

# OPEN SPACES

## Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

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## Voters to Approve \$5.5 Million for Peninsula Land Acquisition

A concentrated effort by City Councils, local organizations, and the Conservancy has led to inclusion of \$5.5 million earmarked for land acquisition on the Peninsula in the LA County Park, Beach and Recreation Act of 1996. The LA County Board of Supervisors has approved placing the new proposition on the November 1996 ballot.

The 1996 Act is modeled after the LA County Park, Beach and Recreation Act of 1992, which was approved by over 62% of voters in November of that year. Like the 1992 Act, the new measure requires approval by a majority of voters to pass, and would provide funds for a variety of recreational and land acquisition activities county-wide.

The 1992 Act made over \$7 million available for land acquisition on the Peninsula. Approximately \$1.4 million of this was used to acquire the 28.5-acre Chandler Trust property in Rolling Hills Estates. This property was dedicated as the Peninsula's newest nature preserve, the Linden H. Chandler Preserve, in 1994. The Conservancy has managed an ongoing program to enhance the property's native habitat value since that time.

### Funds from '92 Act Remain

The funds remaining from the 1992 Act include \$4.34 million for acquisition of "critical natural lands and wildlife habitat" in Rancho Palos Verdes and \$1.4 million for the "acquisition and improvement of lands for coastal access, trails, and open space purposes" in Palos Verdes Estates. These funds must be before December 1997.

The 1992 proposition also included \$4 million for development of a nature center at Friendship

Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. The specific design of the nature center was not known before the Act was passed, and there has been considerable opposition to the design proposed by the County. The 1996 Act does not contain funds for use at Friendship Park.

Funds from the 1992 Act have also been used to help make the George F Canyon Nature Center a reality, and are planned to be used to expand the Pt. Vicente Interpretive Center to include a meeting room and senior center. Funds were also earmarked for the restoration and improvement of Madrona Marsh and projects to upgrade beaches and parks county-wide.

### **\$5.5 Million for Peninsula**

The new Act would make \$4 million available for the acquisition of "critical natural lands and wildlife habitat" in Rancho Palos Verdes, \$1 million for acquisition of "natural lands, wildlife habitat, open space and/or equestrian facilities" in Rolling Hills Estates, and \$500,000 for "acquisition of lands for coastal access, trails, and other open space purposes" in Palos Verdes Estates. In all cases, the land would be used for public access, recreation, or open space.

The Act also contains funds for other South Bay projects, including the Madrona Marsh Nature Preserve in Torrance, construction of a regional indoor sports facility at Wilson Park, acquiring and developing new park land in Long Beach, as well as upgrading the Cultural Arts Center in Manhattan Beach.

The 1996 Act is about half the size of the 1992 Act and would cost taxpayers approximately \$6 per average parcel per year for 20 years.

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*Below is Bill Ailor's testimony to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on June 13, 1996 urging them to vote in favor of placing the Los Angeles County Park, Beach and Recreation Act of 1996 on the November ballot.*

"Good morning. I'm Bill Ailor, president of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. I'm here today representing the 600 members of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, as well as thousands of South Bay residents whose quality of life is enhanced by the open spaces of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

"As you know, the approximately 2,000 acres of undeveloped land remaining on the Peninsula are the only large natural areas easily available to the nearly 1 million residents of the South Bay.

"These open spaces are crossed by trails, provide spectacular views of the Pacific, are the home of the California gnatcatcher and cactus wren, and provide a tranquil beauty rare in the Los Angeles area.

"The proposition you are considering will give voters the opportunity to preserve some of this open space by allocating funds for the acquisition of critical natural areas on the Peninsula.

"We urge you to put the Los Angeles County Park, Beach and Recreation Act on the November ballot and give voters the opportunity to preserve some of the most

spectacular open space in Los Angeles County for ourselves and future generations to enjoy.

"Thank you."

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## Former RHE Mayor Ken Servis Joins Board



Board member Dudley Onderdonk has resigned from the Board of Directors, and former Rolling Hills Estates City Councilman and Mayor Ken Servis has been appointed as a replacement. Onderdonk, who joined the Conservancy Board in 1993, has accepted a position as Director of Community and Economic Development for the Village of Oak Park, Illinois.

Servis, Professor of Chemistry, Dean of Academic Records and Registrar at the University of Southern California, brings a unique perspective to the Board. Servis was mayor of Rolling Hills Estates while negotiations leading to the acquisition of the 28.5-acre Chandler Preserve were ongoing. He has an excellent understanding of how the Conservancy works to preserve open space.

The Servis family have been members of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy since its inception. Recently, Servis has been assisting the Land Conservancy with negotiations to preserve additional open space on the Peninsula.

At USC, Servis has served the University as President of the Academic Senate, with four years as University Marshal, and has chaired and served on numerous University Committees.

Servis has been a resident of Rolling Hills Estates for 25 years. The Servis's three children attended Palos Verdes schools and graduated from Miraleste High School. During those years Servis was an active volunteer in scout, soccer, and various youth, school and community activities on the Peninsula.

