

## Rare Plant Discovered at Forrestal Preserve

By Angelika Brinkmann-Busi

The month of April saw a wonderful and completely unexpected botanical discovery on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, a discovery that proved that a rare Channel Island plant is native to the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Palos Verdes is known to shelter plant species that are otherwise restricted to the Channel Islands chain to which it once belonged. Among these is Catalina Crossosoma (*Crossosoma californica*) a rare, deciduous shrub that grows three to eight feet tall and whose white flowers usually appear from February to April. *Crossosoma californica* is a California Native Plant Society List IB plant (rare and endangered in California and elsewhere) and was named as one of eight covered plant species for the Rancho Palos Verdes Natural Communities Conservation Planning Subarea Plan.

A couple of local plants were discovered by Jim Henriksen in 1977 in the disturbed surroundings of the Forrestal quarry bowl, and it was assumed that these plants were indigenous to the Peninsula. This shrub was previously known to grow only on Santa Catalina, San Clemente and Guadalupe Islands, so this limited occurrence on the Peninsula was very special.

In the early 1990's this small group of *Crossosoma* plants seemed threatened by a proposed development of 42 single family lots. Fortunately, in December of 1996 the Forrestal property was acquired by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes as a nature preserve. Nonetheless, by spring of 2004 the situation of the three mature *Crossosoma californica* plants had seriously deteriorated. Lemonadeberry, another California native plant, had significantly encroached on the sensitive species, and the majority of the lowest-growing shrubs had died back.

Alarmed about the deteriorating conditions, I requested that the City and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy



allow Bart O'Brien, Horticultural Director of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, to take cuttings of the plants for propagation and later re-introduction to the site in order to increase the likelihood of the species' survival there. He came out in April to gather cuttings.

Two days after O'Brien's visit, Dan Ryan, PVPLC Stewardship Director, and I happened to chance upon another healthy *Crossosoma californica* plant within the Forrestal Nature Preserve, about 580 ft. northeast of the three originally discovered plants. This eight-foot-tall shrub was flowering and

producing fruit. Several suckers and small seedlings were observed around the plant.

Within less than a week, the group (O'Brien, Ryan and myself) decided to cross to the adjacent canyon to check out a different colored plant. After making our way down a steep, rocky slope, we discovered hundreds more mature *Crossosoma* plants! O'Brien estimated that this population consists of 700 to 800 of the rare plants. This spectacular discovery in such an urbanized area as the Peninsula proves beyond any further doubt that *Crossosoma californica* is indeed native to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and how important it is to preserve large areas of habitat so that these rare plants can flourish in undisturbed canyons.

### Forrestal History

The Forrestal property was approved in the early 1990's for a 42-home development. In 1996, the PVPLC was able to broker a deal that enabled the City of Rancho Palos Verdes to acquire the property. By bringing together funds from LA County Measure A and State resources, the Land Conservancy successfully preserved the property as an open space nature preserve, and now works to restore and maintain its habitat and trails through a management agreement with the City.



## Preservation of Open Spaces

### A Statement of Purpose

*The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, public-benefit corporation formed to preserve undeveloped land in perpetuity as open space for historical, educational, ecological, recreational and scenic purposes.*

*A diverse group of volunteers from the South Bay makes up the PVPLC's managing Board of Directors and its adjunct advisory board. These private citizens have been drawn together by their belief that open space is crucial to the well-being of our community. Land acquisition by the PVPLC is through purchase and gift. In addition to the good will engendered by gift giving, landowners and others who donate land or funds to the PVPLC may realize significant tax benefits.*

## Open Spaces

A Newsletter Published by the  
Palos Verdes Peninsula  
Land Conservancy  
PO Box 3427  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274  
Office Telephone:  
(310) 541-7613  
Office Fax: (310) 541-7623  
E-mail: [info@pvplc.org](mailto:info@pvplc.org)  
Home Page: [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org)

## president's remarks

Our organization has grown from nothing to an annual budget of over \$1 million in 16 short years—a fact that demonstrates strong community support and an organization that can adapt and evolve to meet new responsibilities.

