



Cover Sheet

Brief Organizational History

In 1998, residents learned that a 401-acre property that sits at the juncture of Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, and Huntington Beach had a residential development proposed on the natural mesa and wetlands. Despite 70 years of use as an oil field, the land has survived and thrived. Volunteers first organized a Sierra Club Task Force to help protect the property's rare ecological staircase with its natural bluffs, arroyos, mesas, grasslands and wetlands, replete with coastal wildlife. It is the perfect location for a nature preserve, which became the Banning Ranch Conservancy's (BRC) ultimate vision for the land.

The Task Force reformed into BRC, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in 2008 with an original mission to: "preserve, acquire, conserve and manage the entire Banning Ranch as a permanent public open space, park and coastal nature preserve." By collaborating with the owners of Banning Ranch, along with tribal leaders, homeowners' association, other non-profit organizations, and the public, this vision was completed in 2022 when the property was protected through a conservation transaction via The Trust for Public Land.

Accomplishments Highlights

The Conservancy led the community-based effort to save the property, hiring biology and oil field consultants, as well as successfully litigating against City of Newport Beach's approval of the Banning Ranch development proposal. In 2012, Newport Banning Ranch LLC proposed 1,375 homes; a resort hotel complex; 75,000 square feet of commercial space. After numerous appeals and five years of intense court proceedings, the California Supreme Court decided in the Conservancy's favor on March 30, 2017, requiring the City of Newport Beach to vacate its 2012 approval of the project. This set the stage for the conservation acquisition and allowed The Trust for Public Land to negotiate an exclusive purchase and sale agreement of 387 acres, with 14 acres being held in private ownership as an oil remainder.

Through a personal relationship BRC had with Frank and Joann Randall, the Randalls pledged \$50 million of the \$97 million purchase price—an unprecedented philanthropic gift. Other funding came from Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris via an \$8 million member request and public grants from the California Natural Resource Agency, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In December of 2022, the Banning Ranch property transferred from Newport Banning Ranch LLC and Aera Energy LLC to the Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority, a local

public agency and joint powers authority. Paying tribute to the generous benefactors, the property's new name is the Frank and Joan Randall Preserve, or the Randall Preserve. Now begins the 2-3 year period of oil remediation, handled by former owner Aera Energy LLC, before the property can be opened to the public. During the remediation several plans will be developed that dictate where sensitive cultural sites are located and habitat and species that must remain protected.

Strategic Planning & New Direction

BRC's and its allies envision restoring the property into an accessible local preserve that would provide coastal access with trails, low-cost camping sites, interpretive areas, cultural access, and picnic sites. The 387-acre preserve is an anchor property within a nearly 1,000-acre network of protected natural lands and waters linked by bike and walking trails and is easily accessed by public transportation. It is also near to many economically disadvantaged communities with a high pollution burden and limited park access. This property unifies the Coastal Corridor of beautiful, natural spaces, which extend on both sides of the Santa Ana River from the Pacific Ocean to Adams Street in Costa Mesa.

3-5 Year Goals

In May of 2022, BRC hired Conservation Impact | Non-Profit Impact to run a Strategic Planning process. It was collectively decided through board, staff, and about 20 diverse outside interviewees that BRC should shift from "fight" mode to "collaboration" mode. Three internal goals and four external goals were developed to guide the next phase. The identified internal goals center around communications, funding, and board development. The external goals involve focusing on deepening and developing partnerships with the community, elected officials, conservation groups, tribal leaders, and business.

The Conservancy is excited about its upcoming announcement of a new name which better captures our updated mission and organization's vision.