



THE NEWSLETTER OF COASTWALK  
Saving the California Coast One Step at a Time Fall 2004

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## Walks in Review

*Coastwalk's 2004 summer walks are over (except for Thanksgiving at Asilomar), completing the 23rd year of this beloved program. We at Coastwalk are grateful for the enthusiastic participation by hundreds of volunteers and walkers.*

*We ask ourselves many questions about the walks. Why do people go on coastwalks? Why do we produce these walks? What about hiking and the coastal experience makes the walks valuable?*

*People may wonder, too, about the nature of Coastwalk itself. Are we a group of environmentalists? Or is our focus primarily social? Are we mainly a hiking group?*

*We can get instruction from the old parable about the visually impaired people who each touch a different part of an elephant's body, and each get very different impression – one perceives a tree trunk, another a leaf – while touching the same creature. I think that when people “touch” Coastwalk, they find the part that makes the most sense to them. Some feel the hikes, others the passion of protecting our coast, still others the camaraderie and fun.*

*Coastwalk truly is many things, all adding up to one critter. Our many activities serve one grand purpose: to bring people into close relationship with our coast, so that they want to actively participate in its preservation. Our mission is to protect the coast. We promote the California Coastal Trail as the symbol of, and vehicle for, that protection.*

*Walking along the shoreline is a moving experience that engages all our senses. It's like falling in love. When we get to meet our coast in this way, we can't help but fall in love with it. And then we can't help but want to preserve it.*

*So, our summer walks fill many roles. Following is a sampling of what coastwalkers experienced on three of our walks this summer.*

*-Richard Nichols*

## Five Things You Can Do for our Coast

*by Sasha Rose Schaible*

Ask most of our loyal supporters how they became involved with Coastwalk, and they will tell you: ‘by going on a coastwalk.’ In walking the coast with us, people experience a big part of what Coastwalk offers: the beauty and challenge of coastal hiking, the chance to learn about coastal ecology, good food, and a community of like-minded people who join our walks year after year. Many choose to deepen that initial coastal experience by going on coastwalks every summer, and we depend on this loyalty from our community of walkers. But there are other ways to deepen one’s commitment to the coast as well.

If you participated in a walk this year, you heard from a Coastwalk board member about our history, how we have grown over the years and the advocacy work we are now doing for coastal access and completion of the California Coastal Trail. You may have realized that Coastwalk can accomplish more when more people become members. As our membership grows, our influence grows. Right now we have 800 members. Imagine if we had 8,000.

If you responded to our follow-up letter by becoming a member or increasing your membership level, we thank you. If you decided to volunteer next year we also thank you. It is because of you that our circle of influence is widening and we are able to engage more people

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## Coastwalk Is...

### THE COASTWALK MISSION:

- Complete the California Coastal Trail (CCT) - a continuous trail along the entire California coastline.
- Protect the scenic and natural environment of the coast while providing public access.
- Educate the public about the CCT and coastal protection, and
- Coordinate with government, community and trail organizations to promote the CCT, protect public access and encourage coastal protection.

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## Volunteer Appreciation

Words cannot express the gratitude that Coastwalk feels for our many dedicated, creative and energetic volunteers. Each year we try to name all of these incredible people (and it always turns out to be quite a list!). This year the honor roll can be found on our website ([www.coastwalk.org](http://www.coastwalk.org)). If you know of someone who has contributed and is not included, please contact Helen at Coastwalk - [hshane@coastwalk.org](mailto:hshane@coastwalk.org), or 1-(800) 550-6854.

## Franziska Jeffreys: Volunteer Extraordinaire

Coastwalk is a “grassroots” organization in the truest sense of the word. Without our incredible corps of volunteers, our world-class summer walks program would not exist at all. From time to time we would like to introduce you to one of these wonderful volunteers and give you a sense of the commitment they have made to the coast and to Coastwalk.

Franziska Jeffreys has been the volunteer chef for the Ventura County and Santa Monica Backbones Trail walks for the past five years. When asked about Franziska, those lucky enough to have walked with her invariably use words like “hilarious” and “delicious.” Below, Franziska introduces herself and tells us a bit about what it’s like cooking on a coastwalk, and admirers give some insight into what makes her (and her cooking!) so special.



