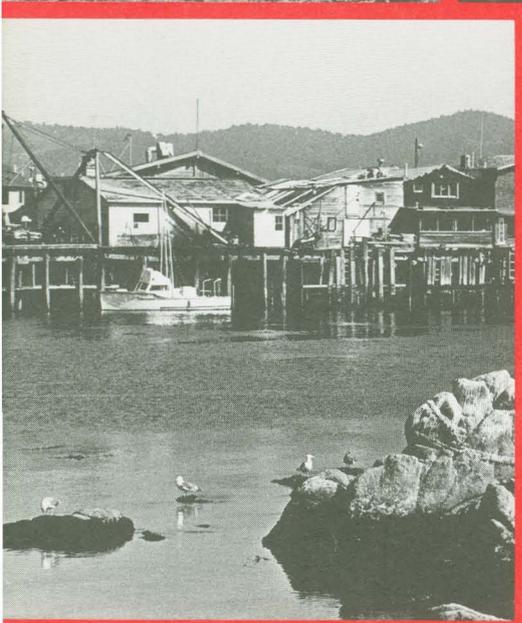
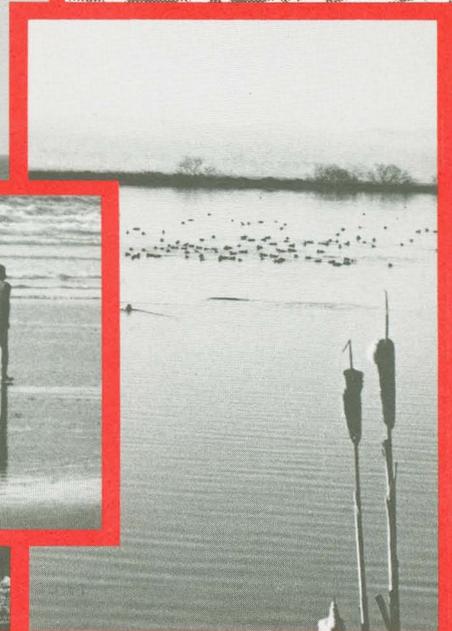
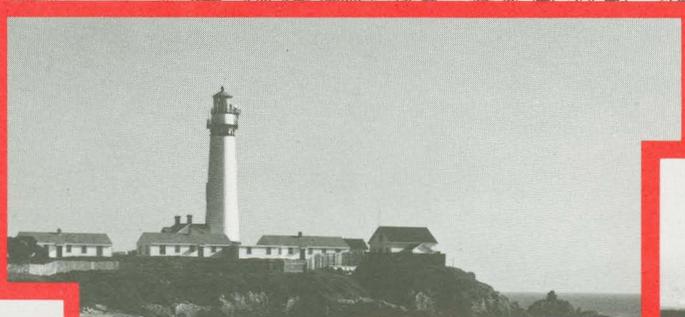
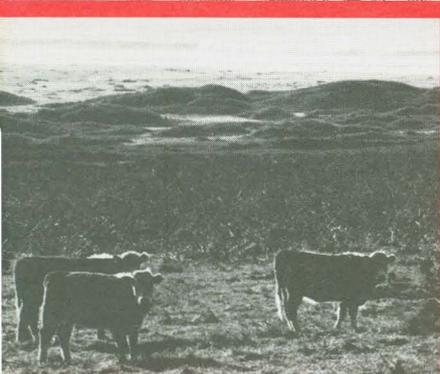


CALIFORNIA
Waterfront Age
FALL 1986 VOL 2 NO 4



Guidelines to Contributors

California WaterfrontAge is glad to consider contributions of articles and shorter items related to the state's waterfronts. We aim to provide a forum for the description and discussion of public programs and private initiatives relating to waterfront restoration and development in California. Resource management and economic development are our major themes.

We will consider articles of up to 3,000 words on the following subjects:

1. Economic development, project finance, waterfront restoration, the impact of changing uses.
2. Tourism, waterfront parks, public access.
3. Maritime industries.
4. Water quality, resource restoration, enhancement.
5. Cultural and historical issues.

We will also consider the following shorter features:

Conferences: We publish summaries of waterfront-related conferences.

Book reviews: We seek relevant reviews, about 500 words in length, of current books and other publications of interest to our readers.

Essays: Reflections on themes related to waterfronts are welcome. They can be verbal, photographic, graphic, or in cartoon form.

Interested contributors should call or write the editor. Send self-addressed stamped envelopes with submissions. (1330 Broadway, Suite 1100, Oakland, CA 94612)

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1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
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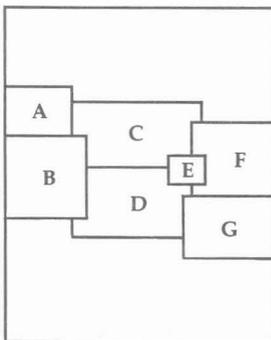
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Dear Reader,

This issue of *California WaterfrontAge* is dedicated to a celebration of the California Coastal Conservancy's tenth birthday. Entry into a new decade seems like a good time to look back at the road traveled thus far and give thought to the road ahead.

The journey has not always been smooth. There have been detours and many ventures into *terra incognita*. Along the way, moments of inspiration allowed us to overcome obstacles that had seemed insurmountable. Many successes lie behind us, and some disappointments. In the first article, Peter Grenell, executive officer, discusses the agency's major achievements and what they signify.

The Conservancy's activities require an adventurous spirit—a willingness to take a chance, to strike out in uncharted directions. In another article, Margaret Azevedo, who has been a member of the Conservancy board since its inception, considers risk taking as an element essential to success. She discovers that the idea of risk taking is not the contradiction it might seem when applied to a government agency, and also that it is an aspect of being responsible.

In establishing the Conservancy, the State Legislature equipped it with an unusual set of tools. Over the years, others were devised, refined, adapted. *WaterfrontAge* editor Rasa Gustaitis shows how these tools have been used to help local governments and groups turn crises into opportunities.

Finally, Joseph Petrillo, who played a key role in founding the Conservancy and served as its executive officer for the first eight years, reflects on the history, the philosophy, and the *modus operandi*—and on how the Conservancy's influence has spread, not only in the coastal zone but also elsewhere in California and beyond the state's borders.

This is an exciting endeavor to become a part of. Certainly a lot remains to be done, but the road ahead should be a little easier, if only because the terrain is more familiar. There will be surprises, there may be disappointments, but there will also be inspiration and invention—and more success. *California WaterfrontAge* will continue to reflect on the activities of the Coastal Conservancy as well as discuss other topics of interest and importance to the coastal community and others concerned with its protection. We can look back with pride, and we can look ahead with eagerness. And we can hope that we have even more to celebrate ten years from now.

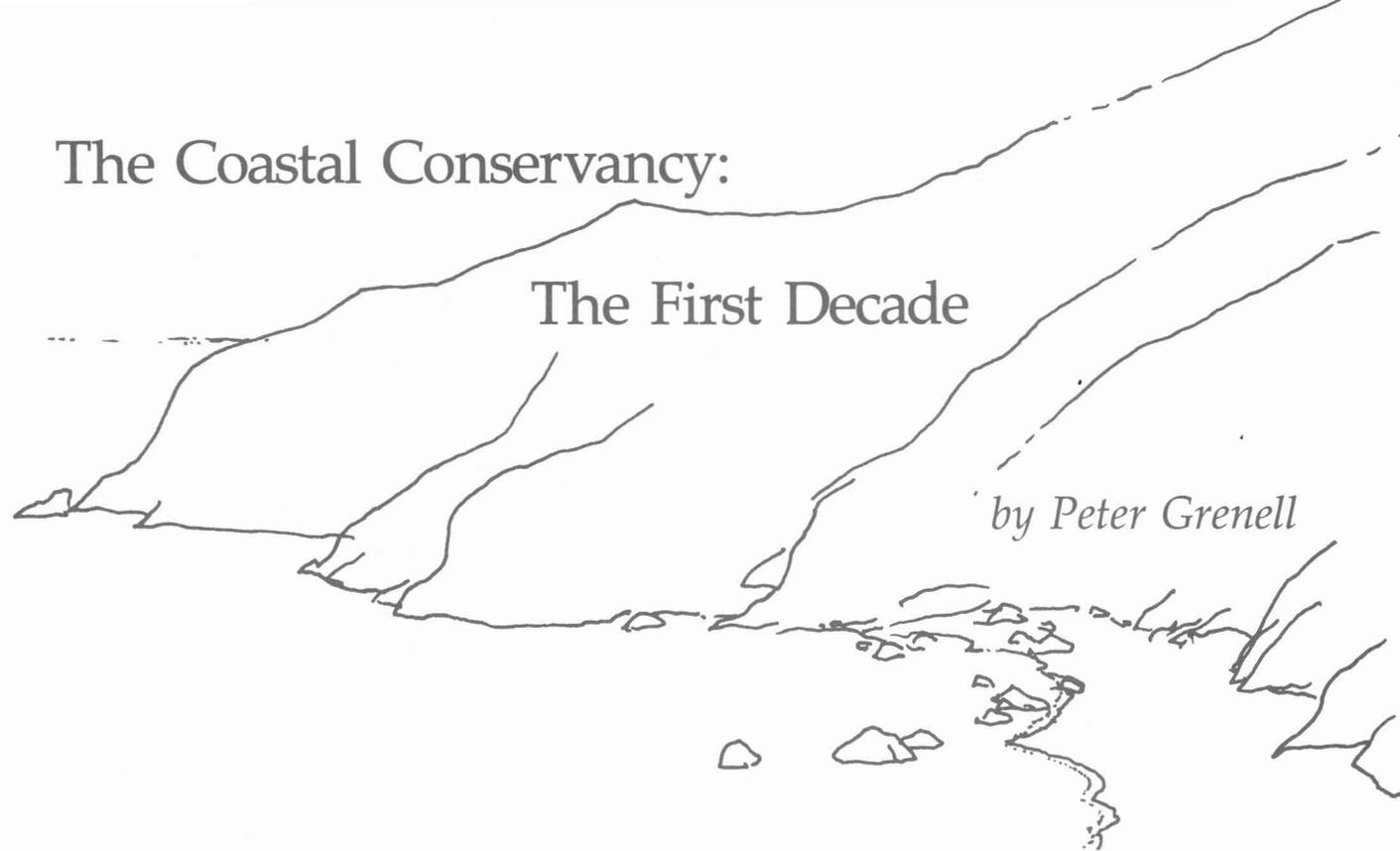
Penny Allen

Penny Allen
Chairman

The Coastal Conservancy:

The First Decade

by Peter Grenell



BACK IN 1972, flushed with victory, fighters for Proposition 20 could not have guessed what troubles lay ahead. California's ballot initiative had launched a program to "protect its golden shore" by stemming the tide of poorly planned development. History had been made. Several serious questions loomed, however, and they grew more pressing as time went on.

What should be done, for example, about the elderly couple prevented from building a retirement home on a scenic part of the coast by the Coastal Commission's claim that the house would block the spectacular view from the coastal highway? The state was unwilling to go through costly litigation in all such cases and certainly unable to just buy most of the coast. Who should mediate among such competing interests as: a financially strapped local government needing to augment its economic base; environmentally concerned citizens wishing to retain their city's beachfront or marsh areas free of development; property owners concerned about any development that might block their views of the sea; private development interests desiring to construct new condominiums or commercial development along the shore; the Coastal Commission, committed to protecting coastal wetlands from intrusive development and to insuring that the public's right of access to the shore is likewise protected; still other coastal property owners concerned about the possible ill effects on their views, comfort, security, and property values of providing public access to the beach; and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies who get anxious about possible intrusions on fragile dunes or wetlands of both developers and the recreational public looking for a good time outdoors? Where would the money come from? And, since government can't and shouldn't do everything, how can you generate, engage, and support an informed local population committed to taking the initiative and working with government to become active stewards of our treasured coastal environment for the benefit of all?

THE LEGISLATURE answered by creating the Coastal Conservancy, a unique agency with diverse responsibilities and a remarkably broad range of powers. It was part of a three-pronged approach to managing the coast. The Coastal Act of 1976 continued the regulatory Coastal Commission that had been created under Proposition 20, and established the structure for coastal land use planning by the states' sixty-seven coastal cities and counties. In contrast, the Conservancy's purpose was to answer those difficult questions through its several statutory programs. A general obligation bond act was passed to fund the Conservancy effort. And so it began.

The Legislature had found that coastal agricultural lands should be protected from intrusion of nonagricultural uses; that many coastal lands, especially in rural areas, were poorly planned and improperly used, to the detriment of environmental values and orderly development; that important fish and wildlife habitat, as well as natural and scenic areas, had been degraded by indiscriminate dredging, filling, and intrusion of incompatible land uses; and that public access to and along the coast was lacking and should be promoted. The Conservancy was to seek solutions to all these problems in the coastal zone, a strip of land varying in width from a

few city blocks to five miles inland, stretching from Oregon to Mexico. It was to help carry out the broad policies for conservation and development set forth in the Coastal Act. A few years later, the Legislature extended the Conservancy's responsibilities still further to include San Francisco Bay and to encompass the restoration of deteriorated or badly planned urban waterfronts.

Recognizing the difficulty of its charge, the Legislature gave the Conservancy broad flexibility in what to work on and how. It could acquire interests in land directly or through distribution of funds to local governments, other public agencies, and eventually to eligible nonprofit organizations. It could initiate development or acquisition projects itself or provide funds to others to do so. In fact, most of its funds have been distributed through local assistance grants, mainly for restoration, enhancement, and development activities. The Conservancy could provide a variety of technical assistance, and could act more rapidly than most government agencies can in certain crisis situations. The breadth of the Conservancy's responsibilities meant that coastal communities working to prepare and implement Local Coastal Plans (LCPs) required by the Coastal Act sought Conservancy assistance on many different resource issues at the same time.





***Opposite:** Coastal agricultural land, like this San Mateo County farm, is among the most valuable and threatened land in the state. **Above:** The effects of urbanization around San Francisco Bay take many forms.*

Approach and Methods

With a clean slate, a strong mandate, a small budget, and the confidence born of ignorance, the fledgling agency began to test its wings in 1977. At the time, very little was known about resolving coastal land use conflicts in a nonconfrontational, nonregulatory manner. Even less was known about ways the Conservancy might operate in practice to help with the implementation of LCPs. About the only thing the Conservancy board and its tiny staff knew for sure was that the \$10 million provided to it by the 1976 bond act would not go far toward solving all the problems identified by the Coastal Commission's 1975 Plan for the state's shoreline.

The job, clearly, was to help resolve these problems rather than to tell others how to do it. That was clear from the beginning. The Conservancy was created as a project-implementing agency, not as a planning agency. Therefore, it was obliged to seek ways to make the most of its resources in a direct and visible manner. It not only succeeded in solving some tough problems, it invented new methods for doing so, and in the

process it created a model that others are now, ten years later, seriously considering adopting elsewhere.

Broadly, the Conservancy's work can be described as helping to resolve resource conflicts, especially those that impede completion of LCPs; and helping coastal governments implement their LCP policies—whatever those might turn out to be—by designing, shaping and funding specific projects through its several programs. Toward these ends, the Conservancy has funded over 360 projects during the past decade, and is presently working on over 330.

But to say that is to say little. What is significant is that the Conservancy chose not to operate as a passive, grant-dispersing bureaucracy similar to numerous others. Rather, it has typically taken an active role, working cooperatively with project applicants in shaping projects. Its efforts are directed toward several goals: to resolve conflicts, to articulate the greater-than-local state interests, to help local groups agree on what they want and set priorities, to enhance the value and extend the impact

of projects, to demonstrate successful approaches that others can then extend, perhaps with even greater success and technical competence, and to stretch its own meager finances further.

Thus, when the City of Oceanside, in perhaps the first project inquiry, asked for \$1.5 million to buy some beachfront property for public access, the agency responded with an attractive counterproposal. It would work with the city to prepare and implement in stages (as financing would permit) a more ambitious plan for the city's entire one-and-a-quarter-mile Strand beachfront. If the property in question was to be acquired as part of the plan, the agency would help in the acquisition. The result has been more than satisfactory.

DETERMINING THE CONTENT of projects, and the level and character of Conservancy involvement, is usually a process that evolves over a period of time—sometimes days, sometimes years. In the case of Oceanside, the full extent of involvement was finally determined several years after it first began. First, the Conservancy helped the city complete its plan, after developing a process for intensive citizen participa-

tion—of which more later. By the time the plan had been adopted, more funds were available and the Conservancy could help the city toward its realization. Oceanside has been carrying out the plan, step by step, for several years now with a mix of financial aid from the Conservancy, other public agencies, the local government, and the private sector.

The active approach has also enabled the Conservancy to move quickly when rapid decisions and action are essential. In June 1983, local fishermen and their representatives approached the agency for "gap funding" to rescue Spud Point, a proposed commercial fishing harbor on Sonoma County's scenic Bodega Bay. The 240-berth harbor project represented eight years of dogged community efforts to provide badly needed improvements for the local commercial fishing fleet. The project was about to disintegrate, even though county funds and a large state Department of Boating and Waterways construction loan had been secured, because long-expected federal funding had failed to materialize. Time was of the essence.

The Conservancy did not have funds available for a loan or grant, so it maneuvered. It had some money tied up in projects that were also important to the state parks department. So it found another source that the parks department could tap, thereby freeing Conservancy funds for use at Bodega Bay. That filled the funding gap and made it possible for the harbor project to go ahead.

But the Conservancy did not stop there. It made certain that the harbor project was viable. This it did by working out a method to assure that, on the one hand, county harbor administrators would have enough revenue to operate and pay off the Boating and Waterways loan, and, on the other hand, that berthing rates would not exceed what the fishermen could reasonably afford. The entire Spud Point resolution was accomplished in four months. The harbor was recently completed.

