

# Calabasas Trophy Acreage to Remain Open Space

95 acres of prime Calabasas land have been purchased by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to be preserved as open space.

The 10 legal lots are situated above Viewpoint School on Dry Canyon Cold Creek bordering Old Topanga Canyon. They were the epicenter of the Calabasas Fire last year.

The property contains a mix of large coast live oaks, coastal sage scrub, chaparral and sections of an unnamed tributary of Dry Canyon Creek. A prominent ridgeline on the site is visible from vantage points in nearby parks and Mulholland Highway.

The real estate deal was brokered through Jeff Schermer of the Calabasas office of Dilbeck Realtors, an exclusive affiliate of Christie's International. Schermer told *Valley News Group* that the deal took close to two years to put together, with a lot of cooperation and teamwork from different divisions of the Conservancy and the owner of the parcel.

Previous owners had proposed large homes on the site, which was zoned for up to nine residences. Local residents had put up many a fight over years with hopes of keeping "mansionization" away from the pristine landscape.

The acquisition of the natural, resource-rich environment is an opportunity to protect water



Jeff Schermer on the parcel sold to the Conservancy.

resources, combat climate change and expand recreational activities for outdoor enthusiasts in the region, the Conservancy said in a report. A section of the Calabasas Highland Trail will provide access at the southeastern point of the property. That trail also connects to the Summit Motorway. "This is the largest and most significant acquisition of open space in Calabasas in many years," said Calabasas Mayor Mary Sue Maurer.

Jody Thomas, president of the Old Topanga Homeowners

Association, said the Dry Canyon area carries historical importance because it was one of the original trade routes from the San Fernando Valley to the ocean. She said the land will assist wildlife migration and serve as a buffer against urban sprawl.

Currently the open space inventory in Calabasas totals about 3,500 acres, including 78 acres of city parks, more than 550 acres of private property easements and 2,150 acres of publicly owned land. Schermer can be reached at 449-1341.