of the Carpinteria Valley Association

Volume 40, No. 1

Spring 2003

Here are just a few of the accomplishments of CVA since our founding in 1964...

- Late 60's: In association with the California Roadside Council, CVA supported the newly passed county billboard ordinance and worked towards billboard removal in the Carpinteria area.
- 1968: CVA's active participation in County referendum resulted in repeal of zoning ordinance amendment which would have permitted a large Humble Oil refinery on the Carpinteria Bluffs.
- 1976: Arrested proposed high-density development on the Bluffs on appeal to State Coastal Commission.
- 1995: CVA supported efforts of over 160 citizens in the Toro Canyon/Serena Park neighborhood opposing a conceptual proposal to develop 85-120 houses on a 15 acre parcel of land located on Toro Canyon near Via Real. The parcel is zoned agricultural. Due to the overwhelming neighborhood opposition, the plans for development were subsequently abandoned.
- *There are many, many more major successes that don't fit here!*



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Ranch Annexation Complicates Water Project CVA Files Lawsuit

Charles Hamilton, General Manager of the Carpinteria Valley Water District, can make a convincing case for why the District needs a 3 million gallon storage tank, and why Rancho Monte Alegre, above Foothill at Santa Monica Road, is the ideal spot for it.

The problem begins when one understands the trade-off involved in obtaining this ideal spot. In addition to paying \$450,000 for the 10-acre parcel, the District must agree to annex 2,150 acres of the ranch (plus a few small adjacent parcels), thereby guaranteeing delivery of an estimated 999 acre feet of water per year (AFY) – a 23% increase over current demand. Further, the District must agree to build a 20-foot-wide road and a bridge to some of the more remote of the ranch's 40 legal parcels – purportedly for access to two smaller tanks to be installed in the area. Admittedly, the ranch will reimburse the District for the road and the bridge – cheerfully, we imagine, since by this arrangement they will have avoided many permitting hurdles from which the Water District is exempt.

The ranch has been on the market for several years, and the availability of District water is clearly a crucial question to the prospective buyer. Indeed, CVA believes that this private enterprise is the true driving force be-

hind the present proposal, which far exceeds the Water District's need for one tank in which to store 9 acre feet of water. We believe that in signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ranch's owners, the District has become entangled in an ambitious private project that will prove costly in terms of both money and district water. The District calls this as a "win-win" situation, but we believe

CVA has maintained from the start that it is dangerously shortsighted to allocate such a large portion of available water to one entity.

the only winners are the ranch's 13 owners and the prospective buyer, who have nothing to lose and everything to gain from the Water District's pursuit of approval for the project.

CVA was not surprised when the Water District certified the EIR on this project on January 8. Since the District was both the applicant and the approving body, it seemed a foregone

conclusion. However, we still challenge the EIR's findings that the project is NOT "growth-inducing." Ignoring the growth potential of the infrastructure itself, the EIR argues that although 52 more homes could be built in the annexed area, these could be built without annexation, since the ranch allegedly has enough water from other sources (wells + Santa Monica Creek) for this buildout. We question this, for the following reasons:

1. Until entering into the Memorandum of Understanding with the Water District, Rancho Monte Alegre was applying to the State Water Resources Control Board for permission to divert more water from Santa Monica Creek.
2. Currently, an agricultural lessee on the ranch is obliged to import District water via a temporary permit, despite the realtor's claim that "plentiful water is provided by several wells and from the Santa Monica Creek."
3. The EIR "assumes" production of "two existing" ranch wells and two "future" wells to be 800 AFY. We see no basis for this assumption. The Draft EIR reveals that one of the "existing"

(see "Water District" on pg 2)

A word about this publication

The Carpinteria Valley is an amazing place to live, to work, and to play. While a "valley" only in name, it's even better — scenic mountains on one side, and the Pacific Ocean on the other!

The residents of this area realized long ago what an incredible place this was. In years gone by, many of them worked very hard to ensure that the things that make this area so unique would still be around today. They built a thriving agricultural industry. They created a dynamic and diversified local economy. They planned and built housing and the necessary infrastructure. They preserved beautiful and biologically important open space lands. In short, they created a place that we proudly call "home", and that many others look forward all year to visiting on vacation! We truly owe our predecessors much.

This is not to suggest that there was not disagreement in the past on what the best plan was for the future of Carpinteria. Our history shows plenty of battles over decisions that turned out to have enormous impact on the community. Even today, there

is not agreement on whether certain decisions made were the right ones or not! But, taken collectively, all the decisions and actions of the past resulted in the Carpinteria that we have today. So someone must have done something right!