Fast action and the capacity to revolve funds for maximum effectiveness

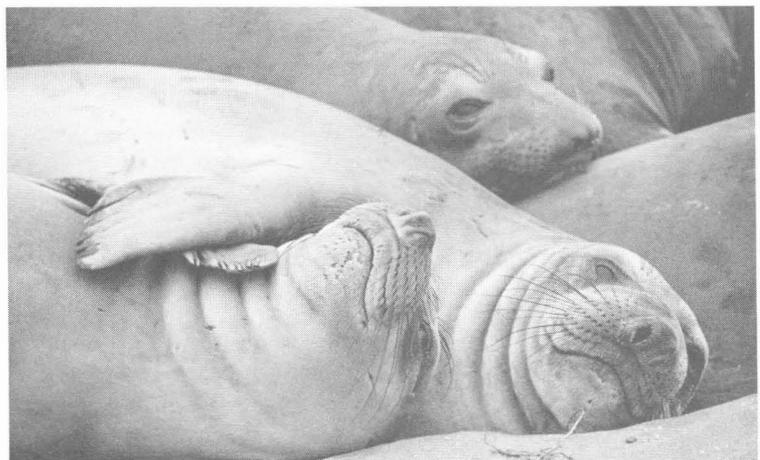
One of the Conservancy's first projects was the renovation of Oceanside's Strand, including rebuilding the city's pier.



are important elements in the active role the Conservancy has chosen to play in project implementation, but there is a second significant characteristic in the Conservancy's approach. The agency seeks to help communities do what they are capable of doing, rather than doing it for them. It promotes and supports local stewardship of resources. Toward this goal it has a vigorous program of working not only with local governments but also with eligible private nonprofit organizations (tax-exempt under IRS Code Section 501 [c][3]). It has worked with at least sixty-four regional and local nonprofits on over eighty projects along the coast and in the nine-county San Francisco Bay area. These nonprofits carry out projects that achieve Conservancy goals when local governments are not in position to directly undertake the project but support both it and the group. The success of such arrangements has been shown in a higher level of local commitment, relatively lower cost, and close accountability through Conservancy oversight and administration.

A THIRD IMPORTANT characteristic in the Conservancy's approach is its commitment to working with whatever is at hand, rather than waiting until the best possible plan can be realized. Thus, for instance, it has been able to accelerate the pace at which public lands have become available for public use. Numerous state-owned beach park units and large expanses of shoreline have been opened for public enjoyment years before they might otherwise have been available. With the agreement of the state Department of Parks and Recreation, the agency has provided facilities such as stairways, paths, and parking areas that are usable and safe until the department's formal but more time-consuming planning process generates the full range and standard of state park facilities.

This sort of cooperation with other agencies and organizations is typical of the way the Conservancy makes the most of its resources. The agency has



Año Nuevo State Reserve is the breeding ground of the Northern Elephant Seal and is home to several other rare species. The Conservancy will aid the construction of a new visitors center (rendering, top) and public access improvements at the popular site.

also worked closely with the California Conservation Corps, whose teams of able young people have built and placed access and resource interpretative signs and have provided labor on numerous Conservancy-aided projects; Caltrans, which has provided signs guiding travelers on the coast highway to public access points to the shore; the Wildlife Conservation Board and Department of Boating and Waterways; the Department of Fish and Game, with which the Conservancy cooperates on its wetlands and watershed projects; regulatory agencies like the Coastal Commission and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), which seek Conservancy participation in resolving various resource issues and which review Conservancy projects; and various federal agencies and departments, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Bureau of Land Management, and others.

A fourth characteristic in the Conservancy's work is a willingness to experiment with innovative technological solutions to stubborn problems. Most recently—and most successfully—the

Conservancy funded the demonstration of a new method of waste water treatment in the Tijuana River Valley. Another experiment, involving a device called the "Longard tube", was aimed at stemming some of the erosion that plagues San Diego County beaches. These cases are discussed at greater length on page 26.

Although many project applicants view the Conservancy simply as another funding source, a grant request frequently leads the agency into a land use dispute that has defied solution. In acquiring a reputation as facilitator or problem solver, the agency has evolved an approach to conflict resolution that, while similar in many respects to other environmental dispute resolution methods, has its own special character. Depending on circumstances, the agency may incorporate structured community design workshop processes, informal series of "one on one" meetings with public agency, private sector, and community representatives punctuated by periodic group meetings; or—with projects involving individual landowners—intensive ongoing negotiations with them or their representa-

California Conservation Corps members plant grass to help stabilize dunes at Morro Bay.



tives. The Conservancy's ability to mediate between the regulatory Coastal Commission and project proponents has been an important additional element of its effectiveness.

Several key factors have emerged from the Conservancy's experiences with conflict resolution. They include a decision at the outset to seek a resolution, without compromising the resource, that is, without losing any of it (not giving up any marsh acreage or access paths, for instance); the inclusion of all interests in the dispute from the beginning—however disconcerting this might be to some—so as to avoid "late hits" and eventual failure because all relevant concerns were not factored into the solution; the basing of alternative solutions on sound economic considerations and the early inclusion of economic and financial factors—often the result of extensive Conservancy staff or consultant work—to enable realistic proposals to emerge which could be carried out willingly by participants; the readiness and ability to expand the context of discussion because construing disputes too narrowly may inhibit finding an adequate basis for resolution; and the willingness to accept challenges or risks (atypical of a government agency) based on a careful consideration of positive and negative possibilities.

THE APPROACH THAT includes these elements has generated some degree of success over the past several years. Interestingly, it appears to be the only way of approaching multi-issue, multi-interest, multi-resource conflicts with at least some possibility of success.

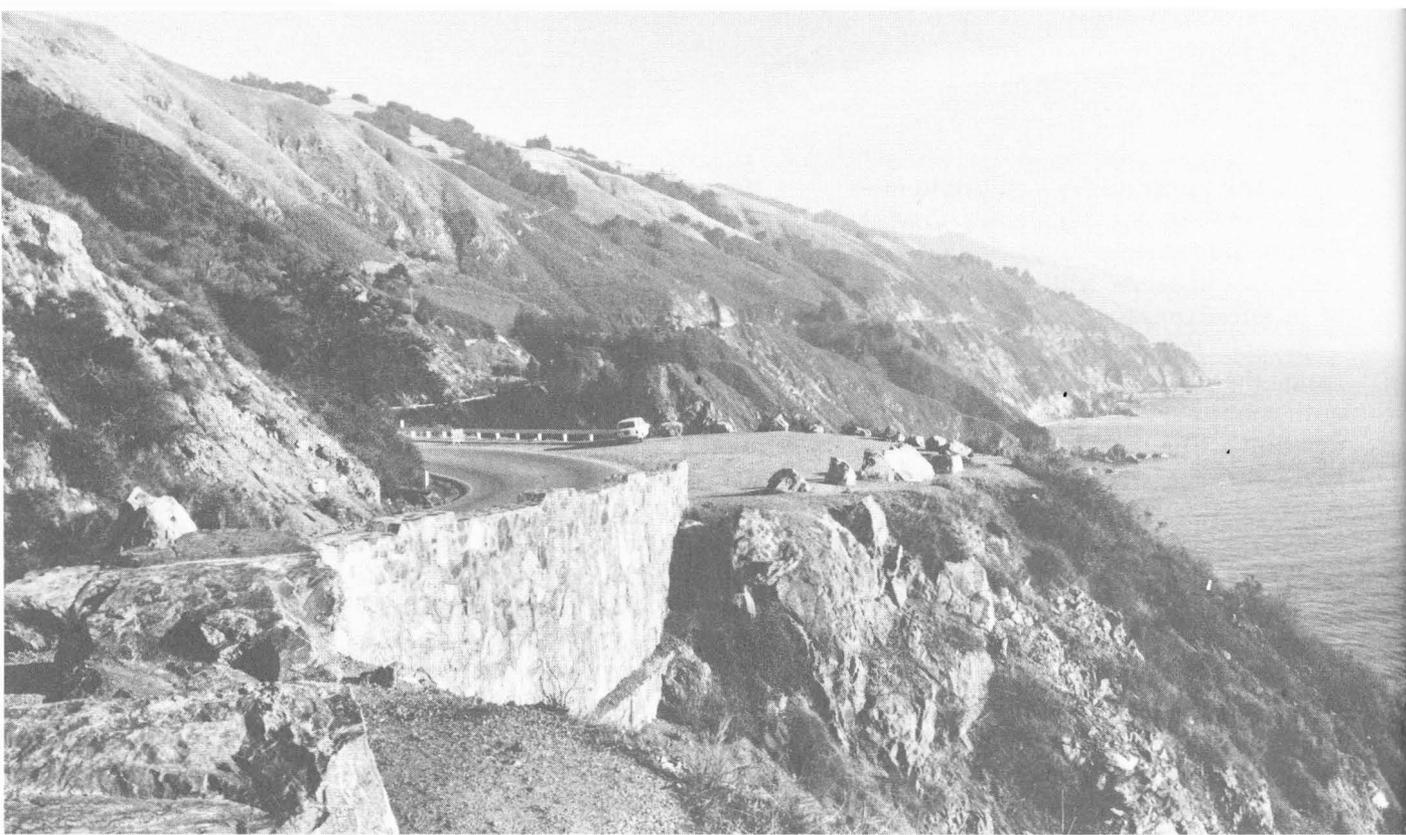
Using this approach, the Conservancy recently succeeded in resolving a dispute that pitted local farming interests against supporters of more public recreation, all set against a background of development threats to the scenic 4,079-acre Cascade Ranch in one of the most beautiful parts of the coast in San Mateo County. (See "Grace . . .", beginning on p. 27.) It has been involved in a long-

simmering dispute concerning the preservation of old-growth redwood trees and restoration of wilderness in Mendocino County's Sinkyone Wilderness, and retention of jobs and revenues in the economically hard-pressed region. In an early project, it found a solution to the problem of preserving and restoring the western part of San Dieguito Lagoon, one of San Diego County's several remaining coastal wetland areas. Now the Conservancy is involved, at the request of the City of San Diego, in finding a preservation solution for the eastern part of the lagoon.

The Conservancy has other methods, too. In land acquisition, it has taken advantage of such techniques as bargain sales (sale at less than market value, with the seller getting a tax break via the charitable donation of the difference) and transfer of development credits; in site planning, it has used cluster designs and conservation easements; in community participation, it has created new versions of workshop processes. These techniques, and others the Conservancy has pioneered or extended, have since been successfully employed elsewhere by diverse organizations.

The Conservancy's site reservation authority has enabled it to rapidly acquire lands needed for public recreational use or open space preservation which other agencies were not able to secure when the owners were ready to sell and which therefore were about to be lost to the public. At least sixty-five such properties have been acquired for eventual transfer to other public agencies for permanent management. Forty-five of these have been turned over to the state Department of Parks and Recreation for inclusion in state park units.

The Conservancy has also become the most extensive user of transferable development credit mechanisms (TDCs) to shift proposed development from environmentally sensitive sites to more appropriate locations. Conservancy-initiated TDC programs now function in the Santa Monica Mountains of Los Angeles County (see "Grace . . ."), in



The Conservancy uses the transfer of development credits to preserve environmentally sensitive areas like Big Sur.

Monterey County's spectacular Big Sur, and in Sonoma County. Another has just begun on the central coast, in San Luis Obispo County. These TDC programs provide a voluntary, market-based method for eliminating development threats to scenic or otherwise environmentally sensitive areas while enabling property owners to attain a fair return on their investments at no net cost to the public. To our knowledge, no other agency is presently engaged in such extensive TDC activity with respect to open space lands.

Technical assistance is another important characteristic of the Conservancy's approach and, in fact, of all its work. Such assistance can take many innovative forms. In one of its earliest projects, in the Southern California city of Seal Beach, the agency was faced with a citizens' request for help in reclaiming an abandoned power plant site for use as a public shoreline park. To help the citizens create this plan—and help them to further refine it—the agency sponsored a series of community design workshops. These generated a citizen-inspired plan for the site, ultimately approved by the city council.

Building on this model, other design workshops, which also required citizens to deal with economic realities, were held in other cities, with increasing success. The results in Oceanside have already been described. In Santa Monica, the only thing the citizens could agree on was that their historic city pier should be saved from disintegration. The workshop process elicited guidelines for restoration, including development stages and a financial plan. Although severe damage to the pier from winter storms later necessitated some revisions as to timing and financing, the city is proceeding with the plan and this year dedicated the completed first phase of the project.

THESE SITUATIONS exemplify an effective Conservancy approach to one its major programmatic activities, assistance to small cities in revitalizing their urban waterfronts. The Conservancy is the only agency in the state currently in a position to provide broad technical and financial help to the smaller coastal communities who often lack the necessary resources to do the job themselves.

In addition, Conservancy staff have been called upon in literally hundreds of potential project situations where they were able to help though, ultimately, the agency did not need to provide capital implementation funding. Such instances do not show up in control agency analyses of agency functioning, but they nonetheless represent a significant achievement. They show that public agencies can respond rapidly, directly, beneficially, and at relatively nominal public cost to a broad range of problems raised by local governments, other public agencies, private landowners and other citizens, and nonprofit groups.

Besides providing public access, the agency's highest priority is the preservation and enhancement of the state's dwindling inventory of wetlands. A frightening 90 percent of California's wetlands have been lost; on the coast, only about 150 remain where once there were 500. The Conservancy operates an ongoing program of wetland enhancement focusing on San Diego County's remaining lagoons; major bays and estuaries including the Tijuana River estuary, Morro Bay, Elkhorn Slough, and San Francisco and Humboldt Bays; wetland remnants now aptly dubbed "urban wetlands", which still support an astonishingly rich variety of ecosystems; and stream and watershed enhancement and management. This last component evolved from a recognition that there is little point in spending sizable sums on degraded marshes and other wetlands if upstream problems—erosion, agricultural and urban development-generated runoff, and other conditions—continue to undermine these efforts downstream. Another aspect of this activity has been increased collaboration with ranchers, other private landowners, and local conservation districts in devising new forms of public/private cooperation aimed at more equitably sharing responsibilities for stream and watershed protection.

A chief attraction of the Coastal Conservancy remains its funding capability for project execution, of course. The

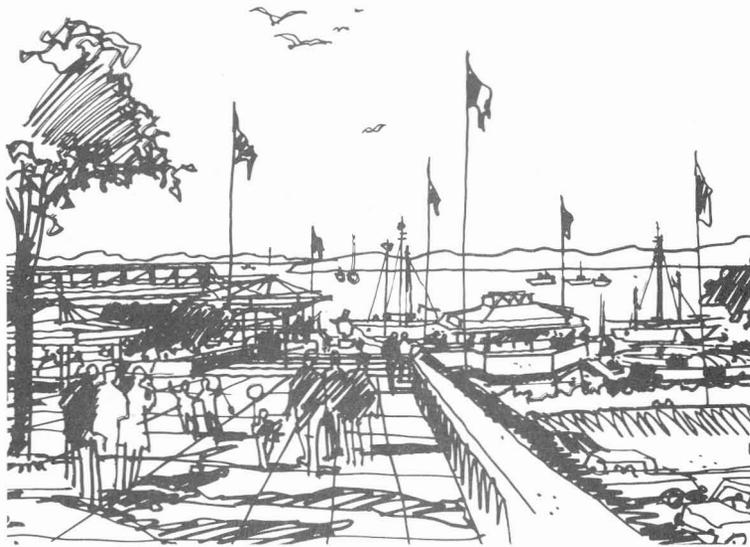
Conservancy has been able to exert considerable leverage with its funds while filling gaps in project funding packages and by providing incentives and stimulus for generation of other funds. Again, the Conservancy's active role in formulating financing arrangements, including making the most effective use of its own flexible financing terms and arrangements, has often been the key to a project's success or failure. The Conservancy has also been able to revolve a sizable portion of its funds for reuse in future projects.

Ten-Year Achievements

The Coastal Conservancy's accomplishments since its establishment ten years ago may be measured along several dimensions. One of the most significant is related directly to the most important planning work of the Coastal Commission, the Coastal Plan of 1975. This massive document identified major coastal

Conservancy-sponsored participation workshops enable citizens to plan the development of their community from the earliest stages.





Top: Working with several other groups, the Conservancy helped the City of Eureka plan a waterfront restoration (shown in part) that would meet Coastal Act standards; it finally was incorporated into the city's Local Coastal Plan. **Middle:** Stairways provide public access to the beach at the Sea Ranch. **Bottom:** In 1985, the Conservancy began a program to preserve historic lighthouses; the Point Fermin light is under consideration.

resource issues, region by region, along the entire California coast. It thus provided the basis for the local coastal planning efforts of the sixty-seven coastal jurisdictions mandated by the Coastal Act of 1976.

Of the 52 major coastal resource issues for which the 1975 Plan had stated goals—as recorded recently by the non-profit League for Coastal Protection—the Conservancy has been directly involved in trying to resolve at least 35 of them. Of these, at least 23 have been fully or partially resolved through Conservancy action, and work continues on the remaining tasks. These issue resolutions have included such diverse actions as wetland acquisitions and enhancement in Humboldt Bay; arranging the acquisition by the Federal Bureau of Land Management of key buildable lots in the Shelter Cove subdivision on the scenic North Coast; provision of public access at Sea Ranch and enabling the completion of the harbor at Spud Point, both in Sonoma County; implementation of extensive watershed protection and public access programs at Tomales Bay; provision of public access and waterfront improvements in heavily visited Santa Cruz and Monterey; resolving use conflicts and providing commercial fishing, public access, and other waterfront improvements in scenic Morro Bay on the central coast (see "Grace . . ."); rebuilding of Santa Barbara's Stearns Wharf (see "To Boldly Go . . .", beginning on p. 18); public access improvements in Los Angeles County and lot retirement in the environmentally sensitive Santa Monica Mountains; instrumental action in devising the plan for Orange County's Bolsa Chica wetland; similar catalytic action in Oceanside; and major work in enhancing San Diego County's coastal lagoons and estuarine areas.

