

The Carmel Pine Cone

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Eastwood donates 79 more acres to land trust

By CHRIS COUNTS

MAKING OFFICIAL a deal to provide flood control, habitat protection and a critical hiking trail link, Clint Eastwood and his former wife, Maggie, donated another large piece of the Odello East property to the Big Sur Land Trust this week.

The donation was announced during a brief ceremony June 28 at Palo Corona Regional Park.

The land trust plans use the property for its \$25 million Carmel River Free project to protect businesses and homes along Rio Road and in the Mission Fields neighborhood from flooding and provide benefits to the environment.

In addition to the Eastwoods, 5th District Supervisor Dave Potter and Assemblyman John Laird attended the ceremony, along with Big Sur Land Trust president Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis.

Introducing himself simply as a former mayor of Carmel, the famous actor and director praised the land trust for its efforts to restore the former artichoke field to its pre-farming condition — and allow it to serve as a flood plain during wet winters.

“Everybody [thinks] there will be no rain again, but there will be, one of these days,” predicted Eastwood, who said the project would enable “floodwaters to go across this land and out to sea without taking out the folks in the neighborhood.”

Eastwood thanked Laird and Potter for their help in mak-

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Former mayor to be parade's grand marshal

By MARY SCHLEY

FORMER CARMEL Mayor Clint Eastwood will be Grand Marshal of the city's centennial parade Oct. 29, organizers announced this week. The award-winning actor and director — whose newest movie, “Sully,” about heroic pilot Sully Sullenberger, is due out in September — was the city's mayor from 1986 to 1988.

He first came here in the 1950s, while stationed at the Fort Ord Army base, and Eastwood's directorial debut, “Play Misty for Me,” was shot in town and elsewhere on the Monterey Peninsula in 1971. Decades later, his imprint on Carmel and the surrounding area is significant, as he owns key properties like Mission Ranch and Tehama, has worked

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Council OKs slightly tweaked plan for beach fires

By MARY SCHLEY

ANYONE WHO expected the city council's discussion of beach fires Thursday morning to be routine — considering the council had made a decision on the very same issue June 6 — would be forgiven for not knowing Carmel very well.

City administrator Chip Rerig presented a plan that was virtually identical to the plan the council adopted June 6 calling for a dozen fire rings and unlimited propane fires on the beach south of 10th Avenue between 4 and 10 p.m. daily, and while council members ended up approving a slightly modified version of that, the re-do only came after a nearly three-hour hearing that included a reversal in thinking from councilwoman Jan Reimers, who argued strenuously for having only propane fires.

At the meeting, more than two dozen residents spoke for and against allowing wood fires on the beach, with some arguing that they shouldn't be restricted to the area south of 10th — so that everyone should have to deal with the smoke, not just those who live at that end of Scenic Road — and others contending that propane is too dangerous.

A letter from on high

An additional element in the debate came in the form of another letter from the California Coastal Commission's staff, which told Mayor Steve Dallas and the council they should adopt a more lenient beach fire program. Central Coast district director Dan Carl agreed with the dozen rings for wood but said they should be allowed 25 feet from the bluffs and that fires should be OK between 2 and 10 p.m.

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FRACKING BAN: FINANCIAL DOOM FOR COUNTY, OR SAVIOR OF ENVIRONMENT?

■ Measure headed for Nov. ballot

By KELLY NIX

A BAN on hydraulic fracturing and further restrictions on existing oil operations in Monterey County would mean losses to the local economy of \$200 million and more than 700 jobs, according to an analysis commissioned by the opponents of an

upcoming ballot measure.

On June 1, the Monterey County Supervisors voted to place an anti-fracking initiative on the November ballot. The measure would also prohibit all new oil and gas wells in the county.

Backers of the ballot initiative, a group called Protect Monterey County that collected more than 12,000 signatures to qualify it for the ballot, argue that there's not enough water in the county to support hydraulic fracturing, and that the extraction process could contaminate water supplies. A fracking ban, they say, would “protect Monterey County's agricultural lands, air quality, scenic vistas and quality of life.”

“The impacts and risks associated with fracking and other well stimulation treatments are too great for county residents to accept,” according to the petition.

Furthermore, expanding oil and gas production operations and continuing to drill new oil and gas wells are “incompatible with Monterey County's vision for the future” and “inconsistent” with the county's “agricultural heritage and rural character,” the proponents of the initiative contend. The initiative does not say where the county's oil, gasoline and other fossil fuels should come from.

Opponents argue that approval of the initiative would “effectively ban all existing and future oil production in the unincorporated areas of Monterey County.”

They say it would also mean a loss of \$186 million to the county between 2017 and 2036 and eliminate more than 700 jobs. The study, by Capitol Matrix Consulting, was commissioned for by Monterey County for Energy Independence, an

Closing dates set for Rancho Cañada

By CHRIS COUNTS

TIME IS running out on golf at Rancho Cañada in Carmel Valley, which announced last week that its West Course will close July 8, while its East Course will do the same Jan. 1, 2017.

“After 47 years of operation, I am sorry to inform you that the Rancho Cañada Golf Club will be closing one course this summer and closing entirely at year end,” the golf club's president, Tony Lombardo, wrote in a letter dated June 21.

To keep golf going at the club, Lombardo said it would have been necessary to extend the lease on land owned by the Hatton family, “but they decided to put the property up for sale for \$10 million. Based on the economics of the golf business, it was not possible for us to purchase the property at that price.”

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GALLERY CELEBRATES REOPENING

By MARY SCHLEY

THIRTEEN MONTHS after a fire ripped through a Dolores Street art gallery and its upstairs apartments, the New Masters Gallery is back in business in its former home, and the second-floor spaces are all occupied again. Celebrations are planned for Friday and Saturday, July 8-9.

“It's been really, really difficult — we've had an extremely hard time, but we're back home again,”

said Heather Howe, who works for gallery owner Bill Hill.

The cause of the June 6, 2015, fire remains a mystery, but Hill — who also lost much of his personal art collection, as well as irreplaceable family documents — is just glad to be back where he wants to be, in the building he remodeled and moved his gallery into in 1992.

The owner of New Masters Gallery for 43 years, Hill recalled

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PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

After being burned out of the space in June 2015, New Masters Gallery owner Bill Hill is celebrating the reopening of the gallery following extensive repairs and renovations. “It's been really, really difficult, but we're back home,” his assistant said.