



OPEN SPACES

Volume 15, Number 1

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

First Quarter, 2003

Ginsburgs Donate \$500,000 for Land Stewardship

Dr. Allen Ginsburg and his wife Charlotte have given the Conservancy our largest donation to date: \$500,000 that will be dedicated to our land stewardship activities on the Peninsula.

Dr. Ginsburg, a retired ophthalmologist who practiced in Redondo Beach, is an avid mountain climber and has climbed with the National Geographic team. On a climb of Mt. Everest, he saved a fellow climber who was suffering from hypothermia and they both missed reaching the pinnacle.

Charlotte Ginsburg was a professional dancer and is well known for her involvement with and support of the Long Beach Ballet. You may have seen Allen and Charlotte perform together—Allen plays the 12-string guitar while wife Charlotte dances flamenco.

Charlotte shares Allen's love of the outdoors. She has also climbed mountains, slept in snow-covered tents, and enjoyed many walks on Peninsula trails.

Both are also active bikers, hikers and kayakers, sharing experiences in our neighborhood and around the world. This experience has given them a special awareness of the fragility of the Earth's land and water resources.

As a result, they have established the Dr. Allen H. & Charlotte Ginsburg Wilderness Experience Foundation to protect fish, wildlife, and flora by funding the acquisition of critical greenbelt parcels to protect lakes and streams and provide corridors for wildlife to reach water resources.

In addition to the Conservancy, they are also donors and trustees for KCET and support the Palos Verdes Art Center, the Braille Institute (where Dr. Ginsburg sponsors the Braille Speed Reading Contest), the Long Beach Ballet, and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

"We recognize the labor-intensive nature of the habitat restoration work that needs to be done," said Charlotte. Current stewardship activities include removing non-native plants and planting native plants from locally collected seeds. "We are pleased that we can help enhance the natural beauty of the Peninsula in this way."



Dr. and Mrs. Ginsburg join Conservancy Land Stewardship Director Steve Heyn on a tour of our native plant nursery facility at the Defense Fuel Supply Depot in San Pedro.

Hundreds of years ago, the Peninsula was a different place. Since that time, farming and cattle grazing eliminated much of the native habitat. The Conservancy is committed to turning back the clock and making preserved areas islands of rich native habitat once again.

We thank the Ginsburgs for their generosity and their recognition of the value of preserving and restoring our extraordinary habitat. We hope that when you see them on their bikes, in the gym, dancing or hiking that you too will thank them for their special gift to Peninsula habitat.

Preservation of Open Spaces--

A Statement of Purpose

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is a nonprofit, non-political, 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, land-owners and others who donate land or funds to the PVPLC may realize significant tax benefits.

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Portuguese Bend: Think It's Preserved? Think Again.

By Barbara Dye, Executive Director

We all enjoy hiking across the glorious hillsides above Portuguese Bend. Many believe that these lands will be available for us to enjoy forever—that we don't need to worry. It would be wonderful if that were true, but I am very afraid that this is a false expectation. Consider the following:

Development proposals are on file with Rancho Palos Verdes for both remaining open space parcels. Barry Hon, who owns the eastern half of the landslide area, has a golf course proposal, with a maintenance building, access roads, parking lots, and a clubhouse on Eagles' Nest.

Jim York, who owns the western half of the open space area (known as the Filiorum parcel) has posted his property and fenced off large sections from the public. Trails that have been used for centuries are now off-limits. He has also been discing the earth, encouraging the spread of invasive plants and eliminating the likelihood that native habitat can be restored to the area without a major effort.

In May 1996, York filed a Moratorium Exclusion application for removal of part of his land from the Landslide Moratorium (some of his property is not in the moratorium). Since that time, he has been working on a development proposal for approximately 50 acres of the western portion of the Lower Filiorum site. In December 2001, his application was deemed complete by the City, and, in a new development, the City's reviewing geologists have just approved the geology for the project. His application will be under active review as soon as he agrees to the level of environmental review required by RPV.

