Agreement Reached!

This is it! After more than two decades of tireless efforts by you, our members, we are excited to announce a breakthrough agreement that clears the way for the purchase and permanent preservation of the last remaining 11.1 acres of the Bolsa Chica Mesa. Signal Landmark has agreed to sell the Ridge and Goodell properties for preservation if the funds can be secured. This agreement represents a milestone in our hard-fought efforts, and your support is now more critical than ever as we enter the next chapter in our goal to preserve this extraordinary culturally and biologically significant open space. This is our chance to save Ridge and Goodell!

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The Road To Acquisition

By Kim Kolpin, Executive Director
And Jennifer Thomas, BCLT President

“Following 19 months of negotiations, we now have a path forward to full acquisition of Ridge and Goodell.”

Following many, many years of extraordinarily hard work and passionate commitment from all of you, we are thrilled to announce that the Land Trust is on the cusp of realizing its dream of permanently preserving the last remaining threatened acres of the Bolsa Chica mesa. In June of 2014 we championed an impressive argument to the developer’s plans to build on the Ridge property which resulted in the City and landowner withdrawing their application before the Coastal Commission. You have not heard anything about the Ridge or Goodell properties since. The reason was that soon after the Commission hearing Signal Landmark requested settlement negotiations. For the past 19 months we have been involved in intense negotiations working towards an agreement which will protect this precious piece of Bolsa Chica. We are now very close to fulfilling this part of our mission.

This multi layered agreement with Signal Landmark and the city establishes a real path for the preservation of the 11.1 remaining acres, all of both the Ridge and Goodell properties. Facilitated by Terry Watt, the agreement is a compilation of legal documents which took a tremendous effort by our staff, Board of Directors, and our attorneys Michelle Black and Doug Carstens to ensure the most positive outcome of preservation. While the agreement is a major accomplishment, we must now undertake and meet the challenge of raising funds to purchase the property from Signal. The Trust for Public Land, a highly respected -- and importantly, extremely successful -- nonprofit organization stepped in early in the negotiations. We are very pleased and honored that TPL shares our vision of preserving this unique and significant part of Bolsa Chica and will be orchestrating the ‘heavy lift’ of raising the majority of the funds to purchase the property. You’ll learn more about TPL on Page 3.

A critical moment occurred during the negotiations talks, when the landowners agreed to work towards preservation of the site and became willing sellers. However, as we are all aware, this coastal property will be expensive to acquire. As a result, the agreement contains a ‘dual track’ approach that allows residential development on 2.5 acres, ONLY IF efforts to raise funds to acquire the entire parcel prove unsuccessful. The remaining property, 8.6 acres, will be protected and preserved under this agreement.

Signal Landmark will support and assist in the acquisition effort, as all parties involved want the acquisition to succeed.

And today, we need your support to finally, once and for all, save Ridge and Goodell.

This is where the rubber meets the road. It promises to be an exciting journey . . . and we are so thankful that we’re all on it together.
Trust for Public Land: A Tested, and Trusted, Partner

By Gina Fromer
California State Director for The Trust for Public Land

Since it was founded in 1972, The Trust for Public Land has partnered with local community organizations like the Bolsa Chica Land Trust to acquire and preserve millions of acres across America.

The lands and special places we save come in virtually all shapes and sizes and include wetlands, working farms and ranches, lands with historical and cultural significance, forests, watersheds and others. To date, we’ve helped create and protect more than 5,000 special places.

As a member or supporter of BCLT, you certainly don’t need me to explain the importance of preserving the last unprotected land on the mesa; you’ve lived and breathed -- and I would bet dreamed about -- that particular effort for many years.

The citizens of Huntington Beach and Orange County -- and the generations of citizens that will follow them -- will never forget your diligence and the sacrifices you have made in ensuring the land, and its cultural and natural treasures will be there for generations to come.

Across the nation, we hear from grateful men, women and children like yourselves, who are enjoying the benefits of our collaborative work. On our website, www.tpl.org we encourage people to post photos and comments about their experiences on the land.

“We all need nature, our children most of all!”

“It makes my city cool.”

“Sometimes I need to see the simple beauty in this world.”

“It’s a beautiful way to learn about life and respect.”

