

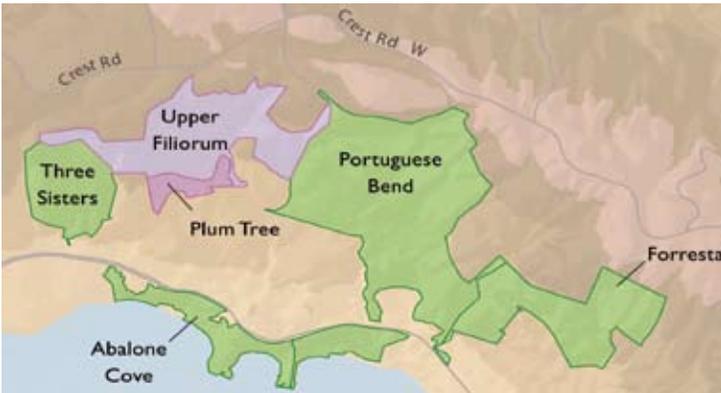
## UPDATE ON THE PLANNED ACQUISITION

Four years ago people asked: “If the landslide moratorium in the Portuguese Bend area precludes any construction, why does the Conservancy need to buy 430 acres of open land in the moratorium area? Won’t the land stay undeveloped anyway?”

The fact that the land was in the moratorium made it much less expensive, but the real reason for the acquisition was to assure that land would be undeveloped forever. It was owned by an entity whose goal was development, not preservation. We wanted to change that.

The recent reversal of the “Monks” case (see opposite) has, in effect, lifted the building moratorium, so the future of open space land in the moratorium is uncertain at present. Since the 430 acres was preserved in 2005, we have no worries about its future.

But we have an almost identical situation on another block of land that is not yet preserved—the Filiorum parcels, which lies between two preserved areas (see map below). As seen, this property links together existing preserves to provide a vital wildlife corridor and allows us to reopen trails that are now closed to the public.



Map showing the Filiorum parcels.

We have an agreement to acquire this 218-acre parcel from York Long Point Associates at open space market rates. With the lifting of the moratorium, this land could become developable. Chances are that if we do not acquire this property now, the fair market price for this incredibly well situated coastal property will skyrocket out of reach.

The Conservancy is working with various government agencies to firm up contributions of about \$8.1 million of the projected \$12.2 million acquisition cost. We need to raise the difference, \$4.1 million, from private donors. And we don’t have much time--our option closes on March 31, 2009.

In the next few weeks we will be kicking-off a public capital campaign to help us achieve our goals. We recognize that these are difficult economic times, but we are confident that each of us will again dig deep to support this effort.

This is the last large block of open space remaining on the Peninsula and its acquisition will complete the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve. Please help us Grow the Legacy we are leaving for future generations!

*-Bill Ailor and Liz Kennedy*

Co-Chairs of the Capital Campaign to Preserve Filiorum

## DECISION CREATES UNCERTAINTY

For the last 30 years the City of Rancho Palos Verdes has had a moratorium that placed building restrictions on properties in the landslide area. Last year, in the case of Monks vs the City of RPV, a Trial Court in Torrance agreed with the City and ruled that the moratorium was a valid regulatory response to the landslide. Fifteen plaintiffs who own sixteen approximately one-acre lots in the Portuguese Bend enclave brought the suit.

On October 1, 2008, the California Court of Appeal’s Second Appellate District reversed the “Monks” decision. It ruled that the moratorium’s building restrictions constituted a “taking” of the plaintiffs’ property as there was no “reasonable probability of personal injury or property damage other than the possibility of damage to plaintiffs’ desired homes in the distant future — damage that could be repaired.” The decision potentially opens the door to development in the Portuguese Bend area, including larger areas of undeveloped land within the moratorium area.

In a closed session on Tuesday October 7, 2008 the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council unanimously decided to petition for a rehearing before the California Court of Appeal and seek a hearing before the California Supreme Court.

# Long-Term Restoration Projects Enhance Habitat

The Palos Verdes Nature Preserve (PVNP) is more than just open space for the public to enjoy, it is one of 32 active Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCP's) throughout the state of California intended to "maximize benefits to wildlife and vegetation communities." Because of this broader objective, managing the Preserve encompasses a wide range of interrelated responsibilities such as scientific research, habitat restoration, species enhancement, trail maintenance, and education.

