

Fall 2010

Vol. 8, No. 2

Come and enjoy Pacifica's parklands—This Land is Your Land!

Samuel Casillas, President

2010 continued to be an exciting time for the Pacifica Land Trust. The transition of Mori Point to the GGNRA is a lasting bright spot showing how different agencies, organizations and individuals can come together to offer us and the coming generations the timeless beauty of the Pacific Ocean with the backdrop of open green hills. There are now boardwalks traversing the ponds and wetlands, leaving the endangered San Francisco Garter Snakes and Red Legged Frogs in undisturbed habitat. The Park Service has removed acres of invasive species, giving us a model for other open space in Pacifica. They have also recently added wooden benches atop Mori Point to allow tired hikers to sit, relax and enjoy the most stunning sunsets in Northern California.

Mori Point has set the bar high for our current restoration project in the Pedro Point Headlands. Throughout 2010 over 25 volunteers a month have aided the healing process in a unique ecosystem that stretches south of Linda Mar Beach to Devil's Slide. The hardy volunteers have toiled in mud, heat and poison oak to remove French Broom, Pampas Grass and other invasive species. They have planted hundreds of native plants including Coyote Bush, iris, California sage, seaside daisy, lizard tail, coyote mint, yarrow and purple needle grass. There has also been significant trail restoration to mitigate erosion that was precipitated by years of human impact. Yet the hard work has paid off starting in March with the blooming of wild flowers, the ocean views stretching from Marin to Half Moon Bay and the wildlife that is prospering in this open space. I encourage everyone to come and enjoy the camaraderie of volunteering or just coming out for a hike in the Pedro Point Headlands.

The excitement of our continued activities in the Pedro Point Headlands will continue well into 2011 and we are also working with various agencies to preserve other sensitive open space throughout Pacifica. To do this we need your support. The Pacifica Land Trust is a non-profit organization and all the board members are volunteers. In order for us to continue with our vision of preservation and stewardship of sensitive open space in Pacifica, we need your help. Next time you are driving down from Skyline Drive or enjoying a hike in one of our many parks, I ask you to kindly consider donating whatever you can afford to the Land Trust to continue our work. For those of you who cannot afford to give at this time, we ask you to please come and volunteer some of your labor or just go out and enjoy the fresh air, the open space and share your experience with your friends and family so that they too can cherish the lands of the place Pacificans call home!



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Pedro Pt. Headland Stewardship Project

Lynn Adams and Michael Black

During this past calendar year, thanks to members of the Pacifica Land Trust, residents of the Pedro Point Community Association (PPCA), and a host of regional volunteers, yet another pearl of Pacifica's magnificent coastal necklace is finally receiving its just due. During November of 2009, the Trust and PPCA jointly hosted our first Pedro Point Headlands workshop to begin galvanizing people to care for the Headlands.



Headlands Stewardship Coordinator Lynn Adams

Twenty-two people attended that initial planning workshop, all of whom were eager to listen to our Headlands ecological restoration plans. Those taking part shared their vernacular knowledge. Since then, the Headlands project has become a labor-of-love for many of Pacifica's grateful residents.

Talented volunteers have cataloged the many native plants and bird species found therein, begun creating maps of a condensed, grade-appropriate and greatly simplified trail network, led seed collection expeditions, and generously shared their knowledge with us. Monthly work parties have contributed over 600 person-hours toward restoring the native habitat, reducing erosion and invasive species like French Broom and Pampas Grass, and created a more ecologically viable trail network.



Headlands Stewardship Day

Just weeks ago, twenty-five volunteers braved steady—but welcome—rains to plant over 60 flats of native seeds. Each flat was voluntarily adopted to be lovingly attended at various homes until January 30, 2011, when they will each be transplanted to a Headlands slide area cleared of Pampas Grass.

