

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE  
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**W17a**C.F.R.  
12/16/98

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Staff: SM-SC  
Staff Report: 12/16/98  
Hearing Date: 01/13/98  
Commission Action:

**RECORD PACKET COPY****STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALANDER**  
**COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**APPLICATION NUMBER: **3-98-095**APPLICANT: **Department of General Services, San Luis Obispo County**

PROJECT LOCATION: Elfin Forest (properties owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, State Lands Commission, and the County of San Luis Obispo) in the Los Osos area of San Luis Obispo County (location and site maps attached as Exhibits 1 and 2). Assessor Parcel Numbers 38-701-004, -005, and -006.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Construct a boardwalk loop trail with two viewing platforms for public access and recreation. The 5,300-foot long boardwalk will be approximately 5.5 feet wide, with some areas narrowing to 3 feet to avoid disturbance to sensitive habitats. At 12 locations, the boardwalk widens to approximately 56 square feet to meet standards established by the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). The boardwalk also includes 12 vista points/rest areas with benches, each of approximately 100 square feet. The 2 viewing platforms, one located at Bush Lupine Point and the other at Mayhem Point, will be 300 square feet each. In total, the project involves the construction of approximately 32,000 square feet (0.73 acres) of new boardwalk. In addition, two new handicapped parking spaces will be created at the northern terminus of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, where the boardwalk trail begins. The project also involves the revegetation and enhancement of environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the forest.

LOCAL APPROVALS: No local permits are required; the site is an area of deferred certification and is not included in the San Luis Obispo County certified Local Coastal Program (please see discussion on page 5 of this report). San Luis Obispo County certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, on December 15, 1998.

FILE DOCUMENTS: Coastal Conservancy Project File No. CP-1-94

**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission **conditionally approve** the coastal development permit requested by the San Luis Obispo County Department of General services for the proposed construction of the Elfin Forest Boardwalk and related parking improvements. Currently, public access within the Elfin Forest occurs in an unmanaged fashion, along a network of informal sandy trails. In addition to providing handicapped access, the proposed boardwalk will concentrate foot traffic onto a designated pathway, which will minimize erosion, soil compaction, dust, and other adverse impacts to the surrounding sensitive habitats associated with human use of the area. Thus, the project achieves Coastal Act objectives of maximizing public access consistent with the need to protect natural resource areas from overuse (Coastal Act Section 30210). In addition, the footprint of the boardwalk has been designed and oriented to avoid impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats, consistent with the requirements of Coastal Act Section 30240.

The recommended conditions of approval require Executive Director approval of final plans for the interpretive signing program, and for the forest revegetation and restoration component of the project. Review of the signing program will ensure that access is appropriately managed to protect sensitive habitat areas adjacent to the boardwalk. The forest revegetation and restoration plan will be reviewed for compatibility with the biological continuance and productivity of the existing habitat values on site and within the surrounding area. This review will take place in coordination with the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, the Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Finally, the Special Conditions of Approval require the applicant to submit copies of the lease(s) or other legally equivalent agreement(s) that provide the applicant with the legal authority to undertake the proposed development on lands held in the public trust by the State Lands Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation. (Staff of the State Lands Commission has already indicated its support of the project, and given permission to the San Luis Obispo County Department of General Services to apply for this permit. The Department of Parks and Recreation has reviewed the project under Public Resources Code Section 5024, regarding the protection of cultural resources, and has indicated the need to obtain a Temporary Use Permit for private contractors working on State Park property).

With these conditions, the project conforms to the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

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**I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following Resolution:

Approval with Conditions

The Commission hereby **grants** a permit for the proposed development, subject to the conditions below, on the grounds that the development, as conditioned, will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, is located between the

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with Mary Howe of the State Lands Commission, 11/30/98

sea and the first public road nearest the shoreline and is in conformance with the public access and public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act; and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

## II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.

2. Expiration. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date this permit is reported to the Commission. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.

3. Compliance. All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application for permit, subject to any special conditions set forth below. Any deviation from the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the staff and may require Commission approval.

4. Interpretation. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.

5. Inspections. The Commission staff shall be allowed to inspect the site and the project during its development, subject to 24-hour advance notice.

6. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.

7. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

## III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Final Plans. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE PERMIT, the permittee shall submit, for Executive Director review and approval, final plans for the project's interpretive signing program, the project's revegetation and enhancement plan, and the project's parking improvements, that meet the following requirements:

a. Interpretive Signing. Final interpretive signing plans shall identify the location, design, and text of all signs to be installed under the project. The objective of this plan shall be to manage public access consistent with natural and archaeological resource protection, by educating the public about the site's biological and cultural importance and the ways in which these resources can be protected (e.g., directing visitors to stay on the boardwalk trail, keep dogs on leash, etc.). The design and location of the interpretive signs shall minimize impacts to the scenic qualities of this natural area by, among other means: being constructed of natural and/or non-reflective materials; having low-profiles that will not intrude upon scenic coastal

views; and, by being distributed along the trail at intervals that achieve effective access management without diminishing the natural qualities of the area.

b. **Revegetation and Enhancement Plan.** Final plans for the forest revegetation and enhancement component of the project shall identify the types of invasive plants that will be removed, and the method of removal, as well as the types of native vegetation that will be planted within disturbed areas, their seed source, and the maintenance/monitoring provisions that will be implemented to ensure their long-term survival. If pesticides and/or fertilizers will be used as part of the revegetation and enhancement efforts, the plan shall include specific guidelines for the use of such materials that avoid adverse impacts to existing habitat areas and the water quality of the adjacent estuary. PRIOR TO THE SUBMITTAL OF THE FINAL REVEGETATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN, the permittee shall provide copies of a draft plan to the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, the Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Executive Director of the Coastal Commission, for review and comment. Any recommendations contained in these comments shall be incorporated into the final plan to the greatest degree feasible. Submittal of the final plan for Executive Director review and approval shall be accompanied by copies of all comments received, and any approvals or authorizations that may be required by these agencies for the implementation of the revegetation and enhancement plan.

c. **Parking Improvements.** Final plans for the two handicapped spaces to be installed at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> Street shall include drainage improvements necessary to prevent surface runoff from causing erosion in adjacent areas, and shall confirm that the installation of the parking spaces and related drainage improvements will not impact any rare native plant species.

2. **Legal Authorization to Undertake Development.** PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE PERMIT, the permittee shall submit, for Executive Director review and approval, copies of the lease(s) or legally equivalent agreement(s), as well as a Temporary Use Permit from the Department of Parks and Recreation, which provides the permittee with the legal authorization to undertake and maintain the project on lands held in the public trust by the State Lands Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

#### **IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS**

##### **A. Project Description:**

The Elfin Forest Boardwalk Project involves the construction of a looped boardwalk with two viewing platforms and interpretive signs, the creation of two new handicapped parking spaces at the existing terminus of 16<sup>th</sup> Ave., and the revegetation and restoration of the forest. Numerous hiking trails currently exist within the Elfin Forest. The intent of the boardwalk project is to maximize and enhance public access to this area, consistent with the protection of the site's coastal resources. The boardwalk will consolidate trails, reduce erosion and degradation of forest habitat, protect archaeological resources, facilitate educational, interpretive and environmental restoration programs, and provide access for persons with disabilities consistent with American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The looped boardwalk will be approximately 5,300 feet in length, and have a typical width of 5.5 feet. It will be located in areas where existing trails have been established, and will narrow to 3 feet wide in certain areas to avoid disturbance to existing habitat areas.. As required by ADA

standards, the boardwalk will have 12 wider sections, which will be approximately 8.5 feet wide for a distance of 8 feet. Two viewing platforms of 300 square feet each will be located at Bush Lupine Point and Mayhem Point, and will provide benches and views of the Morro Bay National Estuary and the Morros, a chain of extinct volcanic peaks. In addition to these two viewing platforms, the boardwalk includes 12 vista points/rest areas of approximately 100 square feet each. The total boardwalk area, including the viewing platforms, vista points, and wider boardwalk areas will be approximately 32,000 square feet, or 0.73 acres.

Construction of the boardwalk has been designed to avoid impacts to adjacent sensitive habitat areas. No heavy equipment or motorized vehicles will be brought onto the site, to avoid impacts to the federally endangered Morro shoulderband snail. All excavation will be done by hand, and materials will be hauled with handcarts. A complete description of the environmental protection measures that have been incorporated into the project is attached to this report as Exhibit 3.

As proposed, the project includes the placement of interpretive signs along the boardwalk to educate the public about the site's cultural and biological importance. The signs will also emphasize leaving all cultural and natural resources undisturbed, and ways to protect the forest (such as keeping dogs on leash).

The two new handicapped parking spaces that will be established at the terminus of 16<sup>th</sup> street are shown by Exhibit 4. These parking spaces will be located entirely within existing County road easements.

