

Open Spaces

First Quarter 1998

A newsletter published by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

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Third Graders Learn About Habitat in Conservancy Program

Third grade students on the Palos Verdes Peninsula are well on their way to learning about the natural habitat that exists right in their own backyards. Under a grant from Las Candelistas, in 1996 Deena Sheridan developed an educational program for third grade classrooms that covers geology, plants, animals and the historical perspective of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The program, "My Palos Verdes Nature Notebook," is now a part of the natural habitat component of the PVPUSD science matrix. This program is presented each year by the Land Conservancy in every third grade classroom in the district.

The culminating activity of the four week program is a nature walk at an open space site close to each elementary school. Here the students see first hand, and in their natural habitat, the plants, animals and rocks learned about in class. There are two unique features about this field trip: first, each elementary school in the Palos Verdes District has an open space, natural science laboratory within walking distance (no transportation expense) for nature study investigations; secondly, parents volunteer to attend a training session in order to teach small groups at specific stations on the site as part of the student's field trip experience.

The entire school community is involved in the out-of-doors experience-learning, having fun and really getting into nature! The biggest problem this year was Mother Nature herself-nine schools were ready and waiting for enough sun to get out and investigate their natural habitat laboratory. When the rains ended, they finally were able to get out for a walk.

In January I visited Deena's program at Vista Grande School. The kids and I learned a lot and the fun while learning was apparent from their enthusiastic participation. Teachers, parents and students enjoy this program and see it as a step toward educating the students to become environmentally literate.

By Linda Hagerty

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Ed Miller Becomes Stewardship Director

We are pleased that Ed Miller, formerly with the National Park Service doing wildlife work in the scenic back country of Mount Rainier National Park, has joined the Conservancy as our Director of Land Stewardship.

Ed graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in terrestrial ecology. He has worked on various wildlife projects, including work with elk, bald eagles, and spotted owls. He has also been involved in botany and stream-related projects.

Ed is happy to have "moved from a wilderness setting into a community project" because that is where he is interested in directing his future career. He sees the Palos Verdes Peninsula "as a place where the community and the natural and scenic beauty seem to blend together well."

Since relocating to Southern California, Ed has worked on various projects, including the PV Blue restoration project at the Navy Fuel Depot site in San Pedro and Heal the Bay's Malibu Creek Watershed Monitoring Project.

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First Color Brochure Mailed in May

A four-color brochure depicting the beauty of open space areas on the Palos Verdes Peninsula is being mailed to every household in the 90274-90275 zip code areas, as part of the PVPLCV's 10th Anniversary Celebration.

Inviting readers to "Share the Vision," the brochure focuses on the history of the Conservancy, highlights our major successes, and pinpoints remaining open space areas on the Peninsula. Production was made possible by a grant from the Trust for Public Land, and graphics design assistance from Rick Humphrey.

We hope you will enjoy this unique representation of PVPLC's role in preserving and restoring our irreplaceable Peninsula heritage. We welcome any additional support you might wish to provide. Donations are tax-deductible, and will be used to support our conservation efforts.

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Conservancy Receives Grant To Advance New Conservation Approach

The Conservancy has received a \$100,000 grant from the James Irvine Foundation to support our work exploring innovative new conservation finance tools. US Forest Capital (formerly EA/Capital), our partner in this work, is an investment banking company dedicated to resolving America's land use conflicts by applying financial solutions to natural resource/land use conflicts. Together, we are seeking to apply the power of capital markets to the forestry landscape.

New Conservation Finance tools use low-cost capital and government guarantees to give landowners unprecedented flexibility to pursue ecologically sustainable forest practices without sacrificing their economic goals. Reduced risk and an extended pay-back period mean landowners can harvest timber at a far slower rate than that demanded by traditional financing. In accomplishing this change, voluntary forest stewardship, healthier forests, increased ecosystem quality, sustainable job sources, and improved community vitality become attainable.

The Conservation Finance approach is being explored in several timber communities in the West. As a result, areas suffering such intractable conflicts as Mendocino County in Northern California now find environmentalists, foresters, and loggers working together to apply Conservation Finance tools to the job of protecting the future of their community forest, its jobs,

its ecological diversity, and its place in their rural community.

Conservation Finance has brought new hope and a pragmatic "real-world" solution to a truly difficult problem. We thank the James Irvine Foundation for supporting this innovative new effort.

by Wendy Millet

While the Conservancy focuses on land preservation and management on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, this innovative program originated by Vice President Mike Kilroy promises to become a major factor in land conservation nationwide. We are pleased to be able to provide leadership in its implementation.