*Beach Cleanup on Port Hueneme Beach, on the day the Coastwalk Coastal Trail Expedition 03 walkers came by in August, 2003*

*“I was inspired to start volunteering for Coastwalk because I found my first walk to be very well organized and I enjoyed it so much. I really enjoy meeting the diverse group of people who participate in these hikes, from homemakers to retired teachers and other public servants, to authors and just fine people. A typical day on a walk is full of fun as each day is different, in terms of people, places and hearty hiker appetites!”*

*I always have to keep in mind that in general, hikers eat more than they normally eat at home due to their increased exercise. The all-around favorite dishes I prepare seem to be lentil-vegetable stew with ham, or without ham for vegetarians, and carrot cake for dessert.*

*Every volunteer cooking day on a coastwalk is a great day as I am cooking from my heart.”*

Backbone Trail leader Susana Nierlich says of Franziska, “she has a flair, she tells it as it is; she is always upbeat, enthusiastic, helpful and self-confident. Her cooking is down-to-earth and reminds you of your mother’s. The hors d’oeuvres are fruit lovingly cut and beautifully presented on a large platter. And there is always iced tea ready when the hikers arrive from a hot and long hike.”

George Smeltzer reiterated the effect Franziska and her cooking have on weary hikers in a piece he wrote for the *Easy Reader*, a Santa Monica Bay area weekly: “Two miles up Big Sycamore Canyon at the Danielson Ranch campsite we were greeted by volunteer and cook extraordinaire Franziska Jeffreys and her wrangler husband Jerry. Leg cramps and flushed faces quickly faded as cold iced tea and beer appeared. Packs were unloaded and tents went up quickly as Franziska prepared and served dinner under a magnificent grove of Oak and Bay trees.”

# Save these Dates!

Please email your event to Leila Rand at [lrاند@coastwalk.org](mailto:lrاند@coastwalk.org)

## Fall Day Hikes with Rob Helms, Coastwalk's Trail Steward

Join Rob most weekends in the fall as he hikes 10-12 miles a day on the Coastal Trail in Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino and Humboldt Counties. Rob will follow the routes in the Coastwalk book *Hiking the California Coastal Trail*, avoiding roads as much as possible. For more information, contact Rob at (800) 550-6854 or [rhelms@coastwalk.org](mailto:rhelms@coastwalk.org).

**California Coastal Trail Celebration:** Saturday, November 20th, 5:30 pm  
Caspar Community Center, Caspar (Mendocino County).

Join the Coastal Land Trust in celebrating the California Coastal Trail with a slide show by members of the '03 Coastal Trail Expedition along the entire coast. Linda Hanes and Jon Breyfogle will present their photos and memories of the journey. Also music, photography, maps, and a silent auction, all to benefit the Land Trust in its efforts to open new trails and preserve the current ones along the Mendocino headlands. For more information, contact Rixanne Wehren at (707) 937-2709.

**Orange County Day Hikes:** Our December 4th hike is in Carbon Canyon. Contact Linda Cook 714-685-8862 for details. Contact Ginny Gregurek at (714) 289-9759 for information on future hikes.

## San Luis Obispo County Day Hikes:

Contact Lars Mikkelsen (805) 423-8180

**March 3, 2005,** Morro Bay Sandspit 9 am - 4 pm 8-9 miles, bring water & bag lunch

Meet: Morro Bay Harbor Patrol, 1275 Embarcadero, Morro Bay

The Harbor Patrol will ferry us across the bay, we'll walk on the sand spit, past Hazard Reef and across tide pools. We finally end up in Montana del Oro campground, where we will shuttle back to our cars.

## Los Angeles County Day Hikes:

**December 18,** Pt. Mugu State Park 9 am - 3 pm. 9 miles, bring water, lunch, snack. On this moderate hike we'll go through some of most scenic parts of Pt. Mugu - through Big Sycamore and Serrano Canyons, up to a ridge with an ocean view, and loop back. Meet at the day-parking lot of Big Sycamore Canyon State Park, across the street from the beach parking lot. Contact Dave Edwards 805-985-3728.

## Get Involved *cont. from page 1*

in solving coastal issues.

