

NATURAL
HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

Partners in Our State Parks

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Central Coast Natural History Association is to support and fund interpretive and educational programs that promote understanding and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the local State Parks.

AUGUST
CALENDAR

*CCNHA Board of
Director's Meeting
Thursday,
August 14, 2003
6:00 - 8:00 PM
Museum of Natural
History Auditorium
Morro Bay*

Central Coast
Natural History Association
20 State Park Road
Morro Bay, CA 93442
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Fax (805) 772-7129
www.ccnha.org

NATURE
NOTES

A NEWSLETTER TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS IN OUR STATE PARKS, FROM CAMBRIA TO PISMO

CELEBRATE ADVENTURES WITH NATURE

AUGUST, 2003



Top Secret

SAFARI

STEP ABOARD FOR AN AWE INSPIRING
ADVENTURE ALONG THE COAST

Secret Safari - A Most Unique Party

The most unusual special event fundraiser in the area has tickets available right now!

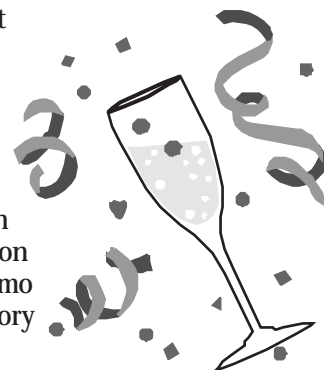


The Secret Safari is a progressive dinner to four secret locations along the central coast. Champagne by Laetitia and hors d'oeuvres from the Inn at Morro Bay will be served at Location One, in the catacombs where life is preserved. Salmon Bisque from Robin's of Cambria and wine from Eberle's will be dished up at Location Two, beneath a canopy of Cupressus macrocarpa. A Seafood Safari contributed by Windows on the Water and Driscolls Wharf will be served with wine from Tablas Creek Vineyard at Location Three, along the shores of former village Chotcagua. And the fourth stop will provide exotic desserts by Seven Hands on Higuera along with wines from Wild Horse among Roman columns. Coffee and Tea will be supplied by Two Dogs while the intricate invitations, with hints and clues, have been created as a gift from Pandora, of Pandora and Co.

The Secret Safari excursion also includes special gifts to all participants as they reach each destination and the evening culminates with a very unique Auction. A surprise announcement will be made that evening about the Central Coast Natural History Association. It is going to be a very big night!

The first location will be announced on the tickets as they are purchased; otherwise the rest of the evening will remain a secret. One hint has been allowed. Dessert by Seven Hands will be served at a Castle. But that is all we can tell you. Safari members will be motored to each location on Saturday, September 20 beginning at 4 PM. Only 100 tickets are available at \$125.00 per person. Attire is formal from the ankles up or in other words, "finery and flip-flops."

For more information or tickets contact Denise Tallman at 805-772-2694 X105. All proceeds to benefit the education and interpretive programming in local state parks from Pismo to Estero Bluffs, including the Museum of Natural History in Morro Bay.



Slip of the Pen



This is going to be a whirlwind month. Therefore, a whirlwind column. As if it is not enough to be creating the first ever Secret Safari Progressive Dinner, CCNHA has developed a brand new logo, a new CCNHA brochure, a new Museum brochure, rack cards for Pismo and Morro Bay, and an entirely new Membership campaign. All to be unveiled

in September. So, if I seem preoccupied when you are trying to talk to me, bear with me. I just need to get through this month!!

Tickets are on sale now for the Secret Safari and it is truly going to be a spectacular event. With only 100 tickets available, and 30 already spoken for, don't wait for the invitations to come out to purchase them. We think we will sell out quickly. The businesses in the community have been so generous, there will be few expenses! Therefore we can make most of your donation of \$125.00 per ticket go directly to CCNHA projects. It is a win-win situation.

Recently the City of Morro Bay approved their budget, which includes a \$2,500 donation towards the Museum of Natural History. This award is approved for two years totaling the contribution at \$5,000. Thank you so much to the City Council for understanding the need for the education programming at the Museum and for their financial support. We are most grateful.

If you have not already noticed, every month the Nature Notes has a theme and we focus our stories around that theme. This month is about the Adventures with Nature walk program. Every Nature Notes provides a monthly list of all the walks that month. This insert is worth the price of membership to CCNHA. I know many people use this information to plan trips for their friends and I have even had someone call the Museum planning their vacation around a walk he wanted to take. All the Adventure with Nature Docents are to be commended for their extraordinary dedication and talents.

While I am thanking people, I must give kudos to Sandra Beebe, chairman of the Communications Committee who has made my life a dream in producing the newsletter monthly. She supervises reporters, develops stories and edits too! She gathers photos (almost all taken by her) and she does it with a never-ending smile. I thank goodness for Sandra Beebe.

