



Contacts:

Louise Olfarnes, Communications Manager
Tel: (310) 541-7613, x 210
Email: lolfarnes@pvplc.org

Andrea Vona, Executive Director
Tel: (310) 541-7613, x 204
Email: avona@pvplc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAND CONSERVANCY ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA – January 31, 2012. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy announced that Bruce Biesman-Simons has been elected Board President for the next two years. He succeeds Ken Swenson who completed his term which included the finalization of the voluntary opens space preservation easements over the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve.

As the new President, Bruce says he will continue Ken Swenson’s vision of connecting the community to the land. He also says, “The Land Conservancy is an established and robust organization with a compelling long-term vision. Most conservancies work to preserve land from development but they often stop there. By contrast, we have reached our primary goal of saving the land we initially set out to save starting back in 1988, but now we focus on public access, trails, signs and restoration of the native habitat that is so crucial to this unique corner of LA County. The 42 miles of trails on 1600 acres of preserved open space, along with our education, interpretive and science programs improve and expand the quality of life in our community.

“It is these kinds of activities that demonstrate our collective long-term vision. The idea of the ‘Audacity of Perpetuity,’ a phrase used by renowned land trust consultant Mark Smiley, is as challenging as it is exciting. Our community certainly ‘gets it’, and together we are well-equipped to take on the challenge. Indeed, we are on the path to making the dream of ‘perpetuity’ real.”

“It’s fantastic to welcome Bruce as our new President and we are grateful he has chosen to share his time and aptitude with us in this new position,” said Land Conservancy Executive Director Andrea Vona. “Bruce’s long time experience with the Land Conservancy, passion for the region’s open spaces and creativity in working with communities will go far in our efforts to protect critical open space and increase the appreciation of preserved lands.”

Biesman-Simons’ direct involvement with the Land Conservancy began in 2000 as a founding member of the White Point Nature Preserve Steering Committee. He contributed design concepts

and drawings for the White Point Nature Preserve Master Plan. In May, 2001, he and his wife, Hale Field, initiated the “Spring for White Point” fund-raising events at their house in San Pedro. After three years it grew to 300 people and needed a new venue. It evolved into the popular Home Tour event.

Biesman-Simons joined the PVPLC Board in 2000 and held the offices of Secretary or Executive Vice President for much of his time on the board. His other community service work includes past President of the Palisades Residents Association, and founding Board member and Secretary of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council. He has also provided volunteer consulting services for Richstone Family Center, dedicated to preventing and treating child abuse. Bruce attended the University of Cape Town in South Africa, and graduated from the Southern California Institute of Architecture in Los Angeles.

President Biesman-Simons is an architect and principal of Biesman-Simons Architecture in San Pedro. Prior to establishing his own firm in 1996, he worked with Frank Gehry on several projects including EuroDisneyland’s Entertainment Center, the Concord Pavilion in Northern California and the Disney Administration Building alongside the Santa Ana Freeway in Anaheim. For the Land Conservancy, he has helped with several architectural and landscape projects that have benefited from his pro bono design and management services. Major projects include the White Point Master Plan, the recognition sites at Del Cerro, and the base for the Pelican Sculpture at Pelican Cove (formerly Fisherman’s Access). His experience with large-scale planning and visionary projects also contributes to the Land Conservancy’s Strategic and Action Plans.

Other Board members recently elected to officer positions are: Joe Platnick - Executive Vice President; Pam Westhoff - Secretary; Marc Crawford – Treasurer. Continuing Board members are: Kenneth W. Swenson (past President), Susan McKenna (past secretary), Allen Franz, Cassie Jones, Henry Jurgens, Elizabeth Kennedy, Mike Kilroy, Leslie McShane, Jess Morton, John Spielman, William Swank, and Grace Wallace.

Conservancy Founder Bill Ailor will continue his involvement as President Emeritus of the organization. Executive Director Andrea Vona notes, “While he will no longer be serving on the Board, Bill remains committed to the vision of the Land Conservancy. I view this transition as a testament of Bill’s confidence in the organization’s strength, health and sustainability.”

###

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy was founded in 1988 and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-benefit organization dedicated to preserving land and restoring habitat for the enjoyment and education of all. The Conservancy owns or manages the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes, Linden H. Chandler and George F Canyon Preserves in Rolling Hills Estates, White Point Nature Preserve in San Pedro, and a native plant nursery on the Defense Fuel Support Point in San Pedro.