If you haven't chosen to get involved yet, we again invite you to join us. Below are some actions you can take to help Coastwalk become even more successful:

- Tell a friend or loved one about our coastwalks and invite him/her to become a member. This past summer one mother invited her daughter to join her on the Mendocino Coastwalk. They had a wonderful bonding experience and the daughter decided to become a member at the end of the trip. Our new walks brochure will be coming out in February 2005 - let our office know if you would like us to send one to a friend.
- Buy a Coastwalk membership as a birthday or holiday gift for someone you know who loves the coast. This is a unique gift and a great way to expose others to Coastwalk's work. Contact Sasha Rose Schaible at (800) 550-6854 or [sschaible@coastwalk.org](mailto:sschaible@coastwalk.org) for more information.
- Get on our e-mail action alerts list. Learn about letters you can write, phone calls you can make or projects you can help with to support public access and coastal protection. Send us an e-mail at [hshane@coastwalk.org](mailto:hshane@coastwalk.org) or go the News page of our website - [www.coastwalk.org](http://www.coastwalk.org).
- Find out what's happening with the Coastal Trail Committee in your area. Join others who give a few hours a month to make sure that your local stretch of the Coastal Trail is completed and protected. Contact Rob Helms at (800) 550-6854 or [rhelms@coastwalk.org](mailto:rhelms@coastwalk.org).
- Donate some of your tax dollars to further Coastwalk's work. Go to [www.coastwalk.org](http://www.coastwalk.org) and click on the "Get Involved" link or contact Sasha Rose Schaible at (800) 550-6854 or [sschaible@coastwalk.org](mailto:sschaible@coastwalk.org).

# Tides & Trails

## Park Disaster

Governor Schwarzenegger recently ordered the State to stop acquiring any new land for State Parks, citing financial constraints. The Governor has not blocked the purchase of other land (for prisons and college campuses). The public places a high priority on parklands, and many coastal properties and the Coastal Trail will be affected by this shortsighted decision. Please write a letter to the Governor, State Capitol, Sacramento 95814, to protest this decision.

## Short Tail Gulch Trail

A new coastal access trail was completed this summer in Sonoma County. After years of effort by local activist Chuck Rhinehart, the mile-long Short Tail Gulch Trail is now open through an easement at the Bodega Harbor subdivision, giving the public access to the rugged shoreline just south of Bodega Bay. The trail connects via the shoreline to the already in place Pinnacles Gulch Trail, making a pleasant 2-mile loop.

## Peace On, and a Piece Of, the Beach

After years of angry wrangling and law breaking by the Broad Beach homeowners in Malibu, a settlement may be at hand to end the ugly dispute over beach use. Although the public has the use of the beach up to the mean high tide line, and about half of the owners have given up rights to the beach in front of their house in exchange for building permits, "no trespassing" signs and private security guards have deterred users for years. Now, after the Coastal Commission sent letters ordering the removal of signs and the withdrawal of guards, and posted the open beach areas online, the owners are evidently ready to negotiate for public use in exchange for clear-cut and fair easement and guidelines to protect both the public use of the beach and the rights of the owners. Coastwalk commends the efforts of the Coastal Commission to protect public access to our treasured beaches.

## Coastwalk in Documentary

Public television station KQED out of San Francisco has produced a major hour-long documentary on the issues of public access along the California coast. Coastwalk members and staff were recently filmed at Salt Point State Park walking the Coastal Trail and expressing their reflections on the importance of the coast and access to it.

Look for the documentary this fall on a public TV station in your area.



## Ft. Bragg's Vision for Coastal Mill Site

by Richard Nichols

The Fort Bragg (Mendocino County) lumber mill site, located on two miles of coastal bluffs fronting the town, is now closed and for sale by the Georgia Pacific Corporation. The mill was founded in 1885 as the Redwood Lumber Company by C.R. Johnson; also in 1885, the town was founded, with Johnson as the first mayor. Thus began the town's long history as the main economic center of logging and milling in the region.

In recent years, the logging industry in the area has severely declined due to over-harvesting, leading to the closure of the town's biggest employer.

Now local citizens and city government have a chance to remold the town, and they have accepted the challenges of planning for the 400-acre site. With a grant to the city from the Coastal Conservancy, a consultant was hired to lead a series of focus groups, and the results are a snapshot of what is most desired for the site and the town.

The key priorities for the town include diverse and well-paying jobs, respect for the small town character, and tourism development.

