

San Luis Obispo County



San Luis Obispo County is at the heart of California's Central Coast in place and in spirit. Distant from large urban centers, it has retained a rural charm while offering many amenities associated with more populated areas. The dramatic beauty of its coastline is unsurpassed in the State and its vast rangelands and natural areas are everywhere reminders of old California.

POPULATION: >275,000

COASTLINE: 92 miles

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS: >90

CONSERVANCY FUNDING: >\$82 million

An extensive network of parks, beaches, and trails ensures that people can get to and enjoy all parts of the County's shoreline, from the unique Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes in the south, through the recreational beaches in the Five Cities Area and around Morro Bay, to the largely pristine seaside lands in the north. The beautiful and accessible beaches, shoreline, and natural lands help the County generate more than \$1 billion annually from tourism.

The Coastal Conservancy has worked for more than 35 years with the people of San Luis Obispo County to sustain the area's quality of life and economic viability, and intends to build on that work to:

- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors
- Restore and improve the health of rivers, streams, marshes, and beaches
- Help sustain farming and commercial fishing industries compatible with the natural environment
- Meet the challenges posed by a rising sea and a changing climate.

Parks & Natural Lands

The Coastal Conservancy has long worked with local communities and several nonprofit organizations and government agencies to protect the County's natural and working lands and open spectacularly scenic areas to the public. Conservancy projects include:

- Protection for more than 80,000 acres of historic rangeland on the **Hearst Ranch** and addition of an 18-mile stretch of coastline to **Hearst San Simeon State Park**. The Conservancy also helped develop the Piedras Blancas elephant seal viewing area within the park and is working to establish a new campground nearby.
- Acquisitions of more than 1,400 acres along 7½ miles of dramatic ocean bluffs from Cambria to Cayucos that enabled the creation of **Fiscalini Ranch Preserve**, **Harmony Headlands State Park**, and **Estero Bluffs State Park**. The properties contain unique habitats, including a native Monterey Pine forest and near-pristine meadows that are home to more than 400 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians.
- The **Cambria-Lodge Hill Restoration Program**, through which the Land Conservancy of SLO County has purchased more than 450 private lots to preserve Cambria's unique pine forest habitat.
- Purchase of several properties along or near the Morro Bay shoreline, including additions to **Montana de Oro State Park**, the **El Moro Elfin Forest**, the **Los Osos Greenbelt**, and **Sweet Springs Nature Preserve**.
- The City of San Luis Obispo's purchase of 108 acres on **Bishop Peak**, popular with hikers for its spectacular panoramic views.
- Protection of more than 4,200 acres in the County's portion of the **Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes**, a National Natural Landmark and the State's largest coastal dune/wetlands complex. The Conservancy also helped open the Dunes Center in Guadalupe and construct visitor amenities within the dunes

Beaches, Trails, & Recreation

The Conservancy has supported multiple projects to help people get to and enjoy the County's spectacular coastal beaches and bluffs, including:

- Construction and renovation of more than 30 **stairways, wheelchair ramps, and pathways to beaches** in Pismo Beach, Cayucos, and Cambria.
- Construction of the mile-long **Morro Bay Harborwalk**, a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk that runs from the City of Morro Bay's commercial district and fishing harbor past Morro Rock to **Morro Strand State Beach**.
- Construction of **California Coastal Trail** segments between Avila Beach and Grover Beach along with development of **Dinosaur Caves Park** in Pismo Beach and upcoming improvements for visitors to **Pirate's Cove** in Avila Beach.
- Restoration of the historic **Point San Luis Lighthouse** and reconstruction of a pathway to a nearby beach.
- Plans and permits for the upcoming development of the **Harbor Terrace Campground** in Port San Luis above San Luis Bay,



BISHOP PEAK FROM THE COAST STARLIGHT

Loco Steve



PORT SAN LUIS LIGHTHOUSE

Jerry Kirkhart



SKIPPING ROPE WITH A KELP STIPE AT MORRO STRAND STATE BEACH

Michael L. Baird



MORRO BAY'S SOUTH T-PIER

Michael L. Baird



MONTANA DE ORO STATE PARK



SLO CREEK WATERSHED



DINOSAUR CAVES



HARFORD PIER



MORRO BAY HARBOR WALK

Waterfronts & Commercial Fishing

The Conservancy has helped coast-side cities revitalize their waterfronts and supported improvements to benefit the local commercial fishing industry. Projects include:

- Reconstruction of the **Pismo Beach Pier**.
- Improvements for visitors to the **Morro Bay Waterfront**, including construction of several viewing platforms overlooking the harbor and new facilities for **Tidelands Park** and the City's **Centennial Parkway Project**.
- Renovation of the southern T-Pier in **Morro Bay Harbor**, construction of floating slips at the pier and fishing gear storage facilities nearby, and installation of an ice machine to support the local commercial fishing industry. The Conservancy also assisted with sea trials for **low-impact fishing gear** to enable sustainable harvest of high-value groundfish.
- Restoration of the historic warehouse at the foot of **Harford Pier** in Port San Luis Harbor; improvements to harbor repair facilities for commercial fishing vessels, and development of the **Coastal Trail Gateway** at Harford Landing to serve visitors to the harbor and the nearby Pecho Coast Trail.

Wildlife Habitats & Working Lands

The Conservancy has long worked for the protection and restoration of the County's creeks, wetlands, and other natural and open lands to preserve native wildlife habitats, control floodwaters, and keep farmland in production. Projects include:

- Protection of more than 2,000 acres of working farmland in the **Morro Bay watershed** and acquisition and restoration of an additional 700 acres to improve water quality, restore wildlife habitats, and reduce the flow of sediments into the bay.
- Restoration of steelhead trout habitats along **Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Rosa creeks** in conjunction with floodwater-management improvements and farmland protection.
- Protection and restoration of more than 50 acres of wetlands and neighboring wildlife habitat within **Black Lake Canyon**, just east of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes.

“The State Coastal Conservancy has been one of the most effective supporters of conservation in our County. The organization is easy to work with, responsive, and professional. They are responsible stewards of public funds and we are honored to have worked with them on many outstanding projects.”

Kaila A. Dettman, Executive Director
Land Trust of San Luis Obispo County

“Recently, I looked around our harbor and was struck by the number of projects, over the years, in which the District and the Conservancy have partnered. The public is well served by the Conservancy’s partnerships at Port San Luis and around the State.”

Steve McGrath, Facilities Manager
Port San Luis Harbor



SWEET SPRINGS NATURE PRESERVE NEAR LOS OSOS

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

CONTACTS :

Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer
(510) 286-0523 sam.schuchat@scc.ca.gov

Trish Chapman, Central Coast Regional Manager
(510) 286-0749 trish.chapman@scc.ca.gov

Deborah Ruddock, Legislative Liaison
(510) 286-4168 deborah.ruddock@scc.ca.gov

Dick Wayman, Communications Director
(510) 286-4182 dick.wayman@scc.ca.gov



1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612-2530
(510) 286-1015

Visit our website: <http://scc.ca.gov>