With a highly talented and dedicated team working from across the country, The Trust for Public Land is excited to partner with BCLT to bring the added resources, and expertise needed to bring this inspiring effort over the finish line.

Perhaps most important of all, we bring a decades long commitment to the places Americans love and enjoy, and your efforts over many years make it abundantly clear that you and your BCLT colleagues do as well.

Inspired by that shared passion and commitment, my TPL colleagues and I look forward to partnering with you and ultimately celebrating our hard-earned success.

We’ll see you on the mesa.
Our Vision, Closer Than Ever to Reality

This historic agreement brings BCLT’s vision for this property closer within reach than ever. We originally shared a concept for what the land could look like in this illustrative designed by Guy Stivers of Stivers & Associates. As you can see, we envision a beautiful passive park offering expansive views of the ocean. It is BCLT’s collective vision . . . one of open space and wildlife, of thriving habitat, of respect for the land’s 9,000-year-old archaeology and a cultural landscape where tribal members can connect with their ancestral homeland. It is an inspiring vision that, working together, we can finally make a reality.

This is just a concept. Now, we have much to do to see it through. The land must first be acquired. Then environmentally and scientifically sound plans will be created so that this land will support and sustain native wildlife habitat and protect its cultural significance. A cultural node for Native American gatherings and public trails will be designed and implemented. This land will for once and for all be free from the threat of development. This is our shared legacy, our mission, and we are excited to bring it to life.
Why the Remaining Undeveloped Land on the Bolsa Chica Mesa is Worth Saving

By Patricia Martz, Ph.D.

The Ridge and Goodell properties on the Bolsa Chica Mesa contain all that remains of an archaeological site that is known throughout the world as the place of origins for the mysterious cogged stones. The Bolsa Chica Mesa was settled by the ancestors of the Gabrielino/Tongva and Juaneño/Acjachemen 9000 years ago and the people thrived there for thousands of years in spite of climate and sea level changes. For this reason, the area is considered as sacred by the Native American descendants and is important for archaeological research. Prehistoric settlements of this antiquity are extremely rare in California. In recognition of its significance, the cogged stone site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A as the type site for the cogged stones and under criterion D because it holds valuable information regarding California prehistory.

Archaeology as it is practiced today is a destructive process and it is important that a site of this significance is preserved for a future state of the art that will be less destructive and will use advanced remote sensing technology to identify and study the past. This is important because it is respectful of Native American religious and cultural values and because after over thirty years of archaeology, there are many questions about this ancient society that remain unanswered. For example, we still don’t know how the cogged stones were used and the role they played in this ancient society.

In summary, Bolsa Chica holds a precious non-renewable resource that we need to protect for future generations. A people without a past have no future.
Buts Chica is my ancestral home, as it is for the 500 members of my tribal council in San Gabriel, and many more in the neighboring tribal communities here in Southern California. Together, we are the descendants of the people who first settled at Bolsa Chica 9000 years ago. As one of the first communities in North America, our ancestors created a community, worshiped, lived in peace and returned to the Earth here. Our culture and spirituality embraces nature and the specific locations of our tribal homes. The sense of place is deeply significant. As evidenced by the artifacts of my people, especially the coggled stones, Bolsa Chica's relationship to the moon, sun, water, and sky are all important parts braided together with the lives of those who came before us.

We are down to these last remaining 11 acres. What may seem a small piece of land, is tremendously important to us. It is one of the last links we have to our cultural landscape. Our villages and ancestral homes have been wiped away. Tiny pieces of Puvunga in Long Beach, Hellman Ranch in Seal Beach, this land at Bolsa Chica, and the land still threatened at Banning Ranch are all my people have left to hold on to of what was once our villages and communities dotted along peaceful shores where everyday life and ceremony defined our culture.

This land, our sacred land, is precious. I look forward to the day soon, where my people may come freely to these 11 acres to reflect, pray, sing, connect and be in harmony with our ancestors on our ancestral home.

“How wonderful that this most important of historic locations with its many archaeological sites will be saved for future generations! Some of the most important Native American sites in Southern California are here. They are an important part of California’s long cultural heritage and places of great ritual and spiritual importance to local tribal communities. Future generations will salute the far-sightedness that has preserved these special places for posterity.”

Brian Fagan,
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology,
University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of Before California.
We Have Big News To Share!

Open for the details!

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