So what does this mean to us today? Are all the important decisions behind us? The answer is an emphatic **NO!**

Now, quite simply, it is our turn. We are the current caretakers of this area. We inherit the legacy of all who came before us. We are faced with ongoing challenges to our quality of life. Often there are no easy answers to these challenges. But it is our privilege and responsibility to do our best for our community's future.

This *CVA* Action newsletter is a regular publication of CVA. It is our

invitation to you to take one step more toward taking responsibility for our community. Our goal is to educate you on the current issues facing us, and to motivate you to take action. We have our opinions, and we're not shy about sharing them! But what really matters is that you have the necessary information to enable you to take action for the good of Carpinteria.

So read through this issue. See what issue you think is the most important. Take that one extra step and contact the appropriate public official. Take action for your community! ❖



History of CVA

The Carpinteria Valley Association (“CVA”) is a non-profit, non partisan, protective and improvement organization. CVA was founded in 1964 – prior to city incorporation – at the suggestion of Richard Whitehead, then county planning director, to fill the need for a citizens group concerned with preserving and protecting the valley’s agricultural aspects, its beauty and natural resources, its quality and rural residential character. Action has been directed toward initiating and/or supporting projects which would enhance these aspects of the valley and city and toward opposing those which would downgrade or destroy them. CVA is not opposed to infilling the core of the city with needed housing. We are opposed to urban sprawl that has an unfavorable impact on the rural/residential and agricultural aspects of the area and which would over-tax available water and needed city services.

As CVA heads for its 40th birthday, we remain committed to our long-standing statement of purpose:

To preserve the agricultural aspects of the area, its natural resources, character, quality and beauty; and to resist such types of commercial, industrial, or residential development as are deemed incompatible with the proper growth of the area. Also to initiate any further projects to improve and/or beautify the area, including landscaping and preservation of existing trees and shrubs.

The important point is that CVA has been an integral part of the Carpinteria Valley for a long time, even longer than the City of Carpinteria has existed! In these 40 years, CVA has taken an active role in a multitude of issues, some large, some small. But through all this, the Carpinteria Valley has remained an incredible place to live.

In future editions of this newsletter, we will discuss some of the past activities of CVA. Some of these look remarkably like battles of today, a fact that can be both distressing and reassuring! Other parts of our history seem almost alien. For example, in 1971, CVA successfully opposed rezoning that would have permitted use of El Estero for a marina with related commercial developments on both sides of the freeway! History can be a great teacher — we just need to listen to its lessons.

SealWatch

The Carpinteria SealWatch is a volunteer organization that has been in operation for twelve years. SealWatch is not affiliated with CVA, but is an outstanding organization whose mission aligns very well with CVA’s values. The group formed to help protect the harbor seal (*Phocas vitulina*) rookery in Carpinteria, one of the last four remaining on the mainland coast of Southern California. The rookery is just east of the oil pier about half a mile east of the State Beach campground. The City of Carpinteria has passed ordinances that close the adjacent beach for 750 feet east and 750 feet west of the rookery during the pupping season (Dec 1 through May 31) so that the mothers and pups will not be disturbed by humans and canines. The group meets and greets visitors to the bluff-top observation point during the season, provides biological information, and urges the public to respect the seals and to avoid disturbing them.

The seals must deliver their pups on land and prefer to nurse them there. So far this year, 37 pups have been born in the Carpinteria rookery! Adult seals are very skittish and flee to the safety of the water when disturbed by human or canine contact. Newborn pups have not learned this flight response and so are often separated from the other seals during a disturbance. In the confusion of a disturbance, the separated pups often drift with the current away from the rookery. Since pups are born without blubber, they need every feeding to survive. Separations often lead to pup mortality.

Of the four remaining rookeries in southern California, the Carpinteria rookery is the one that is most accessible to the public. Early in the history of the Carpinteria harbor seal protection efforts, a decision was made not to exclude the pub-

lic totally from the resource. The concept is that a public that is informed about the seals and has first hand observation and knowledge will provide better protection for the seals in the long run. Once in-

formed, the public will know better how not to disturb the seals and will potentially become advocates for the seals and other environmental issues. Approximately 12,000 visitors are recorded on SealWatch’s data sheets by the volunteers each year.