Parts of the Upper Filiorum site are relatively level and are zoned residential. Because the underlying geologic review of the Upper Filiorum area has not been completed, portions of the site may be found suitable for residential development.

Finally, the current City Council has voted not to allow development on the subdivided lots within the Portuguese Bend community unless the property owners can show that they meet acceptable stability requirements. The property owners have filed lawsuits in state and federal court asserting that this is a "taking" of their property, and demanding that they be allowed to build or have their land purchased from them at prices equal to developable land. It is uncertain what will happen with these lawsuits, but it shows that the future of the land in Portuguese Bend may be decided by the courts, not by the locally elected City Council. Any positive response these lawsuits receive would certainly drive up the price for our efforts to acquire the rest of Portuguese Bend.

So, the threats are out there and real.

The good news is that there is bond money available now in Sacramento. It won't be there forever, but right now Propositions 40 and 50 have set aside funds that can only be used to purchase open space.

We need to make the case in Sacramento that Portuguese Bend is important to preserve, is a bargain for the voters of this state, and is threatened by potential development, degradation of its habitat, and closure of its trails. We are working hard to do that so that we can qualify for funding, and I am optimistic.

However, right now we need your financial support to help us with our efforts, so please consider an additional donation. We are working very hard to achieve the goal that was set fifteen years ago when the PVPLC was founded – to preserve Portuguese Bend so that future generations can enjoy the magnificent open spaces on this remarkable Peninsula. The list of donors in this newsletter is long and impressive. We thank all of you for your help and look forward to a Peninsula covered with wildflowers, home to endangered species, and welcoming to everyone who cherishes the view of a sunset from a trail overlooking the ocean.



Restoration at White Point Nature Preserve Moves Forward

By Andrea Vona, Associate Director and White Point Project Manager

White Point Nature Preserve has undergone some exciting and noticeable changes over the past few months. These include:

- Installation of the irrigation system, consisting of drip tubing as well as an overhead spray system for the native grassland revegetation.
- Erection of safety fencing surrounding some of the military structures on the site.
- Completion of the lead stabilization project, which was required before some of the existing structures could be removed.
- Demolition and removal of the Ready Room Building and four concrete pads.
- Removal of seven abandoned monitoring wells.

On March 1 we thanked the San Pedro Girl Scouts for their support of the project and their financial assistance in the purchase of our first vehicle—a 4-wheel drive truck.

The girls raised funds for the project by organizing and working at “Make a Difference Day” at the White Point site last fall. Aided by members of the San Pedro Lion’s Club, the girls prepared and served a pancake breakfast, held a silent auction, and provided other activities to support the restoration effort.



Members of the San Pedro Girl Scouts and the Habitat Restoration Truck they helped the Conservancy purchase. The truck is being used for projects at the White Point and other restoration sites.

Changes planned for the near future include planting 40,000 locally native plants. We’ll be hosting “Restoration Days” every Saturday from 8 AM to noon throughout the spring for volunteers to help (see below). What better way to spend a Saturday morning—come out and join us!

Additional events coming in the months ahead include the removal of the chain link fence, installation of a 3 ft wooden perimeter fence, and construction of trails, including a handicapped loop, by the California Conservation Corps. Call me at the office (541-7613, ext. 204) if you have any questions about volunteering. We’ll see you at White Point!

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Restoration Days at White Point

Join your friends and neighbors every Saturday from 8-12 for a planting party at the future White Point Nature Preserve.

We are looking for any and all community groups to help us put 40,000 plants into the ground. We’ll dig the holes – you help us plant! Groups of any size are welcome, and

this project qualifies for student community service hours. We can also provide a certificate, suitable for framing, showing that you or your office participated in this community effort.

White Point is on Paseo del Mar, east of Western Avenue, across from Royal Palms State Park. Drive east on Paseo del Mar until you see the open gate.

Call 541-7613 for more information, or visit our website at

www.palosverdes.org.