Most remarkable in terms of the California Coastal Trail are the suggested new uses of the site. The first preference expressed by the focus-group participants was the installation of a walking trail along the entire two mile long-bluff top.

Among other preferred uses are a fine arts center, a conference center, a college, and a mix of housing and light industrial business. Overriding all of these ideas is the concern that the project, in what ever shape it takes, must respect both the character of the existing town and the businesses in the downtown core.

The results of the focus groups are intended as guidelines for the City to develop a specific plan for the site. This plan will then give the buyer of the property a good sense of what development, open space and recreation requirements the City will impose.

If all goes well, Fort Bragg can look forward to a well-planned development with a healthy respect for both the land and the existing town, and Coastwalkers can at last walk the bluffs of Fort Bragg.

## Report from the Trail

by Rob Helms, Trail Steward for the Coastwalk CCT Project



Lately, I have been working hard to develop volunteer committees in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Monterey Counties. In Coastwalk's master plan for completing the California Coastal Trail, local trail committees such as these will play a pivotal role. They will work to build and maintain their local trails, as well as advocate for the CCT with local jurisdictions. Made up

of local activists, hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, they will be modeled after the Los Angeles and Sonoma County committees, which have had huge successes by networking with other local environmental groups, staying up to date on planning events and land acquisitions in their area, attending meetings and hearings, and providing CCT outreach.

The Redwood Coast Land Conservancy recommended Julie Verran to help develop the Mendocino Committee. Julie was part of the group responsible for completing the Lost Coast section of the CCT. As an environmental activist and newspaper reporter for the *Independent Coast Observer*, she has the experience and skills to help build a strong Mendocino Committee. Julie will attend monthly meetings of the Moat Creek Managing Agency, which is currently working on the Bluff Trail near Pt. Arena.

Lorraine Dillon in Eureka is helping to strengthen the Humboldt Committee. Lorraine has many North Coast contacts involved in coastal issues locally. She plans to attend meetings with existing trail groups and recruit local volunteers.

In Monterey, Kyrrha Sevco of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is currently developing a trail working group to aid with the completion of the Sanctuary Coastal Trail, a 61-mile trail from Wilder State Park near Santa Cruz to Pacific Grove. Coastwalk is seeking volunteers in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties to help out.

I've been involved with several trail projects as well. Thanks go to Lou Wilkinson and volunteers for their wonderful trail work in Marin County. On September 25th, Coastwalk volunteers provided trail maintenance and built a bridge over a culvert to reduce erosion at Tomales State Park. The following weekend, we worked with Point Reyes National Seashore staff to remove silt and sand deposits from the Ridge Trail to reduce water damage.

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## MARIN HEADLANDS WALK

Coordinator Pat Ward reported on this very unusual coastwalk. The group slept in dormitory-style housing at the Marin Headlands Institute at historic Fort Cronkite at Rodeo Beach, rather than in tents, and meals were also provided by the Institute in its cafeteria (instead of by volunteers cooking on a camp stove!).

Among many activities, walkers visited the Marine Mammal Center near the Headlands Institute and watched the dedicated staff and volunteers caring for injured sea mammals. They also learned plenty of local history while visiting Battery Townsley, built in the 1920s, anti-aircraft sites from WW II, and the Cold War-era Nike anti-aircraft missile radar site on top of Hill 88. A sampling of Marin's breathtaking beauty was taken in at Stinson Beach and its quaint town, the Point Bonita Lighthouse, and on several memorable hikes.

Evening presentations included one by Jon Breyfogle, a Coastwalk Board member who completed the Coastwalk-sponsored Coastal Trail Expedition '03 along the whole coast of California, and even haiku poetry and a photographic slide show.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Participants in the walk were treated to some inspirational reminders about the huge impact a few committed individuals can have on coastal preservation. Carolyn Shoulders from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) spoke about efforts to save the Muir Beach Lagoon, and Cindy Spring, a volunteer with Save the Bay, gave a presentation about that group's many successes in preserving the San Francisco Bay. Cindy discussed how Save the Bay evolved out of the efforts of three local women, in 1961, against the City of Berkeley's plan to fill in the shallow Bay off-shore. The women mobilized thousands of people around the East Bay to stop the fill project, and in 1965, these activists achieved a legislative moratorium against filling in the Bay, and an acknowledgment from the State that the Bay belongs to the public.