Other, more obvious dimensions for estimating the Conservancy's achievements over the past decade call for dry if nonetheless eye-catching statistics. For example, the Conservancy has protected or caused to be protected over 13,000 acres of sensitive coastal wetland,

open space, agricultural, or other lands, of which more than 6,500 have been protected by acquisition, offers to dedicate, or other means. This does not include the more than 430 square miles affected by its watershed activities, nor does it include the more than 630 individual lots in inappropriately designed or located subdivisions that have been preserved through the agency's lot consolidation and TDC activities. Over ten years, the Coastal Conservancy has become actively involved in practically every major remaining coastal wetland in California and has been responsible for halting further degradation and enhancing habitat values in over five thousand wetland acres.

ONE OF THE primary impulses behind the 1972 Coastal Initiative was the public's concern that access to the coast was being limited. Since its inception, the Conservancy has undertaken over 150 access projects and completed 110 of them, for an average of one accessway for every ten miles of coastline. Many of these projects consist of multiple accessways within one jurisdiction, so the figures underestimate the amount of actual new access.

More recently, the Conservancy has also assisted in providing new or retrofitted access facilities for the disabled and handicapped as an outgrowth of its basic program. Such access is now a standard feature of projects where it is feasible to provide it. Further innovations in the access program have included the assistance provided, mainly to nonprofit groups, in establishing and improving a chain of low-cost hostels serving coastal travelers; and additional aid in restoring historic lighthouses for public use—sometimes as hostels.

Overall, the Conservancy has gotten considerable leverage out of its comparatively modest funds. So far, the agency has committed and spent \$57,765,000 of the funds allotted to it by the 1976, 1980, and 1984 bond acts on a grand total of 363 projects valued at over \$181,710,000. The leverage ratio is thus more than three to one. This ratio

increases to more than five to one when you take into account the eventual repayment of approximately \$22,995,000 of the outlays presently expected from reimbursable grants on many existing projects. In particular, the Conservancy's Urban Waterfront Restoration program is administered on a revolving fund basis as much as possible without sacrificing a needed project. As a result, numerous small cities from Oceanside to Crescent City have been able to undertake waterfront restoration efforts which would not have been possible without the Conservancy's flexible program.

Certain activities by their nature do not generate much financial leverage. The restoring of fish and wildlife habitat areas in wetlands and watersheds and the provision of public access and educational opportunities in such locations do not provide much in the way of financial return, although the Conservancy has often been able to bring in other sources of funding besides its own for these projects. Yet the overall value to society of such efforts, which form one of the Conservancy's—and the Coastal Act's—highest priorities, is incalculable.

Looking into the Future

The results of a December 1985 California Poll showed that, in the pollster's words, "Californians have demonstrated a great deal of concern and commitment for preserving California's environment." Three of the six concerns rated as "extremely important" by those surveyed—preserving the coast's scenic beauty, preserving wetlands, and guaranteeing access—fall squarely within the Conservancy's scope of activities, and a fourth—controlling coastal residential and commercial development—has tested the agency's conflict-resolution powers.

Clearly, such a high level of public concern and the growing number of local requests for Conservancy assistance suggest that the Conservancy's role in



The Antonelli Pond Nature Trail provides public access to this beautiful oasis in urban Santa Cruz.

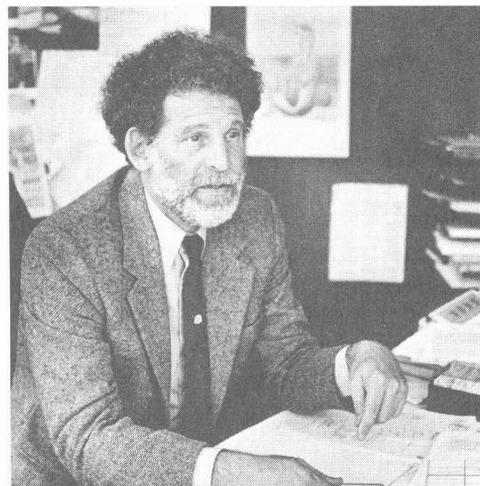
coastal resource management will remain a vital one for some time.

In addition, the Conservancy is becoming more active in the San Francisco Bay area. Conservancy-assisted access, wetland, and waterfront projects are increasing in number (always consistent with BCD's San Francisco Bay Plan) as Bay Area governments and nonprofit organizations become more aware of the agency's resources. The renewed concern for the Bay's environmental quality, as evidenced by recent state and federal planning initiatives and as dramatized by the signs of downstream impact of crises like that at the Kesterson Reservoir, suggest possible future opportunities for more Conservancy action on the Bay.

Ten years on, the Conservancy has survived the growing pains of infancy and adolescence and is now a moderately successful, mature organization which is being noticed elsewhere as time goes on. The Conservancy has served as the model for two more conservancies in California and has been approached by several states for information and guidance on its methods. The State of Florida, for example, is now establishing a conservancy-type structure for dealing with conservation issues in the Keys.

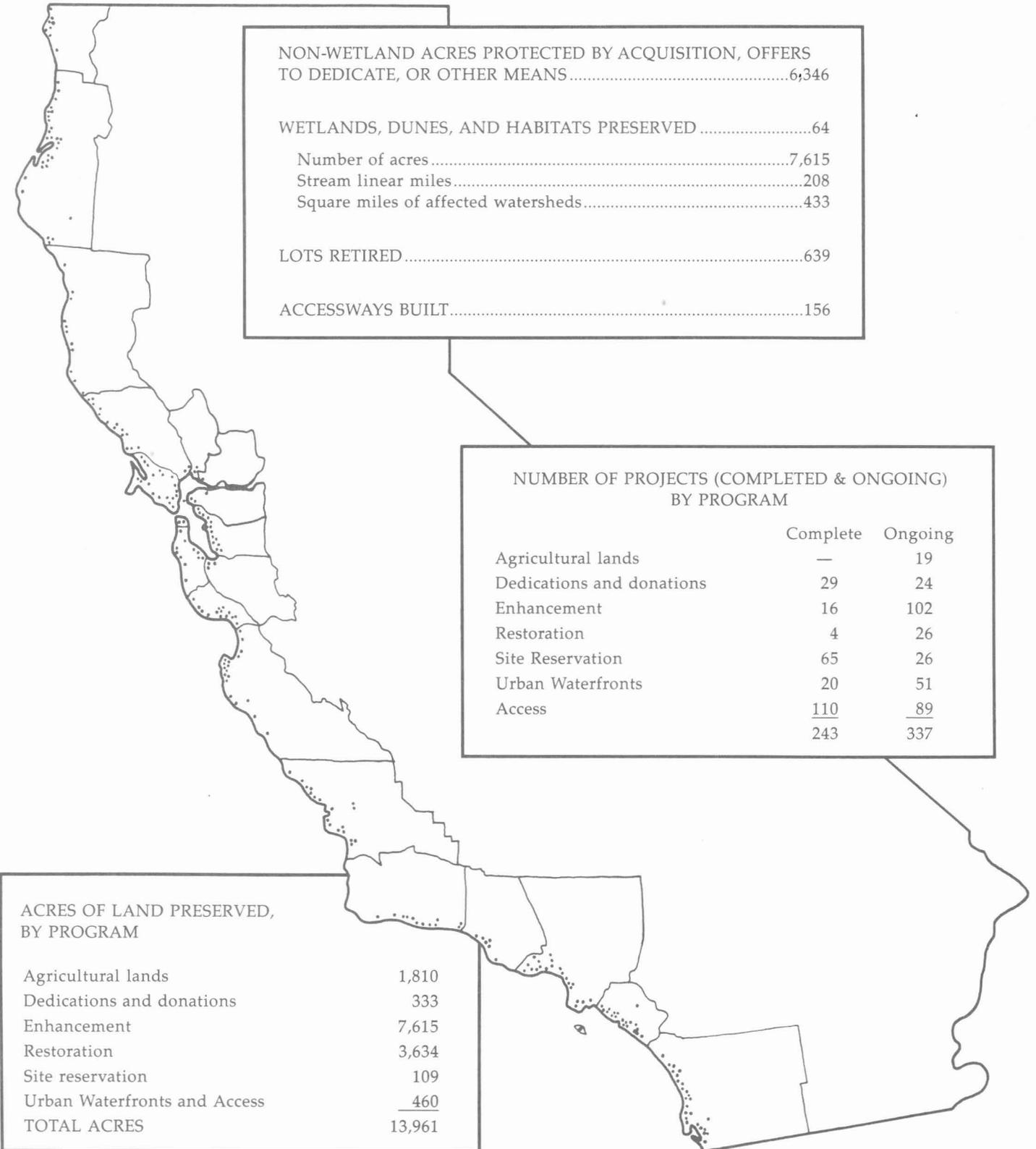
Aside from continuing its basic programmatic activities in response to continuing coastal and Bay needs, the agency is confronted with some new challenges. In the face of continuing fiscal stringency and administrative constraints, the agency must cope with the consequences of its comparative success in resolving coastal land use disputes: more requests to mediate larger, more complicated situations. So the Conservancy's directions in the near future appear to embrace both finishing what it has started and extending the use of its successful resource conflict-resolution techniques elsewhere along the coast. Through further local capacity-building efforts and dissemination of information, it will continue to provide assistance to all those concerned with long-term resource conservation through nonconfrontational, nonregulatory approaches. It also will strengthen its technical competence to assure that its solutions born of crisis are of lasting value.

One can, in the last analysis, always go to confrontation and legal action; this, unfortunately, has been the trend in this country. But the real trick is to find ways to work things out before mutual trust breaks down. The Conservancy model provides a successful alternative. □



Peter Grenell is the executive officer of the State Coastal Conservancy.

Conservancy Achievements



NON-WETLAND ACRES PROTECTED BY ACQUISITION, OFFERS TO DEDICATE, OR OTHER MEANS	6,346
WETLANDS, DUNES, AND HABITATS PRESERVED	64
Number of acres	7,615
Stream linear miles	208
Square miles of affected watersheds	433
LOTS RETIRED	639
ACCESSWAYS BUILT	156

	Complete	Ongoing
Agricultural lands	—	19
Dedications and donations	29	24
Enhancement	16	102
Restoration	4	26
Site Reservation	65	26
Urban Waterfronts	20	51
Access	<u>110</u>	<u>89</u>
	243	337

Agricultural lands	1,810
Dedications and donations	333
Enhancement	7,615
Restoration	3,634
Site reservation	109
Urban Waterfronts and Access	<u>460</u>
TOTAL ACRES	13,961

Stream Restoration: A Little Goes a Long Way

SITTING ON the bank of the Mattole River in Northern California, looking up through a stand of redwoods while swallows dart about in chase of a flying meal, one senses little connection with the turbulent Pacific Ocean many miles to the west. But the river's water tumbles inexorably toward the sea, carrying with it the byproducts of commerce—tons of topsoil exposed and loosed by surrounding logging ventures. By the time the river empties into the Pacific, it has flowed past denuded, scoured banks and over silt-choked pools once rich with spawning salmon. And even as it mingles with the cold salt water, the river deposits vast amounts of eroded soil over the delicate aquatic and emergent vegetation of the extensive estuary at its mouth.

Early Conservancy enhancement projects concentrated on restoring areas clearly recognizable as “coast-

al”: lagoons, estuaries, beaches, and similar habitats. In 1983, legislation acknowledged that such coastal resources do not exist in a vacuum by authorizing the Conservancy to conduct restorative work well outside the narrow coastal zone. Activities far from shore, especially those related to agriculture and urbanization, can have a serious impact upon the quality—indeed, the continued existence—of wetlands occurring at the margin of land and sea. Human activities in and above coastal watersheds have greatly accelerated the processes of erosion, sending sediments into shallow coastal waters far faster than the waves and tides can disperse them. The painstaking, costly task of restoring and maintaining viable coastal wetlands can be achieved more efficiently, and will stand a better chance of long-term success, when the ubiquitous problems of erosion and sedi-

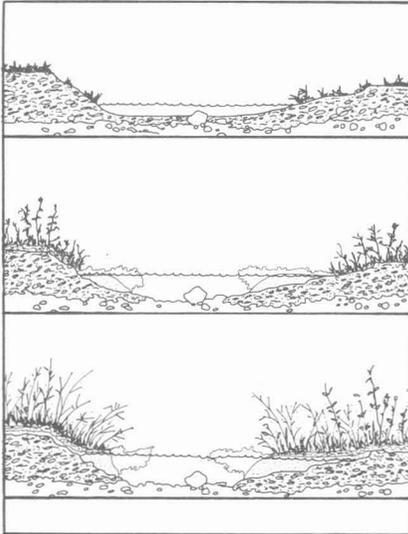
mentation are tackled at their source—upstream.

Stream restoration, one of the primary components of watershed renewal, is as yet too unrefined to be art, too imprecise to be science. Along the Mattole, the Conservancy is experimenting with many techniques in an attempt to combat the erosion/sedimentation problems caused by over one hundred years of intensive logging and grazing. Within channels of the river and its tributaries, debris barriers are being removed, opening the way for migrating fish. Native riparian vegetation and natural meander patterns are being reestablished, permitting the settling of suspended soil and slowing the river's flow, thereby lessening bank erosion.

In seriously degraded areas, structures such as gabion walls and checkdams are being installed to stabilize weakened banks, impound sediments, and reduce erosive forces. An ancillary benefit emerging from these engineering solutions is the creation of wildlife habitat in the form of quiet pools and shady vegetative canopies overhanging the water's edge. Outside the water channels themselves, upslope reforestation and the seeding and mulching of ground cover on denuded soils are helping to reduce the rate and intensity of sheet and rill erosion. Reconfiguration of roads traversing and following the river also helps to stem the flow of sediment.

Because damage exists all along the sixty-two-mile Mattole River, enhancement efforts have been focused on seven sites. Their selection came out of agreements reached between





Opposite: The Mattole River reaches the Pacific about thirty miles south of Eureka. **This page, left:** Three stream profiles show the progressive effects of revegetating the riverbanks. **Right:** Riprap along the side of the Mattole helps stabilize the bank and prevent further erosion.

the Conservancy, the State Department of Fish and Game, and the "Mattole group", a combination of several local nonprofit organizations which have undertaken much of the actual enhancement work. The sites selected and methods used are intended to serve as models for future restorative work on the Mattole and elsewhere. Hopefully, this demonstration program can pave the way for the thousands of similar projects needed throughout the state.

Because streams and rivers rarely correspond to neat jurisdictional divisions, the difficulty of treating watershed problems comprehensively is compounded. Ideally, policy measures limiting grading activities to the drier months, requiring the installation of basins to trap sediments below construction sites, and minimizing the direct impacts on streams of forestry and livestock grazing must be implemented. The mosaic of pub-

lic and private lands typical of coastal watersheds presents a formidable barrier to the enactment of such controls. It is here that the Conservancy's mediator role will be crucial. A promising beginning has been made in the form of a joint powers agreement among three formerly noncooperating Southern Californian municipalities to manage the Buena Vista Lagoon watershed.

Back on the Mattole, in early fall, sharp splashes and the occasional glint of silver only hint at the incredible number of salmon and other anadromous fish that once plied the stream. Degradation of the river's mainstream channel, tributaries, and estuary has reduced the historic salmonid population by over 90 percent. Whether the Conservancy's stream improvement efforts can reverse this decline is now the focus of a long-term monitoring program. Hopefully, prolonged scrutiny can answer

some of the questions surrounding the experimental restoration techniques being used.

In the end, the salmon will be the true measure of success. If, in five years, the number of fish has increased significantly, it will be clear that the river, its quiet backwaters, and the lagoon joining it with the ocean have all benefited from these modest efforts to undo years of destructive land use. And, as similar programs are undertaken elsewhere—Novato Creek, Tomales Bay, McDonald Creek in Northern California, Elkhorn Slough near Monterey, and Buena Vista Lagoon in San Diego County—the overall health of the state coastal streams and intimately associated wetlands can be expected to improve.

—Lee Ehmke

To Boldly Go . . .

Bureaucratic Risk Taking



by Margaret Azevedo

COASTAL CONSERVANCY BOARD members were fit to be tied. They'd been betrayed, led down the primrose path, blewed and tattooed, they felt. "Let them have their old Whiskey Shoals," one of them was heard to mutter when the news came.

But losing the vote at the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors meeting that day five years ago was part of the risk they had taken when they embarked on the project in the first place.

Whiskey Shoals was a subdivision of seventy-two lots three miles south of Point Arena, planned before the Coastal Act. It had come to the Conservancy's

attention in 1977 because of some unhappy lot owners who had been denied the permission to build.

The original development plan had called for seventy-two single-family homes to be spread over sixty-five acres atop two coastal terraces that rise out of the ocean on sixty-foot white cliffs separated by Moat Creek. The Coastal Commission refused building permits, saying that the subdivision violated the Coastal Act. Its water and waste disposal arrangements were inadequate, it lacked public access, it would degrade the environment and would intrude into an otherwise pristine coastline. Yet the lot

owners had purchased their properties in good faith. An issue of fairness, if not constitutionality, was involved.

Whiskey Shoals presented the kind of problem the Conservancy had been created to solve. By law, the agency was authorized to "restore" just such antiquated subdivisions through reassembly of parcels, redesign, and installation of public improvements. It had been empowered to make grants to local public agencies for these purposes. But Mendocino County was not inclined to assume a role generally performed by private land developers.

