



CVA Action

The Newsletter of the Carpinteria Valley Association

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Onshore Oil Drilling in Carpinteria?

What would Carpinteria look like if citizens had not helped to prevent an oil refinery on the bluffs in the late 1960's? Imagine if Carpinterians had not joined to purchase the bluffs as a public park five years ago and, instead, the bluffs had been built-out. What would your traffic be like if we hadn't said "NO" to Costco on Via Real?

The nation's ravenous thirst for oil has reached Carpinteria and poses the next major threat to our way of life. With oil now costing over \$60 a barrel, Venoco proposes to drill for oil within their plant site behind City Hall and above the harbor seal rookery. Called "Paradon," this project will construct a 175 foot tall tower to slant drill into various offshore leases until the year 2020.

Paradon is expected to produce 11,000 barrels of oil per day, and the production of gas by the facility is proposed to increase by ten times. Total production of oil until the year 2020 will be about 23 million barrels. At our current rate of consumption, the total output of Paradon will provide the entire country with about one day's supply of gasoline.

What will Paradon be like? Paradon is like having a huge oil platform in our own backyard. Given today's knowledge of health, safety, and environmental risks, neither Paradon nor the Venoco plant should be permitted so close to conflicting land use areas. Paradon will negatively impact residential neighborhoods, visitor serving commercial, City Hall, the Carpinteria harbor seal rookery, our public parks, and public beaches.

With no structure in Santa Barbara County taller, the 175' **drilling tower** will dominate the skyline and define the character of Carpinteria. Was this your vision for 2020?

There will be increased **air pollution**. According to the Rainforest Action Network, one offshore rig can pollute the air as much as 7,000 cars driving 50 miles per day. This data is likely related to a diesel engine, and Paradon proposes an electric engine with a diesel backup. But there will be additional new sources of air pollution planned (associated diesel engines, gas flares, etc.) and unplanned (leaking joints, valves, etc. and spills). The amount of pollution from each new source needs to be studied.

There will be increased **noise** and vibration impacts to the community and to the harbor seals during the construction of the drilling tower.

These negative impacts to our health, safety, environmental, and visual aesthetics may also have a severe negative impact on property values in the adjacent neighborhoods.

The City is currently planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Venoco proposal. A scoping hearing is tentatively set for April 18. Please attend and tell the City what issues or risks you feel should be studied in the EIR. You can contact the City's Community Development Department for exact time and location. CVA will be holding a

citizens information meeting prior to the scoping hearing. This meeting will be held on April 6, 7:00 pm in the Carpinteria Arts & Lecture Center (the west room of the Carpinteria Library building on Carpinteria Ave). Come and find out about the project. Help save our town from the next crazy project.

It has been mentioned that some citizens may favor this project because it will let us get "everything we want over at Venoco." CVA assumes this means both tax money and upgrades in safety systems that will improve the plant's safety record and regulatory violations. CVA wonders why we shouldn't get those safety improvements now rather than making them contingent on even more oil and gas production and even more risks? What CVA wants is not more oil and gas exploration and development near sensitive areas like the seal rookery and residential neighborhoods, but less.

Paradon does promise to provide money for the City coffers. You need to ask yourself: "Is the money worth the environmental and safety risks? You need to ask yourself: "Is our town for sale?" Think back on

(see "Oil Drilling" on pg. 2)

For more information on Venoco's Paradon Project and what you can do about it, attend the CVA-sponsored citizens information meeting:

Thursday, April 6, 7:00 pm
Carpinteria Arts & Lecture Center
 (the west room of the Carpinteria Public Library at 5141 Carpinteria Ave.)

See inside for updates on many important issues!

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The Horton Legacy for Carpinteria

It is not very often a family can give a gift to their community that will last forever. But Bill Horton and Glenna Berry-Horton have made it happen in the Carpinteria Valley. Our community cherishes this agricultural valley and the foothills that frame it. Many urban areas obliterate their foothills with development. This will not happen here thanks to the Hortons.