#### **B. Project Location:**

The Elfin Forest is located in the unincorporated community of Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County. It is an open space area in the northern portion of the community, bounded by the Morro Bay National Estuary to the north and west, South Bay Boulevard to the east, and residential development to the South. (Please see Exhibits 1 and 2 for location and site maps.)

Prior to the passage of the Coastal Act, a 260-lot subdivision was recorded within this area, which has also been referred to as the "Otto property". Because conflicts between the development of these properties and the protection of natural resources were not resolved by the San Luis Obispo County Local Coastal Program (LCP), the Otto property remains an area of deferred certification. As a result, the Coastal Commission retains coastal development permit jurisdiction over this area.

Contained on the site are archaeological deposits of the Chumash Indians, as well as numerous rare plant and wildlife species associated with coastal scrub, chaparral, oak woodland, and wetland communities. Rare plant species include the federally threatened Morro manzanita, and the largest population of pygmy oaks (a stunted variety of the Coast live oak) in the region. At least 23 species of mammals, 110 species of birds and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians have been observed on the property. Rare species include the California black rail, the sharp-shin hawk, the northern harrier, the California legless lizard, and the Coast horned lizard. The federally endangered Morro Bay kangaroo rat existed on the property in the past, but has not been found in recent years. The site could potentially provide habitat for the recovery of this animal.

In recognition of the important habitat and open space values provided by this area, the majority of the forest has been purchased by public agencies. In 1987, the California Department of Parks and Recreation purchased the northern 52 acres of the forest. In 1994, an effort to

purchase an additional 40 acres was successfully mounted by the Coastal Conservancy, the County of San Luis Obispo, and the Small Area Wilderness Preservation (SWAP) organization. The Commission granted an approval in concept for the Coastal Conservancy's disbursement of funds for this purchase on February 16, 1994 (Project No. CP-1-94).

Currently, San Luis Obispo County, the State Lands Commission, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation own portions of the Elfin Forest. The majority of the project will be located on property owned by the County of San Luis Obispo. A portion of the southern lookout at Bush Lupine Point is located on State Lands Commission property, and a portion of the boardwalk connection and lookout at Mayhem Point is located on land owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Special Condition 3 of this permit requires the permittee to submit evidence that the appropriate legal authorizations have been obtained from the State Lands Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation to undertake and maintain the project in these areas.

#### **B. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas:**

Coastal Act Section 30240(a) of the Coastal Act provides:

Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

As previously described, the Elfin Forest supports numerous sensitive and rare plant and animal species, and is therefore considered an environmentally sensitive habitat area. The project has been carefully designed to avoid impacts to these habitat areas by locating the boardwalk primarily in areas that have been disturbed by unauthorized human use. Direct and indirect impacts of the project on environmentally sensitive habitat areas are addressed in detail below.

The project will provide environmental education and interpretive facilities that facilitate public use of the site but also protect its sensitive resources. The opportunity for the public to experience, learn about, and passively interact with the natural resource values of the site will foster an understanding and appreciation of these resources, as well as a sense of stewardship that is essential to the overall protection and enhancement of such sensitive habitat areas.

Two botanical surveys completed for the project (V.L. Holland, *Main Report*, December 1995, and *Addendum*, February, 1997) found that the proposed route of the boardwalk will not require the removal of any of the sensitive plant species found within the forest, such as Morro manzanita, Suffrutescent wallflower, California spineflower, and Dune almond. To ensure that this will be the case, the botanist recommends that all sensitive plants within the vicinity of the path be clearly staked and marked prior to construction so construction personnel know to avoid them.

Some of the Morro manzanitas and oaks immediately adjacent to the path may, however, need to be trimmed. The botanist therefore has recommended that trimming be kept to a minimum, and be carried out by a qualified arborist or landscaper. In the case of trimming pygmy oaks, the botanist recommended that in no case should trimming exceed 25% of the existing canopy. Of particular concern to the botanist were portions of the project (i.e., some rest areas and some switch back areas) that may require some brush removal and/or significant pruning. To address this impact, the reports call for an inventory to be taken in all disturbed areas where shrubs are removed, or where more than 25% of their canopies are removed, and the preparation of a

revegetation and enhancement plan to mitigate for this loss. This plan should include replanting disturbed sites with species indigenous to the Elfin Forest, particularly Morro manzanita and sand almond, which are encouraged because of their rareness and loss from the Los Osos area over recent years.

