

APPLICATION SUMMARY

1. **Project Name:** Forrestal Nature Preserve Wetland Restoration

2. **Type of Project** (check only one): Planning Restoration/Preservation

3. **Project summary** (1-2 sentences -- specify key action(s) to be undertaken):
The Project involves removal of non-native plants from a riparian area on the Forrestal Nature Preserve, one of the key parcels of the future Portuguese Bend Nature Preserve. The objective is to restore the wetland and discourage further encroachment of non-native plants into the existing habitat on the site.

4. **Location:**
County: Los Angeles
Watershed: Santa Monica Bay
State Senate District (#): 27
State Assembly District (#): 54

5. **Acreage:**
Total acreage of project area: .2, within 160-acre preserve.
Acres of existing (pre-project) wetland habitat: .2 degraded.
Acres of post-project wetland habitat: .2.
Feet of stream corridor (if applicable) : 750 .

6. **Budget Summary:**
Total project cost: \$ 20,700.
Amount requested from WRP: \$ 9,950.

7. **Contact Information:**
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8. **Proposal prepared by** Barbara Dye Title Executive Director

Signature _____ Date 3/7/03

Project Narrative

A. *Site Description*

The Forrestal Preserve is a 160-acre coastal preserve located in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (“the City”). The preserve lies in the coastal zone and forms the eastern bookend of the proposed Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park. The property was previously utilized as a quarry and as a result the topography includes rolling vistas and steep slopes. The elevation varies from approximately 410 ft. above sea level at the connection with the neighboring open space, to approximately 1196 ft. above sea level at its northerly border. The site consists of mostly of Coastal Sage Scrub with intermittent patches of non-native plant encroachment. The proposed project site is a blue-line stream that traverses through the middle of the preserve.

B. *Project Description and Need*

About 1920 the Livingstone Truck and Material Co. began using the Forrestal site for quarry material, primarily basalt. Some of the basalt taken from the quarry was used in building breakwaters around Long Beach Harbor. When the quarry was closed in 1956, the mining activities created a range of slope conditions, which include near vertical walls in some areas.

After mining ceased, a number of developers conducted extensive geological tests and surveys for the purpose of building home tracts, and a tract of 42 homes was approved for the site. The City, along with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, negotiated an agreement to purchase the property from the developers using County bond money and funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board. Ownership was transferred to the City in 1996.

The vast majority of the Forrestal Preserve consists of coastal sage scrub. Although the site has been disturbed in the past from mining activities, much of the site was left undisturbed and is now home to some of the most diverse coastal sage scrub in the City. Furthermore, the Forrestal Preserve also contains a significant number of coastal California gnatcatchers (*Polioptila californica californica*, gnatcatcher), a federally threatened bird species.

The Forrestal Preserve contains a blue-line stream that flows at the surface almost year round. The stream ends in the northwestern quarry bowl area where the water percolates into the ground, and is utilized by a community of plants that are not native to the site, including pampas grass and palm trees. Over the past few years the non-native plant species have escaped the immediate streambed vicinity and started to encroach into the coastal sage scrub. This overall site degradation will continue as long as this seed reservoir remains. This project proposes to remove the non-native plants from the stream, both within the quarry area, and further up the stream above the quarry bowl.

The project will consist of hand removal of pampas grass, fan palms, myoporum trees, castor bean, and other exotics from the riparian and wetland area within this preserve and will replace them with native species.

Project Tasks

1. Manually remove invasive plants (Conservancy staff and volunteers)
 - Palms (*Washingtonia filifera*) – cut with chain saw, cut into manageable pieces for site removal, remove seedlings if necessary
 - Myoporum (*Myoporum laetum*) – cut trunk and treat cut surface with Aquamaster; leave roots in place for streambed stabilization; continue treatment as appropriate.
 - Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)– cut with loppers, bundle and remove
 - Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) – remove with chain saws, treat residual root base
2. Bundling of biomass (Volunteers)
3. Hand removal of biomass offsite (Volunteers)
4. Replanting mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and willow species (primarily *Salix lasiolepis*) within canyon (Volunteers)

C. Ecological Benefits of project

The project will provide riparian habitat for native animal and bird species. This project will replace non-native species with native willow and mule fat species that endemic bird species are better adapted to utilize. Furthermore, the removal of the non-native plant species will eliminate future encroachment of the surrounding coastal sage scrub habitat, therefore preventing any further degradation of gnatcatcher nesting sites. Finally, this restoration project will serve as a model restoration effort for other restoration areas within the proposed Portuguese Bend Regional Open Space Park.

D. Community Involvement/Education Element

As part of the ongoing management of this property, the Conservancy holds monthly volunteer days where community members help with the upkeep of the property. Volunteer tasks include non-native plant removal, trail maintenance, and debris removal. The managing entity for the preserve is an advisory committee, the Forrestal Preserve Steering Committee, which is made up of members from the community. Two committee members, a local native plant enthusiast and a trail expert, will be highly involved in the planning and implementation of this project. Furthermore, the majority of the work for this project will be done using volunteers (see task list above).

The Docents of Los Serenos de Point Vicente, a local volunteer organization, routinely lead educational nature walks for mostly elementary-school age children within the area. Last year the Docents led approximately 1200 children on their nature walks. This restoration effort will be incorporated into their presentations, and a display about

the project added to the Ladera Linda Discovery Room, a small interactive nature center in the building adjacent to the preserve.

E. Restoration Experience

The Conservancy has an ongoing stewardship program that, along with management of various open space properties, includes a complete habitat restoration program. Our restoration experience includes native plant seed collection and propagation, site preparation and planning, and restoration implementation.

Our native plant propagation efforts include our own native plant nursery where locally sourced native plant stock is grown. Ninety thousand plants are being propagated for the 2002-2003 planting season. All plants are grown from seed or cuttings collected locally to ensure proper genetic integrity. This project calls for installation of native riparian species, which will be propagated from cuttings taken from the closest known source (Klondike Canyon).

At the Linden H. Chandler Preserve (Chandler) in Rolling Hills Estates the Conservancy has undertaken a similar wetland restoration. Chandler is a twenty eight-acre parcel that is divided by a blue-line stream. When the Conservancy took over ownership of the property the streambed was dominated by giant reed (*Arundo donax*). Giant reed, sometimes called false bamboo due to its similar appearance, grows 25 to 30 feet tall and outcompetes all other riparian vegetation. The Conservancy, using staff and volunteers, was able to remove the reed from the streambed with a combination of hand labor and herbicide application. Willows, mulefat, and appropriate understory plants were installed.

The Conservancy is currently restoring the 100-acre White Point Nature Preserve in San Pedro with coastal sage scrub habitat. The property was formerly owned by the Air Force, and was covered with invasive grasslands. The Conservancy has treated the existing weeds, and is in the process of installing an irrigation system along with 40,000 plants in 2003. In 2004, we will install an additional 30,000 plants, along with a seeded grassland area.

Other Conservancy restoration projects have included Palos Verdes blue butterfly restoration on the Defense Fuel Supply Depot in San Pedro, and coastal sage scrub restoration on the Lunada Canyon Preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes.

This project will be started as soon as funding is available. It is estimated that it will take approximately two months to complete.