They have just put 104 acres into an agriculture and conservation easement, through the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. This guarantees that their scenic and productive ranch will remain undeveloped in perpetuity! To add to the significance of this gift, the Hortons' western neighbor is Rancho Monte Alegre where the Land Trust is also working to preserve 3,150 acres of orchard land and 2,770 acres of chaparral as a wild land reserve. The Horton's easement not only covers the foothills, but extends to the top of the mountain range behind it. But the public benefit goes even beyond this.

These two property owners and the County Parks Department are working to open over six miles of public riding and hiking trails, including the historic Franklin Trail. Bill Horton is a descendant of the Franklin family, who were early settlers in our valley. They left many benefits for future generations, but none as fantastic as this legacy.

Thank you Bill and Glenna. You are, indeed, valuable benefactors for this Valley! ❖



Harley-Davidson Expansion

Vroom, vroom!

If hearing this motorcycle noise above the noise of Hwy 101 is disturbing to you, you are not alone.

The initial study (a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration) of the Santa Barbara Harley-Davidson expansion project at 3501 Via Real has just been completed. A public comment meeting was held on March 20, and CVA was one of many individuals and groups that expressed concerns about the adequacy of the analysis and the project overall.

CVA, in conjunction with the Padaro Association and Las Canchas (representing the Polo Field Condominiums), has met with 1st District Supervisor Salud Carbajal twice to discuss our concerns. We have been concerned about parking congestion, traffic volume, traffic safety hazards, and loud motorcycle noise, and have requested noise and traffic studies to be completed. We have also expressed our concerns regarding the health and safety of the rural neighborhoods that are routinely affected by this business. We have complained about ongoing violations of their permit regarding tent structures, outdoor sales, and that more than 50% of the property is being used for motorcycles sales.

Also in conjunction with the two other organiza-

tions, CVA is currently in the process of asking the Board of Supervisors to delineate clearly what is allowed in "CH" (highway commercial) zoning in Santa Barbara County. We don't feel that vehicle sales should be allowed in CH zoning. Nowhere else in the county are vehicle sales allowed in CH zones; this zoning is supposed to be for visitor serving needs.

There are a number of ways you can take action on this issue:

- You can still provide written comments until April 7 on the Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project. The project manager in charge of this project is Robert Dostalek (568-2054).
- Return the form on page 4 letting us know you are concerned about this project. We'll keep you updated on when it will be heard by the County Planning Commission (probably in May or in June).
- Lieutenant Fotheringham from the Sheriff's department advised community members to call the County Sheriff's Department (Carpinteria office 684-4561) regarding excessively loud motorcycles. ❖

The John King Resort

John King has submitted to the City the latest version of his grandiose plans for his resort on Bluffs 3. (This is the bluffs area east of Carpinteria Bluffs Park, near the intersection of Hwy 150 and Carpinteria Avenue.) The City is perplexed because there are so many unanswered questions in the application. Evidently the developer has assumed that the EIR consultants will steer the plan in the correct direction.

The application does not consider the traffic issues, biological elements, hazardous materials, geological concerns, or many other elements of an acceptable application. Beyond this, the application includes "proposed acquisition" of some Caltrans land and islands between Carpinteria Avenue and the on-ramps and off-ramps to Hwy 101 as parking areas. There is no documentation on when or if the developer can acquire this land. Furthermore, the setback from the edge of the bluffs is only 50 feet, which may not allow for erosion and may not be a wide enough setting for the Coastal Trail that the City has honored along our bluffs.

While the application does not include any kind of traffic study, the latest traffic study done for the Lagunitas development projects the traffic impacts from the King development to be 3,759 daily trips which will impact our nearby intersections to an "F" level of service (the worst). With all these uncertainties, this project will probably be delayed for about a year and hopefully be reduced greatly from the current description.

The present plans would be funny if they weren't so scary. If you want to see whether they make you laugh or cry, the plans are at City Hall for public inspection. CVA will continue to monitor this proposal, and will definitely keep the community updated on its progress. ❖

Oil Drilling (from page 1)

what your small town charm would be like IF we had been lured by tax dollars on those earlier projects – the bluffs, Costco, etc.

In the meantime consider limiting your personal gas consumption by driving only when necessary and car-pooling. Drive at the speed limit to conserve gasoline (& obey the law!) and to increase road safety. Use a fuel-efficient car, if possible.

