

Laguna

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manager and spokesman for the Ghilotti family members who owned the property. "The fundraising pressure was off once the county bought the development rights. We knew that was a risk."

The final successful effort to acquire the property was pressed by Halgwood and Doms, both of whom were members of the Uplands Project Committee that worked with LandWrights.

Halgwood and Doms come from opposite sides of the political spectrum.

Doms is publisher of the Environmental Impact Reporter and an environmental activist.

Halgwood is a former chamber of commerce executive in Berkeley and Seattle and now a real estate agent who became a champion of preserving the laguna through membership on a city study committee. He said he initially joined the committee to protect property interests and became committed to laguna preservation after coming to understand its value to the environment.

"It was a remarkable partnership, but it was clear to me that regardless of our differences we were on the same page in terms of

saving the laguna," Doms said.

"I felt we had a debt of honor," Halgwood said. "We had pledged to buy the property and failed to complete it. I contacted Juliana and we visited Jim Ghilotti and asked if the family would reactivate negotiations."

Over several months of talks between Halgwood and Ghilotti, the family decided to donate the land outright rather than wait two to three years for a nonprofit foundation to raise the outstanding funds.

"The family decided to donate land mostly because Bill Halgwood continued to follow up with us and show good faith," Ghilotti said.

A Christmas Eve phone call from the Ghilottis' attorney confirmed the gift to the foundation, and the deeds arrived in the mail shortly after the new year.

Ghilotti estimated the family lost about \$250,000 in the 10-year-long investment although it will recoup some of that through tax savings he declined to disclose.

"You smile and hope someday something fruitful will turn out for the property," he said. "You take the bad investments with the good ones."

Halgwood said the uplands will not be open to public access until a city committee prepares a master plan for the 13-mile long laguna park.