Membership Exceeds 1,450 Families In 2002

The list below includes the names of over 1,450 individuals and families from throughout the South Bay and as far away as New York and Virginia who demonstrated their commitment to preserving Peninsula open space by their donations in the year 2002. Many of these individuals also donated their time as volunteers on Conservancy projects. The success of our education, habitat restoration, and land acquisition programs is directly related to their financial and volunteer support. Our organization and our community are grateful.

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Art Show To Offer Great Art And Great Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for a special painting to bring the tranquil beauty of our open space to a room in your home? This show may have the one you want.

Our fine art exhibition and sale entitled "Open Spaces: The Peninsula and Beyond" is coming to the Malaga Cove library for three weeks between Saturday, May 3, and Tuesday, May 27. This special event features paintings by seven outstanding artists and offers some great volunteer opportunities.

Plein air (on location) paintings by artists Daniel Pinkham, Richard Humphrey, Stephen Mirich, Amy Sidrane and Kevin Prince of the Portuguese Bend Artists Colony and guest artists David Gallup of Conejo Valley and Bernard Fallon of Torrance will be exhibited. The artists' work captures the beauty of open space on the Peninsula and in other areas where preservation activities are underway. A portion of the funds from the sales of paintings will benefit the Conservancy.

Come to the opening reception at the Library on Saturday, May 3, between 1:00 and 4:00 PM or visit the gallery during the hours below.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you'd like to volunteer to help with this event, we'd love to get you involved:



Reception guests enjoy opening day festivities.



Guests discuss artwork.

- We need volunteers to help staff the May 3rd reception from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM or to assist with set up and take down.
- We also need Gallery Hosts and Hostesses to staff the art show during open hours (see below). Duties include: welcoming guests, inviting them to sign the guest book, providing guests with the artists' biographies, and providing information on purchasing the art.

Find any of these opportunities appealing? Contact Debbie DiBiase in the Conservancy office at (310) 541-7613 ext. 202 or e-mail Debbieatddibiase@pvplc.org for more information.

Opening Reception - May 3

- 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Saturday

Art Show Hours - May 3-27

- 10:00 am to 5:00 PM, Mondays & Fridays
- 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays.

Malaga Cove Plaza Library Gallery



Board Sets Goals for 2003 at Saturday Session

Conservancy board members and staff assembled Saturday, February 8, for an all day retreat at Ports o' Call restaurant. Staff members reviewed accomplishments of the past year and presented goals for 2003 in the areas of administration, finance, outreach/marketing, education, stewardship, development and the Portuguese Bend Acquisition effort. Guest speaker, Laura Schenasi of Torrance Memorial Hospital provided a well-received presentation on capital campaigns. Brainstorming sessions were held in the areas of outreach, finance, stewardship, education and fundraising. All in attendance left the retreat with a renewed sense of commitment to the Conservancy and its goals.

A Smart Investment Tip: Conserve Land

By Rand Wentworth, President, Land Trust Alliance

At a time when Wall Street offers disappointing returns, land conservation remains one of America's smartest investments. It attracts jobs, enhances property values, and saves billions in government costs.

Today, the best jobs go where the top talent wants to live, and that is in places of natural beauty. Communities that conserve land make an investment in future economic development.

Property next to conservation lands skyrockets in value, with homes selling for 10-20 percent more than comparable homes without access to parks. A survey by the American Association of Homebuilders concluded that new homebuyers want trails and natural areas above any other amenity. Frederick Law Olmsted demonstrated this with Central Park, which was built in the late 1800s for \$14 million and returns \$5.4 million in additional annual value.

Saving land from development is often the best way to reduce government spending and avoid increases in property taxes. Many jurisdictions believe that they will make money from the property taxes on new subdivisions, ignoring the true cost of schools, roads, police, water, and storm water man-

agement. Studies show that it costs between \$1.04 and \$2 for every dollar of tax revenue to provide services to a typical subdivision. So current taxpayers end up subsidizing outsiders who bring increased traffic, crowded schools, and the loss of the community's individual culture.