Thanks to the work of Save the Bay and others, public attitudes towards protection of the Bay have shifted. This answers the criticism by some that efforts to make our coastline public (via the CCT, for example), will lead to further environmental degradation. It is clear that if the public had not assumed its control, the Bay would hardly exist today.

Cindy also spoke to walkers about the individual choices we all can make that help to preserve our coastal environment. She spoke about cars as one of the biggest polluters of the Bay, and reminded us that everything Bay Area residents put down the drain or garbage disposal goes into the Bay.

## GAINING LOCAL ACCESS

The public will gain greater access to the Marin/San Francisco portion of the CCT, and the Trail's fragile environment will be better preserved through the Trails Forever project. This is an exciting new initiative to help people discover and enjoy the Golden Gate National Parks, through which the parks' vast collection of trails, trailheads, overlooks, benches, picnic areas and interpretive exhibits will be revitalized, expanded, and maintained for the future.

The project will also engage volunteers in trail stewardship and preserve fragile park resources. Trails Forever is sponsored by the

On October 16th, nearly 30 Boy Scouts helped Coastwalk build a trail parallel to the CCT beach route at Doran Park in Bodega Bay. The new trail provides alternative routes for hikers, who have had to use the busy park road until now, and ensures safety for all park users. Sonoma CCT Committee volunteers educated the youth about the Coastal Trail project during the event.

I plan to have Marin and San Francisco volunteers working with the monthly trail projects in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area as well. Here we will also have CCT committee volunteers provide information to participants on the CCT project.

In the next few months, I will work to increase the volunteer base on the new committees and to develop more committees in other parts of the state. I would like to see the committee volunteers develop relationships with Coastal Conservancy staff up and down the State to improve the efficiency of committees. If you know of any active trail groups working toward the completion of the CCT, please contact me. And spread the word!

*If you want to learn more about any of these CCT projects, or to become involved, we could use your help! Please contact me at: rhelms@coastwalk.org or (800) 550-6854.*

## Pair Walks West Coast Trail

Nate Olive and Sarah Janes started walking at the State of Washington's northern Cape Flattery on June 8th. On Tuesday September 28, they touched the rusted Mexican/USA fence in the sand at Borderfield State Park. On those 112 days of hiking (excluding down days) they averaged 20 miles a day of wading in the surf, walking beaches and bluffs, and hiking through rain forests, dunes, city streets and wilderness areas.

On the 1,800 mile journey through Washington, Oregon and California, they stayed as close to the shore as possible to discover the best hiking route for the West Coast Trail, of which the California Coastal Trail claims 1,200 miles. They made valuable use of the Coastwalk publication *Hiking the California Coastal Trail*, following the route laid out by Coastwalk in 1996-98. Coastwalkers were the first to do a group walk of the entire California coastline, completing the journey in both 1996 and 2003. But while Janes and Olive join a small handful of people who have hiked the entire California Coastal Trail, they can lay claim to being the first known people to walk the entire length of the USA's West Coast on a trail.

As word of this feat circulates, other long-distance and day hikers looking for new adventures may begin to explore the possibilities of the fascinating and diverse West Coast on the Oregon, Washington and California Coastal Trails.

## The Eucalyptus of Marin

*The earliest introduction of the Eucalyptus trees now so prevalent in the San Francisco Bay Area was in the 1860's – 1880's, after the California Gold Rush. Prior to that, some of the largest Redwood trees in the Bay Area were found in Oakland. These were completely decimated by logging during the Rush for construction to accommodate the huge influx of people. Frank Havens came up with the idea of importing the Eucalyptus from Australia to replace the Redwoods as a source of lumber.*

*The trees did very well here, but failed miserably as a lumber resource.*

*Havens had imported the wrong kind of Eucalyptus – the Blue Gum – which is too hard and splits too easily to use for lumber. As a result, the groves were abandoned, and left to multiply on their own.*

*More trees were brought in for other reasons; for example, the stand on Mount Sutro in San Francisco was planted over the course of many Arbor Days by school children. The stands on Albany Hill and Point Pinole, in Albany and Richmond, respectively, were planted to act as buffers for any blasts from the dynamite factories that thrived there from the late 1800's through to the mid 1900's.*

