



PACIFICA LAND TRUST



*PRESERVING AND PROTECTING
THE OPEN SPACES OF PACIFICA
AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES*



PACIFICA

Our coast is a rugged harmony of endless combinations. Stiff sea winds polish the skies to a blue brilliance. Along the shore, pelicans, gulls and sandpipers vie for the ocean's harvest. Inland valleys support steelhead streams. Silken fingers of fog reach down and enshroud the land below. Dramatic coastal ridges rise upward where hawks and falcons circle. This is Pacifica.

South from San Francisco along the coast, travelers are routinely stunned by breathtaking views and dramatic sunsets that sweep the coast. From the northern ocean bluffs, surrounding ridges, south to Pedro Point, Pacifica encompasses several unique micro-climates and ecosystems with rare and threatened plant and animal species including the Montara Mountain manzanita, the San Francisco garter snake, the California red-legged frog and the Mission Blue butterfly.



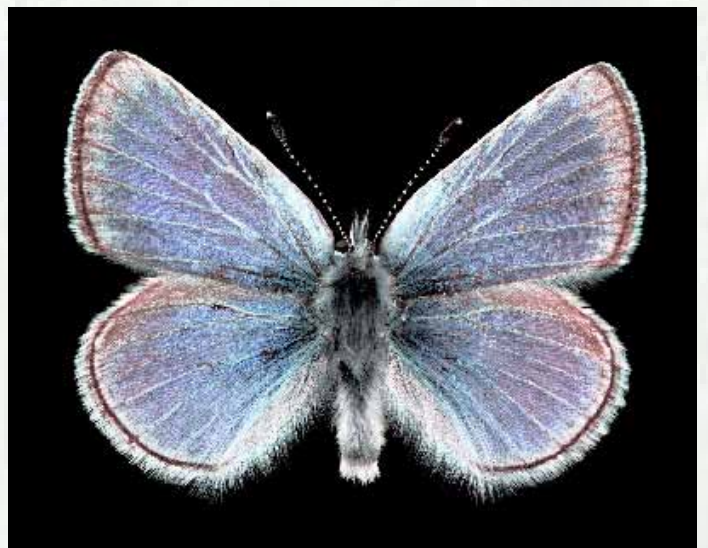
WHO WE ARE

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.

GOALS

The purpose of the Pacifica Land Trust is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, historic and open space environment of Pacifica and the surrounding community for present and future generations. To further this purpose, the Pacifica Land Trust works to:

- Acquire by donation or purchase, land, easements or other conservation mechanisms, for public benefit
- Encourage public awareness of the values of conservation and open space
- Coordinate with the Pacifica Open Space Committee to implement the Open Space Task Force Report
- Educate citizens to respect, value and steward open space
- Encourage economically viable community development in accord with our mission



STELLAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Pedro Headlands, Mori Point, San Pedro Creek, Sweeney Ridge Gateway

The Pacifica Land Trust completed a number of major projects. Among our biggest successes are preservation of the two most prominent headlands in Pacifica, an important creek restoration project, watershed protection for the northern peninsula, and significant additions to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

There is more to be done. Based on our proven record of accomplishments, we are continuing our work to make our community a better place to live.

PEDRO HEADLANDS



This prominent point has long been a landmark for ships off the coast and for travelers on land. It is recorded that in 1542, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sighted San Pedro Point from the deck of his ship San Salvador.

In 1990, this privately owned area was slated for development of 218 houses. As a motorcycle club recreational site, the site was deeply eroded and in danger of being lost to public use. The Pacifica Land Trust learned in early 1992 that the entire property might be available for purchase at a price far below its market value.

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 allowed the public to see and get to know the site.

Since then, much restoration work has been accomplished and there is still more to be done. The property was included in the Golden Gate National Recreation expansion area and current plans are for title and management to pass to GGNRA in the future. In 2007 the

Coastal Conservancy awarded a substantial new grant to the Pacifica Land Trust to continue the restoration and stewardship work as plans are being made for long-term management.

The efforts and contributions of numerous people over the years made the addition of the beautiful natural area of Pedro Point Headlands to the park possible.





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 that Mori Point be put up for auction to provide some return for a failed development project. 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).

Thus began an amazing fund-raising campaign during which the people of Pacifica stood up and voted with their pocket books to preserve Mori Point in perpetuity. Within one month, the money was raised thanks to the contributions of hundreds of residents, including a number of donations of \$1000 and more. Due to an artful performance by Tim Wirth of TPL in a dramatic scene, we managed to win the auction with a bid of \$3.3 million. TPL acknowledged that “We are awed and inspired by the outpouring of support by the Pacifica community in response to the opportunity to save Mori Point!”