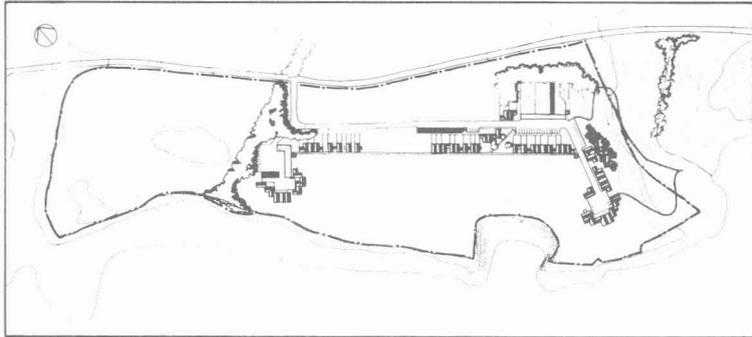
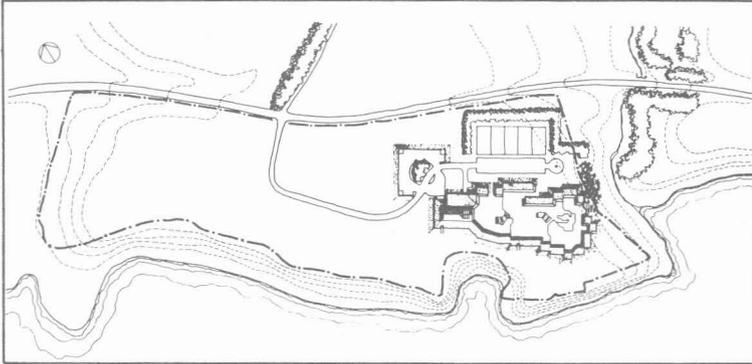
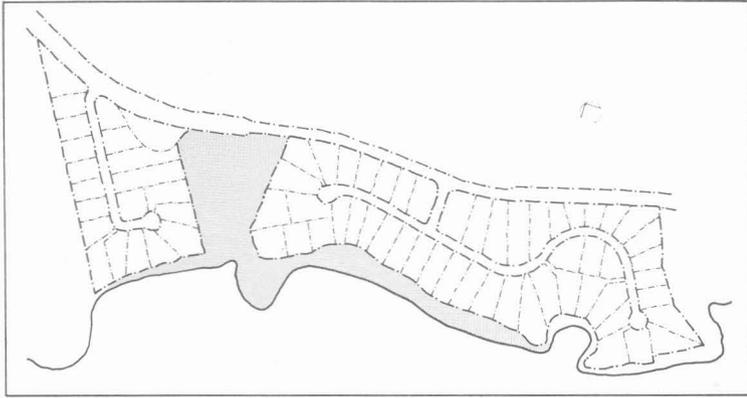
So the Conservancy—in action a bare eight months—leapt into the breach. It prepared a new plan for a fifty-unit clustered condominium development meant to correct previous flaws. This unusually sensitive site plan allowed the units to be nearly invisible from the coast highway. Unfortunately, not all units had clear ocean views, and the project market analysis warned of economic infeasibility. So yet another, more conventional, cluster plan was prepared, this time for fifty-five units. More feasible economically, it was brought by the Conservancy before the Coastal Commission, which approved. The Conservancy found a private developer willing to carry out the new plan and put 10 percent down toward purchase of the existing parcels. Then it went before the Mendocino County supervisors.

There were risks associated with this project, no question. Would it be marketable? The condominium design, though ideal from the standpoint of preserving views and open space, was unprecedented in that remote area. Would it receive the supervisors' approval? There was no guarantee of that, even though individual members had been consulted beforehand.

Pressure for denial came from the South Mendocino Citizens Action Committee, whose members saw the development as a threat to the character of their rural life. A petition was circulated, expressing the fear that the condominiums would "deluge the area with people uninvolved with the community", would "provide minimal local employment", and would block the view. Letters from local residents predicted that time-share ownership would destroy the existing sense of community. One writer foresaw a "noisy town of transients". Another worried that the owners would provide "no kids for our schools, no singers for our choir, and no new talent for the baseball team" and closed by asking the Conservancy to "stay out of our town, and do us all a favor." When the plan came before the Board of Supervisors in 1981, it was rejected.

These coastal terraces in Mendocino County would have been covered with houses under the original development plan for Whiskey Shoals.





Top to bottom: The original development plan for the 65-acre site called for a typical subdivision of 72 lots for single-family homes. The first alternative proposal was for a 50-unit clustered condominium development. The final, more conventional condominium design spread 55 units across the site. Another view of the terraces.

THE CONSERVANCY HAD ventured and had not gained. Whiskey Shoals would haunt the agency's staff and board for years, because they had yet to learn that temporary setbacks were an inevitable part of the risk taking inherent in the Conservancy's purpose. What then seemed a failure was, in fact, only a setback, a demand for shift of direction. The condominium project has not been built, but coastal values have been preserved. No development will be allowed on the site that does not satisfy Coastal Act requirements.

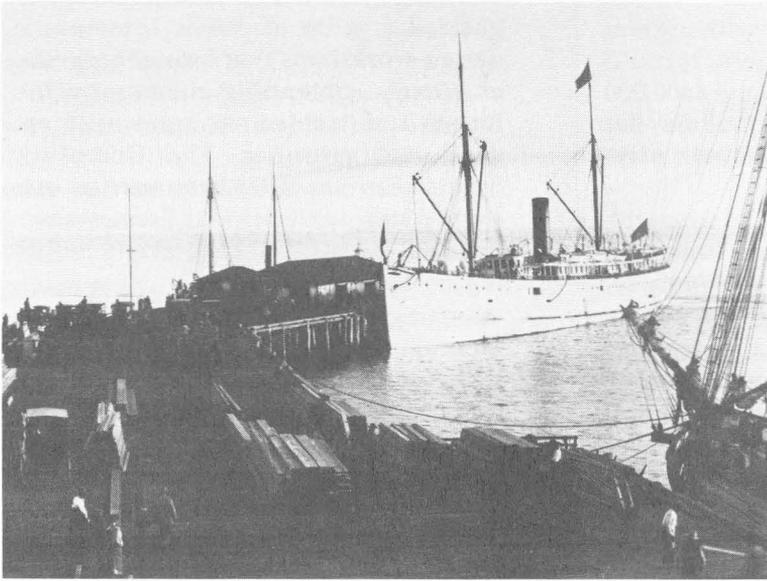
"We took risks," said Joe Petrillo, the Conservancy's executive officer during its first eight years. "We had to. We were breaking new ground. We were doing things that hadn't been done before. The big risk with those early projects was that if we failed, people would say, 'You can't [don't have the capability to] do this type of project.' And then we might never try again."

Having much to prove, the Conservancy always did try again. Its mandate was to play an active role in solving difficult problems, to blaze trails out of thorny thickets and find ways out of predicaments that had defeated others. If it was not up to that task, it had little reason for being.

Therefore, while Whiskey Shoals was lurching toward an uncertain outcome, the Conservancy tackled another trouble-ridden project, Santa Barbara's historic Stearns Wharf. This three-block-long, hundred-year-old municipal pier had once been a community asset but, since a disastrous fire in 1973, had become an eyesore and a liability.

The city could not itself afford to repair Stearns Wharf. Two proposals for high-density commercial developments had been rejected by the Coastal Commission. Too little public benefit, too commercial, the Commission ruled, though the conventional wisdom was that only intensive commercial development would engender enough dollars to restore and maintain the facility.

Seeking Conservancy help late in 1978, the city administrator of Santa Barbara summed up the predicament:



Above: Stearns Wharf was built in 1872 and was a popular attraction from the beginning. **Left:** At the turn of the century the wharf was an important shipping terminus.

“Very briefly, we are faced with a problem of an ocean pier which has outlived its economic usefulness as a transportation terminal but is near and dear to the hearts of the citizens. With development similar to ‘Ports of Call’ in San Pedro, it would be an economically viable project but environmental costs would be high . . . development adequate to restore and sustain the wharf economically has a high price tag in congestion and commercialism.”

How could the wharf be economically viable while maintaining its historical character as a place to stroll, take in the view, breathe the salt air, catch a few fish, daydream while leaning over the railing? Conservancy staff took as a starting point a formula suggested by the Coastal Commission: about three fourths free public use, one fourth commercial, the land use mix that had existed on the pier before the fire. Then it worked backwards from there.

What would it cost to fix and keep up the pier? How much could the commercial fourth be expected to bring in? How much was needed to fill the gap? Having arrived at an estimate, the staff went after the missing money and found it—a new federal Coastal Energy Impact Program low-interest loan of \$1.4 million. (It would be the only use of this

program ever made in California before it was defunded. Hardly anyone else in the state seemed to have known of its existence.) The Conservancy coaxed over a million dollars out of the city and put up \$400,000 from its own funds, half grant and half loan. The pier restoration proceeded.

There were risks here also. Would the project attract the kind of commercial lessees the city wanted? Would the economic projections prove out? Would the public come back to the pier in sufficient numbers to support the commercial establishments? Would the city be able to pay back the loans? If the Conservancy did not bring home the bacon, it would lose credibility.

Not to worry. Stearns Wharf became a whopping success and a model for other waterfront restorations. In its first year of operation, the wharf grossed over one million dollars—more than San Francisco gets from its heavily developed Pier 39. The Conservancy was repaid several years earlier than expected.

WHISKEY SHOALS and Stearns Wharf, two of the earliest projects, are good illustrations of the Conservancy’s derring-do. The agency could have played it safe. It could have

waited—forever, perhaps—for Mendocino County to come to it with a grant request and a plan of its own. It could have offered Santa Barbara the \$400,000 and let the city struggle on alone. But the Conservancy did not see itself playing a passive role.

It must be remembered that when the Conservancy is called in, it is usually to confront a seemingly hopeless impasse, something the local government—caught between Coastal Act regulations and frustrated landowners, or lacking the financial and technical means to realize some element of its Local Coastal Plan—has not been able to resolve.

Clearly the writers of the Conservancy's enabling legislation intended it to resolve these deadlocks. The statute was not so clear as to how that should be done, however, so the Conservancy had little choice but to improvise. In the process, it created and adapted an array of conflict resolution techniques that have since become models for others in dealing with tough land use issues.

To get waterfront restoration moving in Oceanside, a small city in northern

San Diego County, the Conservancy organized a series of public community design workshops that brought together bitterly contending community interests and yielded an agreement on goals and priorities. The Oceanside Strand plan has since been carried out step by step, with city and Conservancy financial assistance. To prevent building on existing lots in an environmentally fragile area of the Santa Monica Mountains, the Conservancy became a broker for transfer of development rights. In this approach, the owner of land on which development is to be prevented or restricted is compensated for the loss of his "development rights" by the sale of those rights and their transfer to an area where development is to be allowed. The Conservancy now uses this technique more than any other agency in the nation for the purpose of securing open space, for protecting sensitive habitat areas, and expanding public use.

In short, Conservancy leadership rose to the occasion with a blend of initiative, resourcefulness and effort that

The restored Stearns Wharf is both popular and profitable.



our grandparents would have called "gumption". And with the gumption came opportunism.

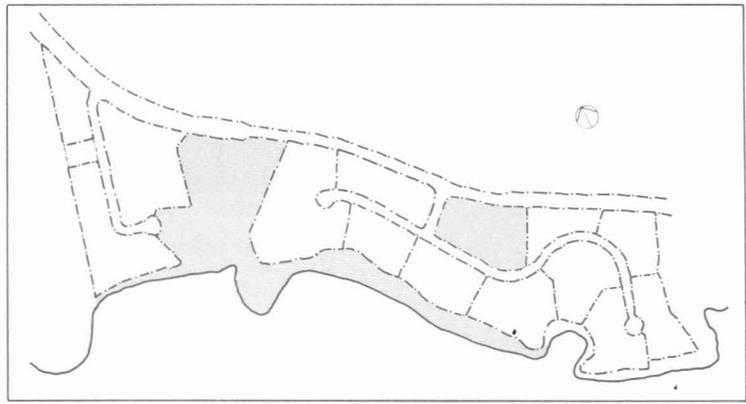
The Conservancy is—has to be—opportunistic because it works by persuasion. It has the power of eminent domain but has chosen not to use it. It must move when the stars are right—when the politics are favorable, land-owners willing, the affected public supportive. The legislature has recognized the need for this capability in approving Conservancy budgets that allow flexibility in the choice of projects in any given year.

A public agency showing this much initiative might have been expected to get into trouble with legislators who don't usually like appointed instruments of government to go too far on their own. But constraints written into its law have saved the Conservancy from its own exuberance. The agency's projects must be run through a gauntlet of approvals—by its own Board, which variously represents the Assembly, Senate, Governor and Coastal Commission and includes six nonvoting "oversight" legislators; by the local government; by the Coastal Commission.

There have been some failures and, more typically, projects that have dragged on for years because of unexpected obstacles, such as a change in political climate, economic reversals, or an unwilling landowner. But few projects have been abandoned. They await more propitious times.

THE WHISKEY SHOALS project did not die with the Mendocino supervisors' rejection. Three months later, it was revived by a typical Conservancy horsetrade. If the supervisors would approve the tentative subdivision map, the Conservancy would hold off filing the final map while the county looked for other solutions. So the Conservancy completed its purchase of the parcels, at a total price of \$1.6 million.

The other solutions did not materialize, and finally, on August 22, 1986, the Conservancy kissed Whiskey Shoals goodbye. Told by consultants that the



The latest proposal for Whiskey Shoals.

market for the condominium plan is now very weak, the board substituted yet another plan. The original seventy-two lots will be regrouped into thirteen parcels, each to be sold off for one single-family home—less than a fourth of the fifty-five units in the original condominium plan.

The Conservancy will retain ownership of a public accessway and buffer around the sensitive Moat Creek habitat. It is hoped that ownership and maintenance will pass to a local non-profit trust. The rest is up to Mendocino County, which, under its recently adopted local Land Use Plan, must assure adequate water and sewer arrangements and require that the homes be sited so as to interfere as little as possible with the views from Highway One.

The result is a nice combination of honor and prudence. The new lot arrangements will preserve coastal values substantially, if not perfectly. It is expected to return a good part of the Conservancy's investment and carries no political risk, since it does not have to be approved by county supervisors.

So the risk in the Whiskey Shoals case turned out to be manageable. Even had that not been so, the Conservancy course of action was the way to go; for the most awful risk it could have taken would have been to take no risks at all. What kind of uninspired results such a stance might have produced is hard to imagine now. □

Margaret Azevedo has served on the Conservancy board since its inception in 1977. She is a free-lance writer and a news analyst for the Mill Valley Record.

Access for All

THE TRAIL STARTS in a meadow behind an old dairy farmhouse built in the 1860s. Redwood decked to protect the fragile undergrowth, it enters a Sitka spruce and lowland fir forest and begins to rise. Through gentle switchbacks, past decks off to the side where one can rest, it climbs to what were once dairy meadows, now reforested with Monterey pines. Here it passes a camping area, equipped with barbecue grills and outhouse. It exits the campsite and comes to an end in another meadow, on a coastal terrace.

To most people, this trail in Mendocino County might sound like just another nice walk. But to someone in a wheelchair, it is a rare opportunity for a direct, personal experience of coastal country, without need for reliance on able-bodied companions. The half-mile-long Jughandle Independence Trail, on the property of the Institute of Man in Nature next to the Jughandle State Reserve, was the brainchild of the Institute's founder, John Olmsted.

In 1965, Olmsted was walking with a wheelchair-bound friend through San Francisco's Golden Gate Park when she expressed regret that she could not visit the wilder parts of the countryside. Her words planted a seed, he says, that eventually bore fruit at Jughandle.

He had founded the Institute as a land trust to acquire land on what he calls "The Pygmy Forest Staircase", a series of five coastal terraces extending five miles inland, each hundred-foot-high step featuring a stage in the evolution of the local ecology—beginning with the sandy beach and ending with the pygmy forest.

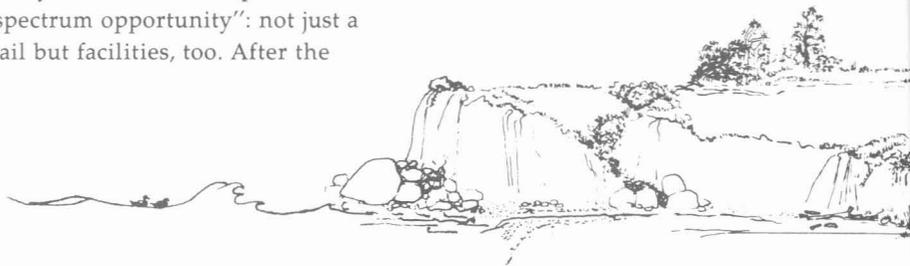


Olmsted recognized the uniqueness of the "giant staircase," and was determined to preserve it from planned development. The Institute ended up acquiring 250 acres, including the 40-acre dairy farm, of what finally became the 1,000-acre Jughandle State Reserve. He set about realizing the dream of his friend in the wheelchair.

Some work was done on the trail under a CETA grant, but it was not yet fully accessible when Olmsted approached the Conservancy in early 1982. Intending to enlist CETA workers, volunteers, and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) for the construction, he asked only for funds to buy raw materials to provide a "spectrum opportunity": not just a trail but facilities, too. After the

board's authorization in May 1982, he returned to Jughandle armed with \$5,800—later augmented by \$3,100—to finish the project.

That sum, says Olmsted, "gave \$20,000 results" and allowed the complete adaptation to handicapped accessibility. The CCC did about a fifth of the work, he estimates, but students from the Pacifica High School Community Environmental Education Project, under the supervision of Abe Evenich, put in some 700 person-hours from 1983 to 1985 to finish the job. In addition to the camping site, simple accommodations are offered at



the farmhouse. Visitors who spend the night pitch in with the small staff of volunteers to maintain the house and the trail.