In accordance with the NCCP, the Land Conservancy is required to restore 15 acres of habitat every three years, or five acres per year. When funding is available, we are able to restore even more acreage.

Each restoration project involves a phased process over several years. First, land must be cleared of non-native, invasive species of plants. Then, over the next two or more years, irrigation is installed, and soil may need to be amended with nutrients or mulch. Only in the last phase are new plants added. After several more years, the plants begin to mature and wildlife begins to use the habitat and the watering system is disabled.

## Current Restoration Projects

Habitat restoration projects are currently underway at three reserves.

*Alta Vicente Reserve.* The initial 15 acres of restoration is in its second year. Irrigation is being installed and weed maintenance going on. It will be another year before new habitat is planted.

*Three Sisters Reserve.* A plan has just been finalized to restore 21 acres of habitat with coastal sage scrub and perennial grasslands. This project is especially important because it will provide habitat for the coastal cactus wren. This project will monitor bird, mammal, and reptile species prior, during, and after restoration to observe the effects of that process on Peninsula wildlife populations. (See related article "Studying Benefits of Habitat Restoration" on page 4).

*Vicente Bluffs Reserve.* Four acres will be restored to provide host plants, including dune buckwheat, for the endangered El Segundo blue butterfly. In addition, three acres of riparian habitat will be restored on the western boundary of the Three Sisters Reserve. Two grants totaling \$268,132 from the California Coastal Conservancy are funding this work. Site preparation will begin in November.



Habitat Restoration is being done at Vicente Bluffs, Alta Vicente, and Three Sisters Preserves.

## Vegetation Survey

In addition to its restoration work, the Land Conservancy will be conducting on-the-ground vegetation surveys of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve thanks to a grant recently received from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The survey team of staff ecologists and botanical consultants will coordinate with the DFG to produce a detailed, accurate vegetation map of the Preserve using the Keeler-Wolf classification system. This is the current standard for interpreting statewide vegetation patterns and for initiating local ecological assessments. The vegetation survey will provide

valuable long-term benefits by identifying where restoration is needed, and to target restoration areas for specific species and plant types.

All of these management projects involve sustained, long-term efforts, whose results over time will continue to enhance the Preserve as a place where people can learn about and enjoy our natural environment both now and in the future.



Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*).

*The devastating fires in San Diego County in 2007, destroyed many acres of habitat along with the birds that hunkered down in their nests. As a result, the Palos Verdes Peninsula may now be home to one of the largest remaining populations of the cactus wren. These birds only nest in three species of cactus, two of which will be planted at Three Sisters. The birds create multiple nests in cactus more than 3 feet high, probably to avoid predation. Both males and females tend to the young, and the juveniles from the previous season's brood help to build nests for the next season.*

## NEWS ITEMS

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- Monitoring Birds . . . . . p. 4
- Demonstration Gardens . . . . . p. 5
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## Education Program Teaches in the Field

The education department of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is embarking on an innovative curriculum project that is guided by the belief that the best way to teach students about the natural world is to get them out into it. Our education director, Kristina Ellis, is working closely with a local elementary school to bring school children out to the nature preserves for rigorous science lessons in the field.

“Learning through Action” is the driving philosophy behind experiential and environmental education. This teaching style is based on the understanding that each learner is different and receives and synthesizes information in different ways. While we are all a combination of many different learning styles, some are better visual learners--they need to see to understand.



Teachers receiving training prior to field trips.

Others are good auditory learners and can retain information that they hear. Still others synthesize information kinesthetically--they learn through doing; through experiencing.

Focusing on kindergarten through grade five, Kristina is currently working with a select group of teachers to develop a comprehensive and engaging curriculum plan that incorporates field trips with parallel classroom lessons. We are developing a total of 10 field trips, based on the California Science standards, while the teachers are creating pre and post-field trip lesson plans. While the in-class lessons will be inspired by the science field trips, they will also be incorporating standards across the grade level curricula like math, art, and social studies. All are designed to be very hands-on, involving and engaging the students through action.