*In the East Bay, the trees were planted by ranchers on steep canyons to stabilize the soil and hillsides. The Eucalyptus replaced the deep-rooted native bunch grasses that were overgrazed by cattle and caused terrible slope erosion problems.*

*In Marin, the Eucalyptus was planted around old homesteads to serve as wind breaks or to demark property lines. The stand at the Marin Headlands was planted on the site of the old Bettencourt dairy farm, run by a family of dairy farmers from the Azores.*

*The trees have a bad rap locally – they are a fire hazard and the oils from the leaves are known to poison the soil. But, the Marin stands have been adopted by the Monarch butterfly for its over-wintering stay. Historically, there were no trees in many coastal areas like the Headlands, only coastal prairie and shrub. So where did the Monarchs over-winter, and what trees did they use, before the advent of the Eucalyptus?*

*- From a talk given by Ken Lavin, Interpretive Park Ranger in the Marin Headlands, on the Marin walk.*

**Walks** *continued from page 5*

Parks Conservancy, the National Park Service, and the Presidio Trust.

The first major project of the program will be to master plan and rehabilitate 17 miles of the Coastal Trail from Marin's Muir Beach to the Cliff House in San Francisco. This dramatic trail climbs ridges, drops down to beaches, has fabulous views of San Francisco and the Bay Region, crosses the Golden Gate Bridge, and ends at Land's End, on the northwestern tip of San Francisco. Coastwalk will participate in this important CCT project, and welcomes involvement from Coastwalk members.

## SAN LUIS OBISPO WALK

The San Luis Obispo walk is a perennial favorite. "This is my fifth Coastwalk, and ranks up there with the best...we experienced quite a variety of interesting activities, from climbing Valencia Peak, to tide pools, to archaeological sites, to sand dunes, to kayaking," says walker Jeanne Jelke.

The walk's participants ranged from ages 7 to 70+, and included ten people under age 16. "Archeologist John Parker gave a wonderful talk at a campfire and led the next day's walk over a large Chumash site, beautiful tide pools and unspoiled beach; finally we arrived by boat at the Morro Bay Yacht club and spent the night there. Wonderful food," reports walk leader Lars Mikkelsen.

Interpreters provided a wide diversity of natural, cultural and political education on the walk, ranging from an evening speaker on the elephant seals at Piedras Blancas to hikes led by representatives of groups like the Land Conservancy and even PG&E (owner of the Pecho Coast Trail and the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant). Among the under-16 set, the hermit crab races were an enormous hit!

## GAINING LOCAL ACCESS

San Luis Obispo's coastline has seen some heavy political action in recent months. In mid-September, after much advocacy against and for the deal by environmentalists and ranchers, the Coastal Conservancy approved \$34 million for the 82,000-acre Hearst Ranch conservation deal. Part of the deal includes giving 13 miles of coastline to the State, keeping three scenic parcels (including San Simeon Point) private, and allowing the construction of an inn and 27 mansions.

An alliance of conservation groups continues to be concerned over details of the deal. It supports amendments that would strengthen conservation safeguards, and give authority over the Coastal Trail route to State Parks. As approved, the Coastal Trail is along the highway for 5 miles of the 18-mile ranch.

Although the deal doesn't look good for public access to the coast right now, with the Hearst Corporation limiting access to three very special coastal places, we hope that in the future it will become clear that hikers and the public can be respectful of natural areas in beautiful places, and that these areas may be opened up. One of Coastwalk's jobs is to be a good steward of the Trail, and to help the public understand the importance of being careful in sensitive habitats.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Coastwalk Board member and longtime local coastal advocate Nancy Graves thinks creatively about how to incorporate local issues, like the Hearst Ranch deal, into her presentations at the walks. She explains "this year's walk was quite different as we had 10 children...I had prepared for adult talks concerning the Hearst Ranch, Diablo Canyon, and other threats to the environment at a couple of campfires. I brought up a question to the group about access vs. conservation: where and when is it appropriate to keep humans out? The children had some great responses to this and followed up by doing a play about it during the talent show.

"I think our one-on-one interaction while hiking is also some of the most valuable work we do....especially when people are curious."