Finally, I want to publicly thank Harry Roden and the newsletter crew who for years and years (almost 2 decades) have been handling the mass mailing of the Nature Notes monthly. If you ever want to join a fun group call Harry to offer a hand in folding and collating and labeling the 1,300 newsletters monthly. This is a seriously dedicated group, but they have a ball. Especially when someone remembers to accent the afternoon with a bag of Hershey's Kisses. A giant thank you to Harry and his crew!

Well, I'm off. Brochures to write and publish! Logos to finalize. Membership benefits to approve. It is going to be quite the month. You have a good one too.

Donation\$ Needed

Education and interpretive programming in our local State Parks from Pismo to Morro Bay always need special funding for new projects. If you are interested in helping, please send your donation to CCNHA, Morro Bay State Park Road, Morro Bay, CA 93442 and specify in a note where you want the donation spent. It is only with your help that these local education programs are possible. The CCNHA Board of Directors, state park volunteers and Docents thank you.

- \$ 750 Living History Project, Montana de Oro
- \$ 500 Monthly Newsletter Sponsor (special name/family recognition that month)
- \$ 2,000 Sponsor Secret Location at Secret Safari Fundraiser, Sept. 20
- \$ 4,500 New fence at Monarch Grove
- \$ 1,000 Montana de Oro Rack Card for Chambers and Visitors
- \$ 1,000 Museum of Natural History Rack Card
- \$ 1,000 Pismo Nature Center Rack Card
- \$ 1,200 Red velvet rope Stanchions for Museum of Natural History in Morro Bay
- \$ 1,300 Rolling Theme Board for Museum of Natural History Deck
- \$ 200 Updated Education Games for Pismo Nature Center
- \$ 1,000 First Museum of Natural History Brochure
- \$ 3,508 New Computers for CCNHA staff – currents ones old and crashing – HELP!

A Heart Felt Thank You

The Central Coast Natural History Association is extremely grateful for continuing donations from the community.

Mid State Bank has approved a \$1,000 grant for a new Museum Brochure. A multitude of businesses have contributed to the Secret Safari. Unocal; Andre, Morris & Buttery; Sinsheimer, Schiebelhut & Baggett, and First Bank have all made donations as Sponsors of the Safari. All the food is donated to the Safari by the Inn at Morro Bay, Robin's of Cambria, Driscoll's Wharf, Windows on the Water and Seven Hands on Higuera. Laetitia, Eberle's, Tablas Creek Vineyard, Talley Winery and Wild Horse have contributed all the wine. Two Dogs will provide coffee and Tea. Pandora, of Pandora and Co. is creating the invitation and tickets. In addition to all this support, many more are contributing to the Auction for that evening.

Donations continue to come in every day and CCNHA is very grateful. The educational and interpretive programming could not be possible without this generosity.

Corrections

In the July 2003 newsletter, Kirk Sturm's daughter's name was inadvertently listed as Amber when her name is actually Emma. Harry Roden, who leads the newsletter mailing crew, was listed as Henry Rodin. And finally, Pismo Docent Chair, George Smith was listed as George West. We apologize to Emma and Harry and George for these errors.



DOCENT CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Docent Council
General Meeting
Wednesday,
August 6, 1:30 PM
Docent House

Pismo Committee
Meeting
3rd Thursdays
(August 21), 9 AM
Pismo Nature Center

Pismo Nature Center
Hours
Open Daily 1-4 PM
Except Tues & Thurs

Pismo Nature Ctr.
Garden Activities
Any Tuesday at 9 AM
Meet in front of
Nature Center
Call Grace Beigle
at 773-2147 or
Susan Grimaud at 543-
2141

Montana de Oro
Holloway Garden
Open all the time
For more information
about the Holloway
Garden:
Call Phoebe Adams
at 528-7911

Montana de Oro
Ranch House Hours
Daily, 11 AM - 3 PM

Montana de Oro
Committee
Last Wednesday
of odd numbered months
at 11 AM
Copa de Oro Cafe in
Baywood

Morro Bay
Committee
Third Wednesday
(August 20), 1:30 PM
Docent House



Dunes & Dunites

By Gail Jensen Sanford

Just inland from the vehicles on the sands at Oceano, there is an area of quiet and haunting beauty. Jack Beigle likes to start his dune walks in late afternoon, when the low angle of the sun highlights and shadows the angles of the dunes into constantly changing patterns that create an atmosphere of contemplation.

