



CVAAction

The Newsletter of the Carpinteria Valley Association

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Offshore Oil Drilling

For more than a century, Carpinterians have firmly protested oil production off our coast. It started when the world's first offshore drilling rigs began churning the waters off Carpinteria and Summerland.

But on Aug. 8 this year, two Carpinteria City Council members broke ranks. They declined to add their names to a letter urging more environmental study before the federal government can extend the life of 36 undeveloped federal oil leases off the California central coast. Two of the leases, owned by Venoco, are off Carpinteria. The others are elsewhere off the coasts of Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo counties.

The two Carpinteria dissenters are Gregory Gandrud and Joe Armendariz. The letter urged the California Coastal Commission to oppose extending the leases without more information on possible environmental damage. The contested leases were initially granted from 1968 to 1984. The five-year leases have been kept alive by federal extensions. They are in federal waters, but the state com-



mission has authority under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act to review and officially object to drilling and production permits if it finds them inconsistent with the California Coastal Plan.

Gandrud was quoted in the Coastal View News as saying the letter reflected reports based on mumbo jumbo, not science. The issues are complex, but have been argued for many years and are not unfathomable. It is indeed science that dissenters are demanding in the federal environmental reports. Armendariz was quoted as saying that the letter was "an effort by the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) ... to ask the City of Carpinteria to get on board their political agenda, which is to basically force consumers to buy alternative forms of energy."

Although EDC did in fact initiate the request for complete information and public disclosure, the lawsuit insisting on state review of federal lease extension was actually brought by the state of California. EDC became one of several interveners supporting the state. It had nothing to do with forcing "consumers to buy alternative forms of energy." It was about whether the state had authority to review the federal plan and determine whether it is consistent with state coastal policies.

After both the federal district court and the federal appeals court held for the state, the U. S. Interior Department agreed to prepare an environmental report to indicate whether the lease extensions would be

consistent with state coastal protection laws. Such a report was drafted and presented to the state Coastal Commission. The letter before the Carpinteria City Council urged the commission to find the report inadequate.

The County Board of Supervisors, and the city councils of Santa Barbara and Goleta opposed the federal environmental report by unanimous votes, or 15-0. Carpinteria joined the majority, but by a 3-2 vote.

On Aug. 13, the Coastal Commission unanimously agreed that the federal impact report was inadequate, largely because it reviewed impacts only of initial steps toward development. The Interior Department had said that later reviews would cover subsequent development. The commission said it wanted the entire process reviewed up front. In a separate but directly related action, the next day the federal district court in Oakland supported the commission's position.

Led by Carpinterians, California coastal communities have historically and consistently opposed offshore oil activity, and for good reason. We cherish clean waterfronts for their economic, natural and cultural values, none of which have been enhanced by the oil industry. How is it possible that two of the five members of the Carpinteria City Council are so extraordinarily disconnected from the community? We can't explain it. But we do know that this action underscores the need for the community to maintain an ongoing dialog with our elected officials to ensure they clearly understand our positions and our vision for our community. ❖

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See inside for updates on many important issues!

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Water District Proceeds with Controversial Tank

Despite public protest over ballooning costs, the Carpinteria Valley Water District (CVWD) is proceeding with its 3-million-gallon storage tank on Rancho Monte Alegre. On Aug. 24, the board awarded the tank contract to Union Engineering. The tank project, originally estimated at \$5.4 million in 2003, is now estimated to cost \$12 million. Not only has the cost changed, but CVWD's rationale for the tank has also changed. It was originally promoted as necessary to store water during the allegedly state-mandated covering of 2 district reservoirs. However, the work on Carpinteria Reservoir is now complete, and the Ortega project, due to begin this month, will be completed long before the tank project. As recently as July, CVWD Manager Charles Hamilton was advancing a second rationale: the need for a place to "blend" district water, which comes from 3 sources: wells, Cachuma, and State Water. Blending would dilute the "disinfection byproducts" in Cachuma water. However, in July the *Santa Barbara News-Press* published a statement by a local engineer with the Drinking Water Division of the California Dept. of Health Services, who doubted the tank would be effective for this purpose. In his opinion, a tank high in the foothills would be too far away from the beach, where the district's main system is located. "How they can mix the water, I don't know. Maybe 10% of it will get blended," he

said.