With these safeguards, which have been incorporated into the project description, the botanical reports conclude that "overall the long term affect of the boardwalk on vegetation of the Elfin forest will be positive. It will help keep visitors on designated paths and will allow natural vegetation to occur in some areas, where the path is getting wider because of foot traffic".

In addition to botanical surveys, Dr. Roger Gambs evaluated the biological resources of the project area in June 1997. This assessment included a survey of the boardwalk route and the area within about 30 feet of either side of the boardwalk. The assessment found that among the 200 species of terrestrial vertebrates known to occur within the Elfin Forest, twelve species may be directly or indirectly impacted by the project. Among these species, the Coast horned lizard and the California legless lizard were noted as having a high risk of being impacted during the excavation phase of construction because they are ground dwelling and have relatively small home ranges. To avoid and minimize these impacts, five mitigation measures recommended by the biologist have been incorporated into the project. These include: avoiding the use of heavy equipment; reducing the construction corridor; restricting visitor access to the boardwalk area; planting native vegetation in the construction corridor; and, implementing native revegetation throughout the Elfin Forest. This latter mitigation is expected to benefit some of the 24 special status species and other species that use the forest.

To address potential impacts to the federally endangered Morro shoulderband snail, a 10-foot wide corridor along the alignment of the proposed boardwalk was surveyed by Ed Reeves in August 1998. Although two shells were found approximately 200 feet from the beginning of the boardwalk at the north end of 16<sup>th</sup> street, no live snails were found in any of the surveyed area. The project has also been reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who has concurred that with the implementation of specific measures, the project will not result in the take of the federally endangered Morro shoulderband snail. These measures, which have been incorporated into the project description, include: training of project personnel to recognize and protect the Morro shoulderband snail and its habitat; containing all construction operations within project site boundaries; and, having a biologist present during construction to prevent any adverse impacts to this species. Should any live Morro shoulderband snails be located within the project area, further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be required.

Overall, this project provides an excellent opportunity to protect the environmentally sensitive habitat values of the Elfin Forest that are being degraded by increasing human use of the area. Trail access within the Elfin Forest is currently provided by a system of sand trails that have been created through many years of unauthorized use by pedestrians and off-highway vehicles. Continued use has resulted in erosion of the sandy soil, and trampling of sensitive vegetation and habitat. By providing a boardwalk, the project will consolidate trails, reduce erosion and the overall degradation of the forest habitat, and facilitate effective revegetation and environmental enhancement.

Nonetheless, the proposed revegetation of the forest intended to mitigate for impacts to sensitive habitat areas, as well as the interpretive signing program, designed to avoid and minimize human impacts to sensitive habitat areas adjacent to the boardwalk, have not been specifically defined. To ensure that these mitigation measures will be implemented in a manner

that effectively protects environmentally sensitive habitat values, Special Condition 1 of this permit requires Executive Director approval of final revegetation and signing plans.

More specifically, final interpretive signing plans must identify the location, design, and text of all signs to be installed under the project, with the objective of managing public access consistent with natural and archaeological resource protection. This will be achieved by educating the public about the site's biological and cultural importance and the ways in which these resources can be protected (e.g., directing visitors to stay on the boardwalk trail, keeping dogs on leash, etc.). To prevent the signs from detracting from the scenic qualities of the area, they must be: constructed of natural and/or non-reflective materials; have low-profiles that will not intrude upon scenic coastal views; and, be distributed along the trail at intervals that achieve effective access management without diminishing the natural scenic quality of the area.

Final plans for the forest revegetation and enhancement component of the project must describe: the types of invasive plants that will be removed, and the method of removal; as well as the types of native vegetation that will be planted within disturbed areas, their seed source, and the maintenance/monitoring provisions that will be implemented to ensure their long-term survival. If pesticides and/or fertilizers will be used as part of the revegetation and enhancement efforts, the plan must include specific guidelines for the use of such materials that avoid adverse impacts to existing habitat areas and the water quality of the adjacent estuary. Prior to being approved by the Executive Director, the plan must be coordinated with the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Coordinator, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Special Condition 1 also requires Executive Director review and approval of final parking improvement plans for the two new parking spaces at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, in order to ensure that drainage is designed in a manner that prevents surface runoff from causing erosion to adjacent areas. The area proposed for these parking improvements is located entirely within County owned roadway rights-of-way, and does not provide any significant habitat values as it is immediately adjacent to an existing roadway and has been degraded by the existence of non-native veldt grass. Nonetheless, to ensure that these parking improvements will not have any adverse impact on environmentally sensitive habitats, Special Condition 1 also requires final plans for the parking improvements to confirm that there will be no damage to any rare native plant species.