Meanwhile, the next major challenge was to raise the acquisition funds. Working closely with Pacifica Land Trust representatives, TPL convinced an *angel* to provide them with a no-interest loan of \$2.5 million while the California Coastal Conservancy came up with an additional \$1.0 million to seal the deal. The late Congressman Tom Lantos was able to engineer boundary expansion legislation to pay the federal share of the acquisition and add Mori Point to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). By Fogfest 2000 (September), the dream of Mori Point becoming part of Pacifica’s open space network became a reality. By 2002, it was part of GGNRA. A short while later, the Golden Gate National Parks Con-



servancy 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. A draft trails plan is undergoing public comment.

Thanks to the persistence and vision of the people of Pacifica, the wonderful natural and recreational values of Mori Point are preserved forever. We are confident that these values will only improve with time under the careful stewardship of GGNRA.

SAN PEDRO CREEK

On August 12, 2001, Mike Vasey, then President of the Pacifica Land Trust, signed the final 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, the cooperation of Mr. Mahoney, and the generous support of Prentice Williams and Nadine Hitchcock of the Coastal Conservancy, which contributed the purchase price of \$1.1 million dollars.



Eventually, the city was able to acquire all of the Mahoney beach acreage. The dilapidated buildings on the property were removed and the San Pedro Creek mouth and adjacent beach were restored to their native states. 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.



The addition of the Mahoney property to the Pacifica State Beach by the Pacifica Land Trust represents a desperately needed expansion of the beach. In recent years, Pacifica State Beach (also known as Linda Mar Beach) has become increasingly popular. People from all over San Mateo and San Francisco counties, and from as far away as Santa Rosa and Sacramento, arrive on sunny weekends to take advantage of one of the best and safest beaches along the Central Coast. The unique natural features of the Linda Mar Cove make for a shallow beach that is protected from strong ocean currents and big waves. These make the beach ideal for families as well as both novice and experienced surfers.

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. Furthermore, the site was identified as a key link to a planned future trail connecting the Sweeney Ridge Trail with the San Andreas Trail.

The Pacifica Land Trust acted quickly and negotiated an Exclusive Option Agreement with the City of Pacifica, with the intention of building a constituency to raise funds for the purchase and preservation of the vital property. Over the course of the next several years, FOSR held annual walk-a-thons to help raise funds to offset the costs incurred by the Pacifica Land Trust. These costs included appraisals fees, option agreement costs, and the creation of a six-page color brochure entitled *Saving the Gateway to Sweeney Ridge and the Crystal Springs Watershed*.

As a result of this partnership, the Pacifica Land Trust leveraged its resources to build a sizable constituency from organizations including 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. During the same time, FOSR generated local support from the City of San Bruno, as well as hundreds of citizens living in San Bruno, San Francisco, Millbrae, Redwood City and many other Peninsula cities.

Although the Pacifica Land Trust did not obtain complete funding for the property, its leadership and determination provided *high visibility* and built broad support with key organizations. 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. In early 2005, GGNRA, PG&E and the City of Pacifica entered into negotiations and contracts which resulted in the establishment of a conservation easement to preserve and protect the natural, scenic and historic values of the Sweeney Ridge Gateway property forever.

This project is an excellent example of how the partnership of local activists and the Pacifica Land Trust is a powerful tool that can be used to protect and preserve our scenic and vital local open spaces.



FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

OPEN SPACE

The Pacifica Land Trust is successful in acquiring and protecting several large and prominent properties in Pacifica; however, there are many smaller properties that border parks and open space that are threatened by development. The Pacifica Land Trust can provide a way for property owners feeling pressed by rising values and limited options to protect property. Conservation easements, tax incentives, donations, planned estate bequests and other instruments can provide a way to accomplish the goals and dreams of owners of potential open space and scenic areas.

