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# Land News

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September/October 2001

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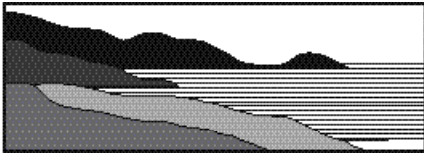
## **Land Trust Purchases Private Property at Linda Mar Beach**

**O**n August 12, 2001 Mike Vasey, President of the Pacifica Land Trust, signed the final contract for the purchase of a 1.1-acre parcel of beach front property along Linda Mar Beach. The property represents half of a 2.2 acre parcel owned by Mr. Robert Mahoney that stretches from the mouth of San Pedro Creek north to the Taco Bell. The acquisition of the land was made possible through the help of Scott Holms of the City of Pacifica, the cooperation of Mr. Mahoney, and the generous support of Prentice Williams and Nadine Hitchcock of the Coastal Conservancy who contributed the purchase price of \$1.1 million dollars. The goal of the PLT is to contribute the 1.1 acres to the State Parks System to enlarge Pacifica State Beach. The PLT, City of Pacifica and State Parks plan to remove a house from the property and then restore the beach to its native state. All debris including concrete, telephone poles and reinforcing steel will be removed and the dune area landscaped in native plants.

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 are showing up on sunny weekends to take advantage of one of the best and safest beaches along the Central Coast. As a consequence, the carrying capacity of the beach at times is nearly exhausted. Space is at a premium and the Snowy Plover habitat in the north dunes is coming under increasing pressure. The addition to Pacifica State Beach of the newly purchased property by the PLT represents a desperately needed expansion of the beach.

It will also protect the mid-region of the beach from future development, eliminate the need for future seawalls to prevent flooding of existing homes and protect the mouth of San Pedro Creek and the Steelhead fishery.

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## Working to preserve 9.2 acres near Sweeney Ridge

Through an internal audit, the City of Pacifica discovered it owns a valuable 9.2 acre parcel, zoned residential, in San Bruno. The site is within the gate to Sweeney Ridge at the end of Sneath Lane. It adjoins the Golden Gate National Recreational Area ("GGNRA") and the San Francisco Watershed. As you begin your hike up to Sweeney Ridge from Sneath Lane, the site is to your left looking toward San Andreas Lake.

The Pacifica Land Trust submitted a bid, along with developers, for exclusive bargaining rights to purchase this beautiful and environmentally significant property, with the aim of keeping it undeveloped and in public ownership and, at the same time, compensating the City of Pacifica with the fair market value of the land. Meanwhile, public sentiment in San Bruno for non-development of the site sparked grass roots efforts by Friends of Sweeney Ridge, who, together with the PLT, has sponsored several events to raise funds and to bring the site to the attention of the community.

The PLT now has signed a one-year option to purchase the site for \$3.1 million ñ the appraised fair market value. This process already has resulted in costs to the PLT, for the appraisal of the property and for option fees (some of which has been defrayed by the fund-raising events). We now are moving forward to contact major funding sources to secure the purchase price. At this point, we do not know how much of the eventual balance will have to be raised from local donations.

Both the National Park Service ("NPS") and the San Francisco Water Department ("SFWD") have expressed interest in managing the property, if PLT can obtain it. The SFWD sees the protection of this property as being important to the integrity of the water district's hydrological system. In addition to water quality issues, the GGNRA, which is part of the NPS, and the Bay Area Ridge Trail feel protection is important and see this site as a key link to a planned future trail connecting the Sweeney Ridge Trail with the existing San Andreas Trail.

This open space land serves as prime habitat for endangered species of animals, including the San Francisco Garter Snake and the Red Legged Frog. The City of San Bruno is supporting the preservation efforts. The Mayor of San Bruno, Larry Franzella, and other City Council members participated in the PLT and Friends of Sweeney Ridge Walk-a-Thon on June 16, which netted over \$3,000. These funds, along with other donations, now total over \$6,000.

To make a tax deductible donation, mail check to Pacifica Land Trust, P.O. Box 988, Pacifica 94044 and designate for "Sweeney Ridge Project".

### Mori Point Poster

A grand view represents the glory and strength of a community that stood together to protect a treasured wild place. Stephen Johnson's original photograph of Mori Point was part of our successful fundraising campaign. The photograph has now been memorialized into a breathtaking poster that measures a dramatic 12x54", perfect for your home or office. This limited edition poster is available from Stephen Johnson's studio at 580 Crespi Drive, Suite A-2, for \$25. Stop by his studio (or go to the web at [www.sjphoto.com](http://www.sjphoto.com)) and purchase a copy of this poster. Part of the proceeds benefit Pacifica Land Trust.