The Dune walk begins at the Nature Center, and moves south along the beach for about a mile, across Arroyo Grande Creek, then east through an opening in the fence, past the foredunes, where there are willows and evening primrose, into the back dunes. These migratory dunes are constantly drifting, and it is possible to climb into one of the higher dunes, with sand stretching in every direction, and feel as isolated as if you were in the Sahara Desert. The variety of shapes of the dunes and the lack of vegetation in the oblique angle of the sun changes your perspective. There is not much sign of animal life.

During the 1920's and 1930's, the Dunes were inhabited by a loose-knit community of settlers, called the Dunites. Some were artists and writers, others misfits, all were looking for a simpler life. A magazine called "Dune Forum" was published in 1933-1934, and the community endured until post-World War II development and vehicles on the beach drove most of the dunes settlers away.

You may want to bring two pair of shoes and a towel for this walk. Start out in high-topped hiking shoes to help keep the sand out, but be ready to change into sandals for the creek crossing. The towel is for drying your feet to change back into your hiking shoes.



Shark Inlet to Beach Picnic

By Gail Jensen Sanford

Ernie and Barbara Eddy meet us at the end of Butte Drive in Los Osos, and the hike begins along the southern edge of Shark Inlet at low tide. The eel grass is slick and Ernie identifies raccoon tracks in the silty soil. The tracks go so far along the route we are following that it is almost as if we are walking with the raccoon. Barbara stops often to show us native sages, yarrow, and beach cucumber, and introduced plants, like beach verbena, sea rocket, and invasive ice plant. At the edge of the water, Ernie finds an empty egg casing from one of the sharks that gives the inlet its name.

The twisted branch of an enormous eucalyptus lies on the ground, the surface of its bark a linear mosaic. Introduced to California from Australia, these trees were originally planted in the early 1900's to be used for telephone poles and construction, but the eucalyptus grows too quickly and crooked to be useful for anything other than beauty and windbreaks.

The Eddys identify buffleheads swimming in the bay, curlews and a willet walk along the shore. As we turn toward the beach, Ernie searches for and finds a stake that he drove into the soil ten feet from the sand dunes four years ago. It is almost buried in sand by the rapid advance of the dunes. At the time of the Portola expedition, in 1769, the south end of the bay was open to the sea.

We climb under a fence and into the beach on a sand-covered road made with diagonal rubber tread like tires that gives emergency vehicles and hikers traction in the sand. We reach the beach at the outside of the sandspit, the open ocean stretching before us. Ernie points out a cluster of snowy plovers along the rocks. We walk into the dunes, over a huge Chumash midden of exposed broken oyster and clam shells. Barbara warns us not to take any shells as this is a registered archaeological site.

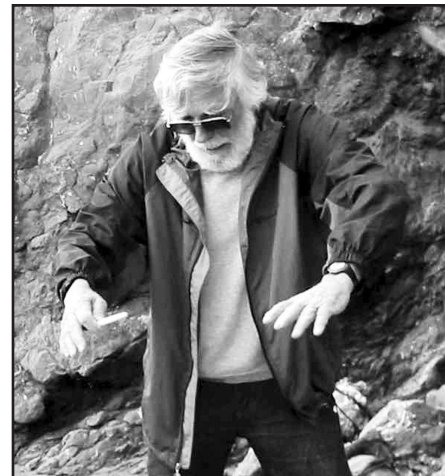
Above the midden, we nestle for cover from the wind in a sand dune to eat lunch. Then Barbara and Ernie lead us to the top of the sand dunes. As we approach the top of the sand, there is a view of Morro Rock and the compact fishing village that the city of Morro Bay has grown from, green hills, and darker Santa Lucia Mountains behind it. Looking down from the top of the sand dune, it seems as we are at the top of the world. The angle of repose of the sand at the top of the dune forms a steep angle, but when I step off the top my boots sink into the sand and gravity pulls me swiftly to the bottom of the dune. It is so much fun that I can't wait until I can go back and slide down the sand dune again.



ADVENTURES WITH NATURE WALKS & TALKS FROM PISMO TO CAMBRIA

Until the Docent program was formed in 1976 and the subsequent formalization of the walk/talk schedule, all walks were led by Museum staff. Interestingly, some of the walks from the 70's are still being carried on by the current group of docents. For example the Los Osos Oaks walk which was done in 1976 by Yolanda Waddell, still very active in Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP), is currently being led by Evelyn and Dave Dabritz and Curt Beebe.

There is something on the schedule for almost everyone. Walks vary in length from the half-mile Windy Cove or White Point walks to the more strenuous walks such as Alan Peak, Coon Creek Loop of 12 miles.



If you want something of a moderate length try walks such as Franciscan Melange at Estero Bluffs led by George Mason.

Or you can take dunes walks at Pismo, estuary walks in Morro Bay or look for otters or whales with the Adams in Cambria.



If you aren't in the mood to walk, Docents such as Jim Little and Bob Field give talks at the Museum.