In 1978 Servis was appointed to the Planning Commission of Rolling Hills Estates and in 1989 was elected to the City Council, serving as Mayor in 1993.

During his tenure as a Planning Commissioner, Ken realized the urgency of preserving open space on the rapidly developing Palos Verdes Peninsula. "Back then, no one group saw open space preservation as its responsibility," Servis said. "Today, that's the Conservancy's role. Open space is an inheritance we can pass on to future generations, but only if it is secured now. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to help."

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## Plants Utilize Survival Strategies

by Joseph K. Slap

The colors, shapes, food products and other characteristics of various plants attract animals which aid in the proliferation of those plants. The methods through which such aid is provided are exemplified by, but not limited to: bees transferring pollen from one plant to another, thus aiding the fertilization process, and certain browsing vertebrates swallowing seeds which they expel without digesting them, thus spreading the seeds, leading to spreading of the plants.

Some plants have been endangered because so many birds, insects, mammals or other animals were attracted to eating critical portions and quantities of the plant or its seeds. Many of those "frightened" plants have developed protective strategies.

The Australian shrub, *Hakea trifurcata*, has its seeds enclosed in fruity seed pods which eventually release the seeds. Prior to spreading of the seeds, the seed pods, or follicles, are often preyed upon by the white-tailed black cockatoo which eats and digests the seeds. As a protective technique, this plant species has evolved a leaf strategy. The young plants have only one type of leaf, a narrow one that resembles a needle. However, as the plant matures toward its seed-producing stage, leaves of another type emerge next to the needle-shaped ones on the same branches.

These additional leaves closely resemble the follicles in both shape and yellow-green color, and therefore serve to confuse and divert the cockatoos. In tests, researchers removed the follicle-shaped leaves of some mature shrubs, but left other adjacent shrubs unmodified. Observers then saw that the birds removed a great many more seeds from the modified shrubs than from the unmodified ones, and that birds which flew to the unmodified shrubs went 2-3 times as often to the follicle-like leaves as to the actual follicles.

Other plants have developed thorns (e.g., roses and lime trees), chemical toxins (e.g., poison ivy and poison oak), traps in which insects fall (e.g., Venus fly trap), camouflage via color or shape (e.g., *Monstera deliciosa*, called the Swiss cheese plant because of the holes in its leaf blades), or tendrils which cause it to climb high so as to have most of the edible portions above the reach of predators.

Some animals must recognize the health advantages of a fruit and vegetable diet, so they go after such menu items. [Go to Top](#)

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## George F Canyon Nature Center Opens



## Aileen Bevan on the steps of the new George F Canyon Nature Center

The opening ceremony for the new George F Canyon Nature Center on June 1 was attended by several hundred individuals, capping a two-year effort by the City of Rolling Hills Estates and local residents.

The Center will provide information and constantly changing exhibits on plants and wildlife native to the adjacent George F Canyon.

"We have a new family of mice," noted Aileen Bevan, Conservancy employee and Contract Naturalist for the Center. "We also have snakes, lizards, and a 'peep-hole' tree with scenes typical of the canyon."

The Nature Center provides a great opportunity for volunteers interested in helping in the Center and leading nature walks in the Canyon. A training program for new docents will be starting in September. Please call Rolling Hills Estates City Hall, (310)377-1577, for more information.

Joe Slap, vice president of the Conservancy's founding Board, will be presenting a free series of lectures on Sundays at 2:00 p.m. at the Center, beginning October 6 and continuing through October 27. The one-hour lectures are titled: "Animal Behavior," "Science in the 90s: What's New," "Geology and Paleontology," and "Astronomy and Cosmology."

The Center, located at the southwest corner of the intersection of PV Drive East and PV Drive North, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and on other days by appointment. The Stein-Hale Nature Trail, which ascends the beautiful George F Canyon, is open daily from dawn to dusk. Admission is free to both the Center and the trail. There is a \$1 per person charge for special tours. [Go to Top](#)

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## Land Stewardship Highlights...

### Chandler Preserve



Our new sign on the Linden H. Chandler Preserve

In June, twelve students from Narbonne High School provided manpower for the removal of fennel and the collection of native plant seeds on the Linden H. Chandler preserve and learned about native habitat. The Preserve, dedicated in 1994, was acquired with funds from the LA County Park, Beach, and Recreation Act of 1992.

The removal and seed-gathering is part of the Conservancy's long-term program of enhancing the habitat of the Preserve. Aileen Bevan, our Land Stewardship Director, has also established test plots of sage brush and bush sunflower for later replanting on the preserve. For more information on activities at the Preserve, call the Conservancy's office, (310)541-7613.

## Lunada Canyon Preserve

Plant and wildlife surveys of the Lunada Canyon Preserve are being conducted to identify plants and wildlife living on the 20-acre parcel. The surveys, being conducted by Angelika Brinkmann-Busi and Martin Byhower, are necessary for the development of a long-term management plan for the Preserve.