A critical factor in this evolution is our yearly planning off-site, where the board discusses what our priorities should be for the coming year. The planning session provides a great opportunity for the board, and particularly new board members, to hear about our progress on our land acquisition, land stewardship, and education programs, and to look at what our directions and priorities should be in each area for the coming year.

The planning session also gives us the opportunity to look three years into the future and see where we might be and to consider what we need to do now to be able to meet coming challenges.

We had 100% participation by board members at this year's session, with presentations by key staff members on each of our primary areas of responsibility. Former Peninsula resident Patricia Sinay facilitated the meeting and kept us focused. Dorothy Courtney, Executive Director of the Richstone Family Center, provided insights on the development of that organization.

Primary results of the meeting include basic agreement on current directions, with the highest priority being completing the acquisition of the property to be included in the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve. Once the acquisition is completed, the board recognized that working with the community to develop land stewardship (land management and restoration) plans for the newly preserved areas will be a critical task. Fortunately, we have developed similar plans for the Lunada Canyon, Linden H. Chandler, Forrestal, and White Point Nature Preserves, so we have a roadmap and know what to expect.

Other topics discussed at the off-site include:

- Overall structure of the board, board committees, and board member responsibilities,
- Efforts to increase our membership,
- Special events and fundraising, and
- Revisions to the strategic plan to reflect current realities.

These planning sessions have been essential to our record of success. We have set a course for continued strong evolution in the year to come.

Bill Ailor

## PALOS VERDES PENINSULA LAND CONSERVANCY

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# project updates

## Portuguese Bend

Progress continues on the Natural Communities Conservation Plan. This ambitious plan to create a 1500-acre nature preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes will be presented to the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council for approval this summer. The Environmental Impact Report on the Plan has completed its public review period, and the City's consultant is completing responses to all of the comments that were received.

The Plan will be revised in response to those comments and will be posted on the City's web page when the final revisions are complete. City Council approval of the Plan is a key step toward approval of state and federal funding for the acquisition. We would be happy to make a presentation about the preserve to your homeowners association or other groups. Contact our office for more information.

## Forrestal Preserve

After almost three years of work, the Forrestal Steering Committee has developed a formal recommendation for a trail system at the preserve. The committee worked very hard, solicited public input via meetings, local outreach, research and a questionnaire, hiked the area multiple times, and deliberated at meetings held once or twice per month. The goal of the effort has been to provide public access to all the places people want to reach, while closing duplicate and parallel trails to provide larger blocks of habitat. The committee will forward its final recommendation regarding which trails will be improved to handle pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle and multiple uses to the RPV City Council for review and approval this fall.

The PVPLC's annual report on the Forrestal Preserve has been submitted to the City as required by the Management Agreement. The annual report highlights the work of the Steering Committee, habitat restoration efforts, volunteer days, and scientific research done at the site. It includes this year's photographs taken to monitor the site's condition, the final report on the wetlands grant, and the results of the trail survey. Look for it on the PVPLC ([www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org)) and RPV City web pages.

June 5<sup>th</sup> was National Trails Day and the PVPLC took the opportunity to partner with REI, the recreational equipment retailer, to hold a work day at Forrestal. More than fifty people participated, completing more than ten trail projects around the preserve, including weeding of the recently restored canyon area and improving the trails. Most (43 of the 55 participants) were members of the newly-formed Palos Verdes branch of CORBA, the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclists Association. This group introduced themselves to the Steering Committee in April, offering to provide "volunteers to assist with conservation, habitat protection, trail work, multi-use trail etiquette, and other activities," an offer that was put into action on National Trails Day.

We appreciate the assistance provided by these groups. If you have a group that would like to spend some "quality time" in the field, give us a call.



*The ice plant fights back! So many weeds were pulled that it took six volunteers to close the dumpster.*

## Lunada Canyon Preserve

We have exciting news: We have been awarded a grant by the Wetlands Recovery Project, funded by the California Coastal Conservancy. With these funds, we will begin work this fall to improve the upper section of wetlands, bring back native trees, and restore habitat for migrating birds. (This is the same grant we received for the Forrestal Preserve last year.)