The Conservancy, meanwhile, began to move toward making handicapped access an integral part of all projects where possible. State policy since 1968 has provided that "physically disabled persons shall be entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to . . . places of public accommodation, amusement, or resort."

Wheelchair access can sometimes be provided by minor improvements, such as grading and smoothing of trails. Elsewhere, however, more extensive trail development is required. Four demonstration projects are underway around San Francisco Bay, scheduled for completion by early 1987: in Berkeley's South Marina area, on the central Sausalito waterfront, at Coyote Point Park in San Mateo, and at Crown Beach in Alameda. Each will provide continuous barrier-free routes where access has so far been limited to short, discontinuous segments.

Other projects, in early stages, will improve access in a new waterfront park in Sausalito to serve the needs of a sea kayaking program for the handicapped, and on a section of San Francisco's waterfront. The latter project came about when a crane operator working on the new Wave Organ near the San Francisco Yacht Club realized that his son would not be able to visit it because there was no wheelchair access.

In addition, four hostels in Northern California—at Montara, Pigeon Point, San Francisco, and Point Reyes—are being remodeled to allow handicapped access. Slowly, independent access for the disabled is expanding on the coast, helping to make it a place of "public resort" for all.

Meanwhile, John Olmsted is at work on the nation's first disabled-accessible wilderness trail, near Nevada

City. That project too, he says, was launched by his friend's remark during that walk in a city park two decades ago.

The Jughandle Farm and Independence Trail is located near the town of Caspar, halfway between Fort Bragg and Mendocino. For more information or to arrange accommodations, call (707) 964-4630.

—Jake Widman

Opposite, top: The redwood-decked Jughandle Independence Trail starts behind an old farmhouse that now offers simple accommodations. **Bottom:** The "Pygmy Forest Ecological Staircase" consists of five coastal terraces that climb in 100-foot steps from the coast. Each terrace is 100,000 years older than the one below, and the oldest bears a forest of dwarf trees.



New Ways of How

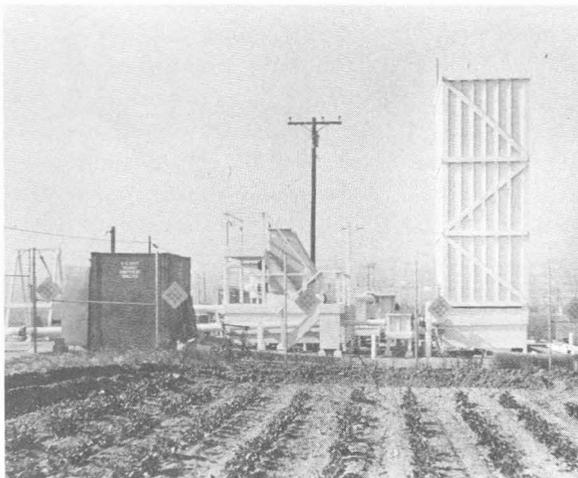
THE PROBLEM IS sewage. The mouth of the Tijuana River is in San Diego, the surrounding wetlands designated the Tijuana River National Estuarine Sanctuary. Most of the river's watershed, however—80 to 85 percent of it—is in Mexico and includes the city of Tijuana. Less than half of Tijuana has sewers, and the sewers that do exist are deteriorating rapidly. The result: raw sewage spills into the river and winds up in the wetlands and on the beaches.

The Conservancy has tackled the problem with the funding of an innovative demonstration primary waste treatment plant in the Tijuana River valley. The low-cost, low-tech approach was developed by an international team of specialists under the direction of a local nonprofit group, the Southwest Wetland Interpretive Association. It has as its basis a core system of modular components proven in industrial waste treatment but arranged in an innovative way.

The system is intended to be flexible enough to be constructed in numerous locations throughout Tijuana, bringing the treatment to the sewage rather than, as required with large regional plants, the sewage to the treatment. It could provide a cost-effective method of treating Tijuana's waste water for reuse in irrigation or for ocean discharge, without negative impact on southern San Diego County or Mexican beaches. The first-phase testing has been successful, and the second phase is underway. The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) took over operation of the plant in February 1986.

This project is among several in which the Conservancy has participated in the search for new technological approaches to stubborn resource problems. Another inexpensive, low-tech effort, to prevent some of the erosion that plagues San Diego County beaches, proved inconclusive. The device tested,

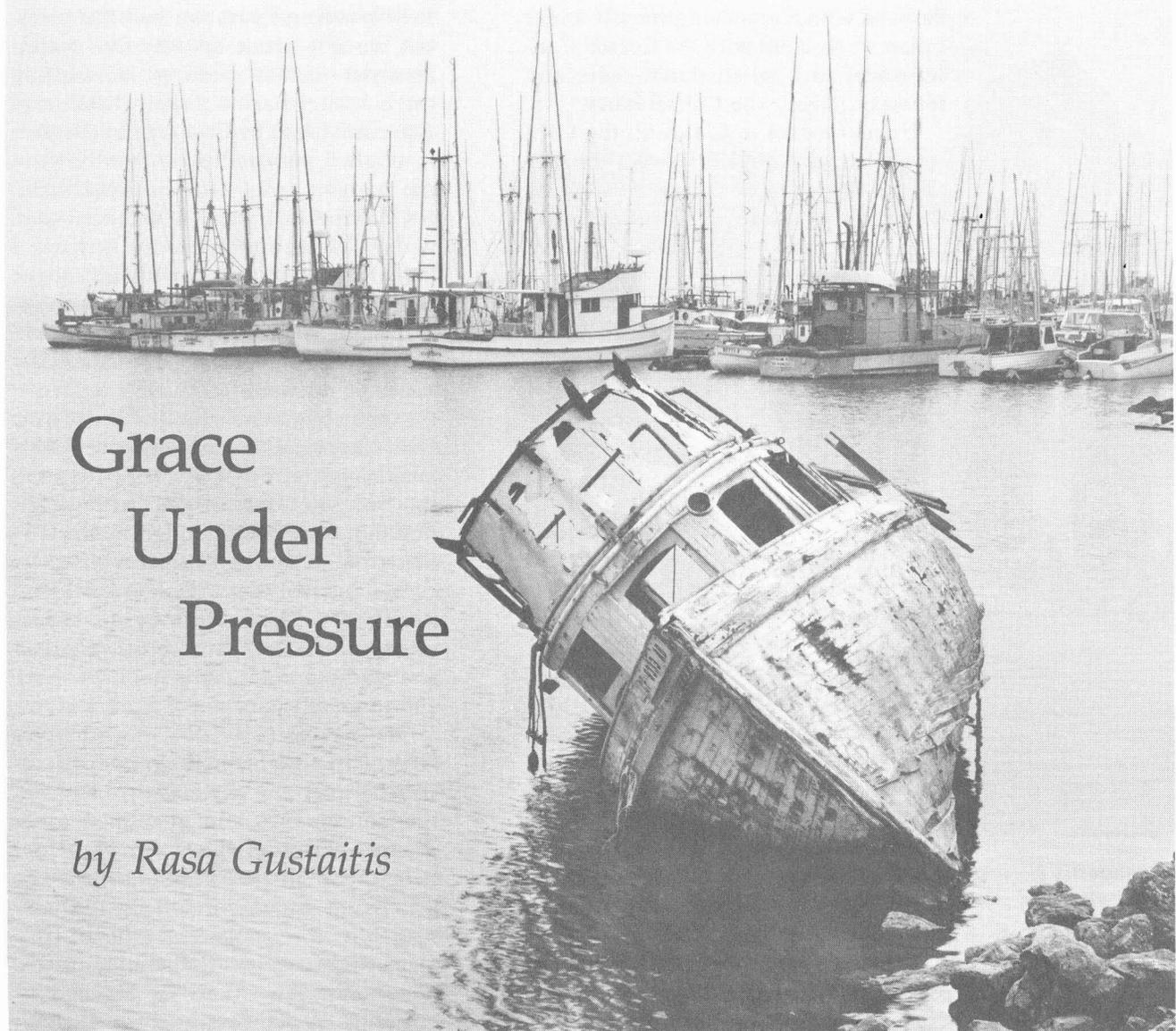
called the "Longard tube", has proven successful under certain limited conditions elsewhere in the world. It consists basically of a large plastic tube or series of tubes buried on the beach which hold in place sand deposited by winter storms. A combination of factors, including some installation inadequacies and the hedging of their bets by skeptical adjacent property owners who, when the storms arrived, pushed rocks in front of their homes with bulldozers and damaged the tube, precluded the Conservancy and the City of Del Mar from adequately evaluating the demonstration's effectiveness. Such risk taking, for what was a marginal public cost (the property owners paid for practically all of the demonstration cost, with the Conservancy filling in a small last-minute gap), exemplifies many of the agency's activities. And—this case aside—it underlies much of the agency's success over the past decade. —*Jake Widman*



The demonstration sewage plant in the Tijuana Valley.



The Longard tube being installed on the beach at Del Mar.



Grace Under Pressure

by Rasa Gustaitis

IN 1980, commercial fishermen of Morro Bay were facing a crippling blow. The city council seemed ready to cut their waterfront berthing space in half by rebuilding one of the two municipal T-piers and converting it into a pleasure craft pier.

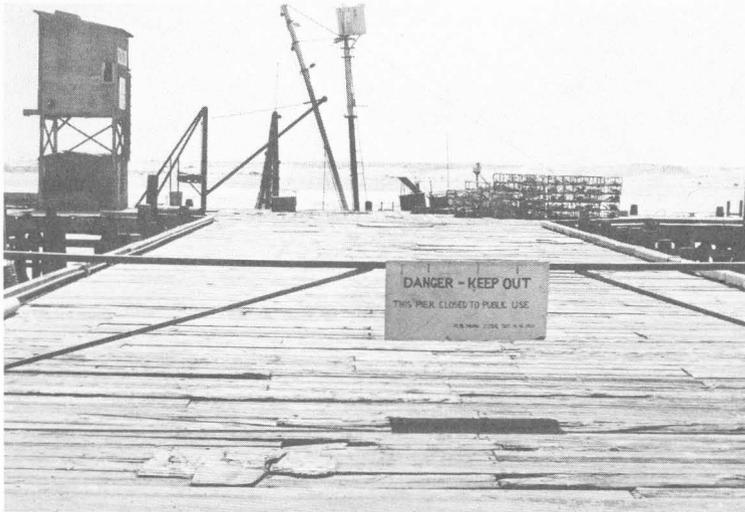
Sports fishermen and seaside tourists were increasingly sharing space with commercial fisheries in Morro Bay, which offers the only port of refuge between Monterey and Santa Barbara. The T-pier in question, with berthing space for up to seventy fishing boats, was unsafe; that was clear. But the city lacked funds for major repairs, as did the fish-

ermen. So an economic argument was being made in favor of a renovation that would serve primarily the boats of vacationers. Private developers were making offers, and the city council appeared ready to approve.

"We had four days before the council meeting," recalled Joe Giannini, who owns a 53-foot trawler and runs a marine supply business with his father, Joe Sr. "We couldn't let this cog get knocked out of the wheel—we needed that T-pier. None of us knew where to turn. There seem to be agencies for everything but commercial fishermen. But I had heard of Stearns Wharf [in Santa

Barbara, which was being rebuilt under a plan worked out with the Coastal Conservancy] so I called down there and found out about the Conservancy."

Unbeknownst to Giannini, the Conservancy was already aware of the Morro Bay situation, because the city had shortly before approached it for help with several proposals, one of which concerned the T-pier. However, the city had taken no further steps on the matter.



This Morro Bay pier needed a renovation that would serve both fishermen and pleasure boaters.

"I phoned Pete [Grenell]," Giannini continued. "He came down within two days, it was unbelievable. He went to the docks, talked to everyone, asked how we wanted the pier rebuilt. We wanted a good solid facility that met basic needs. It did not have to be real pretty, just functional." A proposal was ready in time for the council meeting. It went far beyond the T-pier. First, the Conservancy offered a loan on easy terms for rebuilding the pier if the city agreed to assume its management for the exclusive use of commercial fishing and public access. Then, the Conservancy would help the city find ways to provide more berthing space for other vessels. It would also work with the city on a comprehensive urban waterfront plan involving several other projects and help carry it out.

"We weren't sure we had the votes, but we got about seventy-five fishermen out to that meeting, all wearing these white marine supply hats" said Giannini. "And by God, we got the plan through. I personally believe that was the turning point—maybe for all central California. If we had lost that T-pier, we would have been on our way out. I don't know what the town would have been then. Probably some trinket shops and some 30- to 40-foot boats tied up."

A local engineer who understood the needs of the fishing industry designed the new pier. The city and the Coast Guard kept half of one side, the fishermen have the other. As it turned out, the T-pier not only served as the linchpin that kept the fishing industry in place, but also, like Stearns Wharf, was central in resolving a Local Coastal Plan (LCP) issue. The solution was incorporated into the LCP, which was adopted and has helped both commercial fishing and tourism to develop.

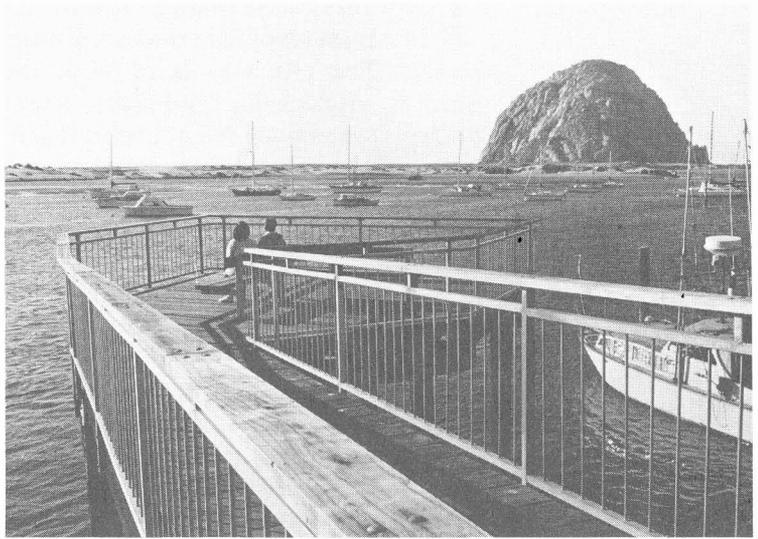
The successful resolution of the pier controversy established a good relationship between the city of Morro Bay and the Conservancy and generated other projects within a waterfront plan consistent with the LCP. Public access to the waterfront was expanded by the construction on several street ends of platforms and stairways that enable people to see the view otherwise blocked by buildings. A planting program to stabilize dunes at the north end of the harbor was instituted. New boat slips have been provided. Plans are now underway for a new tidelands park of about nine acres.

"Tourism and fishing coexist pretty well now," reflected Joe Giannini. "Of course, every time you turn around there is some developer trying to put up more plastic. But we say, 'Hey, we want to keep it functional, we have a working harbor here.' And now, we know we have the votes. We also know that if we have a problem we can pick up the phone and call the Conservancy and say, 'Hey, what do you think?' instead of, like before, just wondering to ourselves, 'What do we do now?'"

IN RETROSPECT, Morro Bay would seem like one of the prototypes of the Coastal Conservancy's *modus operandi*. (Another variant was the concurrent waterfront project in Oceanside, discussed in other articles in this issue.) Responding quickly to a request for help in a crisis, the agency was able to reshape it into an opportunity by offering a deal in which everyone not only won but got more than they asked for to start with. Using the partially repayable grant as leverage, the Conservancy encouraged the city to stand by the local fishing industry, without giving up potential revenue. Moreover, it backed the project not only with the grant but also with technical assistance, making sure that the project was viable.

Once the new pier was in place, the local coastal plan was more than a plan: it was a proposal in process of realization. With the Conservancy again standing by to help when appropriate, further progress was made on waterfront development in keeping with the goals of the Coastal Commission's 1975 Plan and policies in the 1976 Coastal Act.

The Morro Bay pier was one of several that have since been restored, with the Conservancy's help, for public use and local economic benefit. In the process, other crises were reshaped into opportunities that led to a turnaround in attitudes and generated further restoration and development projects. In Santa Barbara, City Councilman Hal Conklin recently remarked about Stearns Wharf: "The Wharf exceeded my wildest expectations. When we put together the plan for the Conservancy in 1979 and 1980 [providing more open space and less commercial use than the city's financial analysts said were essential for viability], we were told it would never work. So we structured our loans based on having to need ten years to pay them back. But we were able to pay off in two years. The Wharf is doing 500 per cent more business than expected and is producing an income of \$500,000 a year to the city. And it's a working commercial fishing wharf as well."



Platforms provide views at Morro Bay.

Based on the Santa Barbara experience, Santa Cruz later contracted for a shorter-term, full-recovery loan for its pier restoration project. As in these communities, so along the whole coast, the Conservancy's goal has been to reach agreements that—as in any good business deal—everyone is satisfied with. This goal is not only part of the Conservancy's philosophy, it is a practical necessity. For only if a deal can be made in which nobody feels short-changed can crises be resolved and Conservancy projects realized. In the process, it often happens that gains exceed expectations.

The Santa Monica Pier is among the several that have been restored with Conservancy assistance.