It was on January 31st, one year ago, when we first undertook our restoration work. In just 3 hours, thirteen “Headlanders” cleared the northwestern slope (above Pedro Point's Grand Avenue) of French Broom, Pampas Grass and



Headlands Stewardship Day

stray Monterey Pines. Volunteers also blocked off unwanted, duplicate trail spurs that confused hikers and crushed native lupine and other wildflowers. Another beneficiary was our very special native prairie grass (“calamagrostis”) which welcomed less competition.

Since that initial session, there have been thirteen work parties that averaged more than fifteen volunteers per session. Working in teams, site stewards selected their preferred tasks, like watering/mulching freshly planted natives, trail widening, invasive species removal, installing signage, seed collection, or anything else that required our attention.

On 2010's Earth Day, over 100 native plants were inserted near the staging area where a cluster of French Broom had once stood. Short term, invasive species like French Broom anchor soils until suitable native plants become available. During October, thirty-one volunteers widened trails, removed over 2,000 Pampas Grass, and harvested the last round of seasonal native seeds.

Pampas Grass has been a particular Headlands challenge because it grows prolifically on exposed, compacted soil, much of which derived from historic motorcycle use. Every work party found a team of people targeting its removal, and on October 31st, thirteen people pulled out over two thousand plants from one slide area alone. A team from “Go Native, Inc.,” also removed almost five hundred of the large Pampas Grass clumps that were growing within a densely clustered site. Other teams clipped off the seed heads from plants that could not be dug out this season.

Another Headlands challenge has been continuing—if infrequent—motorcycle use that greatly accelerates trail erosion, among other ill effects. Our first focus was to stop motorcycles from illegally riding on Headlands land. We set up a network of volunteers who regularly hiked the Headlands and immediately reported any illegal motorcycle presence to City of Pacifica Police. Thanks to these combined efforts, we've seen considerable reduction in motorcycle use for there have only been three reported motorcycle encroachments over the last year.

As we head into the rainy season, we focus on these tasks:

*Volunteers continue germinating and nurturing flats of native seeds. During January 2011, we must plant the thousands of seedlings in exposed soil to reduce erosion, thereby keeping non-native species at bay;

* While soils are soft, seek out and continue removing invasive French Broom and Pampas Grass plants.

* Install mulch and water bars to reduce erosion on badly exposed slopes,;

* Install additional signage to guide hikers and protect freshly restored sites.

* Pursue additional private and public funding to hire contractors capable of large-scale restoration of gullies, ditches and exposed slopes, while relocating and rebuilding parts of our consolidated trail system.

To come join us, contact Lynn Adams at lynn4promos@aol.com or 650-355-1668 to join the Headland's Habitat Restoration Team.

Events

Dec. 12 Pedro Point: Come Get Your Christmas Trees!

On December 12th we are going to devote our December stewardship event to removal of spreading Monterey pines for public use as Christmas trees. This gives us a chance to talk about what is special about Monterey pines, some of the problems associated with them (namely pitch pine canker and their conversion of our diverse grasslands and shrublands into less diverse forests), and our creative solution to this dilemma – to leave groves of pines for wildlife habitat and to remove spreading individuals that will prevent loss of shrubland and grassland habitats.

When: Sunday, December 12th, 2010.

Time: 10:00 AM-3:30 PM.

Meet: Parking Lot by Castle Kitchen, on Pedro Avenue.

Transport: Shuttles to Headlands to be provided.

2011 Headlands Stewardship Workdays

January 30: Planting of Native Plants

February 27

March 27

April 23: Earth Day



Headlands Stewardship Day

Getting the Word Out:

Pedro Point Headland Project Highlights the Value of the PLT
Michael Vasey

The Pacifica Land Trust may be the best kept secret in town. Our mission is to facilitate land acquisition and conservation easements to protect and preserve wild lands in Pacifica and its surroundings for public enjoyment and the enhancement of our quality of life. To accomplish this mission, we maintain a low profile so that we can engage in confidential negotiations with land owners, agencies and other non-profits that have the funds we need to conduct these transactions. We're an all volunteer board, so we need public donations to sustain our operating costs, yet when the economy tanks and high profile projects (like Mori Point) aren't happening, we're too easily forgotten.