It is also cheaper to protect clean water at its source than to build expensive water treatment facilities. New York City, for example, saved \$5 billion in construction costs by purchasing conservation lands around its reservoirs in the Catskill Mountains.

Despite the many documented economic benefits of conservation, each day we are losing 8.6 square miles of America's finest lands to development. At this pace, most of the special places in America will be gone within 20 years. We live in a democracy, but most people simply do not believe that they have a choice about the sprawl that is eroding both our communities and our countryside.

Yet there is reason for hope. America's 1,200-plus nonprofit land

trusts have protected more than 6.2 million acres throughout the country. Land trusts are non-adversarial, charitable organizations that help private landowners protect their land, and they are working for the day when every child in America will grow up within 10 minutes of a protected park, trail, farm, or natural area.

To accomplish this vision, the Land Trust Alliance is working with Congress to improve tax incentives and funding for private landowners, especially farmers and ranchers, who voluntarily protect their land from development. Voters

across the country have shown their strong support for conservation by committing more than \$20 billion in tax revenues

since 1998 to protect parks and open space.

You can take an important step for your community: Offer your leadership, political support, and charitable gifts to a land trust. Better yet, consider donating a conservation easement on your land. It is an investment in the future that offers attractive tax benefits and the satisfaction that the land you love will be protected forever.

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Each day we are losing 8.6 square miles of America's finest lands to development. At this pace, most of the special places in America will be gone within 20 years.

Air Traveler Offers Different Perspective

By Lorraine O'Grady

I am a fairly recent resident of California, but like so many others, a person who cannot stop bragging about this beautiful state. I am writing today to support the efforts of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy and the elected officials of Rancho Palos Verdes, towards the purchase of the Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve.

I have done a fair amount of air travel, and just want to give you an image of how this large area of open space, abutting the Pacific Ocean, impacts so very many people from all over the world.

Imagine yourself in a plane, arriving at LAX for the first time from any other place. The plane's descent brings you over the congestion, mass

of highways, and electric lights of a major city.

There is nothing appealing in this view, which may be your first ever of the West coast of America. But, when you leave the area by plane from LAX, you will follow a different route.

The plane takes off from the run-

Continued on page 11

In Celebration!

Remember your Family and Friends with a gift to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

- Graduations
- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Achievements

Recipients and donors will be specially recognized in upcoming issues of *Open Spaces*

If you have questions, please contact Debbie DiBiase
310-541-7613, ext. 202
ddibiase@pvplc.org

Continued from page 10

way headed west, towards the ocean. From the plane window, you are thinking, “goodbye to all that smog and traffic and overbuilding.”

But, as the plane’s route curves back to the south, what appears on the left side, but a paradise of green; ocean vistas that in places actually have the turquoise blue of the Caribbean; acres and acres of untouched rolling hills; and ruddy cliffs.

This is gorgeous! When I am the passenger in the plane, I couldn’t be prouder—not only that I am fortunate enough to live in this natural jewel—but for all of California and America.

This is the view that can be remembered as representing the natural beauty of Southern California. It is the view chosen to represent this state on the California U.S. postage stamp a few years ago. It is a rare sight anywhere, but particularly when you consider its proximity to all the congestion and blight of Los Angeles.

When I have guests visiting, I always drive up to Del Cerro Park,

Dan Ryan Selected White Point Manager

Former Peace Corps member Dan Ryan has been selected to be on-site manager for habitat restoration efforts at the White Point Nature Preserve.

Dan’s experience includes his service with the Peace Corps in Cochabamba, Bolivia, where he was a natural resource management volunteer, as a landscape foreman in Georgia, and as a naturalist at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota.

Dan is an Environmental Studies graduate from the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

Next time you’re volunteering at the White Point Nature Preserve on a Saturday morning, welcome Dan to the Peninsula.



