

Deadline looms for Castle Rock campaign

By Letitia Thornton
Special to The Idaho Statesman

With less than two months left to raise \$27,000, an effort to preserve a parcel of open space near Castle Rock is running out of time.

By Jan. 1, the East End Neighborhood Association has to make a payment of \$45,000 on the last parcel of a 50-acre site the group wants to protect from development. The group has \$17,000 to date.

In February, the association made a first payment of \$30,000 on the five-acre parcel, part of a tract that has been used for decades as a recreational area by locals and for centuries as a sacred healing spot and grave site by Native American tribes.

Betty Foster, of the Save Castle Rock/Save Eagle Rock fund-raising committee, says there may be other options if they group don't raise the money, but "right now we're focusing on success."

Foster has written applications for several grants, which are still being considered.

"We should know whether we get them by mid-November. I'm hopeful, because the Save Castle Rock movement is such a unique effort," said Foster.

The effort has been officially recognized and acclaimed by three organizations:

■ The Idaho Historical Preservation Council, which awarded it an "Orchid" in its "Orchids and Onions" awards last spring for fostering cooperation between neighborhoods and cultures.

■ The Boise City Historical Preservation Commission, which gave the East End Neighborhood Association an honorable mention for historical preservation efforts.

■ The Ada County Historical



Betty Foster and the Save Castle Rock/Save Eagle Rock fund-raising committee are trying to make a payment on the final parcel of a 50-acre site the group wants to protect from development.
Katherine Jones
The Idaho Statesman

Preservation Council, which has made a contribution toward archaeological preservation.

"We've done it all the hard way," Foster said. "We've had contributions from all over the country, but no corporate help. We've held picnics, sold mugs and T-shirts. We even sold truckloads of rock the developer gave us when they started digging on the site."

Meanwhile, the developers of Morningside Heights, owners of the property, are continuing work

on an adjacent 30 acres under an agreement made last fall with Native American tribes, the city, and the neighborhood.

"It's pretty much on schedule," said Bill Selvidge, project manager for the development. "We expect to be finishing the first phase by Thanksgiving, which means roads, curbs, sidewalks, utilities. Then we'll be working on street lights and landscaping."

Selvidge said builders are processing plans for homes and will begin building in December.

The city of Boise paid \$500,000 last fall and secured the largest piece of the 50-acre tract for preservation. When the East End Neighborhood Association buys the final acreage, the area will be designated a reserve and planted with natural vegetation.

Sections of the reserve which have historic and spiritual significance to local Native American tribes will be kept accessible to them for use in ceremonies.

Foster said if the fund-raising committee comes up short by Jan.

1, it may try to negotiate for a lesser amount of land or an extended deadline.

But they would rather not. "Every square inch of this land has great value," Foster said. "We're saving it for its past, its present and its future."

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to Castle Rock-Eagle Rock Account, Idaho Foundations for Parks and Lands, 567 Warm Springs Ave., Boise, ID 83712. For more information, call Betty Foster at 342-1119.