Enter the Pedro Point Headland Project. Begun less than a year ago, thanks to a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy, this project is all about outreach, building community and, not just acquiring, but enhancing public open space to provide both a quality visitor experience and restore natural values. We are partnering with the local neighborhood (Pedro Point Community Association) to build a stewardship program on the headlands (see project coordinator Lynn Adam's, article). Kids of all ages, adults, and seniors come once per month to help. Many of these folks are Pedro Point neighbors, and most are Pacificans. So suddenly the PLT is getting some badly needed attention as momentum for this project continues building.



Mori Pt. Stephen Johnson

Two recent events are good examples. On October 9, Jake Sigg of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) led a native plant walk on Pedro Point Headland to focus primarily on habitat restoration. About 25 people participated, mostly from Pacifica. Jake is one of the founders of the habitat stewardship movement in the Bay Area and he is a prominent statewide leader of the CNPS. It was great to get his suggestions on our habitat restoration efforts. Jake was so impressed with Pedro Point Headland and our project that we're going to schedule another CNPS outing for spring 2011. Hopefully, this will lead to greater visibility of this local open space gem and our PLT led project.

Another example is the invitation I got to attend a Pacifica Garden Club monthly meeting and talk about "Gardening in the Wild: the Art and Science of Restoring Pedro Point Headland," on November 10. This was thanks to the invitation of Susan Miller, one of our active stewards and a major contributor to our revegetation effort. The Pacifica Garden Club is helping us grow site specific California natives for outplanting later this year in areas that needed conversion. About thirty Pacificans attended the talk and there were some great questions, including interest in what the PLT does and – of course – its need for donations to remain operational.

In December, as you'll discover, we are going to devote our stewardship event to removal of spreading Monterey pines for public use as Christmas trees. This gives us a chance to talk about what is special about Monterey pines, some of the problems associated with them (namely pitch pine canker and their conversion of our diverse grasslands and shrublands into less diverse forests), and our creative solution to this dilemma – to leave groves of pines for wildlife habitat and to remove spreading individuals that will prevent loss of shrubland and grassland habitats.

We're hoping that eventually the PLT will become a household word in Pacifica and no longer be the best kept secret in town. We also hope you will join us and support our efforts, by your presence on Pedro Point Headland during a stewardship event or by a simple donation to help us continue this vital work.



In Memory of Judy Johnson (1941-2010)