These actions are all part of being a good neighbor. So is fighting a proposal that promises to negatively impact our community. Come to the CVA information meeting on April 6, and attend the scoping hearing on April 18. Our community needs good neighbors. ❖



Franklin Creek News

Why are public watchdog groups needed, especially in development issues? Here is a little story that unfortunately happens to be true...

Last year, the Timm Company proposed a residential development between Linden Avenue and Franklin Creek. This proposal was approved by the City of Carpinteria, despite significant issues with it. Therefore, the Carpinteria Creek Committee and Franklin Creek Park neighbors appealed the project to the California Coastal Commission.

The major issue in the appeal was that the proposed project did not include the required 50-foot setback from the creek. Thanks to the appeal, the project was modified to implement the required setback, and to install native-plant landscaping that would be protected by a homeowners association.

Another issue with the proposal was the fact that the City did not follow the part of the new Carpinteria Creeks Preservation Program that requires states that the City "shall consider evaluation of feasibility" of restoration of sloping earthen banks of Franklin Creek. The Creek Committee jumped in at its own expense and engaged a hydraulic engineer with expertise in restoring fish habitat. The engineer discouraged removal of the concrete box channel. While a hundred-year flood would slow the flow in a wide natural earthen stream, he warned that flood re-entry into the narrow channel downstream might not provide property protection there. He agreed that a stream diversion into a small natural stream channel, excavated to produce a parallel streambed occupying most of Franklin Creek Park, appears to be feasible. So while this analysis did not end up changing anything in the proposed residential development, it preserved the integrity of the Carpinteria Creeks Preservation Program, and it provided important data for future projects.

Interestingly, a new issue arose during this appeal. The Creek Committee discovered that a new federal flood insurance map showed that a large portion of this residential area would be inundated by a hundred-year flood. Amazingly, this was a surprise to both Timm Company and the Coastal Commission. The resolution was that the floors of a number of houses must be raised a few feet, thus allowing this area to function as a flood plain.

On behalf of the community, as well as the future residents of this development, CVA gives our thanks to the Carpinteria Creek Committee and Franklin Creek Park neighbors for their tireless efforts on this issue.

So why are public watchdog groups needed, especially in development issues? The reason is that all too often, governmental agencies do not apply the relevant requirements or regulations to development proposals. In these cases, it is up to local citizens to step in and ensure the public's rights are preserved. ❖

A Big *Thank-You* to Carpinteria Valley Historical Society

956 Maple Avenue

for their generous help in handling
sales of our self-published book:

Carpinteria Bungalows and Distinctive Houses

Seal Watch

Each year from December to May, our local harbor seal colony near the Carpinteria Bluffs Park becomes a tourist destination as visitors come from near and far to see our resident seals and their newborn pups. During this period, the beach is closed 750 feet on either side of the rookery to avoid disturbance of the seals.

Local volunteers with an organization called Seal Watch spend countless hours monitoring the seals, documenting numbers and activities of the seals, educating visitors, and working to prevent incidents that might endanger the seals. CVA thanks these dedicated volunteers for their hard work to protect this unique resource, and for sharing their enthusiasm with visitors.

We are only partway through this year's season, but Seal Watch reported a high count of 265 adult seals and 53 pups on the beach in February. They also documented over 4500 visitors in just the month of February! Many of these visitors are local, but a surprising number are visiting from out of the area, sometimes even from the other side of the world.

We are very lucky that the seals have chosen Carpinteria as their home. And we are also very lucky that these Seal Watch volunteers are here and are so generous with their time. ❖



Lagunitas is Back — Again!

Just when you thought the Lagunitas project had disappeared, it appears to have returned. This development consists of 140,000 sq. ft. of industry and 75 houses on 25 acres. It is located next to the Industrial Park east of Carpinteria. These 25 acres have been rezoned five times since 1980, but the land has never been used for anything but agriculture.

The first development for this area was proposed in 1997, and was all industrial. The EIR had two class 1 ("significant and unavoidable") environmental impacts: traffic and pollution. The City then decided to change the zoning and put a residential overlay on it. They also asked the developer to change the plan to be half industrial and half residential. So, a supplemental EIR was written, and then a supplement to that supplement. These new documents specified that in order for the City to endure 2390 more daily traffic trips, a roundabout needed to be built.