In March we had a second volunteer day with the students from Ben Smith's popular and award-winning Environmental Science Advanced Placement class at Palos Verdes Peninsula High School. By partnering with the PVPLC, the students learn some practical aspects of environmental science as a part of their studies.

This year's mowing for fire protection has been completed, and the trail has been cleared, just in time for the annual walk through the canyon by participants in our Third Grade Natural History Program from Vista Grande Elementary.



*Ben Smith helping out.*

# project updates

## Linden H. Chandler Preserve

The Linden H. Chandler Preserve looks great now that our staff has finished weeding the previously planted areas and yearly mowing for fire control has been completed. Keeping the invasive grasses out is a daunting task, but we hope that with continued concerted efforts, we will prevail. Once the newly planted native species have developed sufficiently, they will be able to hold their own without further human involvement.



One of the complications of managing this preserve is that rare wildflowers, like the golden star (pictured), grow within the grasses, so we try to delay weeding until we can work around them. We have spread seeds of locoweed and deerweed, the host plants for the Palos Verdes blue butterfly, in the central, flat areas, and we expect that next spring we will see some new growth of these plants.

At a meeting of the Chandler Steering Committee in May, we reviewed the status and plans for the property. We are actively seeking volunteers to serve on the Steering Committee, so if you live in the area and would be willing to attend two to three meetings a year, we would appreciate your help.

Two Girl Scouts from Troop 669 in Torrance are currently doing projects for their Gold Awards at Chandler. One girl will be creating a nature trail for the preserve. She is researching and writing about the history, geology, plants and animals that live there. She will then design a brochure that will take visitors to numbered stops where they can learn about this special place. The other Scout will be creating a quiet resting spot, called the Memorial Grove, in the center of the preserve.

## DFSP Blue Butterfly Preserve and Native Plant Nursery

After a successful blue butterfly season, life has settled down again at the DFSP. All of the habitat restoration areas have been weeded, and new plants have been installed. Because the early spring rains this year resulted in a flourishing crop of deerweed, it has been a challenge for the Navy to do the mowing on the upper section of the site. PVPLC staff members have worked with the Navy to flag the plants so that potential butterfly pupae can be avoided.



The nursery has started propagation for next year's projects at Lunada Canyon, Forrester, Chandler, White Point, and the DFSP. Efforts are underway to add new plants to the inventory, including riparian plants like gooseberry, blackberry and snowberry, and annuals like jimson weed and calabazilla. We have increased collection of annual wildflower seeds, so that we will be able to add more blooming plants to the grasslands at White Point and elsewhere.

The Land Conservancy had the privilege of hosting a very productive Eagle Scout Project on May 22 and 23. Sean Okumura, (above, on the right) from Troop 378 in Torrance, led his fellow scouts in constructing six wooden tables for our nursery in San Pedro. After visiting the facilities in early spring, Sean decided to focus his project on improving the nursery's plant production. Sean devoted over 150 hours to his community service project and provided the nursery with a lasting reminder of his efforts toward achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. The Land Conservancy would like to thank Sean and Troop 378 for all of their hard work.

## George F Canyon

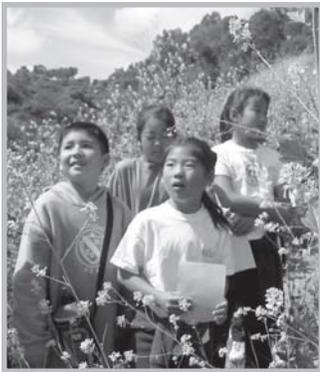


The Rolling Hills Estates City Council has reaffirmed its commitment to the Nature Center by agreeing to continue to fund the Assistant Naturalist, who takes care of the animals and helps out in a number of ways, for one more year. We appreciate the Councilmembers' continued support during a time of budget constraints for the City.

Birthday parties at the Center are great fun for kids, and include a craft, a visit with the animals, and a walk up the canyon. Night walks, birdwatching and senior strolls are scheduled throughout the year. Call the Nature Center at 547-0862 for more information.

We need your help!! Sadly, the canyon overlooks have recently experienced some vandalism. Please keep an eye on our community treasure and report any illegal activity to the Sheriff, the PVPLC or the City.