Skid Hall

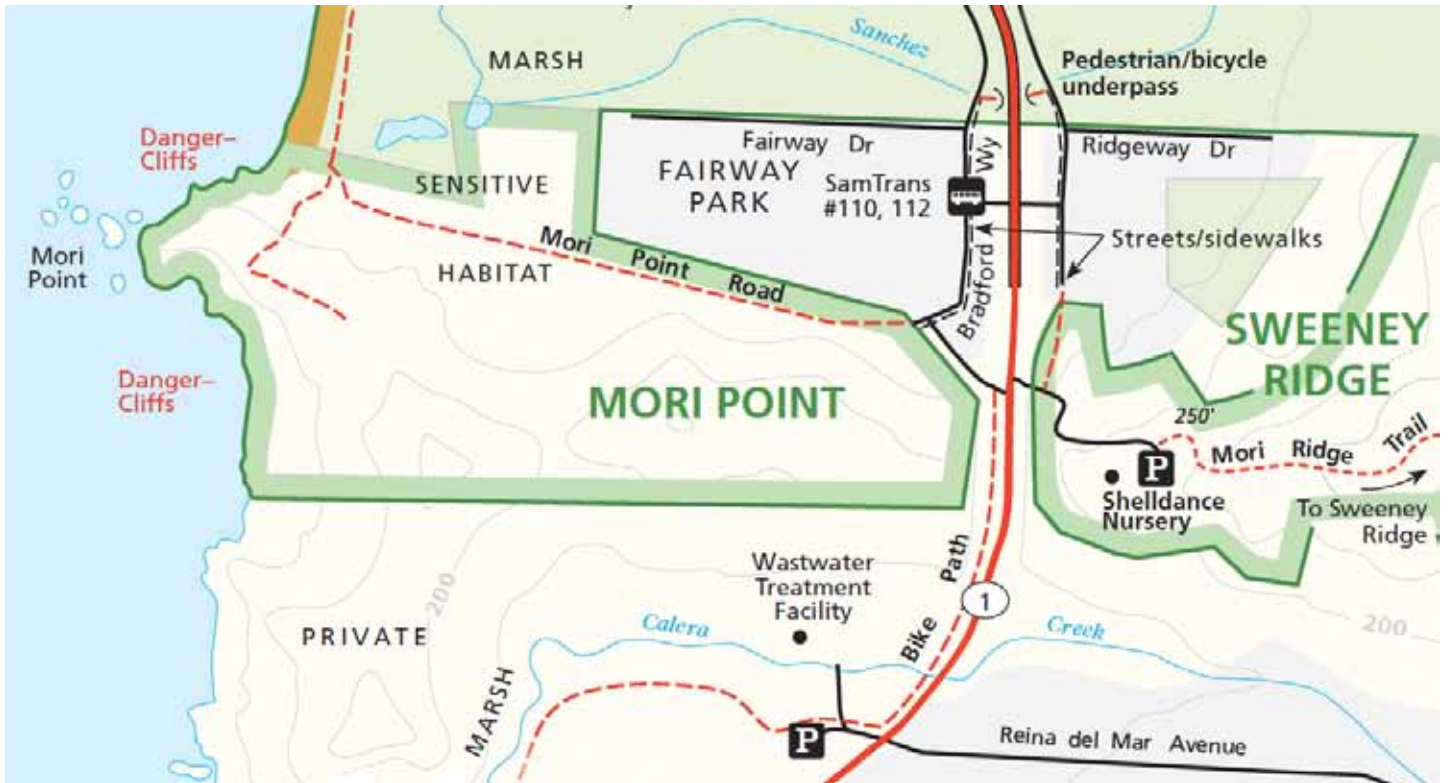
Earlier this year the PLT Board of Directors lost one of its' most valued members, Judy Johnson, who passed away from cancer. Judy came to the Board over a decade ago after serving Pacifica as a school board member and a City of Pacifica Planning Commissioner.

Judy lived in Pacifica for over 40 years, raising her children Juliet and Ted and hiking and enjoying the environment with her husband Tom. As a lawyer Judy provided the land trust with critical legal advice while also serving as a strong advocate for identifying and preserving Pacifica's beautiful open spaces. She was especially active in the drive to preserve Mori Point and loved to hike and support the land trust efforts at the Pedro Point Headlands.

Pacifica and the land trust were indeed fortunate to have someone with Judy's skill, knowledge, environmental sensitivity and drive with us for so long. Our beautiful open spaces are a result of efforts like hers and will serve as her legacy.



Mori Point and Pedro Pt. Headlands. Stephen Johnson



Map: National Park Service

Mori Point Restoration

Susie Bennett, National Park Service

Thanks to the hard work of organizations like the Trust for Public Land, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the Pacifica Land Trust, a 110-acre parcel along Pacifica's coastline was preserved as a biologically diverse open space. This parcel, known to locals as Mori's Point, was saved from potential development with help from a speedy grassroots fundraising campaign and was transferred to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 2002.

