



## **SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2015 - NEWSLETTER**

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### ***COASTAL COMMISSION APPROVES FORMER CRUMMER PROJECT***

In August, the Crummer project, including five mansions to be built on the bluffs in Malibu, was approved by the California Coastal Commission by an 8-3 vote. Now called "Malibu Coast Estates", the 24-acre parcel of land is located adjacent to Bluffs Park in central Malibu. The developers were willing to concede some design elements, and they offered to contribute an additional two million dollars to the State.

The gated subdivision has been in the works for years, last coming before the CCC in February of this year, when it was sent back with demands to make the proposed mansions smaller and set farther back from the bluffs.

This time around, developers presented a project with all single-story residences. While previously the homes ranged in height from 24-28 feet, they will now be 15-18 feet tall. The gatehouse and front gate were modified to a smaller scale.

Not all commissioners were happy with the new plans though. "If we give up this bluff, if we give it up from the public use, it's gone. It'll never come back," Commissioner Mary Shallenberger said. "It's zoned as visitor-serving, and as much as I love that MRCA proposal, it is not enough," Shallenberger added.

The MRCA (Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority) plan Shallenberger was referring to is a new campground to be built in Puerco Canyon that, according to a recent L.A. County Supervisors decision, will benefit area foster children and disadvantaged kids. As part of the project, developer Robert Gold pledged \$2 million to the state, which would go toward the new campground.

What may have made the difference, though, was a deal commissioners couldn't refuse — a doubling of the dollar amount pledged to the State of California to mitigate a disagreement between whether or not the property should be used in a "visitor-serving" capacity. This "in-lieu mitigation" springs from a conflict between land use and zoning maps designating the property for residential use, while a previous agreement showed that the City of Malibu declared if the land was not to be used for ball fields, it should become commercial, community-serving land.

Back in February, Gold agreed to pay \$2 million to the state and an additional \$1 million to the City of Malibu in lieu of using the land in a visitor-serving capacity. In August, Gold pledged an additional \$2 million to the state, which will go toward the Puerco Canyon campground. Representatives from MRCA and Happy Trails (camp for foster children), spoke before Commissioners in support of the project. As part of the monetary agreement, commissioners were not permitted to request any more changes.

The Santa Monica Mountains Task Force and other conservation groups opposed the development, in the belief that these bluffs should be designated open space for the public.

### ***OIL SPILLS ALONG OUR COAST***

The environmental community is concerned about the continuing threats from the oil spill that occurred on May 19, 2015, in Santa Barbara when a pipeline owned by "Plains All American Pipeline" (i.e. Plains) ruptured directly next to Refugio State Beach sending 20,000 gallons of oil into the ocean.

When an oil spill occurs, there is only so much that can be done to protect coastal resources. The best prevention of an oil spill is to not allow new drilling and ensure stringent regulations and laws are in place to prevent environmental damage from oil spills. There should be strong support for legislation in process that prevents new drilling, improves response procedures, requires automatic shutoff technology, and increases safety inspections. Southern California's coastal environment is an ecological treasure and will be significantly impacted by this event for years to come.

Our elected officials need to oppose new oil drilling that contributes to future environmental damage. In 2014, Congressman Brad Sherman voted against H.R. 4899, which would have allowed for new drilling in areas off the coasts of California, where it has been prohibited for many years. The bill passed the House, however it stalled in the Senate. Sherman is continuing the fight against similar environmental threats to our coasts.

### ***DENALI RENAMED***

North America's tallest mountain has gotten a name change . . . from Mt. McKinley to Denali. Located in Alaska, Denali measures 20,310 feet, 3.847 miles above sea level. This recent announcement from President Obama, restored the original Native American title.

Trying to figure out the true size of a mountain is actually pretty hard. Conditions on Denali are treacherous, and the science isn't much easier. However, scientists announced that Denali is smaller than previously thought. Still, it's a mighty tall mountain and we welcome the restoration of its name after all these years.

### ***CARBON BEACH ACCESS***

Finally! The path and pristine views along one of Malibu's most exclusive coastlines are now easily accessible to all of us. After a decade long legal fight that pitted public access advocates against a wealthy homeowner who refused to build a path, the California Coastal Commission officially opened a walkway along the 1.5-mile Carbon Beach a few weeks ago.

"It's an amazing stretch of coast that should be open to everyone," said Charles Lester, the commission's executive director. This walkway was promised years ago. At the time, it was one of about 1,300 promised walkways, though many never opened.

State law guarantees the public beach access up to the mean high tide line. However, in areas like Malibu, many affluent and influential residents have taken extensive measures to keep the public out of their sandy backyards.

The lengthy legal quarrel over Carbon Beach access dates to the 1980's. The Coastal Commission issued building permits to a family in exchange for providing a public path beside their house. The homeowners put up various impediments, including a 9-foot-high wall, large boulders, and a tennis court to resist building an easement. The issue ended up in the courts and CA's 2nd District Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the agency, meaning that the public pathway had a right to be opened. The settlement required the homeowners to pay \$1.1 million in fines. Some of the money will go to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to operate and maintain the pathway and reimburse the attorney general's office for legal fees.

Graham Hamilton, of the Surfrider Foundation, said he is pleased with the opening, but he also acknowledged the remaining challenges ahead. "It's a small victory in a very large battle," Hamilton said. "We hope that any development that is going to take place in the future remembers the citizens' rights under the California Coastal Act and state constitution, which allow public access to coastal lines. "It may be called "Billionaires' Beach," but the pristine views along one of Malibu's most exclusive coastlines are now more accessible. After a decade long legal fight that pitted public access advocates against a wealthy homeowner who refused to build a path, the California Coastal Commission is officially opened a third walkway along the 1.5-mile Carbon Beach in August."