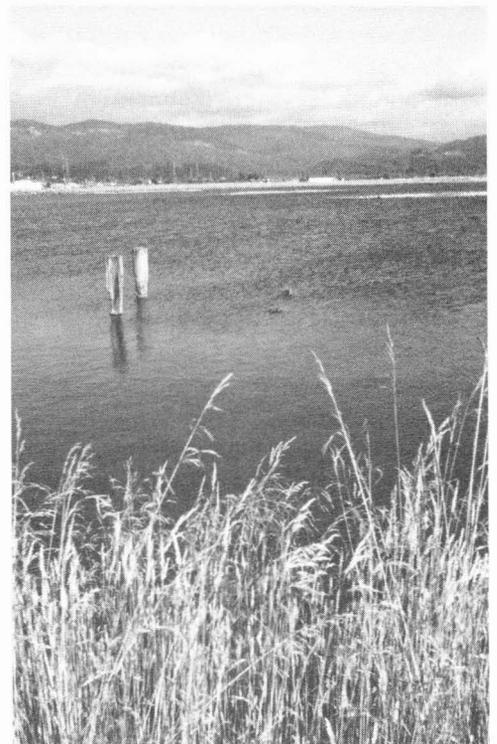
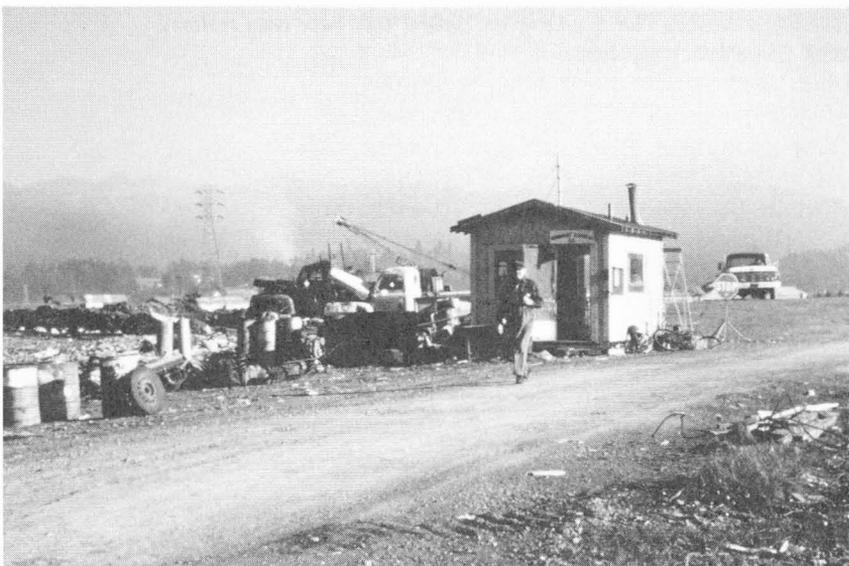
THE CRISIS IN the small northern city of Arcata revolved around a sewage project. The city was faced with the need to upgrade an inadequate waste disposal system but did not want to join with its larger neighbor, Eureka, in a \$77 million project of ocean dumping through an outfall pipe in which the Arcata share would have been about \$9 million. Being the home of California State University, Humboldt, the city drew on local expertise for an alternative. In due course, it opted for a proposal that involved the construction of a secondary treatment pond on its waterfront and its use to raise salmon fingerlings. The waterfront was, in effect, a wasteland, its main feature an abandoned dump known as "Mount Trashmore".

When the city turned to the Conservancy for aid in realizing the project, the agency could not simply say Yes and pitch in. Nothing in its mandate permitted it to get involved in upgrading sewage projects. However, it did have a mandate to preserve and restore wetlands. The Arcata waterfront was a degraded saltwater marsh, one of the important vanishing wetlands on Humboldt Bay, stopover for myriad migrating birds along the Pacific Flyway.

So it was suggested that Arcata modify its plan so as to reclaim the waterfront as a wildlife sanctuary that could perhaps be designed to allow it, eventually, to run treated sewage through a restored and enhanced wetland.

This was done. The waterfront changed from "a place you would want to avoid" to a recreational wildlife haven that attracts visitors from all over the country and abroad, according to Dave Hull, environmental coordinator for the city. "I've given tours to people from Germany, Japan, from back East," he said. The project includes a restored saltwater lagoon, a new freshwater pond stocked with fish, a working salmon ranch, hiking trails, and bicycle paths. And it also, in due course, solved the sewage problem. On July 15, 1986, the city started to run treated waste water through the wetland. "We feel it's not only less expensive but it's also safer—more resistant to spill into the bay," said Hull. Instead of spending \$9 million to dump the sewage into the ocean—and that was a 1977 estimate, by now it's much more—the city spent

Below: Fifteen years ago, a notable feature of the Arcata waterfront was a sanitary landfill. *Right:* Today the area is a haven for recreation and wildlife.





The Arcata Marsh has become a visitor attraction and a playground for the community.

\$300,000 and got both the sewage system and the wildlife sanctuary. "The Conservancy helped us to connect the waterfront with the community," said Hull.

Throughout, there has been enthusiastic community participation, which has cut costs and assured stewardship for the newly restored coastal resource. On September 27, Arcata launched Waterfront Month with a celebration of the entire project.

So once again, with Conservancy help, a community and the wider public got more for the money than it had aimed for. A crisis was the necessary matrix for gathering the energy needed for solution to a longstanding problem. The solution grew from local initiative, imagination, and resources enhanced by more imagination, plus an infusion of technical and financial aid from the Conservancy.

THE ARCATA STORY is a beacon of hope for all those who are concerned with the disappearance of coastal wetlands because it shows that restoration is possible. It also shows, however, that such restoration requires endurance and long-term commitment from local inhabitants, governments, organizations, and the state. The Arcata project was one of the Conservancy's first. Yet because of the complexity of its various parts, it has only recently been completed.

Not every project works out so smoothly, of course. The Conservancy has been in thorny thickets as well. One of these lies in the Malibu-Santa Monica Mountains area, much of which has been subdivided into a patchwork of tiny lots unsuitable for building without great harm being inflicted on the environment and local quality of life.

The Coastal Zone, which is generally 1,000 feet wide measured from the mean high tide line, swings much farther inland in certain locations where coastal protection requires attention to the entire watershed. In the Santa Monica Mountains, the Zone is as much as five miles wide. Because this is land that is ecologically fragile but constantly under development pressure, achieving the goals of the Coastal Act has been difficult. One technique devised to deal with this problem has been the transfer of development credits (TDCs).

Again, a specific local problem was the seed for a program of statewide significance. Two couples, small landholders in the Santa Monica Mountains, were greatly upset because the Coastal Act had annulled their modest plans. The first couple had planned to develop a tiny lot for extra income but then found it did not meet the size standard. The second had a lot within an existing subdivision, on which they planned to

build a house for their aging parents. This lot was buildable, but its development would have increased density beyond the county's standard for the area.

So Coastal Commission general counsel Richard Gorman came up with an idea: perhaps the two couples could make a deal. Perhaps both could be accommodated. The deal, made in the first couple's living room and approved by the Commission, allowed the second couple to pay \$35,000 to the first for an easement, meaning that the too-small lot would remain as open space. In exchange, the second couple received a permit, enabling them to take care of their aging parents as planned.

It became clear that this could be a model for a fair exchange in other situations. The cumulative impact of density was the key issue in the Mountains area, and many mountain lots were unbuildable. Sometimes located on steep slopes covered with chaparral, many of the subdivisions date back to the 1920s and

A Conservancy-initiated program to transfer development credits has helped prevent overbuilding in the Santa Monica Mountains.



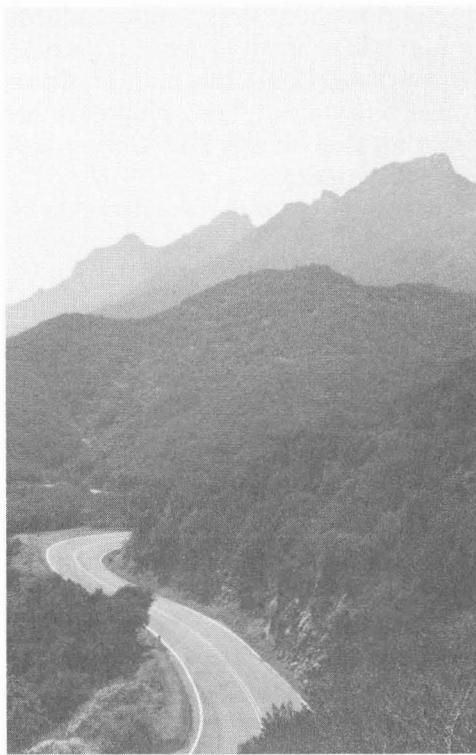
were meant for cabins or tents, with lots as small as a quarter of an acre. Buildout would be disastrous: there is no sewage system, there is a fire hazard. Because of the slopes' steepness, extensive grading would be required.

At the Coastal Commission's request, the Conservancy adapted the concept of that first successful tradeoff, creating a program for the transfer of development credits. A developer who wants to subdivide within the coastal zone would be able to obtain a permit—if his development was found to be acceptable—on condition he bought TDCs from one of the projects where the county had decided to avoid development. So subdivision would be contingent on the undoing of subdivisions.

The program was drafted as a cooperative venture between Los Angeles County, the Coastal Commission and the Conservancy. The county has deeded some lots—acquired for tax arrears—to the Conservancy, which acts as a clearing house for the TDCs, making it easier for developers who need to buy TDCs to obtain them. The county gets a return.

This approach has been adopted in three subdivisions in the Santa Monica Mountains so far. A variant is available through a nonprofit group of local inhabitants, the Mountains Restoration Trust, which the Conservancy organized in 1981 and launched with a \$300,000 grant to conduct a pilot study in the Cold Creek watershed. According to Betty Wiechec, executive director of the Trust, this watershed contains a cross section of the flora and fauna in the Mountains, from creek to dry rocky land. The Trust has a mandate to retire 100 building sites in it.

Being local residents, Trust members are able to solicit TDCs as gifts and find opportunity purchases. They also have a strong interest in stewardship. Wiechec, for instance, became vitally interested in the steep slope problem in 1978, when a massive landslide stopped within inches of her eighteen-month-old home. The plastic-covered pile of dirt behind her house keeps the interest



Inappropriate lots planned for steep, brush-covered slopes dotted the Mountains.

alive, as does the rain. "I stay up when it rains," she said.

The TDC program "is the most controversial, next to access in Malibu," according to Wiechec. Not all the members of the city council like it, but nobody has come up with an alternative solution, she said. Among its critics is Tom Bates, land use chairman of the Malibu Board of Realtors, who argues that the lots saved as open space through TDCs could never have been developed anyway. "The program doesn't fly. I've sold off maybe 100 lots under the TDC program, and not one has been buildable," he said. "I've sold creek beds, waterfalls, some landslides." Wiechec counters that "most of the lots we have easements on [by donation or purchase] are buildable, and some are worth around \$75,000."

The TDC concept is taking hold in Monterey County, and there is a great deal of interest in the citrus area of Riverside and in dairy areas near Chino and also some interest in the Tahoe region, according to Madeline Glickfeld,

special consultant to the subcommittee on antiquated subdivisions of the state Senate Local Government Committee. Conservancy-aided TDC programs are also underway in San Luis Obispo and Sonoma counties.

"Many TDC ordinances have been adopted. But outside the Coastal Zone, a number of the ordinances are not as well designed. Lack of resource information and technical assistance is a primary impediment, though the Coastal Conservancy has done a wonderful job of sharing its information," she said.

Thus a program that grew out of the successful resolution of a coastal problem has expanded into a useful land use planning tool beyond the coastal zone.

BEING A PROBLEM-SOLVING agency, rather than one that operates according to a specific program mandate, the Conservancy has been able to use the crisis/opportunity approach to devise a variety of methods for helping local communities deal with problems they face in adopting and implementing their LCPs. Several of these are discussed in other articles in this issue.

One of the toughest and most unyielding problems is that presented by agriculture, an exceedingly threatened resource. A breakthrough was made this year, the tenth year of trying various approaches without much success, at Cascade Ranch. This project, in San Mateo County, is the biggest for the Conservancy thus far and may become a model for achieving several goals of coastal restoration and development, including agriculture, through a mixed use plan. This too was generated in a crisis.

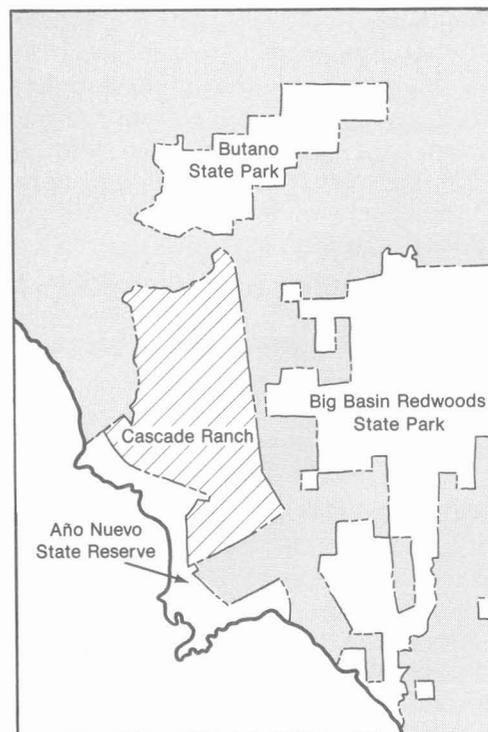
The 4,079-acre property includes farmland, rolling hills, secluded valleys and steep forested slopes. It surrounds Año Nuevo State Preserve, the only mainland habitat for elephant seals in North America. It links the coast and the inland ridges of the Santa Cruz Mountains and connects with Butano and Big Basin State Parks.

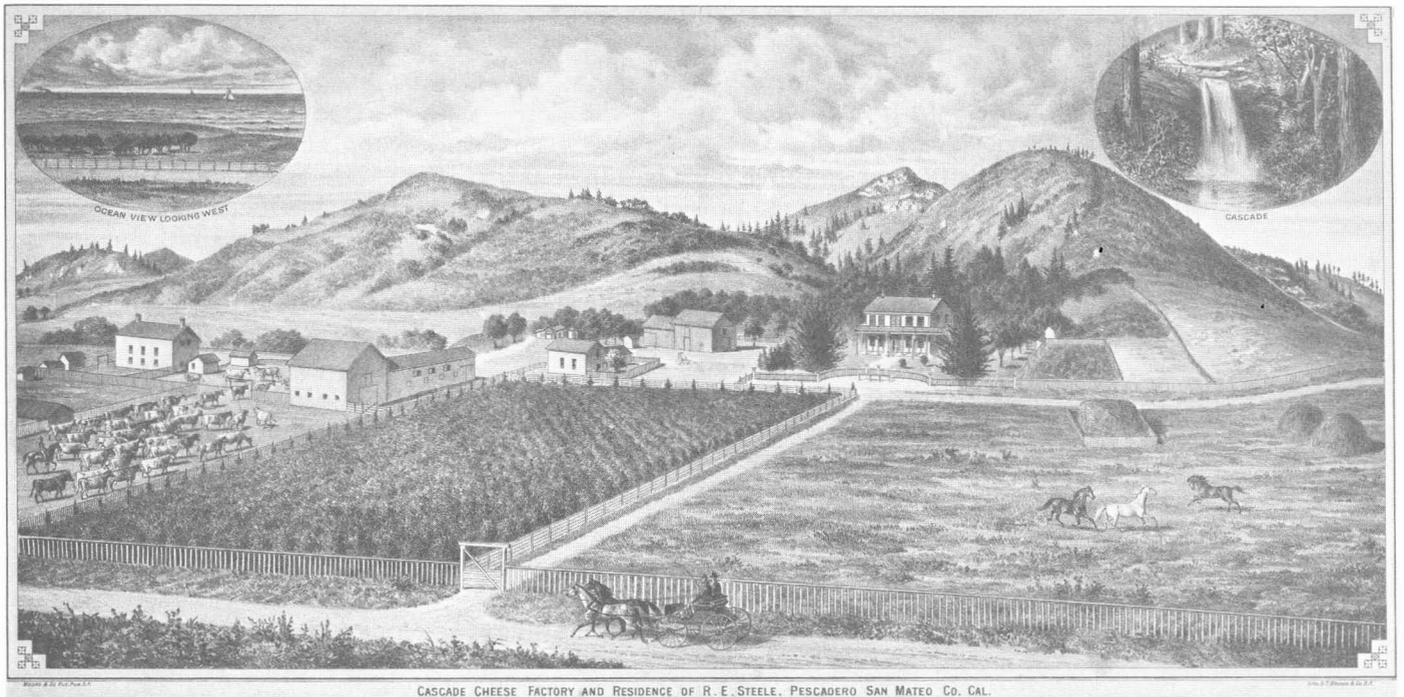
The future of this land, one of the most significant open spaces on the county's coastline, has been debated

since 1981, when the owner, a development firm, sought to subdivide it and build thirty-eight homes. He won the support of farming interests with assurances that most of the ranch would be kept in farming. However, conservation groups and others feared that the incursion of nonagricultural uses, namely the houses, would make the continuance of farming tenuous. The developer's plan also provided insufficient public access under Coastal Act standards.

A suit by the Sierra Club stopped the developer's plan. The Trust for Public Lands negotiated an option to buy the property from the owner, but attempts to turn it into a state park met with opposition from farm interests, because it would have meant a loss of the land to agriculture. Thus a conflict that had begun as one between development and conservation had turned into one that pitted public recreation against agriculture. The Trust for Public Lands, under pressure for action on the option, asked

With the largest grant in its history, the Conservancy purchased Cascade Ranch. Seventy percent of the land, adjacent to Año Nuevo State Reserve, will be parkland; most of the rest will remain agricultural.





Cascade Ranch began as a dairy farm in the 1860s and in recent years has grown artichokes; the two-story house shown in this 1878 lithograph stands today. The story goes that some of the farm's cheese was sent to President Lincoln. A plan to turn the ranch into a park was opposed by county farmers.

the Conservancy to resolve the conflict by adding agricultural preservation to the park project.

