



Protecting and Restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and Its Watersheds

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March 5, 2008

City of Carpinteria
5775 Carpinteria Avenue
Carpinteria, CA 93103

Attention: Nick Bobroff

Re: Carpinteria Creek/8th Street Bridge

Dear Mr. Bobroff,

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper (Channelkeeper) is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds. As part of our mission, we strongly encourage and support city policies that protect the environment, specifically the ecology of our creeks, wetlands, and beaches.

Although sometimes an inconvenience, we strongly believe that these policies are ultimately good for both the environment and for the citizens of Carpinteria and other Central Coast communities who value their natural and ecological heritage. It is this heritage that largely makes Central Coast cities like Carpinteria a better place to live than the rest of Southern California.

After the initial construction impacts of the 8th Street bridge subsided, the bridge structure likely caused and continues to cause only a very minimal impact to Carpinteria Creek. Given the tremendous importance that the local community places in this structure, it may seem tempting and perhaps justified to exempt this project from City policy and reconstruct the existing bridge within the creek. Unfortunately, this issue is larger than the 8th Street bridge because it sets a precedent regarding City policy. We at Channelkeeper would like to believe that the City of Carpinteria has moved beyond the days of approving projects that directly impact the most sensitive environments within its boundaries. The existing City policies confirm that it has. We would look to these same policies in the future to prevent similar but more unwanted and harmful development projects from impacting Carpinteria Creek. To that end, it is important that the City sets proper precedent and remains consistent with city policy, even when it is inconvenient to do so. ***If*** the 8th Street bridge is beyond maintenance and needs to be rebuilt, it should be rebuilt out of the creek.

We find it very unfortunate that this policy will ultimately lead to the removal of a structure that is so highly valued by the local community. However, we hope that local residents will continue to value that which truly makes Carpinteria special; that is both the community that uses it and the creek that it spans.

Respectfully,

Ben Pitterle
Watershed Programs Director
Santa Barbara Channelkeeper