Debbie DiBiase Appointed Director of Development

Debbie DiBiase of Palos Verdes Estates has been selected as our new Director of Development and will play a key role in helping us reach our fundraising goals for the Portuguese Bend open space acquisition effort.

Debbie and her husband, David, have lived on the Peninsula for 24 years and have enjoyed raising their four children in this beautiful place. Debbie has a broad background working in the local community, including serving two terms as a PTA president, more than ten years as a Girl Scout Leader and chairing many school and community events. In addition, Debbie produced and edited a cable television show in conjunction with Cox Communications and the Palos Verdes Unified School District.

Currently, Debbie is completing her M.B.A. and is the incoming President Elect of National Charity League.

An avid runner, Debbie especially loves jogging the Peninsula trails with her yellow labrador retriever, Tessie.

We welcome Debbie to the Conservancy family!



leave the car and go for a hike in the [proposed] Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve. It is a perfect escape, like a mini-vacation. It is quiet and pure.

And, because of its size, you become one with the nature, not just a person in a park, looking out at the rest of the

world.

I urge all of you to experience the pleasure of this vast tract of unspoiled land in our midst and to support its purchase, so that future generations will always have the same glorious view we currently enjoy.



Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
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**Dates to Remember--
 Join us at these exciting events!**

- 4/6 volunteer Day at the Fuel Depot
- 4/12 Volunteer Day at the Forrestal Preserve
- 4/19 Volunteer Day at Lunada Canyon
- 4/24 Walk on the Wild Side
- 4/26 Walk on the Wild Side
- 4/26 Earth Day at Cabrillo Aquarium
- 5/3 Plein Air Art Show Reception
- 5/3-27 Plein Air Art Show Exhibit
- 5/4 Volunteer Day at the Fuel Depot
- 5/10 Volunteer Day at the Forrestal Preserve
- 5/17 Palos Verdes Marathon
- 6/7-8 PV Chamber of Commerce Steet Fair

Preservation Points: Quick Updates on Major Projects

Made possible through the support of our members

Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park – The preservation effort is continuing. At its February meeting the RPV City Council approved the current draft of the Natural Communities Conservation Plan, agreed to contribute \$1 million to the acquisition of the reserve, to provide \$100,000 per year for ongoing maintenance costs, and committed to add 300 acres of City-owned land, including most of the City Hall property, to the reserve. If you know of a group that would like an update on the NCCP and/or the acquisition effort, call the PVPLC office.

White Point Nature Preserve – Work is underway!! Temporary fencing has been installed and the irrigation system is going in. The building at the southeast corner of the site has been removed along with several concrete pads. We have 40,000 coastal sage scrub plants to get into the ground so we invite your help with this effort.

Volunteer days will be held every Saturday from 8 AM to noon (more details inside).

Chandler Preserve – Chris Wendell, with his Boy Scout Troop from Torrance, has completed his Eagle Scout Project by planting 160 willows in Dapplegray Canyon. We expect to re-establish the Neighborhood Advisory Committee this spring – call the PVPLC office if you are interested.

Lunada Canyon – More than a hundred students from the PVPHS AP Environmental Science Class recently helped plant two acres of habitat in the canyon.

Forrestal Preserve – The Conservancy-led Steering Committee is working on the Management Plan for the preserve, focusing the location and design of signs and trails. A native plant survey is underway to help with the planning efforts.

George F Canyon – The Nature Center continues to welcome visitors and provide lots of exciting programs. Call 547-0862 for more information.

Nursery and Fuel Depot – More than 50,000 plants are flourishing in our nursery, destined for revegetation projects at White Point and other Peninsula locations.

Nature Walks – The 2003 Walk Flyer was mailed to all our members last month. An exciting group of walks is ahead, including several this spring in prime wildflower areas. The schedule is posted on our web site, www.pvplc.org.

Education Program – Our third grade nature walk program will be bringing students to natural open space near 15 schools this spring.

Events – Our spectacular Plein Air Art Show is scheduled for May. Mark your calendars!