The solution that was worked out preserves and enhances the farmland and adds parkland, visitor facilities, and low-cost accommodations badly needed along this heavily traveled coastline. In late 1985, the Conservancy authorized the largest grant in its history, three million dollars to buy almost 700 acres of farmland and a campground site. It made a commitment to install water impoundments (essentially, irrigation reservoirs) to expand agricultural production by about 180 acres, doubling current use. Then the farm property, with protective agricultural easements, will be sold back to experienced farmers, so returning to the agency a great portion of its grant money. The current lessee received a guarantee that he can continue to farm for five years after the water improvements are made. Private

developers will have an opportunity to buy land for a public campground and a lodge adjacent to the nonagricultural tract to be acquired by the state as parkland. The 2,900 acres of parkland includes much of the watershed leading to the beach in Año Nuevo and will be managed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Conservancy's role in resolving the Cascade Ranch crisis was twofold: adding the agricultural piece into the puzzle, and so making the whole project work, and putting the overall land use package together. The agency was, in effect, the glue for the project. In the process it worked with state and local agencies, agricultural interests, and with several nonprofit organizations, each with a different function. "Without the Conservancy, I don't think it would have happened," commented John Wade, of Peninsula Open Space Trust. Success depended greatly on win-

ning the support and trust of the county's farming interests, which had supported the previous development plan and were the principal opponents to the previous park plan.

"We still have to prove ourselves in terms of carrying out the project," said Don Coppock, the Conservancy staffer in charge of the Cascade Ranch project. "Farmers won't be convinced until the new water impoundments are built and water is flowing through them. But we have done the most difficult stuff. From now on, if we're professional and careful, we should carry it off."

Betty Stone, manager of the San Mateo County Farm Bureau, observed that "it is probably premature to evaluate. Much of what has happened so far is on

paper." But she added that she had found the Conservancy, especially Don Coppock, very cooperative and informative. "Don was really fantastic to work with," she said.

Thus, once again, the basis of future cooperation has been laid through a successful crisis resolution. As the Conservancy moves into its second decade, Cascade Ranch—a project with a complexity the agency could not have managed before its current maturity—may become the gateway toward as yet unforeseen opportunities. □

Rasa Gustaitis is the editor of California WaterfrontAge.

A view of Cascade Ranch today, looking from the southeast corner toward the ocean, shows that the character of the land has not changed much in the last 108 years.



More than a Place to Sleep

IMAGINE MAKING your way up the coast of California, long on energy but short on cash, and knowing that you are never very far from clean, attractive, affordable lodging.

This happy scenario is the goal of the Conservancy's Coastal Hostel Program, an offshoot of the Public Access Program. The Conservancy's mandate includes providing overnight facilities for persons of low and moderate income. The result has been the alliance of the Conservancy with nonprofit groups—notably American Youth Hostels (AYH)—for the purpose of creating a string of hostels spaced no more than about fifty miles apart along the California coast.

The Coastal Conservancy's hostel program began in 1982, but early efforts to interest nonprofit groups drew little response, in part because of a relatively low limit on the funding available for a given project. In the spring of 1985, the money offered was increased to \$300,000 per project. The first grant, authorized in April 1985, went to the Santa Cruz Hostel Society for the renovation of the Carmelita Cottages—formerly a cluster of summer cottages—and to the Golden Gate Council of American Youth Hostels for making the existing hostels at Montara, Pigeon Point, San Francisco, and Point Reyes accessible to the disabled.

More recently, the Conservancy granted \$118,737 to the Golden Gate Council for the renovation of the DeMartin house in the Redwood National Park in Del Norte County. The house was built in the late 1800s by

early settlers. It was run as a hostel around the turn of the century but fell into disuse after the DeMartin family moved out. In 1968 the Redwood National Park was established, and the National Park Service recognized that the "highest and best" use for the building would be to refurbish it for use as a hostel once again. The house became protected property, and in 1980, when the park's General Management Plan was issued, the restoration was made a priority.

The Park Service set about putting a new roof on the house and looking for possible entrepreneurs to run the accommodations. Finally, in the words of the Park Service's Bob Belous, "three hands joined together"—the Park Service; the AYH, who had worked with the Park Service in the past and who knew of the Conservancy's hostel program; and the Conservancy. With labor supplied by the California Conservation Corps, the walls of the house will be stripped down to the studs and replaced, a new wing will be constructed, and decks with ocean views will be added. The work began in October 1986, and AYH expects to have the hostel open by June 1987.

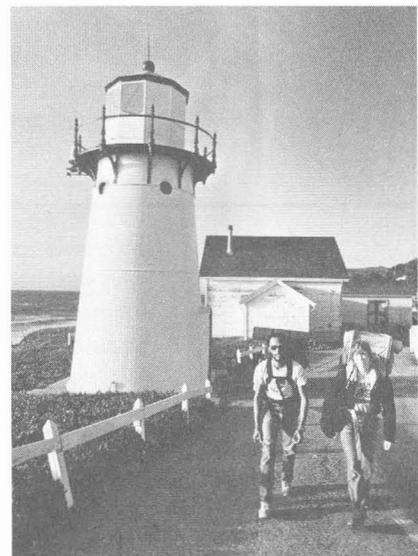
Barbara Tatum of AYH feels that the Conservancy is indispensable to the dream of hostels all along the coast and made "the critical difference" in assuring that a hostel exists in the Redwood National Park.

So far, all the coastal hostels have been established in unused buildings on public land, such as decommissioned lighthouses, as at Pigeon

Point, and vacant houses, as with the DeMartin House, according to AYH. Thus the hostel program serves the dual purposes of providing low-cost accommodations and preserving historic structures. In fact, the latter benefit may prove to be an international model.

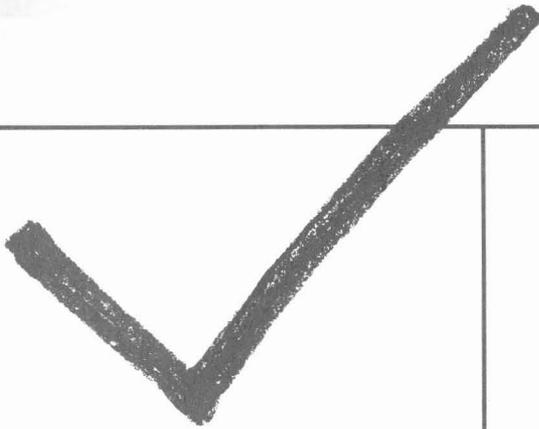
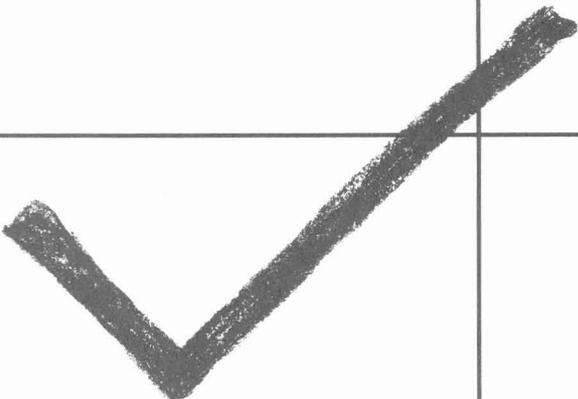
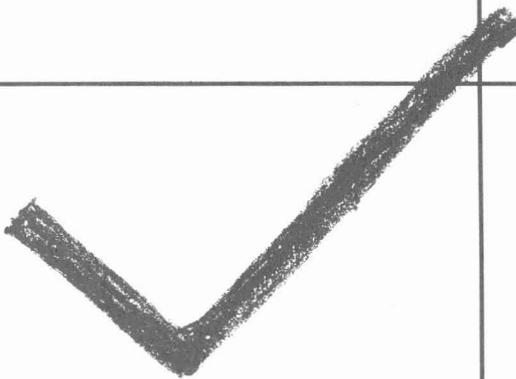
One Conservancy staff member, recently vacationing in Scotland, discovered that the question of what to do with decommissioned lighthouses was causing the same concern there as in California. His description of the hostel program as a solution captured the imagination of his host from the Scottish Conservation Projects Trust, and the two of them ended up discussing it on BBC Radio's "Good Morning, Scotland."

—Jake Widman



Hikers leave the hostel at Montara Lighthouse.

Scorecard for the Coastal Wish List

THE LEAGUE for Coastal Protection has assembled a tally of some of the successes, failures, and unresolved issues from ten years of coastal zone management, based on the goals detailed in the 1975 Coastal Plan. Although many problems remain, the League found that net gains in coastal resource protection have been impressive and overwhelmingly positive.

It is clear that California's coast is far better off than if Proposition 20 had not passed. Much incompatible development was prevented by Coastal Act policies and Coastal Commission guidelines that set a resource-conscious tone for coastal development.

Highlights of successes and areas of concern or failure follow:

Successes:

- *Public access* has increased significantly. Thirty miles of public access, accumulated from 2,000 permits with access conditions, have been opened; an additional 50 miles are projected. More than 100 new public access points have been opened.

- *Coastal wetlands* are better protected and there has been almost no reduction in the 100,000 acres remaining. Numerous wetland restoration and watershed enhancement projects are underway or completed.

- *Subdivisions in agricultural lands* have been significantly reduced. No subdivisions have occurred in the coastal zone of several counties in 13 years. Most counties have adopted Local Coastal Plans (LCPs) calling for large-acreage zoning to prevent the breakup of agricultural lands into small suburblike parcels.

- *Lot consolidation and transfer of development credit programs* like those in Marin County, at the Bixby Ranch in Santa Barbara County, and in the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles County are models that have attracted nationwide attention as solutions to short-sighted land divisions.

By Phyllis Faber

- *Cooperative projects between federal, state, and local governments and nonprofit organizations*, unprecedented in California's history, have taken place. Examples are the King's Range, Elkhorn Slough, Upper Newport Bay, and Tijuana River. The Department of Parks and Recreation has acquired more than 27,000 acres identified by the Coastal Commission for parkland, including 22 miles of ocean shorefront.

- *Urban waterfront restoration and public use improvements* have occurred in many coastal cities, and many waterfront/land use resource conflicts have been successfully resolved by the State Coastal Conservancy, including those at the Arcata Marsh, the Spud Point Marina in Bodega, the Morro Bay waterfront, Stearns wharf in Santa Barbara, and the City of Ocean-side Strand beachfront.

Areas of Concern or Failure:

- Policies to protect *agriculture* have recently been undermined by Coastal Commission actions in Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, Carlsbad, and Ventura and San Diego counties.

- There is no overall approach to *shoreline erosion* by state or federal agencies in the face of a projected rise in sea level and changing weather patterns.

- Although coastal *dune habitats* are often protected by local coastal plans, there is little enforcement of regulations covering the use of off-road vehicles (ORVs). Dune habitat along the entire coast is being destroyed at an alarming rate as ORV groups increase in numbers and political power.

- Competition for a diminishing groundwater resource threatens *wetlands, agriculture, and tourism* all along the coast. This is particularly noticeable in the South Central Region.

- *Oil development* on the federally controlled Outer Continental shelf, with the resulting industrialization of rural coastal areas, threatens a wide variety of coastal

resources, both off- and onshore, and has overshadowed the need for a statewide ocean policy that considers all resources and interests.

- The Coastal Act of 1976 does not address *water management* for streams emptying into coastal wetlands. Timber harvest and residential development usually result in heavy sediment loads and altered water runoff patterns that seriously threaten coastal wetlands, fishing streams, and spawning areas.

- There is little incentive for urban local governments to complete their *local coastal plans*. The task of developing these plans has been extremely difficult from everyone's perspective. Some cities and counties have worked hard at it and now administer their own coastal programs. Others, particularly urban and Southern California jurisdictions, have little desire to finish a highly controversial task. Consequently, the Coastal Commission—whose staff is already overburdened—retains jurisdiction.

To date, the Commission has reviewed and acted upon 108 land use plans, 87 percent of the total number of 124 LCP segments. Of these, 86 are certified, and 22 were rejected or approved with suggested modifications. Because of extensive budget cuts and reductions of Commission staff, the LCP adoption process has become even more drawn out and difficult to complete.

In assessing the successes and failures of ten years, the League for Coastal Protection took as reference point the goals set in the 1975 Coastal Plan—the ten-year-old wish list. It selected 52 goals on the basis of their significance, variety, and regional scatter. Among the 43 on which some action was found to have been taken, the League found the Coastal Conservancy involved in 35, or 81 percent. □

Phyllis Faber is a wetland biologist and former chairman of the North Central Coast Coastal Commission.

In The Beginning



An Interview with Joseph E. Petrillo

Joseph E. Petrillo played a key role in drafting the Coastal Plan and in shaping the bills that made it law in 1976. He was counsel for the California State Coastal Commission between 1973 and 1975, consultant for the State Senate land use committee from 1975 to 1977, then became the first executive officer of the Coastal Conservancy. Nine years later he resigned to go into private practice as an attorney and consultant on land use planning. Petrillo was interviewed by Rasa Gustaitis, WaterfrontAge editor.

WaterfrontAge: *You were there from the beginning. What was the genesis of the Conservancy?*

Joe Petrillo: It grew out of a need perceived while we [the Coastal Commission] were drafting the Coastal Plan. During that three-year period after Proposition 20 we had almost absolute authority to deny permits for development. I like to say that we had unconstitutional authority to do whatever we wanted on the coast.

How ever did the voters grant such power to a government body?

It was basically a conservative move: they did not want further change in the coastal environment, which was going from recreational open space to closed communities and heavy development. They knew that this trend would continue, so they voted against it. Remember, the proposition was temporary. We

had three years to do a plan, three years to regulate.

So what did you do with all your power?

Well, we believed we could do anything because of this incredible authority to say No. But what we discovered was that the act of saying No did not achieve the goal we were trying to achieve on the coast. "No" couldn't restore resources that had already been damaged nor protect resources that were about to be injured because of a commitment that had already been made. "No" couldn't give the public more access, except in very limited circumstances. "No" couldn't redevelop waterfronts.

There was a second problem: The reason you had to say No was that there was an impulse to do something. On the coast, that impulse was economic: to develop because the land had value in the marketplace. Merely saying No did not remove the value. Thus you would have

to say it not just once but again and again forever.

So under Proposition 20 you had the power to block the flow of the river but could not redirect the river?

Right. Eventually, the river will find ways around you. And it would seem that you were compromising right and left when you really weren't, you were doing the best you could.

So?

We were frustrated. We all [the staff] were red hot. We were not that young, most of us were in our 30s. We had all come from other jobs. Most of us were idealists, but fairly cynical because of our experience. We tried to figure out: After you decide to save the coast, how do you save it?

Eventually, we came up with a three-pronged approach. We continued to say No but also set up a planning process, which was theoretically supposed to deal with projects en masse, recognizing that when you are dealing with cumulative impact, controlling any one project is meaningless.

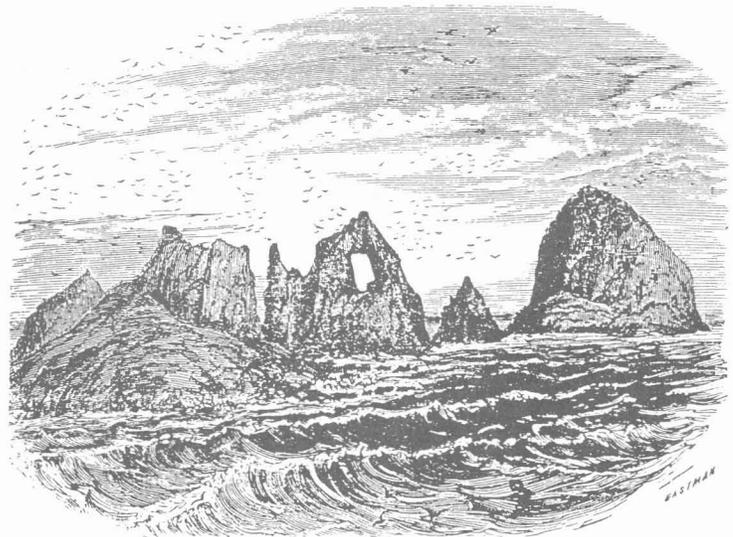
Second, we asked for money to buy lands that shouldn't be developed at all, those that you don't even want to waste time arguing about—the significant dune, the rare wetland.

And third, we set up the Coastal Conservancy with broad powers to restore land, provide access, protect agriculture, and with other powers that came later. I was in charge of writing the management section of the Coastal Plan. I looked for models. What entity could restore land—land that might look open but that really has parcels all over it?

Redevelopment agencies could. True, they have most often dealt wrongly with their power, but that is a failure of

planning perception, not inherent in the mechanism of buying land and re-doing what's on it. So there was one model. The second was the land trust, especially as in Massachusetts, which has a long history of such trusts.

While I was casting about, I also met two men who proved very influential, Bob Lemire and John Olmsted. Lemire, who later wrote a book called *Creative Land Development: Bridge to the Future*, at this time was involved in planning the future of Lincoln, Massachusetts, a wealthy town outside of Boston. The city was moving out toward the community; people there did not want the change, but they realized that change would overwhelm them if they did not do something. So rather than voting against change, they tried to deal with it. They did not just set up a planning operation—which is always the wrong way to go because planning abstracts you from reality—they dealt with land parcel by parcel. They examined each parcel, decided what they wanted to happen on it, then set up a mechanism for it. Some parcels they bought; for others they had regulation, or a redevelopment mechanism.



Who, exactly, did all this? The town planners?

No, the community. They had a series of town meetings. And then Lemire was in charge of making sure that everything would happen. They have been doing this sort of thing in New England forever. So I saw that and thought: that's what we should do on the coast. If we want some of the coast to remain open and in agriculture, it's not enough to zone it for agriculture. That still leaves two problems: one, nobody may want to do agriculture, and two, the land is already subdivided. Zoning is meaningless when you're looking at 11,000 small lots.

