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By Cathy Tyson



View of Acalanes Ridge Open Space Photos Richard Gylgayton

Muir Heritage Land Trust (MHLT) is going all out to host the Autumn Celebration 2010 party to support acquiring and protecting twenty-three acres of open space in Acalanes Ridge that encompasses the highest, most visually significant promontory in the area. The public is invited to enjoy wine, appetizers and the music of legendary Bob Athayde, and support the Acalanes Ridge Land Acquisition project while mingling with celebrity guests and MHLT members at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on November 3. Freshly elected officials are expected to attend, as well as MHLT volunteers and award winners.

It's not everyday that residents get to ensure a scenic landmark is preserved in perpetuity for the community to enjoy and possibly get an autograph from Doug McConnell of "Bay Area Backroads" fame.

The parcel in question is located within the City of Lafayette and is vitally important because it links the Acalanes Ridge Open Space and Briones Regional Park and has commanding views from the summit of the Livermore foothills, Mt. Diablo, Suisun Bay, the Carquinez Strait, Briones Regional Park, the Oakland Hills and Las Trampas Regional Park.

In an innovative collaboration, the MHLT generated a plan to combine the resources of all parties and signed a purchase agreement in February with partners the City of Lafayette, the City of Walnut Creek, and the East Bay Regional Park District. "In this agreement, the Muir Heritage Land Trust will hold title to the property, which will be governed by a conservation easement held jointly by our three partners," said Linus Eukel, Executive Director of MHLT in a statement.

"Escrow must close by the end of December, and completion of this project hinges on all partners fulfilling their part of the agreement. Our partners have pledged funds from Measure WW and other sources to purchase the land, at a price of \$1,305,500. MHLT must raise \$400,000 to cover the costs associated with acquisition, and to provide for stewardship, administration, planning, and an endowment for long-range management," he continued. Contributions are still needed to reach their goal in addition to current significant donations from the Seaborg Open Space Fund, the Walnut Creek Open Space Fund and many individuals in the community.

The festivities run from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00p.m., Wednesday, November 3 at the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Please RSVP to ellen@muirheritagelandtrust.org or call 925-228-7152. The event is being sponsored by Overaa Construction and Saintsbury Vineyards. For more information, go to www.muirheritagelandtrust.org.



Photos Richard Gylgayton

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