# PLT New Board Members

**Ernie Gomes** lives in San Bruno and is an engineer for Bechtel National Incorporated, which focuses on Government projects including the cleaning up of several government toxic waste sites throughout the country. He is currently assigned at the NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, where he is the construction manager of the VMS project, which is the modernization of the space shuttle simulator. Ernie is the founding father of Friends of Sweeney Ridge, an organization working in partnership with the PLT towards purchasing and

preserving 9 acres of open space land adjacent to the Sweeney Ridge Trailhead. He is also on the San Bruno General Plan Update Committee, focusing on open space, environmental, and quality of life issues, and was recently appointed to the San Mateo Union High School District Citizen Oversight Committee, which oversees the planning, budgeting, and construction of the seismic and life safety retrofit projects in the district's high schools.

**Dinah F. Verby** is an experienced attorney who works exclusively as a neutral provider of dispute resolution services, primarily as a mediator and arbitrator. Dinah also serves as an Administrative Law Judge for the San Francisco Rent Board, and is on the mediation panels for the San Mateo Superior Court and Small Claims Court, as well as the California 1st District Court of Appeal. She volunteers her time to conduct community mediations for the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center. Since moving to Pacifica in 1989, Dinah has been active in various community activities, including efforts to preserve open space and growth control, while promoting sustainable development principles. Dinah is currently Vice-Chair of the City Council-appointed Economic Development/Redevelopment Project Area Committee. She is also a member of Pacifica's Environmental Family, Vallemar Conservators, and the Pacifica Chamber of Commerce.

**William C. (Bill) Schwegler**, Senior Vice President of Strategic Initiatives and Chairman of the Board for Telcontar. Telcontar is the provider of the premier software platform for location-based services such as driving directions, real-time traffic information, and maps. Bill Schwegler has been with Telcontar since the company's 1996 inception. He has more than 17 years of computer industry experience to the company, including a period in which he founded two previous start-up companies. Schwegler has extensive skill in integrating new technologies to create innovative products, as well as identifying new markets and distribution channels for those products.

# Yes!

Count me in! I support the **Pacifica Land Trust** and the work you are doing to preserve and protect Pacifica's natural lands.

Here is my tax-deductible contribution:

\$25     \$50     \$75     \$100     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send with check made payable to : **Pacifica Land Trust**    P.O. Box 988, Pacifica, CA 94044    (650) 359-7034

# GGNRA & Pacifica Land Trust:

## Working Together to Create a Premier National Park on the San Mateo Coast

Over twenty years ago, the people of Pacifica and northern San Mateo joined to push congress into creating the Milagra Ridge and Sweeney Ridge units of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Since then, Milagra Ridge has become an inspired example of how citizen-based stewardship can transform a degraded, weed-infested site into prime habitat for endangered species and a great place for people to recreate. Other San Mateo park units have not fared as well. With the new millennium, however, a new era has begun for the GGNRA in San Mateo and the Pacifica Land Trust has been, and will become, a major partner in this exciting new development.

The first giant strides in this direction occurred last year with the stunning success of the Mori Point acquisition. Funding for the Trust for Public Land (TPL) is now part of the new administration's budget. Barring the unforeseen, Mori Point should become part of the GGNRA within the next year. A key to its acquisition was passage and signing of the GGNRA boundary expansion bill in 2000. This bill also makes possible the inclusion of one of the PLT's major projects, the Pedro Point Headland property, into the GGNRA. The GGNRA has already confirmed that it desires to take over the management of this magnificent headland and preparations are now underway to make this a reality. Brian O'Neill, GGNRA Superintendent, met PLT representatives recently on Pedro Point and extolled the work the PLT has done to control erosion, remove invasive species (such as pampas grass), and begin revegetation with California native plants. The park will be further improved by the planned transfer of Cattle Hill from the City of Pacifica. This will make possible a better trailhead from the end of Fassler Avenue to the Discovery Site on Sweeney Ridge.

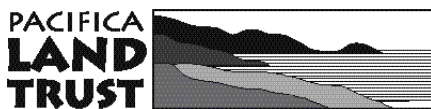
Further, a second boundary expansion bill has now been introduced by Congressman Tom Lantos. This bill would extend the GGNRA from Pedro Point south along the Midcoast to hills above Pillar Point harbor. This will add nearly 5,000 acres of prime open space to the park including the Rancho Corral de Tierra properties. Another land trust, the powerful Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), recently secured an option to buy this property. The PLT may well assist in acquiring some of the other so-called Devil's Slide properties if the boundary expansion succeeds.

Finally, the PLT effort to acquire the slope directly above the Sweeney Ridge Trailhead at the end of Sneath Lane in San Bruno is another small but very significant effort that will protect the integrity of the Sweeney Ridge unit into the future. The GGNRA has already pledged to assist the PLT in this effort.

As if this were not enough, another important development is the nomination of Paul Jones of Pacifica, a board member of the Pacifica Land Trust, to serve as a member of the GGNRA Advisory Commission. Having representation on this commission is of critical importance for a renewed focus on both new and old San Mateo coastal properties that will form the foundation of the future GGNRA in this region. Paul Jones is a stellar selection for this position and, in conjunction with the people of Pacifica, northern San Mateo, and the Midcoast, Paul will insure that the dream of a vibrant national park in our region will be realized.



by  
**MICHAEL VASEY**



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