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Table-Watcher Needed

Like sitting outdoors, basking in the sun? Looking for something to do on an occasional Saturday morning? We're looking for a volunteer to staff a table at our Nature Walks.

It's easy work requiring very little activity. But it's important to walk participants. If you think you might be interested, call Anke Raue, our Volunteer Coordinator at 377-2599.

Peninsula Photo Book Available

A Special Place by Mary Donovan and Ted Bruinsma, a beautiful photographic representation of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, will be available after June 15th through the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. This hardcover book, which has been featured in the Daily Breeze and Peninsula News, makes a great gift for someone local or far away. Price: \$40 plus tax and postage. A portion of the proceeds benefits the PVPLC.

Telephone (310) 541-7613 or e-mail pvplc@aol.com to place an order.

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Plant Propagation Project Progresses

One aspect of PVPLC's mission is to promote native plant restoration efforts on the Peninsula. As part of this effort, the Conservancy will be paid as a consultant on habitat restoration and native plant cultivation to the Ocean Trails project .

The Conservancy will be growing a wide variety of native plant species for use in the project's restoration and mitigation efforts. The plants include many coastal sage scrub and bluff scrub species that are native to the Peninsula and were required by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the habitat conservation plan for the Ocean Trails project.

Under the leadership of Tony Baker, an area landscaper who specializes in native plants, the Conservancy is aiming to grow approximately 20,000 plants for the Ocean Trails project. While this seems like a lot of plants, it is only a quarter of the total plants that the Ocean Trails project is required to grow and plant on the property.

Tony will also be responsible for the care and stewardship of several hundred native plants that were protected from grading on the Ocean Trails and Subregion One development projects. Under the direction of Barbara Dye, these plants have been boxed and will continue to be watered and cared for until they can be replanted on the property late in 1998.

"I'm pleased to help the Conservancy with this restoration effort," Tony said. "Doing this kind of mitigation is a satisfying way to see how non-native areas can be restored to support native wildlife, birds, and butterflies."

Tony will also be cultivating plants for the Conservancy's restoration of the Linden H. Chandler and Lunada Canyon

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Management Plan for Forrestal, Shoreline Submitted to RPV

In March, the Conservancy submitted a proposal to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes for the joint development of a management plan for the Forrestal and Shoreline Park properties. A copy of the letter to Mayor Barbara Ferraro is below.



Dear Mayor Ferraro and Members of the City Council:

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is pleased to submit the enclosed [draft proposal for the development of a management plan](#) for the Forrestal and Shoreline Park properties.

As you will see, the draft is not a complete plan for managing the properties, but is a framework for development of such plan. We propose to develop details of the final plan jointly with the City and any other participants you might wish to have involved. Once the plan has been finalized, the Conservancy would propose to manage those areas the City desires to permanently preserve as natural open space areas. Our goal would be to provide such management services at no cost to the City.

We are excited about the possibility of being involved in the long-term management and restoration of these two outstanding natural areas. We look forward to working with you to develop a plan enabling such activities to become important additions to the volunteer and educational opportunities available to residents of our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

William Ailor, President

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A Brief History of the Conservancy

Open space is of great benefit to wildlife and to humans—for wildlife, it is vital for existence; for humans, it adds to the quality of our lives. We think of healthful, unpolluted air, sites for scenic and body-strengthening walks, locations for studying and enjoying plants, birds and other creatures, and much more.

Recognizing the community's desire to preserve open space, Bill Ailor held a public meeting in March 1988, at which Janet Diehl of the Trust for Public Land, a land conservation support organization, was guest speaker. Bill and Janet spoke so convincingly in proposing the establishment of a local land conservancy, that the 130-member audience cheered and encouraged the founding of PVPLC.

Bill, retiree Joe Slap, attorney David Bence, and a small committee drafted and filed the Articles of Incorporation, the By-

laws, and the State and Federal applications for non-profit, tax-deductible status. The status was quickly approved and the Conservancy was born.

Since start-up, PVPLC has felt it part of its mission to inform our local community about the Peninsula, including, for example, its open space, topographical and ecological features, geology, and various aspects of its history.

In 1989, the first "Open Spaces" newsletter was published, and shortly thereafter, the organization hosted its first docent-guided nature walk. Today, the walks are regularly attended by over 150 participants and are televised on Cox Channel 3 and on the Torrance Unified School District's Public Channel 2.