Since then, the rationale for the tank has shifted to storage. However, the 3 million gallons (9 acre feet) of storage is a drop in the bucket compared to the estimated 999 acre feet that CVWD will be obliged to supply annually to Rancho Monte Alegre as part of the package deal they struck. If ratepayers are upset about footing the costs for the tank, they will be even more irate as the conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ranch's owners and CVWD are played out over the next few years. From the start, CVA protested CVWD's linking the tank to annexation of the ranch. We unsuccessfully sued the district in 2003, maintaining that the project's EIR did not address the growth-inducing potential of guaranteeing a reliable water supply to more than 2,000 acres of Rancho Monte Alegre. Predictably, the ranch sold shortly after securing this water, and plans are now underway for developing its 49 legal parcels.

It is worth reiterating what we told LAFCO in May of 2003, in a last-ditch effort to stop this project. Based on the EIR and the Memorandum of Understanding between the ranch (RMA) and CVWD, we prepared an analysis of "Who Gets What." With the ranch desperate for water in order to develop, CVWD was in a strong negotiat-



(see "Water Tank" on pg. 3)

Harley-Davidson Expansion Update

CVA continues to follow the expansion plans for the Santa Barbara Harley-Davidson project. Harley-Davidson is proposing two story additions at both the eastern and western ends of their existing one story building. There would also be a café to serve about 20 people. Harley Davidson has just purchased some property from Caltrans for additional parking.

After quite a few meetings between Harley-Davidson and the Santa Barbara County Board of Architectural Review, it was decided that the County Planning Commission needs first to give approval before the Board of Architectural Review reviews this project.

After receiving many complaints from neighbors and because of health and safety concerns, the County succeeded in preventing Harley-Davidson from originating any more events at their Via Real location. However, CVA along with the Padaro Association and the Polo Club have been very concerned about the ongoing violations of their as-built permit – which does not permit outdoor sales nor more than 50% of their property to be in sales. Currently the service operation is next door at 3651 Via Real. Because of these continuing violations a meeting was held with 1st District Supervisor Salud Carbajal and his planning staff to hear our concerns. Unfortunately, the County currently has a policy of not issuing Notices of Violation while an applicant is in the process of submitting a plan. These violations have been going on for 3 years and the neighbors at the west end of Carpinteria Valley are very concerned about the noxious effects caused by the traffic and noise generated by large numbers of customized motorcycles. Discussions are currently being held with County Counsel regarding these ongoing violations. We were also able to present our case for the need to have traffic and noise studies conducted as part of the initial study.

After the traffic and noise studies are completed, the planner Joddi Leipner will publish an initial study around mid-November and will make the determination whether this project warrants a negative declaration or an EIR. There will be a 30-day public review period to review the adequacy of the document. It should go to the Planning Commission late January or early February.

Besides the ongoing violations and the aesthetic, traffic, and noise concerns regarding the expansion, CVA is very concerned about the precedent of allowing a motorcycle dealership in a coastal Commercial Highway (“CH”) zoning. The original application in 2002 stated that the business was “predominately service to the traveling motorcyclist...with a minor sales component.” This was the argument used in convincing the County Planning Department that for the first time motorcycle sales might be allowed in a CH zoning. Currently Harley-Davidson advertises itself as the No. 1 used motorcycle dealership in California. Obviously, sales seem to have become a much larger part of the business, and their service consists of increasing the decibel level of purchased motorcycles.

Any concerns or comments you have should be addressed to:

Joddi Leipner, Jleipner@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
568-2514

Copies can also be sent to:

Anne Almy, Anne@co.santa-barbara.ca.us ❖



Did you know...

Almost every activity in our community has some type of effect on our ocean water quality: oil & gas from cars, pesticides & fertilizers from our yards, dog droppings and litter left to wash into our streams and ocean. Do you really want to swim in all that???

Torrey Pine Threatened

Efforts to save the 118-year-old Wardholme Torrey Pine located on Carpinteria Avenue from overdevelopment are underway. STOP (Save the Old Pine), an organization headed by Kathleen Reddington has been formed, and a committee is being established to work toward turning the 2.28 acre parcel into a city park.

In June the property's owner Scott Smigle and Peikert Group Architects proposed plans to the Carpinteria Planning Commission for the site including 21 condominiums, three live/work units, and a 2,100 square foot commercial building. The commissioners voiced concerns regarding potential traffic increases, the high density and large scale of the residential buildings, and the impact to the historic Torrey Pine. The commissioners sent the project designers back to the drawing board. Commissioner Chuck McQuarry said, "I really think the citizens should have more impact about what goes on here."

In August, Reddington presented a petition signed by nearly 900 local residents to the Carpinteria City Council. The council was receptive and wished her well in her endeavor. Reddington and those area residents who signed the petition believe the citizens of Carpinteria would be much better served if the area surrounding the pine is preserved as open space and established as a city park honoring the landmark tree. Smigle says he's "willing, open, and interested in what the community has to say about the future of this property." Fundraising efforts are currently underway, and STOP is hoping to raise enough funds to buy the property. If you are interested in joining STOP or contributing, email CVA or send us the form on page 4 and we'll put you in touch with STOP. ❖



Here Comes Lagunitas (Look Out!!)