Drawing on the main principles of experiential education, the field trips involve compelling elements like teamwork, learning games and role-play. Students will take on the role of a “scientific detective” or “explorer of the natural world” in order to conduct their very own field investigations. Students will engage in activities that include soil experiments, creating a compass, and even surveying wildlife and plant distribution. Each will use these experiences to prepare their own mini restoration plans.

The goal is to create an experience that is as real as possible, where the children are involved at all levels of learning. When people are engaged mentally, physically and emotionally, they comprehend so much more and will retain information much longer than from reading alone. When you can add fun and excitement to the learning process, it brings the material to life, inviting students to become involved and learn at their own pace and interest level, fostering a life-long love for learning and nature.

### YOUR GIFT IS IMPORTANT

Your donation will be put to good work by the Conservancy on a variety of programs. You have many ways to donate to the Land Conservancy:

Our Mariposa Circle is for donors giving \$1,000 or more annually, with special thank-you events and benefits.

Our Legacy Circle is for donors giving \$5,000 or more for three years, with signature thank-you events, additional benefits and permanent recognition at the Del Cerro site.

We also offer many planned giving options.

For more information, call Bob Ford office at 310.541.7613 or e-mail [rford@pvplc.org](mailto:rford@pvplc.org).

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### **Center**

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Laurie Morgan, Asst. Naturalist

### **Newsletter published by the:**

Palos Verdes Peninsula  
Land Conservancy  
P.O. Box 3427  
PV Peninsula, CA 90274  
Tel: (310)541-7613  
Fax: (310)541-7623  
E-mail: [info@pvplc.org](mailto:info@pvplc.org)  
Website: [www.pvplc.org](http://www.pvplc.org)

## STEWARDSHIP, RESTORATION, AND EDUCATION UPDATES

### Study of Benefits of Habitat Restoration on Animal Populations Begins

This winter, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy will begin restoring approximately 21 acres of native habitat at the Three Sisters Reserve. This restoration project is located at a site that has been degraded for decades, having been farmed in the 1920's and 1930's and probably ranched prior to farming. Although patches of coastal sage scrub and grasslands persist to this day, the amount of non-native grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees present is much greater than that of native plants.

We often state that the new habitat will benefit the fauna by providing better quality food and nesting sites. Although many studies have shown that nature responds to habitat restoration, each project is different. The question for the Three Sisters restoration is "How will the fauna respond to the restoration of fully native habitat, particularly on a long-degraded patch of land surrounded by urban development?"

The Conservancy's Research, Education, and Community Involvement Program (The Conservancy's RECIPE program is sponsored by a grant from the Alcoa Foundation) is coordinating several scientific investigations into the faunal response to habitat restoration at the Three Sisters Reserve. The goal is to develop quantifiable data from as many different types of animals as possible on the response to habitat restoration in the Preserve. To date, both a bird and a small mammal survey are underway.

In July, the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society began a five-year collaborative survey of birds in the in the Reserve. Five sites are being monitored; two in the 21-acre coastal sage scrub habitat restoration site and three areas that will remain unrestored (the controls). Both RECIPE and Audubon encourage students and interested volunteers to participate in this study.

Retired biologist Dr. Peter Major is conducting a similar survey on small mammals. This study will monitor small mammals such as mice, wood rats, and voles in the Three Sisters Reserve. To date, a survey grid has been established, equipment purchased, and applications for permits to trap animals have been submitted to the California Department of Fish and Game. Once permits have been issued, the survey will begin. Dr. Major is also looking for students and interested volunteers to help conduct the survey.

For more information about how to participate in either of these RECIPE studies, contact Ann Dalkey at [adalkey@pvplc.org](mailto:adalkey@pvplc.org) or 310.541.7613 X 208.



A pocket gopher at Three Sisters Reserve.

in

### Collaboration to Monitor Bird Movements

The Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society and the Conservancy are joining together in a project to monitor how birds move to new habitat areas over the next five years. The five-year plan is to develop quantifiable data on how quickly the birds move into new habitats, and the numbers and diversity of the bird population over time.

The project will involve a core group of birders trained on survey techniques, who will then lead students and community volunteers in conducting surveys of the birds resident at the Three Sisters Reserve twice a month. The RECIPE-sponsored project adds birds to the plant and small mammal monitoring programs being implemented on the PVPLC preserves.