Open space preservation has been accomplished in various ways. The first acquisition, the 20-acre Lunada Canyon was donated by the E.K. Zuckerman family. The second, now the 28.5-acre Linden H. Chandler Preserve, was acquired in 1993 in partnership with the City of Rolling Hills Estates using L.A. County Measure A funds, made available as a result of Conservancy efforts and voter approval in 1992. The third, the 160-acre Forrestal property, preserved by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes in 1996, also used funds from Measure A, but included State Wildlife Conservation Board funds-the first State money ever used on the Peninsula for land preservation. The last, the 53-acre Shoreline Park property was preserved in 1997 by action of the LA County Board of Supervisors.

The Forrestal property is particularly significant. It contains the gray fox (the only known tree-climbing type of fox), the endangered California gnatcatcher, and other fascinating creatures, plus beautiful views, foliage, and a fabulous record of sharks' teeth and other fossil discoveries.

PVPLC has offered to manage and maintain preserved open space at no cost for PVP cities. The Conservancy also provides contract naturalist services for the George F Canyon Nature Center in Rolling Hills Estates.

In this article, focus has been on PVPLC's origin, on its beneficial activities, and on its resulting great value to our Peninsula and residents, both human and wildlife.

In closing, I want to express my deep appreciation to the volunteers who have spent time performing administrative, educational, fund-raising, and other functions; to those who have donated funds or land, and to local city governments that have encouraged and accomplished open space preservation. After 10 years, the efforts and donations of all those people have helped further the preservation of the natural environment on our Peninsula.

Happy 10th Anniversary to PVPLC and to all of its supporters!

by Joseph K. Slap

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Conservancy Conducts Teacher Training Program

On February 18, the PVPUSD and the PVPLC conducted a natural habitat training session for third grade teachers. A series of lessons involving environmental investigations and research was developed by Leah Melber, PVPUSD teacher, and presented along with the Natural Habitat Curriculum and "My Palos Verdes Nature Notebook" provided by the PVPLC.

Leah, Deena Sheridan and Linda Hagerty had great fun taking the teachers outdoors, demonstrating the Nature curriculum, and introducing them to many different ways one can investigate nature.

The day ended with a field walk at George F Canyon led by Deena, with teachers observing and exploring in a natural habitat site. Just as we want their students to do, the teachers learned in the classroom and reinforced their lessons by visiting the great outdoors.

Teachers appeared to be involved and enthusiastic while participating in the natural habitat investigations. They also showed an appreciation for the outdoor activities and organized nature walk. The evaluations were very positive and requests for more information on the natural habitat of the Palos Verdes Peninsula were received, along with requests for more Deena.

Plans are now in the works to correlate the K-5 grades' natural habitat curricula with the grade level science matrix and present more teacher workshops to the individual grades in the same successful way as the third grade presentation.

With the enthusiasm and positive response generated among the teachers, we may well expect to see our Palos Verdes hillsides and canyons dotted with students investigating, questioning, conducting research, collecting data, and learning from and enjoying the fabulous natural habitat in their own backyard.

By Linda Hagerty

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Rains Benefit Habitat Restoration Efforts

We are well on the way to an other glorious spring, with wildflowers starting to bloom and winter rains fading away. The rains have been very helpful to our restoration activities at Linden H. Chandler and Lunada Canyon preserves.

In January, 100 seedlings of native species were planted in the Chandler preserve, including black sage, California sagebrush, gooseberry, deerweed, and ashleaf buckwheat. We have been looking after them, and most seem to be doing quite well.

The two test plot areas which have been planted in the past have been weeded out; we have also been removing non-natives, including fennel, radish, curly dock, and the mallow that rings the top of the hill near the Empty Saddle Club. The arundo, or giant reed, that was cut last year is coming back in places. When the rains end, we will continue our efforts to eliminate this very persistent non-native plant.

In the last month things have started happening at the Lunada Canyon property. We have an advanced placement Environmental Science Class from the Palos Verdes Peninsula High School doing some studies on the natural environment and vegetation of the canyon. With the help of volunteers, the process of removing the ice plant covering large areas of the canyon has begun. Once it is gone, the area can eventually be seeded and planted with native plants.

As the spring progresses, these projects will be continuing at Chandler and Lunada. In the near future we will also begin collecting native seeds for later plantings, and begin the removal of the large fennel population in Lunada Canyon.

Fennel is another very aggressive non-native plant. With a little work and persistence, these two open spaces will return to a more natural state, encouraging the return of rare native birds and butterflies.

For future reference, the volunteer day that is on the third Sunday of every month will move back and forth from the Chandler to Lunada preserves, depending on projects.

Information including the date, specific location, and nature of the work will be posted on the message phone of the Conservancy, 310-541-7613.

by Ed Miller

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