"It's an amazing stretch of coast that should be open to everyone," said Charles Lester, the commission's executive director. At the time, it was one of about 1,300 promised walkways, though many never opened. State law guarantees the public beach access up to the mean high tide line. But, in areas like Malibu, many affluent and influential residents have taken extensive measures to keep beachgoers out of their sandy backyards. The Carbon Beach West pathway, as it is officially known, will be open between sunrise and sunset beside 22246 Pacific Coast Highway.

The Coastal Commission plans to open at least 18 additional paths in Malibu.

### ***OUR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER***

We all know the wilderness champions that represent us, and who work to create new wilderness areas. High on the list is Senator Barbara Boxer. Earlier this year, she introduced the Central Coastal Heritage Protection Act. The legislation would protect 245,665 acres of new and expanded wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument, strengthen protections for wild and scenic rivers, and designate a new national recreation trail.

### ***SOLAR ENERGY***

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning is currently drafting regulations to guide the development of solar and wind energy in the unincorporated areas of the County. The intent is to provide baseline standards that support and facilitate the responsible development of small-scale systems and utility-scale facilities in a manner that minimize potential safety and environmental impacts. Information about the project is available on the Department's project website at the following link: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/energy>

### ***RIM OF THE VALLEY PLAN***

A proposed plan to add a huge swath of wilderness to the national parks system is moving forward. The Sierra Club has long supported the plan and recently supported Alternative D of the Valley Draft Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment (conducted by National Park Service) which gives the most protection to the land and the eco-systems. This will provide the utmost protection of the natural, cultural, and historical resources of this diverse area, as well as expand recreation & education opportunities for millions of park users.

The proposal will add more than 490,000 acres of Rim of the Valley lands to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and place these lands under federal protection from development. The plan will also provide a significant wildlife corridor linkage through the Santa Susana Mountains range, the Chatsworth Reservoir, the Simi Hills, and Griffith Park.

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### ***SMMTF WEBSITE***

Visit the Santa Monica Mountains Task Force website. You can access the website and be up-to-date on all Task Force conservation news, scheduled activities, events, trail work, outings, and other timely information: [smmtf.org/](http://smmtf.org/)

If you have conservation news, events, photos or other Sierra Club related information that could be posted on the website, email full descriptions to our webmaster Bill Vanderberg, so he can evaluate these items for posting: [bill.vanderberg@ca.rr.com](mailto:bill.vanderberg@ca.rr.com)

If you prefer to receive future SMMTF Newsletters by email, please let us know by emailing Sue Palmer at: [rumpuskat@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rumpuskat@sbcglobal.net)

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**Newsletter Written by Taskforce Management Committee Representative –  
MaryAnn Webster, Chair  
Joan Weaver, Editor**

The Santa Monica Mountains Task Force is an activist committee dedicated to encouraging the protection of the Santa Monica Mountains while promoting the understanding and awareness of their natural values. The goals encompass maintaining open space and acquiring additional parkland. To achieve these goals, members participate in monthly meetings, recommend policy on the Santa Monica Mountains, lead outings to acquaint the public with the mountains, build and maintain trails.

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***SMMTF ACTIVITIES - March-April 2015 - <http://smmtf.org/calendar.php>***

Tue 9/15/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Nicholas Flat from Leo Carrillo State Park</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 9/15/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers – Malibu Creek SP / King Gillette Ranch</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 9/15/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 9/22/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 9/22/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers/ Sycamore/Serrano Cyns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 9/22/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 9/29/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 9/29/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers/ Pacific Palisades Marlen’s Favorite</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 9/29/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Sat 10/3/15	<a href="#">O: Santa Monica Mountains Trail Work</a>	 Outing	Service/Stewardship	Moderate
Tue 10/6/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 10/6/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers/ Chumash Trail-La Jolla Canyon</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 10/6/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Sat 10/10/15	<a href="#">O: Santa Monica Mountains Trail Work</a>	 Outing	Service/Stewardship	Moderate
Tue 10/13/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 10/13/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers/ Tri Peaks (3010')</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 10/13/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Sat 10/17/15	<a href="#">O: Santa Monica Mountains Trail Work:</a>	 Outing	Service/Stewardship	Moderate

Tue 10/20/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 10/20/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers/ Corral Canyon to Mesa Pk</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 10/20/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Sat 10/24/15	<a href="#">O: Santa Monica Mountains Trail Work:</a>	 Outing	Service/Stewardship	Moderate
Sat 10/24/15	<a href="#">O: Lower Zuma Canyon</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 10/27/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Conditioned Hikers - Coastal Santa Monica Mtns</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Tue 10/27/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Moderate Hikers - Santa Ynez Cyn to Trailer Cyn</a>	 Outing	Hike	Moderate
Tue 10/27/15	<a href="#">O: Tue Tiger Hikers</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous
Sat 10/31/15	<a href="#">O: Santa Monica Mountains Trail Work:</a>	 Outing	Service/Stewardship	Moderate
Sat 10/31/15	<a href="#">O: 18th Annual Backbone Trail Festival: Peaks with a Point and a Rock.</a>	 Outing	Hike	Strenuous