The American kestrel is a beautiful and small native hawk present in the preserves.

An article written by PVPLC Science Director Ann Dalkey titled 'Birding on a Restoration Project' providing an overview of the project was published in the Society's August/September newsletter *Hummin'*. The full article can be viewed at: [www.pvplc.org/recipe/recipe/results.shtml](http://www.pvplc.org/recipe/recipe/results.shtml).



Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon President Martin Byhower and Audubon member Evi Meyer observe a bird during a Three Sisters survey.

## STEWARDSHIP, RESTORATION, AND EDUCATION UPDATES

### Gardens and Nature Center to Highlight Preserves

A new project to develop a demonstration garden at the George F Canyon Preserve and a demonstration garden and nature center at the White Point Nature Preserve have recently been initiated. All will teach visitors about the natural world and help them appreciate the value of our open space preserves.

At George F Canyon, the existing Nature Center is central to teaching children and adults about the plants, animals, and natural history of the Peninsula. The planned demonstration garden will enhance the learning experience with a meandering trail and several areas where groups can gather to view various types of native California vegetation.

At the White Point Nature Preserve, a 4-acre area surrounding the Assembly building has been designated for a native plant demonstration garden. Construction is expected to begin this fall which, when completed in 2009, will include a variety of pathways and seating areas.

By the end of 2008, construction of the new White Point Nature Center (formerly the Assembly building) will be completed. The building will be opened as a coastal educational nature/history center with a classroom for children, a public restroom, and interpretive programming space for the Preserve. Educational exhibits will depict the unique continuum of the site's history including that of the Gabrielino Indians, coastal land use by the Sepulveda family, the resident Japanese abalone fisherman and farmers, utilization by the military for coastal defense, and the current story of community preservation and ecological restoration.

Stay tuned for more information about these exciting projects.



*White Point demonstration garden plans.*

### Conservancy Launches New Volunteer Trail Crew Program

It is fantastic that we are lucky enough to have several Nature Preserves on the Peninsula, where everyone can enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, running, horseback riding, biking, bird watching, photography and more on nearly 42 miles of recreational trails. Maintaining these trails so that they are safe and help to protect native habitat, is an important part of the Land Conservancy's management responsibilities.

The Conservancy has initiated a Volunteer Trail Crew Program that will develop a crew of volunteers with basic trail-building skills. Volunteers who complete the program will be certified to work on trail projects authorized by PVPLC. In support of this program, REI has generously provided funding for its first year, a \$10,000 grant for tools, supplies, and training materials.



*Kurt Loheit (in yellow) teaching the Trail Crew class at George F. Canyon Nature Preserve. The group is assessing a rock retaining wall.*

The program includes an introductory classroom session and a series of outdoor hands-on skills courses where volunteers learn the technical skills involved in trail design and maintenance. Topics include safety, assessments, water control, erosion sources, proper tool use, basic survey skills, and resource considerations..

The introductory class, offered 3 times a year, is based on the Basic Trail Maintenance class co-developed by local resident Kurt Loheit, which has been adopted by the Angeles District of California State Parks and the Southern California Trails Coalition.

The Trail Crew Program is open to adults 18 years of age or older. Introductory class size is kept to a maximum of 15 students. Each student must demonstrate proficiency in the skills in order to pass each class, and a yearly training review is required to maintain status as a qualified crew member. For more information and a schedule of Program classes, contact Leslie at [lbuena@pvplc.org](mailto:lbuena@pvplc.org) or 310/541-7613 X213.

## EXPLORING THE GEORGE F CANYON NATURE CENTER

A carpet of wildflowers, a shady canyon trail along-side a riparian willow habitat, and a natural spring-fed stream are just of few of the wonderful treasures people will encounter at the George F Canyon Nature Preserve.

Owned by the City of Rolling Hills Estates, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy has been running nature education programs and operating the Nature Center since 1996. This wonderful community gathering place sits at the head of a one mile trail through one of the most pristine canyons on the Peninsula.



