

Land Trust's Project Opens Antonelli's Pond

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THANKS to a local land preservation group, a freshwater pond in the city will be enjoyed for years to come.

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, a non-profit private land preservation group, has nearly completed an improvement project at Antonelli's Pond on the westside.

The project, paid for by a \$30,000 state grant, includes observation platforms, stairs down to the water, and a woodchip trail along the west bank of the pond. An information kiosk for visitors will be finished soon.

Land Trust purchased half of the pond and up to 100 feet of its west bank. The east side is owned by AT&T, which bought the former Synertek building. Land Trust's ownership guarantees protection of the pond, a favorite spot of bird watchers and fly fishermen.

"People wanted to get close to the pond, and the bank was eroding away," said Anna Jean Cummings, executive director of Land Trust.

At one time the pond was a source of water for Antonelli begonias, which were grown on the land now occupied by the AT&T building. The freshwater comes from Moore Creek which runs parallel to Western Drive and originates on the UCSC campus. From Antonelli's, the water spills out through Natural Bridges State Park and into the sea.

Land Trust also owns a small parcel of land along Highway 1 north of the pond. The long range plan, says Cummings, is to purchase the land between the pond and the highway and connect the trail so that there will be access from both Delaware Avenue and Highway 1.

Founded eight years ago, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County assists landowners in protecting and pre-



GREG PIO

Land Trust executive director Anna Jean Cummings: "People wanted to get close to the pond"

serving natural features of their property while offering them tax incentives. The concept of "land trust" had its roots in Great Britain, and various forms of the idea have been incorporated in the United States.

The project at Antonelli's never could have been completed without the help of Simone Mortan, whom Cummings calls the "pond coordinator." Local Boy Scouts pitched in as well, planting bushes along the banks to protect against erosion.

Land Trust hired two workers from the Santa Cruz Community Action Board to complete the major construction work. The board is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to defending the interests of low-income people in Santa Cruz County.

The workers were part of the board's natural resources and employment program, which trains low-income people to do erosion and flood control maintenance as well as other restoration jobs. •