So Lemire was very innovative.

Not a single thing he did was innovative. Everything was traditional. But the people in Lincoln all sat down and concentrated on implementation, on *how* are we going to get it done? They did not leave implementation to the zoning process.

And John Olmsted?

John Olmsted was trying to save a section of the coast at Jughandle Creek, in Mendocino County, because he had discovered it to be a unique environment.

He was, in effect, operating as a conservancy, using the full range of what were to become Conservancy mechanisms. He was not only acquiring the land but also restoring it, teaching on it, putting in accessways—and doing that with almost no money, by selling Christmas cards.

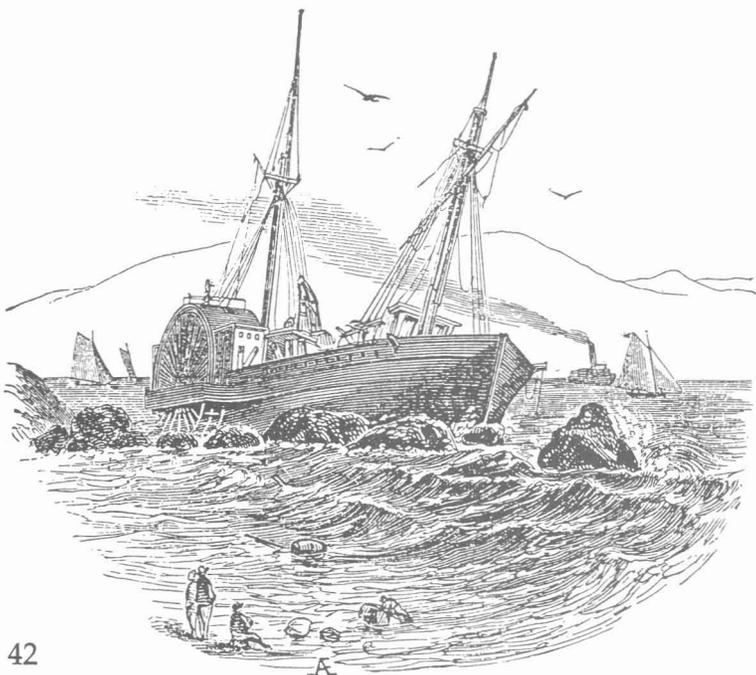
There was, at this time, no public agency that restored habitat. Though one thinks that the Department of Fish and Game does that, in fact it has limited authority. Their stream restoration team, for instance, is set up to restore only streams in public ownership, and only for anadromous fish, not for the full range of habitats. Nobody restores streams for the water ouzel.

Before you became involved with coastal management you participated in Buckminster Fuller's World Game. Did you bring anything away from that?

The whole environmental consciousness and planning consciousness, for me, personally, came out of World Game, and the insistence on implementation—not so much because that was part of the workshop as that it was the failure of the workshop. It lacked that conversion of idea to production, though Fuller himself talked about that conversion.

I also picked up the very important idea of looking at things in terms of trends. Coastal management became, to me, a series of actions dealing with the trends on the coast. You try to catch the beginnings of trends that go in your direction. You're an opportunist, like the tick who can sit for months, even years, motionless, waiting for a warm-blooded animal to come by. Then he pounces.

You catch a trend and ride the wave, or you create a trend yourself, with a model. You take the risk to do something, not knowing if you'll be successful, for the purpose of creating a model. If people then say you did it all wrong and they could do it much better, that's great. It means they have gotten over the negativism and now believe the thing can be done. Our goal was to start



and then let other people do it better. There is no system worth affecting that is so small you can affect it much single-handedly.

So you incorporated lessons from Lemire, Olmsted, redevelopment agencies, land trusts, and the World Game into the concept of the Conservancy?

Yes. And the Conservancy was built into the Coastal Plan, and we drafted the plan into three bills and found authors and worked it through. I eventually was in charge of the legislation under Senator Jerry Smith who was the author of the Coastal Act, which continued the regulatory process. The author of the "Conservancy Act" [the agency's enabling legislation] was Michael Wornum, assemblyman at the time, now chairman of the Coastal Commission and member of the Conservancy Board. Fred Stiles, consultant in the Assembly Office of Research, drafted the Conservancy Act for Wornum, and I worked on it, too. The authors of the bond act were Senators John Nejedly and Gary Hart.

Did you see conflict resolution as an important principle from the beginning?

It was. But at the time we wrote the Conservancy Act we couldn't write in the elements of conflict resolution because one, I was not sure what they were, and two, it is very difficult to articulate something like that in terms of legislation. When I was chosen to be the executive officer, I focused a considerable amount of time on conflict resolution and developing mechanisms, which the Conservancy pioneered to a great extent.

One is direct conflict resolution, or what I call "active negotiation"—you go in and negotiate with the land owner, but you offer something: acquisition of land, money, or assistance in processing, for example. The innovative aspect of that was that we said the agency had to be flexible enough to do this in an almost unlimited variety of cases, to be able to buy or give grants for almost



Attack On The Lighthouse

Political passions ran high in the state capital during the debate over coastal protection. The Smith Bill (the Coastal Act) extended the life of the Coastal Commission; companion legislation created and funded the Conservancy.

anything that would solve the problem. It might be to build something, or to buy something. By spending the money you take the conflict out of the hands of the opposing parties and the economic fight out of the conflict.

You have to bring something to the table that breaks the impasse, especially when you're dealing with land use. Otherwise your mediation becomes another planning exercise.

There is also a series of steps you follow. First you resolve as much as can be resolved technically. Bring as many people as possible together in a room and find out if they aren't really talking about the same thing but using different languages. In Berkeley I have seen

seven plans exactly the same, each proponent insisting not only that each of the other six is entirely different from theirs but that they are generated by the devil. And the plans are the same. Their differences are insignificant.

So then what?

You reduce everything to economics when dealing with an environmental group and a developer, so you're talking the same language. Nobody else I know who mediates does this on a consistent basis. You say to the developer, "Okay, we want to preserve this marsh. It will cost you x dollars. In return, we will give you time, you'll develop quicker, that's worth x dollars. We'll give you tax benefits, that's worth x dollars. We will give a bonus, x dollars." You do your own plan with the goal of achieving for the developer returns similar to those he expected.

Give me an example.

Bolsa Chica, where we wanted to preserve a wetland that was threatened by a planned development of a marina and 4,000 houses. We did an economic analysis of the returns for the developer under his plan and took that as a target for what we wanted, then designed a plan that would preserve the amount of wetland we wanted and give the developer a return equivalent to that in his original plan. We did a model, ran his plan and ours through the computer, and kept adjusting our plan. We found that the houses that returned the most to the developer were houses with a view. In our plan, we expanded the marsh and therefore also the perimeter around it. There were many more houses with views than on the developer's plan.

In addition, we came up with a way to eliminate almost seventy-five million dollars in capital costs that the developer had in his plan, which he would have had to pay up front.

We disagreed on a lot of elements, but I'm pretty convinced that our plan was far more viable and would return to



THE TUFTED PUFFIN.

the developer much more than the existing plan. He accepted it and it is now working itself through the different agencies.

Stearns Wharf was a similar case. We put together a financing plan and focused on the hard economics to show it could be done. Most citizen participation work, before the Conservancy, consisted of getting people together to see what everybody wants. At most, as in Jim Burns' version [Burns, an innovator in citizen planning, has worked frequently with the Conservancy], they would sit down and do a little planning themselves. We took Jim Burns' approach one step further, adding a process I call "reality training". After everyone agreed what they wanted, I had my economist come in and put numbers to it. And then we would look at all the funds available for implementation. These funds usually came out to be considerably less than the hopes and dreams. So then I'd say, "Your city council is going to have to decide what to cut, so why don't you do it."

Then Jim Burns developed a game in which people make choices. The idea of

gaming the hard economic choices is a Conservancy innovation. So the citizens' plan is always reflected by the economics.

So you actually dealt with the whole problem.

I always said that if the Conservancy wasn't solving problems, then it would have no function as a separate agency. If it were just handing out grants to local governments for access, for restoration, any agency can do that. You write some guidelines, wait till the stuff comes in, review it, and send it out. The Conservancy is only legitimate if it uses its power to give grants in a way that also solves problems.

For instance?

The concept of moving into a community and doing the first step as quickly as possible is something we discovered early on. Usually all the bureaucrats

want the final plan before you even start. The Conservancy itself, if left to its own devices and not managed, will behave that way. What we did was to come in with a small element of the plan right away. In Oceanside we went in with access, a single stairway from the top of the bluff to the beach. In Morro Bay, it was with the T-pier for commercial fishing. That kept the momentum, people could see that. Once that was in, the whole plan was real and the politics of changing that plan became very difficult. Therefore, everyone gained breathing room to complete the plan.

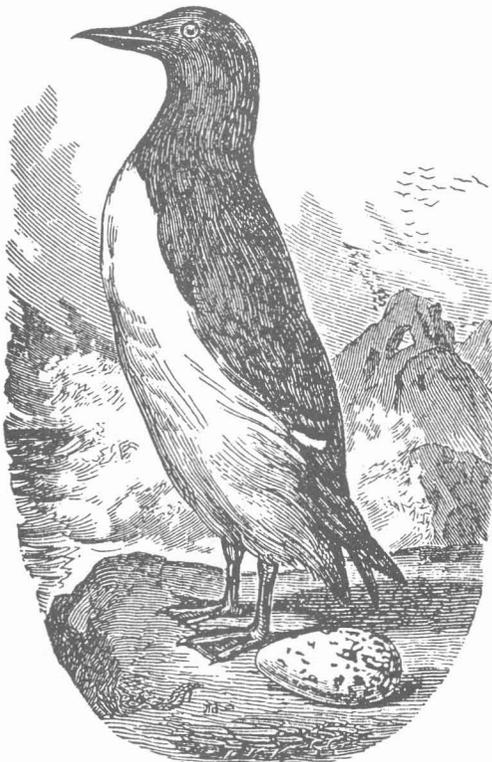
Another thing we discovered—I discovered—was that conflict resolution is very difficult to manage. It's the first thing the agency will turn away from because it's very difficult for individuals on a staff to accept that responsibility unless the head of the agency is working with them and insisting that it be done.

Because you step into the middle of crossfire?

Yes, and also because it also requires a great deal of work. Things have to be on time, because if you're the delay, there is no reason for anyone to turn to you. You don't present any hope of resolution if the focus is on you as a problem.

Now that means that you're asking bureaucrats to be there, to deliver things on time, to be flexible, to be non-judgmental. Many people who go into government agencies have a judgmental aspect and like to be regulators. Given a chance, the bureaucrat will always say: "It does not fit my regulations." But the moment you start doing that, you are useless to the Conservancy. On a daily basis, where we would get involved in problem resolution, the first thing that the staff person assigned would usually say is either, "It doesn't comply with regulations," or "I'm waiting for them to propose alternatives." If this way of thinking takes hold, the creativity of the agency is over.

The management function is to say, "No, tomorrow morning I want at least



The Murre, or Foolish Guillemot.

five alternatives that solve the problem and then I want them to be put in a letter, with an economic analysis." What's important is to do that, not to establish whether these alternatives will work or not, because you don't know what will work until after you send the letter. The alternatives must pencil out economically, of course, and be thoughtful.

This is creative and challenging work.

Yes, but it's also, in its own way, formula. There is a formula to our way of doing conflict resolution, our way of buying land, our way of doing citizen participation. But that formula will never get started unless there is management insistence that it be done because the natural inertia level will not allow it to kick in.

Did you come up with a way of dealing with that inertia?

In the beginning we did a lot of training and exhortation. That worked quite well, especially with people who came in from the outside, with some experience in the upper levels. We also were able to divide people into two groups—those who had a natural propensity for dealing this way and those who felt more comfortable dealing with the management of our established programs. We were able to put the first group on special projects and give our regular grant program to the second group. It becomes more difficult with time to maintain that arrangement, however, because, for one, the civil service system does not allow you to adjust comfortably, that is, to pull in the type of person that you need. Second, people who get the system down—the moment they realize they have it, they will leave.

Why?

Because what we did was ask staff people who might be 24 years old and just out of school not just to review a permit

and see whether it is consistent with the Coastal Act, we asked them to do a development plan better than a development plan of a man who made a million dollars last year. People who can do that for the Conservancy can put almost any deal together, in any format. They no longer look at themselves as someone who is learning something or is just a bureaucrat. They suddenly realize that they are capable persons, able to deal on the level of anyone they meet.

Sounds a little arrogant.

Well, it does. But these things are not beyond the reach of a competent, well-trained, positive, and fairly creative person. That's a broad range of people. You know that people with M.A.s and the Ph.D.s have the ability to learn a system—they had to, to get the degree. What they need is the confidence. Once they get it, these people leave.

Where have they gone?

Well, Dennis Machida is executive officer of the Tahoe Conservancy, being very creative in his own way. One person came to us as an academic economist and is now a full partner in a large development company on the East Coast. Two former staffers are among the four people who run all of the property development office of a major corporation. One woman is a chief project person for BRIDGE, the organization that builds much of the low-income housing in the city, one woman is professor of architecture at the University of Kansas, another ex-staff member is a principal in an economic planning firm—and he did not come to us as an economist. An ambitious young biologist who, when he came to us, did not believe he could solve problems and restore wetlands, is now one of the top consultants on wetlands and a principal in a major planning firm. Peter Grenell left; we got him back by giving him a challenge he couldn't refuse—becoming the director of the Conservancy.

Does this mean that you just hired people who were talented and on their way up?

I'm not sure. There is no doubt that these people are capable. But would they have jumped as quickly as they did without that sudden confidence they could deal in the upper levels? I'm convinced that the answer is no.

So the Conservancy has served as a great school for future leaders.

One of the most important things any agency does is that. The more people you have coming through who learn something and then feel compelled to leave because they feel they can do much more elsewhere, the better it is for the agency—if you can keep replenishing the staff with fresh talent. When you are prevented from doing that, it's very difficult to prevent an agency from totally ossifying within five years. The agencies that don't are remarkable. The Coastal Commission gave up the ghost about five years ago.

Has the Conservancy ossified?

To some extent, much of our innovation work may be finished, although much remains to be done. People have bought into the idea of restoring their piers and

marshes, building accessways. When I started these programs, nobody thought restoring a marsh was worth a penny, nobody thought of restoring piers, nobody wanted accessways.

In fact, the Coastal Commission and the Department of Fish and Game were opposed to the idea of restoring habitats. They argued that was interfering with nature, that if you encourage people to start restoring them, you will develop an ethic of further human intrusion and that this could be misused. Seriously. They told me that time and again. Right now restoring things is the big thing; but I tell you, ten years ago I couldn't get a hearing in the entire U.S. except with a very few people.

Or take our stream restoration program. Nobody was doing it in a comprehensive way, as far as I know, when we began giving money to fence streams so cattle wouldn't come in, to plant, repair streambeds, do a whole range of things. Now everyone is restoring streams. In effect, the Conservancy's role has shifted from creating the program to helping others along.

Did the idea for marsh and stream restoration come to you from coastal communities?

There is always input. If you're a creative agency you're out there like a sponge.



If restoration is catching on, what's the reason? Is it just a change in the times?

I think the Conservancy had a lot to do with the change. It's not that we did a lot of projects. It's that we forced the model through. Usually, people are not willing to start doing the right thing until they eliminate the possibility of failure. But once you have a successful model to point to, everyone takes credit and goes out and says, 'I can do as well or better.' They've bought the system.

The more people you have out there working toward the same goal, the more chances that more and better ways will be discovered, that more people will join in, that support will grow. That's the idea in the nonprofit program. The Conservancy has been criticized in the current administration because some of these people fail, some are inept, some don't even pay too much attention to accounts. All that is understandable and expected and something the agency should stay on top of all the time. But that is no reason to pull back, because some of these people are doing a great job. You don't get strong, experienced people unless you try.

Working with the nonprofits, you're developing talent and expertise. The nonprofit program was set up to, theoretically, create many John Olmsteds—maybe nobody quite like John, but many more, to do the job. John is as extreme an advocate for the environment as anyone, but he doesn't just talk, he goes out there and saves it. Jughandle Creek is saved. The land is bought.

He was always dealing with some emergency. The Coastal Conservancy does that too, doesn't it?

That's what it's supposed to do, because the emergency is where the destruction of the environment is going on. Each permit application is a crisis because someone is trying to develop on a resource. If you don't respond to these, we will end up with a series of localized zoos, rather than with an environment.

Policy is not a series of abstract goals. It's how you deal structurally with specific programs. You can see what your policy is by looking at the results of what you do. It is the series of actions to save the wetlands that is your wetlands policy.

Do you see a broader application for the principles you developed in the Coastal Conservancy?

Yes. There is a great deal of interest in conservancies now. Florida just passed a law setting up the first one outside California. In this state we have three now. You will see more, but they will tend to be more on the order of the Tahoe Conservancy, which has the same structure but is not forced into the innovative mode, in the sense of inventing new concepts almost on a daily basis, because many of the techniques we used are now acceptable. Lot consolidation and stream restoration, for example, work quite well in Tahoe, with the significant modifications they have made in the concepts we pioneered. And the Tahoe Conservancy's course might be smoother than ours because their staff has been trained to do these things.

What future do you see for the Coastal Conservancy?

There is much to do in continuing programs in access and in stream and wetland restoration. In agricultural preservation, where great creativity is needed, I see a great future for agriculture—if the agency can come up with politically acceptable alternatives. There are also other issues that we have not even focused on yet, such as preservation of beaches. And we've never really dealt with habitats other than those of streams and wetlands. Watershed work has just begun—a concept that originally met resistance because people thought it was a great expansion of government intervention. In fact, such projects can benefit everyone.

There is a great future for the Conservancy and much to be done. □

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