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By Vicki Stavig

## ART of the WEST

As a group, artists not only recreate the beauty of the world around them, they often generously support efforts to preserve that beauty. Such is the case with the BayWood Artists, a group of artists who have taken a particular interest in preserving the open spaces of Marin County and the greater Bay area of San Francisco. To that end, they are sponsoring a major exhibition in October to raise funds for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council.

The council, a nonprofit organization, is working to create a multiple-use ridgeline trail circling San Francisco Bay and connecting the region's parks and open spaces for hikers, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians. Over the years, the council has acquired approximately 270 miles of land for the trail through easements, fee title sales, and donations.

The trail was the brainchild of the late William Penn Mott, Jr., who had served as general manager of the East Bay Regional Parks District, director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and Director of the National Park Service.

Mott's vision was a 400-mile ridgeline trail circling the entire bay and linking the region's greenbelt of parks, open spaces, and agricultural lands. It is a vision shared by many others, including a group of artists who banded together five years ago as the BayWood Artists. They were concerned about preserving the land in the bay area and wanted to support the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council's efforts.

"Some of us had been thinking about this for a long time, but it took Mary Welch, a local patron of the arts and a miracle of a woman, to get us together," says Zee Zee Mott, a member of the BayWood Artists and William Penn Mott Jr.'s daughter-in-law. "We were the first such group formed in northern California. A lot of other groups have formed since, and we're just delighted. We're all



*Headland Waters by Zenaida Mott*

passionate about preserving the land around here for future generations."

The bay area draws visitors from throughout the world, as much for its natural beauty as for its cultural diversity. "It's being loved to death," Mott says. In an attempt to make sure that doesn't happen and that the natural beauty of the bay area will be preserved for future generations, the BayWood Artists has organized nine exhibitions and raised approximately \$100,000 since its formation in 1996.

The group includes 13 artists: Joshua Adam, Christin Coy, Ben Farnham, Dana Hooper, Daniel McCormick, Carolyn Meyer, Sherrill Miller, Zee Zee Mott, Craig Nelson, Lissa Nicolaus, Randall Sexton, Thomas Soltesz, and Patricia Wallis. The BayWood Artist' latest fundraising effort will be an exhibit and sale of approximately 130 paintings that depict areas along the Ridge Trail. The admission-free event will be conducted at the Officer's Club Gallery at the Presidio in San Francisco from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday,

October 13 and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, October 14.

"The first day is usually a feeding frenzy," Mott says. "Paintings will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis." Fifty-percent of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the Bay Ridge Trail.

For more information on the exhibit, call (415) 391-9300. □

*Vicki Stavig is editor of Art of the West.*