## VENTURA WALK

When walking the coast of Ventura County one sees offshore a string of islands, part of the Channel Islands National Park (CINP). On the second day of our walk, we board a 62-foot boat for a day of adventure at Anacapa Island. As we smoothly speed along at some 22 mph in our twin-hulled craft, a pod of dolphin is sighted. The dolphins see us and come to play as the boat slows. The dolphins swiftly swim alongside us and, two or three at a time, gracefully leap into the air in unison.

After crossing the four mile Anacapa Passage, we arrive at West Island which is the largest of the three islets that make up Anacapa Island. It is the biggest brown pelican rookery on the Pacific coast and a Research Natural Area, closed to public entry. Hundreds of these endangered species birds are viewed soaring along the high cliffs. Once near extinction, the brown pelican has made a remarkable recovery.

Our next stop is Landing Cove at East Island, where there is a 154-step stairway that zigzags up the cliff from the landing. As we reach the trail at the top we are greeted by scores of noisy Western Gulls. Each of the adult gulls is accompanied by one to three young.

At the time of our mid- July visit, the young birds are out of the nests but have not yet learned to fly. As we move along the trail we see an occasional gull stretch its wings and fly for the first time. Upon returning to the Landing Cove we watch on video monitors park ranger divers, equipped with scuba and underwater camera, show and tell what they are finding in the sea. A two-way intercom system allows visitors to ask questions and converse with the rangers.

Then it is back on the boat for some viewing of wild life, including California sea lions, as we approach the end of another adventuresome day with Coastwalk.

*-Don Mills, four-year walk leader for Ventura County Coastwalk and a volunteer in Channel Island National Park*

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Longtime coastal advocate, coastwalker, and naturalist Tom Maxwell led a hike along Ormond Beach during the walk and discussed the many threats to its endangered bird population from pollution and other ills. Walkers regularly see the birds (least terns, snowy plovers and the endangered salt marsh birdsbeak, among others), and the harbor seals and brown pelicans, back from the edge of extinction, that live at Mugu Lagoon.

Tom talks about a host of pollution troubles in the area, including this example, "Whenever Thousand Oaks Waste Water Treatment Plant has a leak in any of its lines, the waste goes down Conejo Creek and eventually into Mugu Lagoon where the 250 plus harbor seals spend their rest periods and rear their young. With enough warning, they can be driven out to sea to feed until the lagoon flushes.

"Ormond Beach is a nesting site for both least terns and snowy plovers. (Local activist) Al Sanders has taken the lead in obtaining fencing and watch-dogging the site. Dogs, it is true, are a major menace to plovers. While the parents are aloft fleeing from a loose canine, the gulls are busy eating the babies and eggs. Al says that he sometimes calls the police three times in one morning trying to get them to take action in enforcing the dog ban. A fenced entrance has also been provided for surfers to cross the wetlands without stepping on the eggs." This is another great example of the impact one person's

commitment to our coast can have.

## LOCAL ACCESS ISSUE

Local Coastwalkers have also been involved in the effort to preserve Surfers Point, next to the Ventura River and on the shoreline of the county fairgrounds, which is a popular surfing spot because of the consistent year round wave quality. It is also popular with stroller-drivers, bicyclists, sunset gazers and picnickers. In 1981, the city and fairgrounds built a bike path (a segment of the present CCT), part of which immediately eroded and fell into the surf. Next, in 1989, the bike path was rebuilt and a parking lot was installed. This too began to fail. In 1992, the city installed a seawall to protect the parking lot. This, combined with the damming of the Ventura River, which trapped sediment meant for the shoreline, led to the quick and steady erosion of the beach and remnant sand dunes.

Since that time a task force of interested parties has worked to find a solution to the problem, one that would protect both the remnant beach environment and the bike path. Finally, after years of debate and efforts by the local Surfrider chapter to make the project environmentally sound, the task force has settled on a plan that would move the parking lot, road and bike path back, create a retreat zone with soft barriers to erosion while restoring the beach and dune area.

This coastal "hotspot," combining elements of recreation, natural processes (erosion), urban impacts, and planning, demonstrates that hard work and commitment can lead to sound solutions to very difficult problems created by human activities.