The City Council had the first reading in August 2003 and was planning to approve the development in October after receiving the OK from Caltrans on the traffic mitigation. As the traffic numbers climbed over the past decade, as we have all observed, Caltrans stated that the mitigation was not acceptable. When the City returned to Caltrans for the second time, the City was again turned down. The next step the City took

was to travel to Sacramento and lobby Caltrans to OK the plan. At that time, Caltrans said that it needed an alternative roundabout to the one the City wanted at Highway 101 and Highway 150. This alternative turned out to be at Hwy 150 and the Via Real dogleg.

Therefore a new traffic study was done and the draft just recently arrived at the City. It states that the project would be built by 2008 and that there would be significant traffic impacts at both Bailard Ave and the Hwy 101 and Hwy 150 intersection. The roundabout mitigation would only be acceptable for the Bailard intersection at Via Real until 2016. By 2025 most of the intersections in the area would be at an "F" level of service (the worst). Caltrans states that the traffic increases about 2% a year, so by 2025 it will increase by 49%. Lagunitas would account for 16% of the cumulative traffic and 28% by 2025. Mitigation could be:

- Traffic signals at Bailard intersections
- 2 roundabouts at Bailard
- 6 legged roundabout at Bailard/Via Real/ 101 northbound
- Roundabout at Via Real / 150 / Camino Carreta
- Realign Via Real closer to 150 & 101
- Realign Via Real to intersect with 101/150 – a 5-legged roundabout

This project, along with its potential mitigations, would have an enormous impact on our community. CVA has been studying and providing our comments on the Lagunitas project throughout its lifetime so far, and we intend to continue to do so. We encourage you to contact us (see the form on page 4) so we can keep you updated on the status of Lagunitas, as well as the other major proposals in the area. ❖

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

Good News & Bad News

"I've got good news and bad news. Which do you want to hear first?"

How many times have we been told this? So often when there is "good news", it is tempered with accompanying "bad news". But an optimist might note that when there is bad news, if you look hard enough, you can find the silver lining of good news somewhere.

This issue of the CVAction newsletter is another case of good news & bad news. We describe a number of development proposals that threaten to fundamentally change the Carpinteria we know and love. These include Venoco's onshore 15-story oil drilling derrick, John King's Resort on the bluffs, and the Lagunitas mixed-use development with its severe traffic impacts.

However, we also share some positive things happening in our community, including the generosity of Bill Horton and Glenna Berry-Horton in creating an agriculture and conservation easement on their ranch, as well as the activities of the volunteers of Seal Watch with the thriving harbor seal colony here in Carpinteria.

While there will always be both good and bad news, as individuals and as a community, we have control over how much of each there is. What does it take to tip the balance toward having more good news than bad? It takes vision, commitment, and action. Our community has already articulated a shared vision for itself in the City of Carpinteria general plan, which states that the goal of the community is:

"To preserve the essential character of our small beach town, its family-oriented residential neighborhoods, its unique visual and natural resources and its open, rural surroundings while enhancing recreational, cultural and economic opportunities for our citizens."



Winter low tides allow us to visit with "neighbors" who are usually under water!

The commitment is up to each of us. Are we willing to be vigilant and work toward this vision?

That brings us to action. Action is what this newsletter is about. CVA strives to keep the community informed on important issues that affect us all, and to educate the community on when and how to act to have the maximum effect.

CVA will continue to track the issues in this newsletter, as well as other important topics. We want to help keep you informed and help you take the action that you believe is needed to achieve our shared vision for Carpinteria. To help us in this goal, please fill out and return the form below to give us your contact info, and to let us know what issues are most important to you.

Together we can make sure that there is much more good news than bad! ❖

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 just about time to renew!)

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 Paradon / general oil development
- Use of lands owned by the Carpinteria School District
- Greenhouses
- Rancho Monte Alegre
- Harley-Davidson expansion
- Lagunitas mixed-use development
- Specific development proposal: _____
- John King Resort
- 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!