This fall or winter the City of Carpinteria is poised to approve the Lagunitas Mixed Use development project. The project proposes to develop 74 housing units and 145,000 square feet of office park space on land historically in use by agriculture. The City has recently completed a project study requested by Cal/Trans. Still to be resolved by the City are selecting the specific mitigation (i.e. which infrastructure design) for local road traffic, and updating actual traffic data from 1999.

CVA has been involved in the public process on this project since 1999. The project is located on Via Real near the Industrial Park in the eastern end of the city. Many Carpinterians may not be familiar with the project or its impacts. But those impacts will be felt by all Carpinterians. Let's look at the balance sheet and compare what the project promises to provide Carpinteria (as touted by city planners) and what price we will have to pay in terms of impacts.

Purported Benefits

- Traffic circle infrastructure built at Via Real and Route 150
- Four traffic signals to get from one side of the freeway to the other across the Bailard overhead
- Four residential units provided at below median income level
- \$250,000 to support the electric shuttle
- \$250,000 for off-site affordable housing

Impacts

- 2390 additional car trips per day on the freeway and local roads
- Loss of small town charm with new roadway infrastructure and signalization
- Air pollution (Class I impact, as identified by APCD)
- Loss of open agricultural land
- Inadequate project parking

CVA notes several flaws with the traffic analysis that results in the stated 2390 trips per day (as if that isn't bad enough) and CVA feels the real traffic impacts may be much worse. The traffic study is from 1999, and we believe the traffic has gotten worse since then. (Data shows a 10% increase on the freeway from 2000 to 2001, alone.) The City also ignored comments from Caltrans regarding the mishandling of the traffic data.

The project is advertised as “live where you work”, as a novel approach to reduce commuter traffic. The developers agree to market units to local employees for 75 days, but there is no long-term guarantee that people will not want to move from Lagunitas (and keep their job near the project) or change jobs (and still live at Lagunitas).

CVA feels that Carpinteria doesn't get enough out of this deal and the benefits do not outweigh the impacts in terms of increased traffic and loss of small town charm. If you share our concern about this losing proposition, or if you want to learn more, contact us. (You can use the form on page 4 or email us at cva@silcom.com.) ❖



Water Tank

(from page 1)

ing position. However, they and their lawyer appear to have let the ranch set all the terms.

Rancho Monte Alegre gets:

- \$450,000 for a 10-acre parcel created to include the least developable terrain in the vicinity.
- The right to lease back 7 of these 10 acres for \$1 per year per acre, since the tank will only occupy 3 acres.
- \$37,489 per year in exchange for leasing a 4.25-acre parcel to CVWD as a “staging ground” for constructing the tank.
- The right to seek a lot line adjustment to acquire the 7 “surplus” acres back from CVWD “for no additional consideration.”
- A 1.5 mile, 24-ft. wide road to more remote parcels, and a 70-foot x 18 ft. bridge, built by CVWD. RMA will pay for these, but will have bypassed the permitting hurdles and restrictions they would have faced as a private entity seeking to construct this infrastructure.
- Two 200,000-gal. tanks for use by ranch residents only. Again, RMA will pay for these, but will deed them back to CVWD, who will be responsible for their maintenance.
- CVWD water: 999 AFY in a normal year; 1,067 in a drought year. Delivery “guaranteed” to every parcel in the annexation area.

Carpinteria Valley Water District gets:

- A 3-million gallon storage tank (9AF in exchange for committing 999AFY in a normal year, 1,067 in a drought year).
- Responsibility for building the 1.5 mile road to RMA’s more remote parcels, involving blasting sandstone outcroppings, removing oak trees, and building 2,320 linear feet of concrete retaining walls, in some cases 16 feet high.
- Responsibility for installing a 70-foot bridge across Santa Monica Creek, for enhanced access to RMA’s remote parcels.
- Responsibility for delivering water to these parcels.
- Responsibility for building two 200,000 gallon “upper tanks” for the use of RMA only. RMA would pay initial costs, but would deed the tanks back to CVWD, which would be responsible for their maintenance.

The public gets:

- To pay for the District costs associated with this project.
- To have less district water available. In a drought year, estimated allocation to RMA is 97% of our State Water allocation (based on our allocation at the time RMA was annexed, before any potential sales of State Water to other districts)
- Increased development, with its impacts on traffic, air quality, and views.