CVA is proud to have SealWatch in our community. These dedicated volunteers give generously of their time for the benefit of

our community’s natural resources, and base their efforts on the belief that community education and understanding will have the most long-lasting results. This is very much what CVA also believes. This year SealWatch began on January 11, and will run until May 31. There are still some volunteer slots open. If you would like to get involved please contact Christy Boyd at 684-1505. Or at least make a point of saying “thanks” to the SealWatch volunteers the next time you stop by to visit the seals! ❖



Contact Info:

Here is the contact info for you to make your views known. See the articles in this newsletter for details on the issues and where your input is needed most. Then do your part by sending your views to the appropriate people at the addresses listed below:

City of Carpinteria

Attn: <name of Planner, or Council Member, etc.>
5775 Carpinteria Avenue
Carpinteria, CA 93013
(805) 684-5405
Fax: (805) 684-5304
Web: <http://www.carpinteria.ca.us/>

Santa Barbara County

Attn: <name of Planner, or County Supervisor, etc.>
123 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
Web: <http://www.countyofsb.org/>

LAFCO

Attn: Bob Braitman
105 E. Anapamu St., Room 406
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-3391
Fax: (805) 647-7647
Email: lafco@sblafco.org
Web: <http://www.sblafco.org/>

California Coastal Commission

South Central Coast District Office
89 South California Street, Suite 200
Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 585-1800
Fax: (805) 641-1732
Web: <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/>

Carnevale Housing Development

CVA has been tracking a development proposal for a small Carpinteria creek side parcel of land. This property is located at the corners of Carpinteria Avenue, Arbol Verde, and Concha Loma. The Carpinteria Creek Foundation and the Arbol Verde/Concha Loma neighborhood have taken the largest interest in this proposal. The project, however, has broader regional interest due to the high number of rare birds that winter here, Watershed Coalition interest in reintroducing steel head trout to the creek, a convenient public access point to the creek, and the beautiful riparian views afforded traffic on Carpinteria Avenue as well as the neighborhood streets.

The subject parcel is one of four abandoned utility parcels located on both banks of the creek in this area. This particular lot was a former road and bridge abutment for a small bridge just south of the bridge



from Carpinteria Avenue. S o m e h o w these four parcels entered the real estate stream of commerce. The owner of the parcel, Mr. Louis Carnevale, has had difficulty designing a house that meets his e c o n o m i c needs but also respects

the very large constraints on this small lot. These constraints include the creek, its setback, and the setbacks from three streets. The Carpinteria Creek Foundation, CVA, and the neighborhood have provided input in the EIR process and participated in public hearings on various iterations of these designs for over 12 years. At a 1992 hearing the project was denied and the Planning Commission required a setback of 50 feet from top of bank. During this time the Creek Foundation attempted to purchase the property for a “fair market appraisal” but the owner wanted to include the costs of his architect, attorney, etc., and so his asking price was always greater than the appraisal. The Creek Foundation and governments are forbidden from participating in purchase for a price higher than the appraised value.

The Creek Foundation and 146 citizens (who donated the \$870 fee) recently appealed a Planning Commission decision to approve a two story single family home on this lot. The primary basis of the appeal was when the baseline for the riparian vegetation should have been drawn. The public had earlier won a 20 foot setback based on the testimony of three biological experts, but the project is actually being built between 9 and 13 feet from the willows on the site. On January 27th the City Council voted 3 to 1 to deny the appeal. The Creek Foundation has appealed this decision to the California Coastal Commission. A first hearing date by the Coastal Commission will likely be during April in Santa Barbara.

CVA fully supports the Creek Foundation on this appeal. We encourage you to write a letter to the Coastal Commission in support of the Creek Foundation’s appeal (see page 2 for the address), and to attend the Coastal Commission to testify. ❖

Greenhouses: 25 Years Without a Plan

After several years of planning, the County of Santa Barbara, in January 1980, adopted the County Coastal Plan. This Local Coastal Plan contained a policy requiring the County to prepare, and submit to the Coastal Commission for approval, a master environmental assessment of the cumulative impacts of greenhouse development on the resources of Carpinteria Valley, and to determine the level of development that could occur without adverse impact on those resources.

In 1986, after working with the Flower Growers Association, the County adopted the "Compilation and Assessment of Existing Information" to satisfy the LCP policy. The resolution also included new development standards and procedures for permitting greenhouses. It never looked at cumulative impacts of development, and was never approved by the Coastal Commission.

The CVA has been involved with this issue since the formulation of the first Coastal Plan, continually seeking a cumulative long-term plan. In this time, greenhouse development went from 3 million square feet in 1970, to 8 million square feet in 1982, to the current 14.9 million square feet. Enforcement of development standards has been nonexistent. In fact, 4.3 million square feet of the greenhouse



development has been built without any permits. As a result of the CVA appeal in 1997 of a 171,000 square-foot greenhouse project to the Coastal Commission, the Commission ordered the County to finally comply with the Coastal Plan and complete the long awaited Carpinteria Valley Greenhouse Program Environmental Impact Report.

