

The Robert J. Bernard Biological Field Station



This?



Or This?

There is a choice!

What is the BFS?

The Bernard Field Station (BFS) lies adjacent to the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden just north of Foothill, between College and Mills Avenues. Established in 1976 by the Claremont Colleges, ***the BFS is a genuine and unique community treasure.*** It provides a magnificent view of open land, mountain, and sky for all who live in or pass through Claremont, reminding us of what the surrounding landscape once was like. It provides habitat for many native plants and animals and is an outdoor classroom for both college students and Claremont children, as well as an important historical site for the Tongva, the indigenous people of the Claremont basin. Its historical, ecological, visual, and educational importance to Claremont citizens are clear.

What is the controversy?

The North Campus Master Plan (NCMP) proposes the Bernard Field Station as the location for the fledgling seventh Claremont College, the Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences (KGI), a biotech graduate school.

Although this project would leave much of the BFS intact, it would destroy almost one-third of its rare coastal sage scrub habitat.

In addition, the colleges have stated clearly that they intend to develop the entire area eventually. There is no protection for any of the land for any period of time.

College administrators view expansion of the colleges as of more importance than the preservation of this unique educational resource.

What about alternatives?

There are at least three alternative sites already owned by the colleges: the golf course, the quarry at the corner of Foothill and Claremont Blvd, and the state-of-the-art laboratories on Arrow just west of Indian Hill, where the KGI has already begun operation. It is perfectly possible for the colleges and the city to have both a new college and a field station.

However, even though building elsewhere makes the most sense, and the environmental impact report identified the quarry as the preferred site, the colleges still intend to build on the BFS and have convinced the city that the other sites are unsuitable. In fact, instead of preserving any of the BFS, the city and the colleges have agreed to preserve the golf course for 25 years as a mitigation measure.

Could the BFS be located elsewhere?

This would clearly not prevent the loss of habitat, natural and cultural resources, or the view. Neither would it prevent the loss to education. The present location is an easy walk from all the colleges and securely fenced. The colleges have agreed to continue maintain a field station somewhere, but if it requires time and money for students to get there, and is not a safe place for students to work alone, it will not be used.

Do Claremont citizens have a voice in decisions about private property?

Yes, we have the right to say no to this proposal. Cities restrict what can be done on land all the time with codes and zoning ordinances. In addition, CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act, gives cities the authority to decide that environmentally damaging projects should not be allowed, even on private land, and to deny permission to build.

If city officials do not represent the will of the people on an issue, state law provides that citizens can ask for a referendum to be held so they can vote on it.

State law also provides for citizens to make laws directly (and this includes zoning ordinances) by passing initiatives that are voted on by the public.

Is building on the BFS a “done deal”?

In spite of misinformation being given out by those who should know better, including some city officials, this building project is not a done deal.

Although the environmental impact report (EIR) has been certified by the Architectural

Commission (AC), **that does not constitute project approval.** The colleges must rewrite their master plan to include all the mitigation measures that have been identified and then resubmit the document to the AC.

If the project is then approved, the City and the colleges must sign a development agreement. Only then can the project go ahead.

What will happen when the NCMP is resubmitted? (Probably in January. call City Hall)

Even after all mitigation measures are implemented, the project would have serious adverse effects on natural resources, on habitat and wildlife, and on aesthetic resources due to the loss of mountain views and natural vegetation. Because of this, *the AC will need to issue a “statement of overriding consideration” in order to approve the project. This would have to say that they feel the benefits of the project to the citizens of Claremont outweigh the damage to the city’s environment.*

What about the benefits of the project?

None of the possible benefits of the project are tied to its location. They would occur no matter where it is sited. In addition, virtually all of the possible benefits on the list are benefits to the colleges rather than directly to the City.

An economic analysis of the project suggests that the KGI, if successful, could bring a dozen biotech companies to the area, which would certainly change the character of the City. If it did, the cost in areas such as housing, traffic, schools and so on should be considered before deciding that this would be

a benefit. In addition, such businesses might locate in less expensive cities near Claremont rather than here.

Whatever benefits might result from building this college are not tied to building it on the BFS. Even if some were, they do not outweigh the loss of this part of the city’s heritage and character.

Who opposes building on the BFS?

Four of the five undergraduate faculties at the Claremont Colleges voted overwhelmingly not to build on the BFS. College students wrote hundreds of letters against it. Hundreds of Claremont adults and children wrote letters or spoke at Architectural Commission and City Council meetings opposing the loss of this land.

“This is our heritage, and a heritage we should be able to leave for future generations. This last remaining mountain view uplifts us all.”

“All the good intentions as proposed by the Keck can never replace the ecological losses of so many living things”

“It...is an invaluable asset to Claremont’s natural resources, to the student population of the Claremont Colleges and the local public schools and to the citizens of Claremont.”

You can add your voice to theirs by getting in touch with the planning department at City Hall. The address is below.

The Friends of the Bernard Biological Field Station:

The Friends group was formed in March 1999 to distribute information about the field station, to help preserve it and to improve its educational value.. The organization has recently incorporated

and is filing for non-profit status. If you would like to be on the mailing list, call the number below. Donations can be sent to the address in the box.

The Friends of the Bernard Biological

Field Station: www.fbbfs.org

(909) 260-4403

PO Box 1101, Claremont, CA 91711.

City Hall: (909) 399-5470

PO Box 880, Claremont CA 91711

The Coalition to Preserve Claremont’s Character.

(<http://rii.twu.net/cpcc>)

(909) 932-1529

City government is not listening to the wishes of Claremont citizens. CPCC is supporting **an initiative** that would make the Bernard Field Station a conservation zone. This would allow continued use of the land as a field station for the colleges and for public education while at the same time protecting the habitat, the view and the window into our past that the land provides. This initiative is not anti-KGI, since it could be built elsewhere, it is simply pro-Claremont.

However, the NCMP cannot be stopped after the development agreement is signed unless a **referendum** petition signed by 10% of the registered voters is submitted within 30 days of that date. A referendum would prevent development for one year during which time the terms could be altered or the initiative passed.

All registered Claremont voters can sign or circulate the petitions to put these measures on the June ballot. Petitions will be available every Sunday morning at the Farmer’s Market in the Village or call the number listed at the top for other locations.

This is a grass roots organization funded by concerned citizens. Please call if you are willing to make a donation to help with legal fees related to the petitions.