With these conditions, the project is consistent with Section 30240 of the Coastal Act.

### **C. Archaeological Resources:**

Section 30244 of the Coastal Act requires:

Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

According to the Archaeological Review completed for the project by Robert Gibson in May 1996, two archaeological sites are present within the project area. Both consist of shells, burnt rocks, dark sandy soil and flakes, and have been adversely impacted by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, natural wind erosion, and amateur artifact collection. However, the archaeologist states that "overall both sites are largely intact and the association of these two



sites and the Elfin Forest makes them potentially significant cultural resources that should be protected for future generations".

Upon inspecting the existing trail system currently used by the public, the archaeologist found that the proposed boardwalk could actually protect the cultural resources and vegetation from impacts associated with public use and vandalism.

Mr. Gibson also provided recommendations regarding the treatment of the cultural resources within the project area, which have been incorporated into the mitigation measures that will be provided as part of the project (attached as Exhibit 3). As stated in the archaeological report, "If these recommendations are followed, then the proposed boardwalk trail in the Elfin Forest will not have adverse impact to any known cultural resources."

Thus, with the archaeological mitigation measures that are to be provided as part of the project, the development conforms to the requirements of Coastal Act Section 30244.

#### **D. Scenic Resources:**

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic area such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

The San Luis Obispo County Environmental Division conducted a visual assessment of the project and identified that the eastern portion of the boardwalk, as well as the two overlooks, will be partially visible from South Bay Boulevard. The most visible element of the overlooks, other than visitors themselves, is expected to be the informational signs and benches. However, since the height of the signs is not expected to exceed four or five feet, and benches are not expected to exceed three feet, the visibility of these project elements from South Bay Boulevard was not considered to be significant by this assessment. To minimize the visibility of the eastern portion of the boardwalk from South Bay Boulevard, the project has been designed to minimize the removal and trimming of tall vegetation that will screen this section of boardwalk.

As previously noted, Special Condition 1 requires Executive Director review and approval of final interpretive signing plans. In order to ensure that the signs will not detract from the scenic qualities of the area, this condition requires that the signs must be: constructed of natural and/or non-reflective materials; have low-profiles that will not intrude upon scenic coastal views; and, be distributed along the trail at intervals that achieve effective access management without diminishing the natural scenic quality of the area.

With this condition, the project is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