The County agreed, and in April 1999 issued the notice of intent to prepare the EIR.

For almost three years, and through innumerable hearings, the CVA, along with representatives from the City of Carpinteria, the University of California, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, the Environmental Defense Center, open field farmers, and many concerned citizens of the Valley, provided testimony on the adverse impacts of greenhouse development. Of course, many of the 42 greenhouse operators, along with their hired public relations consultants and attorneys, testified that this was all really not necessary.

The EIR fairly documents that even with only 2 million square feet of additional development, significant and unavoidable adverse impacts will occur in the areas of visual resources, land use conflicts, traffic, water quality and groundwater, and biological resources.

The Board of Supervisors, in February 2002, approved a plan in which 2.75 million square feet of additional development, more than 18% growth, will be allowed in the area south of Foothill Road, and between Nidever Road and Linden Avenue. The Coastal Commission is scheduled to review this plan in April at its meeting to be held in Santa Barbara. CVA will be there to ask the Commission to reduce the allowable expansion to a level which would not cause significant environmental impacts, and to require the County to enforce its own permit process and building standards.

CVA feels that it is appropriate and necessary to implement long-term planning for the purpose of preserving the resources of an area, and to protect the interests of the community as a whole, not only the interests of a few. ❖



Lagunitas Mixed-Use Development

The Lagunitas Mixed Use Development proposal is now in a state of flux. This project is planned for 25 acres of the Arnesen property east of town (that's just north of Via Real between Bailard Ave and Hwy 150). It is no wonder that after 6 or 7 years of the City of Carpinteria trying to work with these developers that a decision can't be made – **this project is too large for our town!** The Planning Commission is now scrutinizing the development of 160,000-sq. ft. of office space and 74 homes. They stated many concerns in December including:

- Added traffic of 2588 more car trips per day was way too many.
- The office buildings were too large.
- The large amount of grading was unacceptable.
- More play area was needed.
- The 2 story houses should be clustered on the western boundary and the number of streets be reduced.
- The retention basins create a fencing concern.

A workshop was held on January 29th with the developers to see if some of these items could be addressed, but no consensus was reached. The developers showed plans reducing some office space, moving the housing from the center to nearer the western boundary, and showing a new condominium type structure that placed the three separate housing structures and their garages in one building instead of three. Grading was slightly reduced, but the grading plans were just introduced that night so the public didn't get a chance to view them.

The Planning Commission seemed to like the new ideas even though the grading was not reduced by very much, and the density was *increased*. There was no new workshop or meeting time set.

This development still has an excessive amount of daily car trips, the air pollution is not mitigatable, and the grading is still excessive. CVA believes that the added traffic and air pollution is unacceptable to our community, and that the development should follow the natural contours of the property, especially since it is a riparian area with a creek running through it.

The project would also result in a loss of agriculture since it has been used for that purpose for over 60 years. We hope that the community follows the progress of this development and will encourage the city not to bring excessive amounts of daily traffic and pollution to city streets. CVA also recommends that the riparian area be saved and not filled.

Since our state mandate is only to plan for 75 units by 2008, this project includes an excessive amount of houses to put in this one area. Our mandate was low because the city had not grown very much in the 90's. At this point, the project will build 76 units and we will likely be on our way to a much larger quota from the state in the next cycle.

Are we losing our "rural, small town, Carpinteria charm"? A dense urban development like this at the urban boundary of our valley certainly doesn't fit into that category.

We ask you to voice your opinion on this project to the City. As always, you can write or email the City Council members. But even better for this project, you can visit our mayor, Dick Weinberg, at his public "office hours" at the Coffee Grinder every Tuesday from 4 to 6PM. ❖

Water District (from pg 1)

wells, on Foothill Rd., has not been in production for several years and has been sold to a third party, with the ranch retaining undisclosed "rights" in it. Another well is in production, but "no recent tests have been done to determine its capacity." As for a third "existing" ranch well that "RMA owners have considered redrilling," it is on a non-contiguous, mountainous parcel more than a mile away, and therefore ineligible for supplying the aforementioned 52 homes.

After presenting testimony at every public hearing, CVA has filed a lawsuit against the Water District, alleging that the EIR is inadequate. Our goal is to see the document revised to reflect the true impacts of this project. This is crucial, since both the county and LAFCO will rely on this document for their decision-making. County approval is necessary for parts of the project in the Coastal Zone, and LAFCO approval is necessary for annexation of the ranch into the Water District.