Recently, CVWD refused offers by state water officials to discuss alternative to the tank. However, after CVA invited Dr. David Spath, Chief of the Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management, Calif. Dept. of Health Services, to come down for a public forum, CVWD sent him a separate invitation. Currently, the plan is for a jointly-hosted meeting on Tues., Nov. 15.

Meanwhile, CVWD has built the road to the tank site, and Union Engineering reportedly began work on the tank in late September. On Sept. 21 CVA presented CVWD with nearly 600 signatures on petitions demanding a moratorium on rate increases, gathered by a grassroots network of concerned citizens. However, since

Timm Co. Proposes 25 New Homes Between Linden Ave. and Franklin Creek

A neighborhood group and, separately, the Carpinteria Creek Committee have appealed City approval of a Timm Co. residential project to the Coastal Commission, requesting modification of the proposal. The Commission will hold a hearing in a month or two to consider both appellants' objections. The developer has included a required 50-ft setback (for structures) from Franklin Creek's top-of-bank, in which vegetation must be limited to native trees and shrubs.

In addition to appeal issues, a Carpinteria Creeks Preservation Program (adopted in 2004) includes a new policy focusing on Franklin Creek, which borders the Timm development. It reads: The City "shall consider evaluation of feasibility" of restoration of sloping earthen banks of Franklin Creek. The cement box-channel was imposed after the 1969 flood.

Cement removal and restoration of a natural environment along the 200-ft project's stretch of the creek (and a longer extent of Franklin Creek Park on the west) are now subjects for discussion. The Carpinteria Creek Committee is initiating consultation on feasibility of restoration among City officials, hydrologist-engineering experts, and Flood Control staff. Possible positive results include cement removal and restoration that increases flood capacity, therefore slowing storm flow, and a small riparian forest corridor that would invite foraging birds and other wildlife.

CVA supports and thanks the Carpinteria Creek Committee for their efforts in this and related issues. ❖

the next rate increase is not scheduled until next summer, CVWD’s attorney, Chip Wullbrandt, termed them “moot.” Members of CVA and spokespersons of the citizens’ network have been invited to meet with CVWD’s Budget & Finance Committee, but no date has been set. Between debts incurred from securing State Water 15 years ago and money borrowed for the various current projects, CVWD owes close to \$100 million—a staggering amount for a district this size. As board president Fred Lemere said recently, there is “no secret magic wand” to bring money in; “it has to come from the ratepayers.”

Increasing the public’s non-confidence in CVWD is the recent discovery that the state did NOT require the covering of Carpinteria and Ortega Reservoirs, the starting point for this whole mess. Jon Merkle of the California Environmental Protection Agency said in July that “We have not issued any orders to the CVWD for any reason related to the quality of their drinking water... Nor has the Department of Health Services told us that Carpinteria has a problem or is even approaching a problem.” The two reservoir covering projects have already cost the district millions more than originally estimated.

Under pressure from CVA and other concerned citizens, CVWD has finally acknowledged the glaring conflict of interest in having the same lawyer as the new owners of Rancho Monte Alegre: Chip Wullbrandt of Price, Postel, and Parma. In late September CVWD hired a different attorney to handle its dealings with RMA, while the ranch has done likewise for its dealings with CVWD. However, the fact that Mr. Wullbrandt still represents RMA on “land use” issues and also represents Montecito Water District is a bit too close for comfort for many observers. They point to the “giveaway” by CVWD in the Memorandum of Understanding described above. “If that’s Chip Wullbrandt looking out for the best interests of the Carpinteria Water District BEFORE he was hired by Rancho Monte Alegre,” said one observer, “it’s time for CVWD to wake up and get someone different for all their transactions.”

A lot of this damage cannot be undone. But it’s still not too late to demand accountability and openness from CVWD. If you agree with us that CVWD needs to change its mode of operation, contact us so that together we can perform our duties as citizens of the district. If we can genuinely work together with the district, we may find some solutions. ❖

CVA Farm Tour Offers Insights

Participants attending CVA’s June 11 tour of local agriculture gained insight into the role of farming in this valley, past and present. The group, which included State Assemblyman Pedro Nava and First District Supervisor Salud Carbajal, toured the Reiter Brothers’ organic strawberry farm at the former Parsons Airfield, the Bill Horton avocado ranch, and the Brown family’s California Tropics.

Standing in the middle of 40 acres of strawberries, staff members at Reiter Brothers explained the advantages of organic vs. non-organic farming, and let tour participants taste the result—slightly smaller but tastier fruit. They explained that the parcel at the eastern end of the Carpinteria Valley has a microclimate ideally suited for this operation, distinctly different from the climate in Oxnard, where the company has extensive berry fields. Early in the season, the Carpinteria fruit is sold to local specialty groceries, while at the end of the season it is destined for jam. The Reiter family has been in the berry business for three generations, with operations in northern California and beyond. They are currently experimenting with blackberries for the market. All too soon, it was time for the tour to move on to the Bill Horton avocado ranch.