**F. LCP/CEQA:**

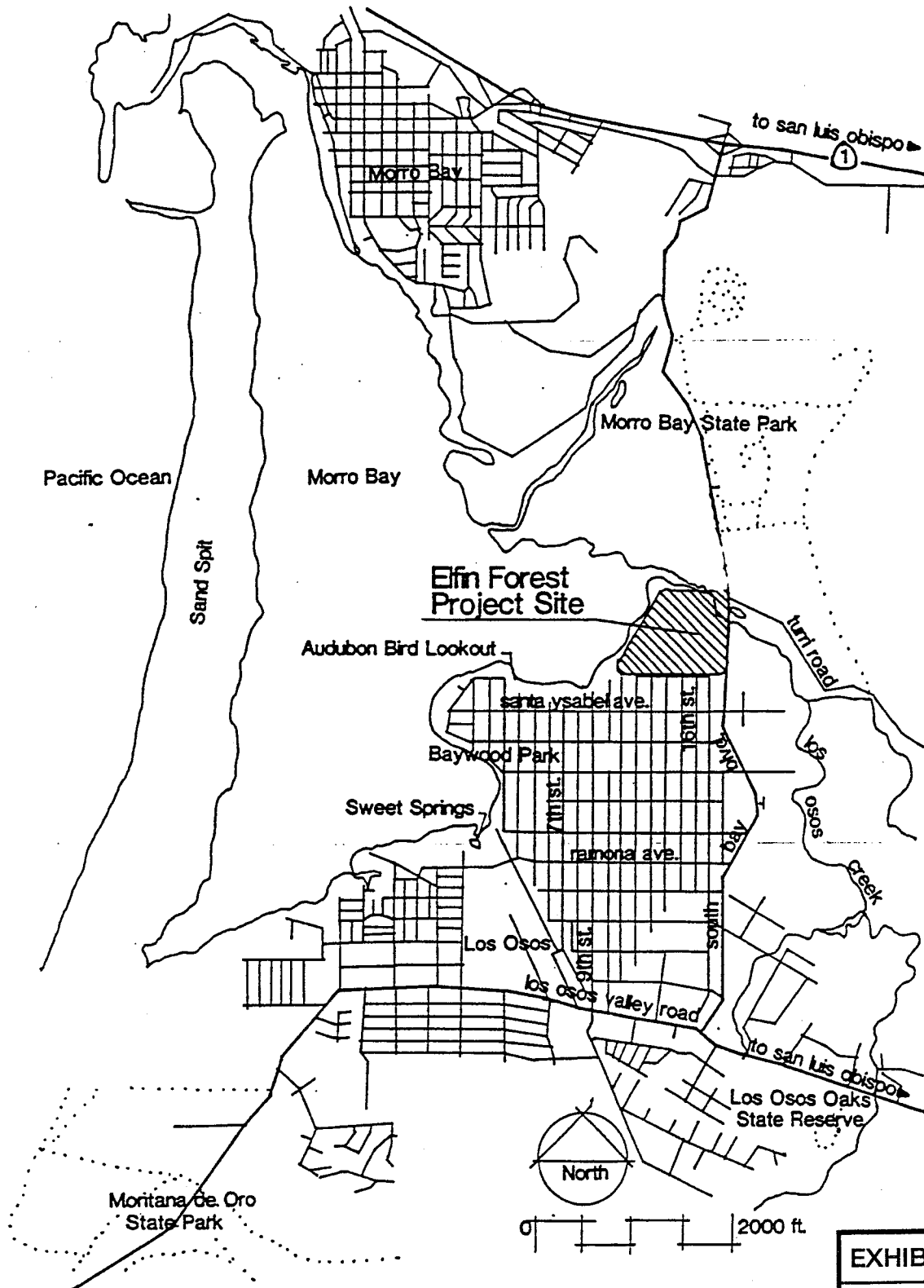
As previously noted, the project is an area of San Luis Obispo County that is not covered by the San Luis Obispo County certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). This area was "whiteholed" from the LCP due to unresolved issues regarding the development of the antiquated subdivision within the forest, and the protection of the forest's natural resources. While these issues have been effectively resolved through the public acquisition of the forest, it remains an area of deferred certification.

As detailed above, the project will enhance public access and recreational opportunities, and facilitate the protection and restoration of environmentally sensitive habitat areas. By fulfilling these Coastal Act objectives, the project represents a positive accomplishment towards the eventual development and certification of LCP standards for the area that reflect these land uses. Thus, the project will not prejudice the ability of San Luis Obispo County to develop an LCP for the area that conforms with Coastal Act requirements.

In complying with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County certified a mitigated Negative Declaration for the project on December 15, 1998. With these mitigation measures, which are identified in the Revised Developer's Statement for the project (attached as Exhibit 3), and the conditions of this permit, the project will not have a significant adverse affect on the environment within the meaning of CEQA.

# EXHIBIT 1

## LOS OSOS/ELFIN FOREST COMMUNITY ACCESS exhibits



**STREET MAP**  
with local land marks and activities

EXHIBIT NO. 1

APPLICATION NO.  
3-98-095

Location Map

# EXHIBIT

## LOS OSOS/ELFIN FOREST COMMUNITY ACCESS

S I T E P L A N

Key

-  New Accessible Boardwalk (PROPOSED)
-  New Trail (NOT A PART OF THIS PROJECT)
-  Existing Trail