Park planners and natural resource specialists thoroughly analyzed different trail plans and habitat enhancement activities with extensive community input, and in 2006 issued an Environmental Assessment which outlined a plan of action for this important site. The National Park Service and its support partner, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, have completed three years of combined habitat restoration and trail improvements, transforming this highly disturbed area into a more intact, hydrologically functional site. These improvements have included road-to-trail conversions, a consolidated trail

network with way-finding signs, and an elevated trail crossing over some of the most sensitive areas of the park site. Habitat enhancement activities have included removal of artificial fill, recontouring erosion gullies, invasive plant management, and large-scale planting fueled by volunteers with the Park Stewardship Program. The site's threatened California red-legged frogs are flourishing with the increase in breeding habitat, and we're anticipating higher numbers of endangered San Francisco garter snakes during our next round of surveys, as they rely on California red-legged frogs as a major food source.

For more details and images, please check the Parks Conservancy's website at <http://www.parksconservancy.org/our-work/trails-forever/accomplishments/mori-point.html>. If you haven't visited lately, I encourage you to visit Mori Point for yourself!

What is the Pacifica Land Trust

The Pacifica Land Trust is a group of people who share an appreciation of the multiple values associated with our natural environment. We come together to work toward preserving these values by saving open space and fostering an appreciation of our coast. Formed in 1992, we work closely with the California Coastal Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the City of Pacifica and hundreds of local citizens to maintain the character and quality of the unique natural heritage that distinguishes Pacifica and its surroundings.

PLT Project History Highlights

Pedro Point Headlands

In 1990, this privately owned area was slated for being occupied by 218 houses. As a motorcycle club recreational site, the landscape was deeply eroded and in danger of being lost from public use.

Pedro Point Headland was the PLT's first open space acquisition in the early 1990's through funds provided by the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Department of Transportation. Although the property is partly owned by the Coastal Conservancy and City of Pacifica, the PLT has managed its stewardship since it was acquired.

More recently, after a campaign for public support, which garnered letters from many citizens, members of Congress and the City Council, the State Coastal Conservancy awarded a grant for restoration of the property. Many "cleanup" parties have allowed the public to see and get to know the site.

Mori Point

Mori Point has long been regarded as the crown jewel of open space in Pacifica. The point was threatened by development for over a decade. In 2000, a court ordered Mori Point to be sold at public auction. Members of the Pacifica Land Trust lobbied the California Coastal Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to take the unprecedented step of participating in the auction. TPL was cautiously willing, but asked the Pacifica Land Trust to raise the non-recoverable costs needed to participate in the auction (about \$100,000).

We won the auction and by 2002, Mori Point was part of GGNRA. A short while later, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy agreed to take on Mori Point as one of their few site stewardship locations. Restoration efforts took place to enhance habitat for California red-legged frogs and the San Francisco garter snake.

San Pedro Creek

In 2001 the Pacifica Land Trust signed a contract for the purchase of a 1.1-acre parcel of beachfront property along Linda Mar Beach. The property represents half of a 2.2-acre parcel previously owned by Robert Mahoney that stretches from the

mouth of San Pedro Creek north to Taco Bell. The acquisition of the land was made possible through the help of Scott Holmes, the former Director of Public Works for the City of Pacifica, with the cooperation of Mr. Mahoney, and the Coastal Conservancy, which contributed the purchase price of \$1.1 million dollars.

The property is now permanently protected from any form of development and became part of Pacifica State Beach. This acquisition also insured that the multi-million dollar flood control project upstream will remain viable because a constriction at the mouth (as was planned) would have jeopardized its function. So far, the flood control project and creek mouth enhancement have performed flawlessly.

A wetland area constructed at the mouth of the creek encourages Steelhead migration and provides habitat for birds and aquatic animals such as the California red-legged frog. It is noteworthy that San Pedro Creek supports one of the last remaining Steelhead fisheries along the San Mateo Coast; protection of this precious resource is vital to protecting fisheries along the California Coast.

Sweeney Ridge Gateway

In January of 2001, a group of concerned San Bruno citizens discovered that a parcel of land adjacent to the San Francisco watershed and GGNRA Sweeney Ridge Trail was being targeted for development. The 7.2-acre parcel, owned by the City of Pacifica but located in the City of San Bruno, was zoned to allow for the development of nine homes. The steeply sloped property drains directly into San Andreas Reservoir.