# project updates



## Education Program

The Third Grade Natural History Program has completed its best season ever, serving more than 1300 children at 16 schools—11 in Palos Verdes, four in San Pedro and one in Lomita. This was made possible by the wonderful cooperation of over 340 parent volunteers from these schools, each of whom set aside three to four hours one weekday to learn about the ecology and geology of the area to be visited by their children during the nature walk. The parents served as docents, congratulating the children as they identified plants.

The final walk brought rave reviews from parents, teachers and students. Many said, "This is the best field trip I have ever been on!" and "Can we do this again next year?"

We are looking forward to next year, the 10th anniversary of our Third Grade Program, and to the addition of Point Fermin School in San Pedro to the program. If you would like to help with the Third Grade program, training is provided throughout the year. Call the office for details, 310-541-7613.

## White Point Nature Preserve

Grassland areas have been the primary focus for restoration activities at the Preserve this past quarter. We have experienced good germination of the hydroseeded areas plus, unfortunately, lots of weed growth. Staff and volunteers are relentlessly battling the non-native annual grasses and other invasive species to create a 28-acre grassland with perennial bunchgrasses and blooming annual wildflowers.

New native species being introduced to White Point include tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), farewell to spring (*Clarkia botatae*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), annual buckwheat (*Eriogonum gracile*), and tansy mustard (*Descurainia pinnata*). These species each boast beautiful blooms that will make the Preserve a great place for people, butterflies, and other living things to visit.

The White Point Advisory Board and the PVPLC have selected a landscape architect for the native plant demonstration garden project. This four-acre garden will include signs to guide visitors through an educational and aesthetic experience, highlighting how native plants can add beauty while reducing water use. We look forward to this improvement to the Preserve.



orange fiddlenecks

## volunteer news

### PVPLC Interns Win Teen Service Awards

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Coordinating Council awarded Teen Service Awards for 2004 to PVPLC interns Melody Pongmanopap and Cynthia Hsu at a ceremony held at the Palos Verdes Library. The Peninsula High seniors received certificates from many elected officials, including Senator Feinstein, Congressman Rohrabacher, Senator Karnette, Assemblyman Lowenthal and Supervisor Knabe.

The girls were lauded for their work on compiling a native plant notebook for the PVPLC. We congratulate Melody and Cynthia on their well-deserved award. Both will be attending the University of California at Berkeley next year, and we wish them well.



Maude Landon congratulates Melody and Cynthia.



### Land Preservation Introduced at Luncheon

Two of the Conservancy's most enthusiastic volunteers, Mary Lopes and Olga Jones, held an elegant garden party to introduce their neighbors to the Land Conservancy. Surrounded by fragrant flowers including antique and modern roses, the participants sipped champagne and enjoyed lunch at beautifully decorated tables.

After the meal, PVPLC Executive Director Barbara Dye spoke briefly about the Conservancy's programs and efforts to preserve the Portuguese Bend area. The event brought in many new members and donations of more than \$800 to the Land Conservancy.

# special events

## Peninsula Residents Show Support at Special Events

### Community Celebrates Spring for White Point

The fourth-annual “Spring for White Point” was a fabulous success! On May 2, over 300 community members gathered at the Los Angeles Yacht Club to celebrate the White Point Nature Preserve and to raise funds to support projects at the site.



White Point Fundraising Committee members Beth Sohngen, Susan McKenna, Bruce Biesman-Simons, Terry Miller, and Veralee Bassler

As part of the event, artworks from 35 local artists were displayed and sold at the silent art auction. Great Wines International provided wine tasting, and local food establishments supplied goodies for a spread to suit anyone’s tastes. The sounds from Harold Greene on the Chapman stick & Brian Asher on the electric cello set the mood for the party.

A highlight of the evening was the appearance of Councilwoman Janice Hahn, who expressed her strong support for White Point Nature Preserve and her gratitude for such a dedicated community.

We thank all of the volunteers, donors, and participants for making this the most successful event to date. See you next year!