Several invasive non-natives have been identified and will be removed. One of these is the poisonous castor bean plant, and several large stands have been removed from the Posey Way entrance to the Preserve.

The land included in the Lunada Canyon Preserve was donated to the Conservancy in 1992 by the E.K. Zuckerman Family. [Go to Top](#)

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## Plein Aire Art Exhibition Planning Progresses

California Art Club members Daniel Pinkham, Amy Sidrane, and Rick Humphrey continue to paint the open spaces of the Palos Verdes Peninsula in preparation for their upcoming Palos Verdes Peninsula: An Artistic Impression exhibition to benefit the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. All three artists grew up in Palos Verdes Estates in the 1960s and they remember an area vastly different from what exists today.

### Daniel Pinkham



Daniel Pinkham is a nationally known landscape painter who studied under scholarship with noted Russian impressionist Sergei Bongart. Through this intensive study he learned higher artistic ideals that he feels could not have been taught by anyone else.

Pinkham is also a signature member of the Oil Painters of America, has exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum of Art, Carnegie Art Museum, Monterey Museum of Art and the Joan Irvine Smith Gallery of Fine Art. He has received numerous awards and has been featured in several art publications, including Southwest Art Magazine. His work takes him throughout the United States and Europe.

## Amy Sidrane

Amy Sidrane moved to the Peninsula in 1961 and began painting and drawing when she was in Elementary school. From 1979 to 1981 she studied with Bongart, who gave her a strong traditional foundation in aesthetics.



For the next several years she began to develop her own personal style: studying from life and painting on location in the United States and abroad. During this time she exhibited her work with the Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art and at galleries in New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, and Utah. Sidrane also received the Best of Show Award at the Catalina Festival of Art.

## Rick Humphrey



Rick Humphrey began his formal art education at the Los Angeles Art Center College of Design in 1973. From there he joined the staff of The Aerospace Corporation in 1977 as a graphic designer, and has an extensive background in design, illustration and computer graphics.

In 1985, he began to study oil painting with Daniel Pinkham, learning the principals of color, composition and unity.

While he loves to paint landscapes throughout the United States, his primary subjects are of the Palos Verdes Peninsula where he grew up.

A member of the California Art Club and the Oil Painters of America, Humphrey has exhibited in juried exhibitions throughout California.

"Our goal with this show is to give our impressions of the beauty we find on the Peninsula," said Humphrey. "When we were growing up, the natural beauty of this place made a great impression on each of us. We've seen great changes over time and want to help the Conservancy preserve the special feeling the Peninsula's natural environment gives each of us."

The show is currently planned for early April of next year. [Go to Top](#)

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## PVPLC Tutors Teachers to Teach Peninsula Habitat

A Conservancy-led in-service of over 50 elementary school teachers was held in late June. Teachers from every Peninsula elementary school, as well as from St. John Fisher and Holy Trinity schools participated in the five-day training program designed to help teachers integrate a local habitat segment into the Palos Verdes Unified School District's new hands-on science curriculum.

Held at locations near each of the five elementary schools, the all-day training sessions were broken into two parts. The morning session provided an overview of the habitat on the site, and during the

afternoon session, Heather White, educator and naturalist for the Conservancy, helped teachers develop grade-specific activities related to the local habitat.

The training program is a follow-on to the Conservancy's successful Third Grade Education Program developed by Deena Sheridan and led by Barbara Dye, PVPLC Board Member and head of our education program. "We were asked to help the teachers make the existing science program better, so we worked with the Southern California Earthquake Center to bring this training session directly to the teachers," said Dye.

Deena Sheridan's Third Grade Program, funded by a grant from Las Candelistas, has been a great success, receiving letters of thanks from teachers and positive articles in the Daily Breeze and Peninsula News.

"When we started the Third Grade Program, less than one child in three had ever walked across Peninsula open space," Dye recalled. "Now we're expanding their horizons by helping them understand and appreciate the plants and wildlife near their homes. The excitement in their eyes is a joy to see."

Our Third Grade Program reaches about 600 students with three in-class sessions, followed by a nature walk with parents helping students identify wildlife and understand habitat.

The new hands-on science curriculum will reach all kids in kindergarten through the fifth grade—more than 3,000 young people.

We want to make the local habitat segment a permanent part of the education curriculum, and we're looking for a community partner interested in joining with us over the long term to make this happen. "Our yearly budget is only \$5,000," Dye concluded. "Where else can a sponsor do so much for so little?" Please contact the Conservancy's office (310)541-7613 if you'd like more information on this special opportunity.

*The PVPLC's educational programs and Nature Walks, as well as special events such as our Photography Competition, and the upcoming plein-air art show "Palos Verdes Peninsula: An Artistic Impression," are part of our overall efforts to help raise our community's awareness and appreciation of Peninsula open space.*

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