Bill Horton descends from the Bailards and the Franklins, who came to Carpinteria to farm shortly after the Civil War. His acreage north of Via Real near Bailard Avenue has been in the family for generations. The tour group gathered on a ranch road running between towering 60-year-old trees on one side and a newer orchard on the other. Carl Stucky, member of the County Agricultural Advisory Board and manager of the Horton Ranch, spoke to the group about avocado farming. He, too, emphasized the uniqueness of the Carpinteria Valley in terms of soil and microcli-

mate, making in ideal for agriculture. As he spoke, the Hortons’ dog, “shapely” from eating fallen avocados, circulated among the crowd.

Traveling through private agricultural roads, the group regained Casitas Pass Road near Lions Club Park, and continued east to California Tropics, where they were welcomed by Jonathan Brown. After a lunch on the porch of the classic barn-style packing house, the visitors heard more local ranching history. Brown described how ancestors of both his parents were attracted to Carpinteria by its reputation as an ideal spot for agriculture, and how the land on which the present operation is located was owned first by one forebear and then another, starting in 1871. The Brown family has agricultural records for the ranch that date back to 1917. Ancestor Henry Fish had the Fish Seed Company, which shipped Carpinteria Lima beans around the world in the early twentieth century. Other crops previously grown on the present ranch include apricots, olives, lemons, oranges, limes and tomatoes. California Tropics was formed by Rosemary Carton Brown and her children in 1973. Current crops include cherimoyas, sapotes, pineapple guavas, and passion fruit. The cherimoyas are exported as far as Japan, where they are a great delicacy.

Not included in this year’s tour, but touched upon in CVA’s illustrated tour guide were various organic vegetable operations: the Whitneys’ blueberries and tomatoes, Tom Shepard’s salad greens, and the Coleman family’s organic vegetables.

Participants in the tour came away with a new appreciation for the long tradition of farming in Carpinteria, still alive and well, and essential to our identity as a small beach town in an agricultural valley. ❖

Carpinteria Valley Association

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The *Carpinteria Valley Association (CVA)* was founded in 1964, and continues its mission to preserve and enhance the rural beauty of the Carpinteria Valley, especially its open field agriculture, and to maintain the charm of Carpinteria and Summerland as small beach towns. CVA strives to accomplish these goals by providing education and advocacy on issues related to land use, planning, and community development with an emphasis on the natural resources and environment of the Carpinteria Valley, Summerland, and the surrounding region.

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“You should have been here ten years ago.”

A few years ago, singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett related the following observation about Key West, Florida:

“It seems every place I go to get away these days, somebody always says, ‘You should have been here ten years ago.’ All these years later, there is still a soul to this place. There are those, of course, who don’t see it and never will. They are focused on land development, get rich quick schemes, and other carpetbagger ploys. We seem to spend a lot more time than we should have to to keep these thieves and predators at bay, but that is life in the tropics.”

That is also life right here in Carpinteria. We do spend more time than we should have to working to preserve the soul of this area. But what other choice do we have? Preserving and protecting the community we love is always worth the effort! This is why we invite you to work with us toward this goal. Maybe one of the issues we discuss in this newsletter strikes a chord with you, and you want to learn more or take action. Or maybe there is an issue that is important to you that we don’t discuss here. In either case, use the form below or contact us by email to let us know your thoughts.

We need to work together to make sure that ten years from now, we will not be saying “You should have been here ten years ago.” ❖



“On the other hand, once we’ve destroyed our environment, we needn’t be concerned about it any longer.”

I want to join CVA!

- I want to join CVA! I am enclosing \$5 for my annual membership (Our annual renewal date is June 1, so it’s time to renew if you haven’t yet this year!)**

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:

- Santa Barbara County planning issues
- Carpinteria City planning issues
- City of Carpinteria General Plan
- Venoco’s facility / general oil development & monitoring
- Use of lands owned by the Carpinteria School District
- Greenhouses
- Rancho Monte Alegre
- Harley-Davidson expansion
- Lagunitas mixed-use development
- Specific development proposal: _____
- Preservation of historic Torrey Pine
- Open field agriculture issues
- Water issues
- Affordable housing issues
- Zoning enforcement
- Environmental impacts of development (e.g., traffic, parking, air quality, biological issues, etc.)

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!



On our website, you can find a full-color version of this newsletter, as well as past editions!