CVA has maintained from the start that it is dangerously shortsighted to allocate such a large portion of available water to one entity. The District insists that it has enough water (Cachuma, State Water, and groundwater) to supply this project AND potential buildout of the Carpinteria General Plan. This is hard to understand, since most of us remember the last extended drought, when flushing toilets became a luxury. Admittedly, that was before State Water. But according to District figures, in a drought year, the Rancho Monte Alegre annexation area would require the equivalent of 97% of our State Water allocation. (And that assumes that we actually get our entire State Water allocation in a drought year!)

In sum, the Water District is prepared to spend \$5.6 million on a project that will provide storage for nine acre feet of water, in exchange for committing 999 AFY to the ranch annexation area in a normal year, and 1,067 AFY in a drought year. Unless you're the potential developer of the ranch, it doesn't add up.

Concerned? You should be! Tell it to the County (Chris Price, Planning and Development) and LAFCO. (See page 2 for the addresses.)

Also, please consider making a donation to CVA, to help pay for the lawsuit (see page 4). ❖

Carpinteria Valley Association

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The *Carpinteria Valley Association (CVA)* provides education and advocacy on issues related to land use planning, development, and the environment in the Carpinteria Valley and the surrounding south coast region.



How do you fit in?

The title of this newsletter is *CVAction*. The emphasis here is on the “action” part! Our hope is that in providing you with information on key projects and issues affecting the Carpinteria area, you will be motivated to take action.

In most of our articles, we include a specific recommendation on who you should contact on that issue, based on what decision-making body is currently involved. This is the most basic part of the participatory process of community planning. But there is so much more that you can do! To fully understand an issue requires much more information than we can fit in one newsletter. We invite you to contact us regarding any issue that you feel strongly about. We want to hear your thoughts. We can help you research the issue further, and fully participate in the public process. Return the form below to let us know your interests.

We hope you see value in the work of CVA. Although we are an all-volunteer organization, we do have expenses. Please fill out the form below, and return it with your check for \$5 to join CVA. Your membership allows us to continue our work. Be sure to include your email address if you have one. Email is a very timely (and cheap) way for us to update you on important issues. We promise a low volume of messages and no spam!

An additional urgent financial need we have is funding for our lawsuit against the Water District. Our goal is to get an adequate EIR that fully analyzes the impacts to the community of the proposed project. This is absolutely essential to make fully informed decisions. Unfortunately, this lawsuit costs money. We hope that you understand the importance of this issue, and that you are able to make a contribution to help cover these costs.

In addition to money, it takes many volunteers to help CVA accomplish its work. We need volunteer help in many areas, some skilled, some not. Use the form to let us know how you might be able to help out.

You'll see on the form that CVA has an educational arm called *Carpinteria Valley Foundation (CVF)*. CVF focuses on public education on issues and on the public process. Our belief is that if the public is fully informed about important issues, and knows how and when to make their voices heard, then our public officials will know what the community wants and needs. If we don't tell them, then we get what they *think* we need! Please consider making an additional donation to CVF to help fund our educational efforts.

You can see that there are a multitude of ways for you to take action. It is up to you to help determine the future of our community. ❖



I want to join CVA!

- I want to join CVA! I am enclosing \$5 for my annual membership
- Enclosed is my contribution to support the CVA lawsuit against the Carpinteria Water District to force the preparation of an adequate EIR for the proposed annexation: \$ _____

Note: Contributions to Carpinteria Valley Association are not deductible as a charitable donation for tax purposes.

Additionally, I want to support the public education efforts of the Carpinteria Valley Foundation. Enclosed is my donation:

- \$20 Individual \$25 Family \$50 Supporter \$100 Benefactor Other: \$ _____

Note: Contributions to Carpinteria Valley Foundation are deductible as charitable donations for tax purposes.

I am interested in the following issues:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara County planning issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Open field agriculture issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpinteria City planning issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Water issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Carpinteria General Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Venoco's facility / general oil development & monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use of lands owned by the Carpinteria School District | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental impacts of development (e.g., traffic, parking, air quality, biological issues, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific development proposal: _____ | |

I want to help! I will help on:

- Technical analysis of environmental documents
- Attending public meetings
- Telephoning and/or mailing
- Database maintenance
- Website development and maintenance

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Mail this form to us at: **Carpinteria Valley Association**
P.O. Box 27
Carpinteria, CA 93014

Thanks!

We're on the web!
www.silcom.com/~cva/