## In Celebration!

Graduations Weddings  
Birthdays  
Anniversaries  
Achievements

Remember family & friends with a gift to The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Recipients and donors will be specially recognized in upcoming issues of *Open Spaces*. For more information, please contact Debbie DiBiase at 541-7613, ext. 202, or by email at [ddbibase@pvplc.org](mailto:ddbibase@pvplc.org)



### Annual Art Exhibit & Sale Highlights Open Space

After months of preparation, the Portuguese Bend Artist Colony introduced this year’s exhibition to the public in late June. Titled “Open Space: The Peninsula and Beyond,” the show features beautiful *plein air* oil paintings depicting the stunning landscapes of the Peninsula and other open space areas.

The show features paintings by local artists Richard Humphrey, Stephen Mirich, Daniel Pinkham, Vicki Pinkham, Kevin Prince, Tom Redfield, Amy Sidrane, and guest artist, Bernard Fallon (shown at left with PVPLC President Bill Ailor). All paintings in the exhibition are

available for sale, and a portion of the proceeds benefits the Library and the Land Conservancy.

Gallery hours are: Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10am to 5pm; and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1pm to 7pm through the month of July. The gallery will also be open on Wednesday evenings during the popular concert series held in Malaga Park.



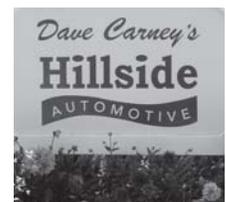
### Golf Tournament a Great Success

An eager group of sixty golfers participated in the “Tee Off for Open Space,” golf tournament held in June at the Los Verdes Golf Course, to benefit the Land Conservancy. The event was organized by Sharon Nolan of ReMax Palos Verdes Realty, with assistance from golfer and RPV Councilman Steve Wolowitz. The event included coaching and encouragement by professional golf instructor

Marilyn Cohn, also of ReMax, and a post-tournament cocktail hour followed by a sunset dinner.

Close to 100 diners enjoyed live blues music, provided by *Scarlett*, and actively participated in a silent and live auction. Donated auction items included artwork by local Portuguese Bend and San Pedro artists and strand cruiser bicycles from Precision Design Products.

Our thanks to Sharon for leading this effort and to Steve for his involvement and support. And our thanks also to the many golfers who helped make this event a success.



PVPLC says “Thanks” to the Carney’s at Hillside Automotive for donating all the labor required to repair our truck. We really appreciate it.

## membership news

### IN CELEBRATION

#### **Peter Gales**

In celebration of his birthday, given by Don Gales

#### **Joanne and Kevin Scoville**

Celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary

### IN REMEMBRANCE

#### **Loretta Hanson**

given by Nell and Hal Mirels

#### **William F. Schmidt**

given by Ilene Schmidt

#### **Bill Schwebel**

given by Mary Jane Schwebel

#### **Val Kurrasch**

given by Dr. Madeline Kurrasch

#### **Pete Migale**

given by Jo Ann and Bruno Michetti

#### **Harry A. Kueser**

given by Ruth P. Kueser

#### **Florence Harrison**

given by Fran and Gene Gold

#### **Margaret T. Davis**

given by Don and Sharron Brundige

#### **Natan Kashper**

given by Lois Knight Larue

## Couple Make a Difference Volunteering at White Point

Jim and Veralee Bassler are the best kinds of volunteers – passionate, hardworking, and fun. And they have really made a difference at the White Point Nature Preserve.

Veralee brings enthusiasm to the White Point Steering Committee, is always willing to help with activities, and organizes the art auction that is such an important feature of the Spring for White Point event. Jim has personally transformed the White Point site, collecting mounds of trash, eliminating hoards of weeds, and creating balanced sculptures of rocks and found materials.



Jim and Veralee met in the early 60's, when they were studying textiles and working on various art projects. "We're still doing the same things now," Veralee comments with a smile, "a true version of the circle of life." Jim went on to teach art at Long Beach and UCLA; Veralee taught for LAUSD for 27 years. In the early 70's they moved with their three daughters to Oaxaca, Mexico to run a cultural immersion program for high school students.