*A view of the Nature Center and some beautifully restored land.*

For years it has been a destination for exploration and learning among many school children and families throughout the community. The naturalist responsible for most of that quality programming is Loretta K. Rose. A valuable part of the Land Conservancy team, Loretta has been trained and is officially certified by the National Association of Interpretation (NAI). NAI is a well respected professional association that has been dedicated to the support and

training of interpreters and naturalists for over 50 years. As a result, we are able to offer quality educational interpretation through the Nature Center to compliment the Conservancy's other successful programs.

One of the most popular programs offered to the public is the Nature Center's monthly Full Moon Hike. Occurring on or near each full moon, Loretta leads small groups of visitors on a nocturnal adventure through the canyon. Combining interactive experiences such as testing your night vision with a color game, where visitors are encouraged to explore their senses as they journey through a dark world of scent and sound.



*Flowers lining the hiking path.*

Other hikes offered occur on the first Saturday of each month and include the Monthly Bird Walk and the 1st Saturday Hike. The 1st Saturday hike will bring you into a wonderful world of curiosity and discovery. You will learn about habitat, geology, drainage, wildlife, folklore and more. The bird walk is a slow, easy and quiet walk. Binoculars are provided to each participant so they can fully enjoy the hike.

The Nature Center is a wonderful place for individuals and families wanting to learn more and explore the natural open spaces around them. For more information on happenings at George F Canyon call 310.547.0862

## PRESERVES BENEFIT STUDENTS IN CSULB PROGRAM

This summer, two California State University at Long Beach (CSULB) departments conducted research on Conservancy-managed preserves as part of their Geosciences Diversity Enhancement Program. This program's goal is to increase the diversity of students in the disciplines of geography, anthropology, geology, and biology.

The program brought high school students, college freshmen, high school teachers, community college teachers, and university professors together for special research projects. At George F Canyon, geologists mapped the geological features of the canyon, and geographers hiked their students through much of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve to count the number of native plants found in areas that were farmed historically.

After the field work was completed, each student spent time in the laboratory to assess their data. They produced posters that summarized their work and presented them to the professors, friends, and families on their last day of the program.



*GDEP participant records observations on Catalina schist made within George F Canyon.*

The participants benefitted from their experiences in many ways. They appreciated being able to work closely with the professors while learning how to conduct outdoor research and several students are now planning on majoring in a natural sciences discipline.

## SEMINAR TO FOCUS ON SMARTER GIVING

The Land Conservancy and some of the Peninsula's other major non profits are collaborating on a unique program created to help donors make the most effective use of their resources for the organizations they care about.

"Smarter Giving for Everyone" will consist of an interactive presentation and discussion with Edward Long, Esq., nationally-recognized elder law attorney. He will cover the crucial impact of individuals on community organizations and services; tax benefits of various types of gifts; balancing your philanthropic desires and current needs; things to look for in a recipient organization; and using wills, trusts, beneficiary-naming, as well as other giving tools.

This free event will be held at the Peninsula Center Library in the Community Room at 2:00 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. on November 3rd. Refreshments will be served at the beginning of each program. Seating is limited. Please RSVP to [ckitner@pvplc.org](mailto:ckitner@pvplc.org) or call Christen Kitner at 310.541.7613 X201.

### We Remember

**Richard Burns** given by Jo Ann Michetti

**David Clum** given by Frank and Joan Shields

**Bill Millar** given by Rosellen Trunnell

**Frances Yarber** given by Diana Innes

### We Celebrate

**Bob Ford's Birthday** given by Jean and Tom Parsons

**Liza and Burkette Logan** given by Susannah Garcia

**Mark Whitson Family** given by John and Linda Whitson

## HELP US PLAN THE 2009 SPRING FOR WHITE POINT HOME TOUR

The Spring for White Point Committee is seeking new volunteer members to help plan our 2009 Home Tour & Celebration, which will be held on Sunday, June 14. This is an incredibly fun event featuring interesting, unique, and historic homes in the San Pedro community plus a fabulous party and silent art auction, all to raise funds for the White Point Nature Preserve.

Meetings are typically held monthly during late afternoons and the schedule is flexible. If you can help with home selection, publicity, marketing, graphic design, sponsorships, the silent art auction, or other planning activities, the committee welcomes you to join. For more information, please contact Amber Heidt at [aheadt@pvplc.org](mailto:aheadt@pvplc.org) or 310.541.7613.



