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## PalosVerdesPatch

# PVPLC Seeks Trail Patrol Volunteers

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is recruiting volunteers for a Volunteer Trail Patrol to protect the preserve.

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*By Ken Swenson, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy*

The [Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy](#) and the city of Rancho Palos Verdes are recruiting volunteers to serve as part of a new Volunteer Trail Patrol to help protect the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve from damage and vandalism and keep it a safe experience for all visitors.

The preserve is the culmination of efforts started in 1987 when Dr. Bill Ailor and others formed the PVPLC to acquire, protect and preserve natural open space lands on the Peninsula. With the partnership of Rancho Palos Verdes and support from federal, state and local agencies, the Coastal Conservancy and millions of dollars of financial support and countless volunteer hours from community members, approximately 1,400 acres of land was set aside as a home for the native flora and fauna that had largely disappeared from the balance of the Peninsula.

The preserve sits in a heavily suburban setting, and more people visit it today than ever before as a place to enjoy the scenic beauty and as a popular destination for outdoor recreation. Nevertheless, it is subject to a variety of federal, state and municipal laws that control its use in order to protect the conservation values that are the underpinning of its creation.

The natural wonder and the fragile ecology of the native environment that the Preserve exists to nurture are not immune to the pressures of use. While visitors are required to stay on approved trails, leave the plant and animal life alone and follow other rules, many do not. Worse, efforts to replant and to encourage compliance by using signs and barriers are routinely met with vandalism.

Rangers from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority patrol the Preserve on a limited basis, but they are unable to make substantial inroads due to the number and mobility of violators and the limited patrol time available.

The result is increasingly obvious off-trail and unauthorized trail use that unlawfully damages habitat, natural geology and terrain; prevents natural revegetation that would otherwise fill in old trails that are not in the approved trails plan; costs time and money to repair, replace, and replant; and ruins the scenic beauty and the outdoor experience for other visitors.

In order to assist the MRCA rangers, the city and PVPLC are working to establish a Volunteer Trail Patrol Program. The Program is not finalized; however, it is expected that Volunteer Trail Patrol members will assist the MRCA rangers by regularly patrolling the Preserve on foot, and potentially by horse or by bicycle, to observe and report violations. The information collected will allow the MRCA rangers to respond to violations and to focus enforcement efforts. Volunteer Trail Patrol members will also have opportunities to assist in educating visitors to the Preserve as another means to help with rules compliance. The current plans is for volunteers to receive training to enable them to function more safely and effectively, to be subject to rules and a code of conduct, and to be regularly evaluated. Volunteer Trail Patrol members will not be able to issue citations or make arrests.

PVPLC and the city are asking for a minimum hourly commitment per month in order to assure the program's maximum effectiveness. For more information or to volunteer for this effort that will protect the conservation values of this unique South Bay treasure for generations to come, please contact Barb Ailor at [info@PVPLC.org](mailto:info@PVPLC.org). The Volunteer Trail Patrol can make a difference, but only with the dedicated support of community volunteers.

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the February issue of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Horsemen's Association Dispatch newsletter. Ken Swenson is a member of the Board of Directors of PVPLC and its immediate past president. He currently chairs the conservancy's Stewardship Committee.*

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