0 300 900 Feet

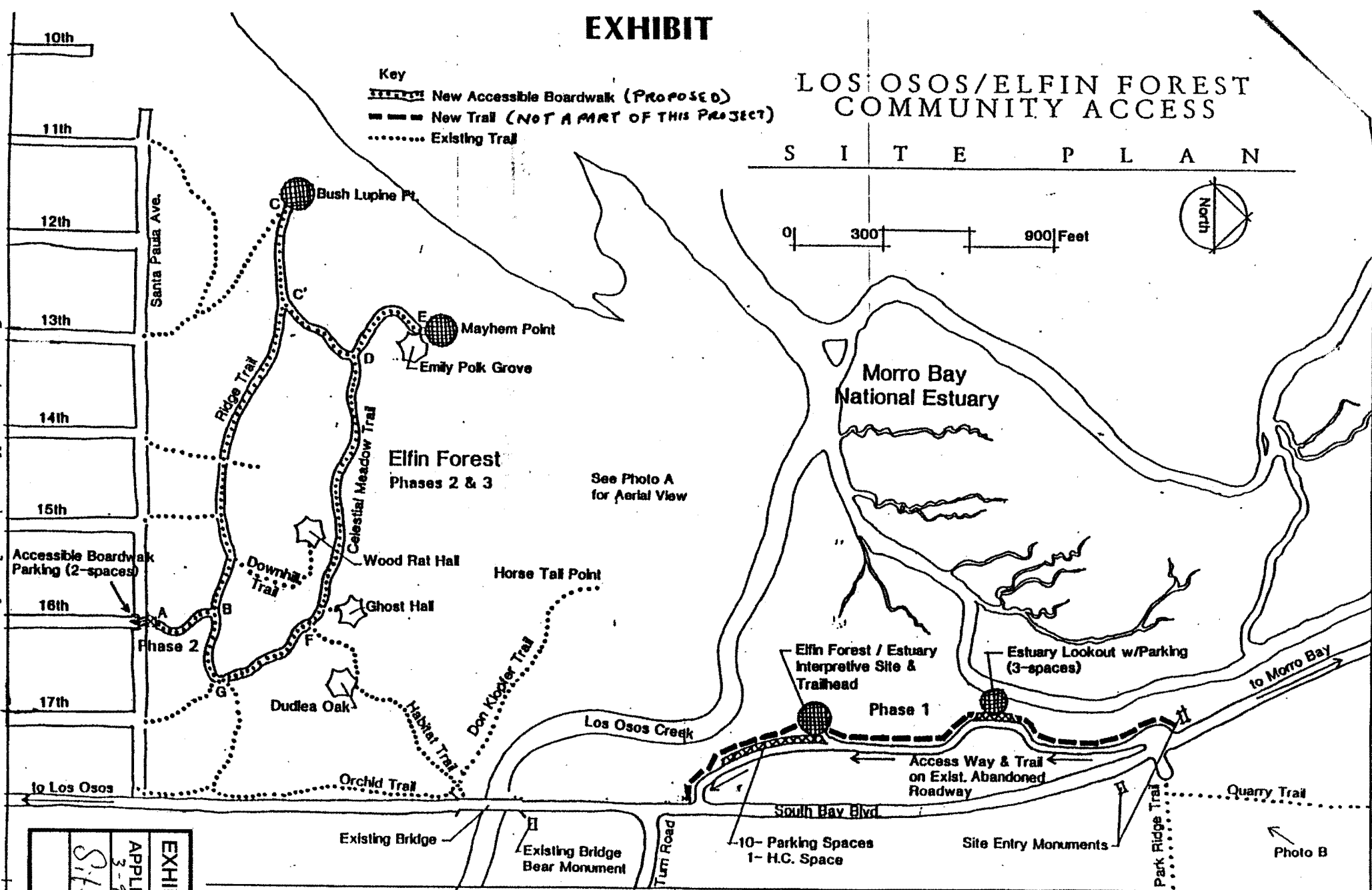
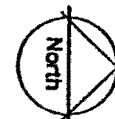


EXHIBIT NO. 2

APPLICATION NO.  
3-98-095

Site Map

EXHIBIT NO. 3

APPLICATION NO.  
3-98-095

*Revised developer's  
statement*

*Revised* DEVELOPER'S STATEMENT FOR  
COUNTY GENERAL SERVICES/PARKS;  
ELFIN FOREST ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT; ED95-234

The applicant agrees to incorporate the following measures into the project. These measures become a part of the project description and therefore become a part of the record of action upon which the environmental determination is based. All construction/grading activity must occur in strict compliance with the following mitigation measures. These measures shall be perpetual and run with the land. These measures are binding on all successors in interest of the subject property.

**Note:** The items contained in the boxes labeled "Monitoring" describe the County procedures to be used to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures.

Archaeology

The applicant has read the archaeological report (Gibson; 5/10/96) and understands that the project site is within an archaeologically sensitive area. In an effort to protect any archaeological resources present at the project site, the applicant shall implement the following measures:

1. **Prior to any ground disturbing activities:**
  - a. at least two shell samples shall be collected from each known archaeological site (SLO-1122 & SLO-1395) for Carbon-14 dating and processing. This shall be performed by a qualified archaeologist.
2. **During construction activities:**
  - a. the applicant shall retain a qualified archaeologist to monitor all earth disturbing activities related to construction of the boardwalk and overlooks.
  - b. if any archaeological resources are found during monitoring, all work shall stop within 150 feet of the resource until such time as the resource can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist. The applicant shall implement the recommendations of the archaeologist, as required by the Environmental Coordinator.
  - c. all excavation work should be done by hand with shovels. No heavy equipment should be used. All excavation workers shall be trained to identify archaeological resources during digging of the footings for the boardwalk.
3. **Upon completion of all monitoring/mitigation activities, and prior to occupancy or final inspection, whichever occurs first:**
  - a. the consulting archaeologist shall submit a letter (or report) to the Environmental Division summarizing all monitoring/mitigation activities and confirming that all recommended mitigation measures have been met. This portion of the project shall not be finalized until this final report is received by the Environmental Coordinator.