2008 White Point Home Tour Committee. Not pictured: Karen Silence.

## SEE THE BEAUTY OF THE PENINSULA IN HIGH DEFINITION

How often have you had your breath taken away by the stunning views down to the coast with Catalina peeking out over the horizon? Or watched a flock of pelicans skimming over the crashing surf? And yearned to re-live these exquisite moments?



Now a video created by Chris Burke (who produced the Fulfill the Dream video for our capital campaign in 2005) and his business partner Jared Cotton, captures with stunning clarity, the scenic natural vistas in Palos Verdes.

The DVD titled PVPHD (Palos Verdes Peninsula High Definition) is available for purchase at [www.pvphd.com](http://www.pvphd.com), the PVPLC office, and the George F. Canyon Nature Center. The price is \$20 plus shipping costs, with a portion of the proceeds going to support the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy.

For more information about PVPHD, please call 310.669.9980 or email [info@redtailmedia.net](mailto:info@redtailmedia.net).

**NOVEMBER 1**

Bird Walk  
9AM

Meet naturalist Loretta Rose at the Nature Center. We supply binoculars.

**NOVEMBER 1**

Volunteer Workday  
White Point  
Nature Preserve  
9AM - 12PM

Help with a planting project.

**NOVEMBER 1**

Hike at George  
F Canyon  
1PM - 3PM

Join expert guide Ted Winter for a lovely hike. \$3 per person will bring you into a wonderful world of discovery. Please call 310.547.0862 for more information.

**NOVEMBER 8**

Hike at Lunada Canyon  
Trail  
9AM - 11 AM

Ascend a steep trail to see the results of recently restored coastal sage scrub habitat and a small wetland. The Agua Amarga Reserve is home to several pair of endangered gnatcatchers and cactus wrens. RPV.

**NOVEMBER 8**

Volunteer Workday  
Portuguese Bend  
Reserve  
9AM - 12PM

Help with a trail maintenance.

**NOVEMBER 14**

Night Hike  
George F Canyon  
Time to be arranged

This hike will bring you to the top of the canyon for a fantastic view of the city lights below. Limited to 20 people. Call 310.547.0862 for reservations.

**FALL/WINTER CALENDAR**

Join us for these exciting events and volunteer opportunities! Reservations are recommended for all Volunteer Workdays and they are required for workdays at the Nursery.

For information and reservations, call Christen Kitner at 310.541.7613 X 201. Directions and information about our nature walks can be found at [www.pvplc.org/naturewalks](http://www.pvplc.org/naturewalks).



**NOVEMBER 15**

Volunteer Workday  
George F Canyon  
9AM - 12PM

Help with planting the demonstration garden.

**NOVEMBER 22**

Volunteer Workday  
Forrestal Reserve  
9AM - 12PM

Help with trail maintenance.

**DECEMBER 6**

Bird Walk  
9AM

Meet naturalist Loretta Rose at the Nature Center. We supply binoculars.

**DECEMBER 6**

Hike at George  
F Canyon  
1PM - 3PM

Join expert guide Ted Winter for a lovely hike. \$3 per person will bring you into a wonderful world of discovery. Please call 310.547.0862 for more information.

**DECEMBER 6**

Volunteer Workday  
Three Sisters Reserve  
9AM - 12PM

Help with trail maintenance.

**DECEMBER 12**

Night Hike  
George F Canyon  
Time to be arranged

This hike will bring you to the top of the canyon for a fantastic view of the city lights below. Limited to 20 people. Call 310.547.0862 for reservations.

**DECEMBER 13**

Volunteer Workday  
White Point  
Nature Preserve  
9AM - 12PM

Help with a planting project.

**DECEMBER 13**

Hike at Oceanfront  
Estates Bluff Trails  
9AM - 11 AM

Head for the Interpretive Center and on to the bluff top trails to see thriving native habitat and great views of the coastline. Easy. RPV.

**DECEMBER 20**

Volunteer Workday  
Nursery  
9AM - 12PM

Transplant native seedlings.

**JANUARY 10, 2009**

Hike at Pt. Fermin  
Tide Pools  
9AM - 11 AM

From Cabrillo Beach, walk along the rocky shoreline to see rock formations and tide pools. LA.



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

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