



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Franklin Trail Grand Opening **First Phase Opens to the Public November 1st**

"It seems that it takes a village to build a trail, at least when you are trying to re-create a lost trail through private farm land, a school campus, city streets and sensitive wildlife habitat. We are fortunate to have virtually the whole village of Carpinteria backing the Franklin Trail."

Jane Murray, Co-Chair
Friends of the Franklin Trail

Many friends of the Franklin Trail will gather on Friday, November 1, 2013, at 3:30 to celebrate the official opening of the first phase of the historic Franklin Trail. Please join the project partners, County Supervisor Salud Carbajal, City of Carpinteria Mayor Brad Stein, and many donors, volunteers, consultants and contractors who worked to bring back this valued community asset.

Friends of the Franklin Trail, a hearty group of volunteers, brought loads of inspiration when they launched an effort in 2010 to get this long-desired trail project moving. In 2011, the Friends group asked the non-profit Land Trust for Santa Barbara County to be a project partner, with the Land Trust providing financial, planning and project management support.

After many months of planning, engineering, environmental study, and trail easement negotiation, Land Trust contractors Peter Lapidus Construction and the Santa Barbara County Trails Council broke ground in May 2013.

On November 1, the first 2.25 mile segment of the Franklin Trail will open for the public to enjoy. This trail is designated by the County as "multiple use," that is available to hikers, bike riders, and equestrians. The

trail will be closed to horses and bikes until January 2014 to allow for rainfall and foot traffic to help compact the loose trail tread. The trailhead is located at the end of Sterling Ave and Meadow View Lane, at the north end of Carpinteria's Franklin Park.

Salud Carbajal, Santa Barbara County First District Supervisor comments *"The Franklin Trail is like the 'Little Engine That Could,' after nearly 40 years of countless obstacles, the community finally has achieved its vision of reopening the trail and providing public access to the scenic foothills of the Carpinteria Valley. This was made possible by a collaborative effort that included government agencies, nonprofit organizations, property owners and the public at large."*

More than 360 people and foundations made charitable gifts for the trail, complementing government grants secured by the Land Trust from the County of Santa Barbara (\$122,000) and the Caltrans Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (\$200,000). The City of Carpinteria has also been a partner in this endeavor, helping to enhance the City's existing portion of the trail. Private donations, fundraising events and in-kind services have totaled over \$530,000.

Land Trust executive director Michael Feeney notes that, *"The project turned out to be much more complicated, time-consuming and expensive than any of us anticipated. The volunteers with Friends of the Franklin Trail really hung in there, and community donors stepped up to meet the funding need."*

This short first segment of the trail was particularly costly due to the need to install a 65-foot pedestrian bridge across a tributary of Franklin Creek, several retaining walls, plus fencing and electric gates to provide security where the trail runs along the Carpinteria High School campus and through a private avocado orchard. An informational kiosk and native landscaping to beautify the trail entrance were installed on the campus.

With the first phase built, the Franklin Trail team will turn next to work with the owner of Rancho Monte Alegre and the U.S. Forest Service to see the trail opened across the remaining five miles to the peak of the Santa Ynez Mountains. From there the trail will connect to East Camino Cielo and to the existing back country trail system along the Santa Ynez River. This second phase of the project is expected to be open in late 2014 or 2015, after needed landowner and regulatory approvals are secured and more money is raised to restore the historic trail route.

HISTORY OF FRANKLIN TRAIL

Although people have hiked Franklin Canyon since time immemorial, the original Franklin Trail dates to 1913, when the Forest Service built a trail from the Carpinteria Valley to the ridge of the Santa Ynez Mountains. This gave hikers and riders a direct route to the Santa Ynez River. In the 1930s, Franklin Canyon was closed to the public after a fire was attributed to picnickers there. The public then accessed the trail via the Edison service road.

The trail was closed in the 1970s when ranchers whose land it crossed became concerned about the transmission of avocado root rot on the feet of hikers and horses. Efforts to reopen the trail by the County of Santa Barbara, the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee and the Montecito Trails Foundation gained momentum when landowners gradually granted easements across their property: Rancho Monte Alegre, Bill and Glenna Horton, the Persoon family and Carpinteria Unified School District. The fundraising efforts of the Friends of the Franklin Trail, with the help of the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, gave the impetus to move forward the design, permit and construction of the trail.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This trail has been realized through the overwhelming support of the Friends of Franklin Trail community and the cooperation of Santa Barbara County, County of Santa Barbara Community Services Department, City of Carpinteria, Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, Caltrans (EEMP grant), Santa Barbara County Trails Council, Montecito Trails Foundation, Carpinteria Unified School District, Johannes Persoon Family, William Horton Family, Rancho Monte Alegre and the Los Padres National Forest.

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