*- Edited by Leila Rand. Contributors: Richard Nichols, Pat Ward, Cindy Spring, Ken Lavin, Lars Mikkelsen, Jeanne Jelke, Nancy Graves, Don Mills, Tom Maxwell, Dr. John Parker, Bill Sullivan. With special thanks to Diana Savage, Bill Queale, Valerie Wilson and Winter Bonnin.*

Photos and reports from some of the Summer 2004 walks are up on the web : [www.coastwalk.org/hikes/oldwalks.htm](http://www.coastwalk.org/hikes/oldwalks.htm). If you have pictures or writings from an '04 walk that you would like posted on the web, please contact Leila Rand at (800) 550-6854 or [lrاند@coastwalk.org](mailto:lrاند@coastwalk.org).

## SLO's Ancient Peoples

*Each year, local SLO archaeologist Dr. John Parker introduces walkers to the Chumash Indians, who populated the Morro Bay area until 1803. Walkers get to examine Chumash artifacts recovered from archaeological sites, and visit an ancient village site at the north end of the Morro Bay Sand Spit, where they inspect broken shell remains, pointing to a diet rich in shellfish, and refuse left behind by stone tool making.*

*Before European contact, Morro Bay's Chumash had well-defined village territories with a regional government system and class structure. A practice of over-producing food and a food taxation system ensured that everyone had enough to eat, even during drought years. Shell and soapstone bead currency formed a money economy, which was in use as early as 3,000 B.P. (before present). Dramatic evidence of this economy has turned up in Morro Bay sites where pieces of obsidian have been discovered. These were traded from places as far away as the Oregon border and east of Yosemite.*

*Radiocarbon dates, obsidian hydration analysis, and stylistic artifacts all indicate that prehistoric use of the Morro Bay area began sometime before 9,000 B.P. By 1,500 A.D. European-introduced diseases such as measles, smallpox and TB were spreading northward from Central America. These had already taken their toll by the time the first European explorer anchored near Morro Rock. It is estimated that 1/3 of the Morro Bay population was already dead. In 1803, the last traditional Native American left his village on the shores of Morro Bay to live in Mission San Luis Obispo.*  
*- From the talk given by archaeologist Dr. John Parker on the SLO walk.*

## About Knobs

*We became aware of those things geologists call "knobs" in San Luis Obispo County on the first morning of our visit, when we drove south to the Nipomo Dunes. By the last morning, when Morro Rock disappeared into the fog behind us as we walked up the beach to Cayucos, we had become well aware of them.*

*Ancient Morro Rock, one of the most visible landmarks on the California coast and the inspiration for poetry, painting, and photography, is the northwestern-most of an 18-mile string of probable volcano sites. It doesn't look like a volcano because the cone is gone after 25 million years of erosion. All that is left is the plug, a lump of igneous rock - and gulls, pelicans, and perigrene falcons love it.*

*At 580 feet, Morro Rock is the shortest of the SLO County knobs. Until World War II, it sat alone in the ocean. Boats, sea otters, and the tide went in and out on the east side. But the military wanted the sand dunes for amphibious landing practice. To bring the troops closer, engineers built the road to the rock that is now there. Its creation blocked the natural draining of sand from the harbor, and today, once a year, the sand must be dredged.*

*By Bill Sullivan, SLO walk participant*

# Another Great Coastal Cleanup Day

40 Coastwalk volunteers met for the 20th Annual International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 18th, at Shell and Furlong beaches in Sonoma County. The group was made up of people of all ages and included 17 high school students from the Youth Action Council (YAC), which develops students' leadership skills through local service projects.

As volunteers cleaned trash and debris from the Kortum Trail, which links the two beaches and is a segment of the CCT, they learned about Coastwalk and its mission. On the beach, YAC participants learned about the trash cycle and its effects on marine life. Afterwards, the Coastwalk crew joined other volunteers for a free barbecue, including a sand castle contest, at Doran Beach.

Coastwalk is just one of many groups that participated in Coastal Cleanup Day, which is sponsored by the California Coastal Commission. More than 44,000 volunteers picked up over 623,367 pounds of trash and 110,000 pounds of recyclables at 700 sites along the California coast.



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**Yes! I want to enjoy *and* preserve the coast!**

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Have you been on a Coastwalk? Yes Not Yet If yes, which one(s)?: \_\_\_\_\_

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