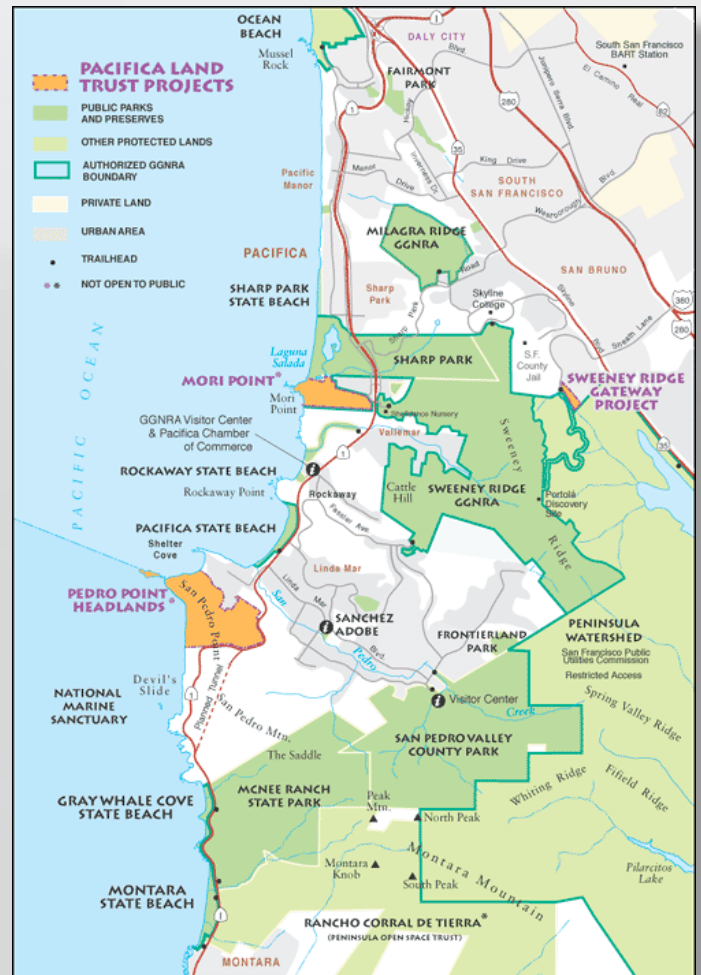
The Pacifica Land Trust philosophy is based on respect for both property rights and for property owners. The methods that the Pacifica Land Trust can use to accomplish land protection are in contrast to the restrictive zoning and public pressure used in the past to guide land use decisions. In Pacifica and the surrounding area, we have so much open space, with so many trails, vistas and peaceful places, that it is easy to forget that it can change over time, and that the place we love can end up behind a fence or for the use of only a few. As the Pacifica Land Trust moves into its next phase of maturity, we hope to be involved in managing and restoring land for the benefit of all of Pacifica and its surroundings. Our work has really just begun.

PRESERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

While the essential mission of the Pacifica Land Trust is to acquire open space to help preserve the natural integrity of our surrounding wild places, we are increasingly aware that preservation is not enough. Invasive species, soil erosion and inappropriate use of public land can cause natural values to degrade in spite of protected status. What is needed, in addition to preservation, is good land management and active stewardship.

Although public land management agencies are doing their best with limited funds, it is evident that there is a compelling need for more volunteer citizen involvement in this effort. For this reason, the Pacifica Land Trust board decided to reach out to the local community and provide support for active volunteer stewardship of certain key public land parcels. This led to a new project, the Pedro Point Headland Stewardship Program.

While GGNRA agreed to accept Pedro Point into the national park, we still appear to be years away from transfer. Many conservation and access issues require attention, and as more people begin to visit the area, more attention needs to be paid to trail safety. The California Coastal Conservancy consequently awarded a grant to the Pacifica Land Trust to partner with the Pedro Point Community Association to develop an active stewardship program to help provide a management presence on the site until its management future is finalized. We look forward to building this community partnership with the Pedro Point Community Association to both improve Pedro Point Headland's natural resources while enhancing the site for community recreation.



HOW LAND TRUSTS WORK WITH LANDOWNERS

Land Trusts work in a variety of ways by directly negotiating land transactions, many of which offer direct income, estate or property tax benefits to a landowner.

- **DONATION** – A landowner may give property to the land trust by a gift or will
- **PURCHASE OR BARGAIN SALE** – The land trust buys the property, usually at a reduced rate that benefits the land trust and offers certain tax advantages to the landowner
- **LIFE ESTATE** – The landowner sells or donates the land but retains the right to live on it throughout their lifetime
- **LIMITED DEVELOPMENT** – The land trust arranges a strategy whereby the least environmentally significant portion of a property is carefully developed to finance conservation of the rest
- **CONSERVATION EASEMENT** – The landowner enters into an agreement with the land trust that retains the land in its natural, scenic, historic, agricultural, forested or open space condition



HELP US

- **VOLUNTEER** – Join our site stewardship program; assist us with weekend work parties
- **DONATE** – Assist us with our land conservation fund; help us to fund our projects
- **CONSIDER CONSERVATION EASEMENTS** – Protect your property from development
- **IDENTIFY OPEN SPACE** – Contact us if you know of property in need of preserving or protecting



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