Jim and Veralee are now retired, but they are as busy as ever. Jim's weaving was recently featured in *Fiberarts Magazine*, which described his work as "straightforward simplicity, with great respect for world traditions, and a spirit of discovery."

Veralee was selected to produce ceramic tiles for the benches to be part of the San Pedro waterfront renovation project that will start soon. The community is sure to be charmed by her striped fish and beachy tiles.

When asked about their volunteer work, Veralee said, "I feel that working on White Point is the best use of our time. We just care about it so much."

We appreciate the Basslers' strong commitment to the White Point Nature Preserve and thank them for sharing expertise gathered from their varied and interesting lives together.

### PLANNED GIVING OFFERS WAYS TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK

As we acquire and preserve open space areas, the Land Conservancy is accepting very long term responsibilities. For example, most of the areas we preserve require much work to restore native plants to the point where bird, insect, and animal species native to this area can thrive. While we will continue to rely heavily on volunteers, funds will be required for management, conducting scientific studies, raising and providing locally native plants, providing water and equipment, and the like. These types of projects will continue for decades and provide some nice opportunities for volunteers and for community members who want to leave a little something to the community as part of their estate planning.



One way to do this is to simply include language in your Will. For example, if you'd like to make a gift to the Land Conservancy of assets that do not already have beneficiary designations, you can simply state: "I give \_\_\_\_\_ dollars to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Rolling Hills Estates, California." As an alternative, you may leave a percentage of your estate to the Land Conservancy using similar language.

If you wish to make substantial gifts either during your lifetime or at the time of your death, there are other more sophisticated tools available that allow you to structure your gift to benefit both your family and the Land Conservancy. If you are interested, we can provide additional information on these tools. We encourage you to consult a lawyer specializing in estate planning on how to properly provide for your family members and the Land Conservancy as part of your estate plan.

**AUG 14**

**Nature Walk  
Ken Malloy  
Regional Park  
9am - 10:30am**

Visit a lake that is the last of the South Bay sloughs just north of the intersection of Vermont and Anaheim Streets. Park in the public lot off Vermont St.



**SEPT 11**

**Nature Walk  
Upper Pt. Vicente Park  
9am-11am**

Learn about the military history of the Point and admire some of the best cactus wren and gnatcatcher habitat. Park at RPV City Hall at 30940 Hawthorne Blvd.

# Summer Calendar

Join us for these exciting events, nature walks and volunteer opportunities! For more information, visit our website at [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org) or contact Volunteer Coordinator Susanna Klein at 541-7613, ext. 206, or by e-mail at [sklein@pvplc.org](mailto:sklein@pvplc.org).



**SUNDAY,  
OCTOBER 3  
NOON TO 4PM  
SAVE THE DATE!**

**Mile Long Picnic Fundraiser  
& Photo Contest**

Bring your own picnic, enjoy the views, listen to live music and help to preserve Portuguese Bend. This year's picnic will be held at Abalone Cove Shoreline Park. An invitation with all the details will be mailed before Labor Day.

And, don't forget to send your entries in for our 14th Annual Photo Contest. Winners will be announced at the Mile Long Picnic. See the enclosed flyer for an entry form and all the details or visit [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org).

**The PVPLC is now seeking volunteers!**

**We need help at the George F Canyon Nature Center, stocking the gift shop, staffing the center and leading activities. We're also looking for volunteers interested in serving on Steering Committees for our properties, including George F Canyon, Chandler, Lunada and White Point. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator Susanna Klein if you'd like to get involved in some way.**

**OCTOBER 9**

**Nature Walk  
Chadwick Canyon  
9am - 10:30am**

Full of fascinating habitat and unusual plants, this canyon is tucked away on the Peninsula's northern slope. Park in the office complex lot on Palos Verdes Dr. North, across from Rolling Hills Estates City Hall.



**NOVEMBER 13**

**Nature Walk  
Royal Palms Park  
2pm - 4pm**

Visit tide pools and see unique geology in the cliffs. Park along Paseo del Mar in San Pedro between Western and Weymouth Avenues. Meet at the park entry on top of the bluff near the end of Western Ave.



Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy  
PO Box 3427  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274  
310/541-7613

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