Throughout the year special educational programs are arranged, such as the recent one by entomologist Dennis Sheridan on Insects.



New docent trainees are recruited each year and trained by the more experienced docents.

Wandering with Docents via the Internet

By Mike Baird

Did you ever wonder what it is like to go on a docent-led interpretative walk? What kind of people show up? What do they find interesting? What kinds of interactions are there?

Through the power of the Internet, you can now experience in advance, and in your home, many of the San Luis Obispo Coast District volunteer docent-led walks. The morro-bay.com website is a not-for-profit community service site, featuring educational information, maps, photos, historical notes, and information about enjoying beautiful Morro Bay and surrounding areas in a responsible way. Included in this extensive website are several sections on docent activities. Just head your browser over to morro-bay.com, and click on "Docent Pages" or "Outdoor" to see for yourself.

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Chair

Gail Jensen Sanford,
Reporter

Harry Roden and the
entire Mailing Crew

Deadline for the Sept.
issue of the newsletter
is Wednesday, August 6,
2003 at 5:00 PM.

Send copy by e-mail (the
preferred method) to:
cnha_news@hotmail.com

Hard copy may be faxed
to the Museum at
772-7129. Hard copy or
disk files may be
delivered to the news-
letter tray in the Museum.
All articles should have
prior approval from
Denise or Sandra first.
Articles will be included
as space permits.



*Norma
Wrightman
Chairman,
Adventures with
Nature Committee*

Where can we
explore tide pools with our
kids in local state parks?

See amazing tide pools at
Montana de Oro's Corallina
Cove and Hazard Reef,
North Point at the north end of
Morro Strand, and along Moonstone
Beach in Cambria. Choose a low or
minus tide to explore.

Tide pooling is an adventure if you
move slowly and observe closely.
Here's a tip on how to explore with
low impact on animals and plants
living in tide pools. Pick a pool with
anemones, marine snails, and hermit
crabs where you can stand, squat or
sit on bare rock. Don't sit on little
black orbs that may be tiny
periwinkle snails!



Watch patiently for several minutes
and keep your shadow out of the
tide pool. You'll see anemones
opening, hermit crabs moving
(maybe competing for a new shell
home), and sculpins (tiny fish
camouflaged so you only see them
when they move) skittering across
the pool. Look for limpets or other
snails creeping slowly across algae
covered rock as they graze using
rasp-like tongues.

Some animals spend their lives in
one small tide pool. I ask kids on
my walks, "How would you like it if
I plucked you out of bed and
dropped you in the middle of New
York City?" They get the message—
if you pick up a tide pool creature,
put it back in the same place.
Please don't love our tide pools to
death!

**Photographer's
Alert!**

Think about photos
to enter in an
upcoming exhibit at
the Museum.

Watch for details in
the September
Nature Notes
newsletter. The show
is tentatively
scheduled for
Nov-Dec.

ASK
AN
EXPERT

PHOTO GALLERY



Docents Linda Winters and Tyra Solomon and Puppets were the hit of the evening with the many children who attended the Summer Solstice Celebration at Montana de Oro.

KIDS SAY IT BEST!

(Our favorite thank you this month)

Dear M.B. Nat. Hist. Museum,

Thank you for showing us the museum and taking us on a hike. I really liked the hike we went on and all the food chains. I came back with all my family and played all the games. I even learned a lot. I watched a video. I like your museum.

Sincerely, Emily Franzmann, Second Grade

ART WITH HEART FUNDRAISING SATURDAY

Carol
DiNolfo

Come spend a pleasant Saturday afternoon while supporting two local non-profit organizations at once. Every 3rd Saturday of the month the San Luis Artists' Gallery hosts a fundraising reception from 2 to 5 PM, during which a portion of all sales will be donated to charity.

CCNHA is one of the participating organizations in this event. So, if you're looking for a decorative item for yourself, or for a gift, consider making a purchase in the gallery that will help CCNHA.

The San Luis Artists' Gallery is the largest, most diverse private gallery in San Luis Obispo. With over 25 artists in the co-op, this eclectic mix of fine art and crafts guarantees there is always "something for everyone." The gourmet desserts of Steven deLuque, nibbles and local wines add to the delightful ambience. By hosting this monthly fundraising reception, the artists of the gallery hope to benefit the community and to acquaint people with their fine art and crafts gallery.

Always on the 3rd Saturday of the month, the next "Art with Heart" Saturday is scheduled for August 16th. The San Luis Artists' Gallery is located at 570 Higuera Street in the historic Creamery in downtown San Luis Obispo. More information is available on the gallery's website, or you may call the gallery at 547-9396. Admission to the event is free. And remember, when you purchase that special item, be sure to tell them you want your donation to go to CCNHA!