Local San Bruno citizens formed a "grass roots" organization called the Friends of Sweeney Ridge (FOSR) and soon contacted the Pacifica Land Trust to solicit help in mapping out a strategy to save and preserve the property. The Pacifica Land Trust quickly realized that the preservation of this property was vital to maintaining the hydrological integrity of the watershed lands. The site also serves as prime habitat for endangered species of animals, including the San Francisco garter snake, Mission Blue butterfly and the California red-legged frog.

As a result of this partnership, the Pacifica Land Trust's leadership and determination provided high visibility and built broad support for this project, including such organizations as the Department of Interior, GGNRA, TPL, Committee for Green Foothills, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, California State Coastal Conservancy, and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. As a result, in the latter part of 2004, GGNRA made a proposal to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) whereby PG&E would fund the acquisition of the Sweeney Gateway property for open space, as partial mitigation for a high voltage transmission line that PG&E was erecting through a GGNRA scenic easement located in the San Francisco watershed lands. A conservation easement was established to preserve and protect the natural, scenic and historic values of the Sweeney Ridge Gateway property forever.



Donation from Board Member Stephen Johnson

Most of you in Pacifica receive the Pacifica Directory with Stephen Johnson's photographs on the cover. Last year's cover of Pedro Point at dusk is being made available to the Pacifica Land Trust as a special fundraising project.

Steve is donating 10 original 11x14 prints to raise funds for the PLT. Steve's 11x14 prints sell for \$800 each, they are available here for \$195 each. Email info@sjphoto.com.



Our Beautiful Commemorative San Pedro Creek Heron Poster is available for you to purchase today!

One day in March 2005, PLT board member and Pacifica photographer, Stephen Johnson, saw this Great Blue Heron feeding in the mouth of San Pedro Creek, near the beach. In honor of this heron and the countless other waterfowl who now have their "watering-rights" restored, we've produced this handsome commemorative poster. It is available from us, or you can purchase it from Stephen at his studio. The 18x24 inch full color poster is \$20 (plus tax and shipping of \$7.65), proceeds to benefit the Land Trust and our continuing projects.

Purchase from: **Pacifica Land Trust:**
PO Box 988, Pacifica, CA 94044
www.pacifica-land-trust.org

Stephen Johnson Photography:
1220-C Linda Mar Blvd., Suites 5-7, Pacifica, CA 94044
www.sjphoto.com 650 355-7507

Land Trust Funding

We reside within a stone's throw of some of the most beautiful property in the world. Although much of the Bay Area's landscape has been developed, there still remain significant areas of pristine open space that provide a visual escape from urban sprawl.

Land trusts, such as the Pacifica Land Trust ("PLT"), work tirelessly to preserve and protect scenic coastal lands such as San Pedro Mountain, Mori Point and Sweeney Ridge, to name a few. Our continued success depends upon your generosity and your desire to preserve our quality of life.

PLT is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation and all donations are tax deductible.

Join the PLT at the level you can:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| \$35 PLT Associate | \$75 PLT Sponsor |
| \$125 PLT Sustainer | \$300 PLT Steward |
| \$1,000 PLT Partner | |

Got Email?

We'll keep you up-to-date, electronically!

From time to time issues arise that require a speedy response. Public hearings, land development proposals, and restoration projects (to name a few) are often up for review with relatively short notice. A growing list of concerned Pacificans' emails will help us keep you informed, and enable you to respond if you are inclined.

Interested? Email us at info@pacifica-land-trust.org. We will not share your email or bother you needlessly.

A Special Thanks to Jim Noziger at Custom Binding in Pacifica for printing our newsletters.

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I support PLT!
Keep up the good work!

Please use my donation below to continue the work of protecting our precious Pacifica resources.

Your generous donations allow us to continue working to preserve our open spaces and protect our lands for generations to come. Please be as generous as your budget allows so the Pacifica Land Trust can keep serving our community.

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