3-98-095  
Exhibit 3, p. 1

**Monitoring:** A letter shall be submitted by the consulting archaeologist. Compliance will be verified by the Department of Planning and Building in cooperation with the Environmental Division.

### Botanical Resources

The applicant has read the botanical survey (Holland; December, 1995) and understands that the project site is within a botanically sensitive area. In an effort to protect any botanical resources present at the project site, the applicant shall implement the following measures:

4. **Prior to any vegetation removal or trimming:**

- a. an inventory of all plants to be removed or trimmed shall be performed. Plants not found on this list shall not be removed or trimmed without authorization from a qualified botanist, as approved by the Environmental Coordinator.
- b. all sensitive plants (including, but not limited to; Morro manzanita, suffrutescent wallflower, California spineflower, and dune almond) within 20 feet of the proposed trail route shall be staked and marked clearly so that construction personnel know to avoid adversely impacting these species. If any plants are inadvertently impacted, a qualified botanist should be consulted prior to implementing remediation.
- c. a *revegetation and enhancement plan* should be prepared to reduce the adverse effects of vegetation loss. This plan shall be reviewed and approved the Environmental Coordinator prior to implementation. This plan shall include revegetating areas of erosion and vegetation loss due to impacts caused by man (these areas include unofficial trails throughout the property). The revegetation effort, as required as part of this agreement, shall be limited to an amount equivalent to the square footage of vegetation removed (i.e. if 20,000 square feet of vegetation loss occurs with the project, 20,000 square feet of revegetation should occur in areas designated for revegetation and restoration). Any native species trimmed where 25% of the canopy is removed shall be included in the revegetation (e.g. if four of the same species have 25% canopy removed, one individual of the same species shall be planted). *Additional revegetation and restoration of disturbed areas, outside the requirements of this agreement, can be directed and implemented by the applicant.*

5. **During construction activities:**

- a. Trimming of pygmy oaks shall be kept to a minimum. If trimming of pygmy oaks is necessary, the trimming shall be conducted or supervised by a qualified arborist, or other qualified individual, familiar with proper trimming procedures for pygmy oaks.

**Monitoring:** Compliance will be verified by the Environmental Division.

### Biological Resources

The applicant understands that the project is within a biologically sensitive area and agrees to implement the following measures:

3-98-095  
Exhibit 3, p. 2

## 6. Prior to any vegetation removal or trimming:

- a. No "take" of the Morro shoulderband snail (*Helminthoglypta walkeriana*) shall occur during project implementation. Avoidance of any areas that contain Morro shoulderband snails shall be method of avoiding "take" for the project.
- b. No heavy equipment shall be used and vegetation modification shall be limited to trimming of branches that overhang the existing trails.
- c. A biologist experienced with the Morro shoulderband snail shall be present during project implementation to ensure the species is not affected from project activities.
- d. The biologist shall verify that the staked trail route is in areas that are not known to be Morro shoulderband snail habitat.
- e. Pre-construction training shall be conducted for all project personnel and shall include: a description of the Morro shoulderband snail and its habitat; the general provisions of the Endangered Species Act; the necessity for adhering to the provisions of the Act; the penalties associated with violating the provisions of the Act; the protection measures for the species as they relate to the project; and the access routes and project site boundaries within which the work may be accomplished.
- f. No Morro shoulderband snails may be moved out of the affected project area. If a live Morro shoulderband snail is located within the project area, an alternative route for the boardwalk shall be found or the project shall cease until an incidental take permit is obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- g. If the County becomes aware of unanticipated effects of the proposed action or the occurrence of other listed species in the vicinity of the project, the Service shall be contacted as soon as possible to assess any potential impacts to listed species and the need for compliance with the Act.

**Monitoring:** A letter shall be submitted by the consulting biologist. Compliance will be verified by the Department of Planning and Building in cooperation with the Environmental Division and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The applicant understands that any changes made to the project description subsequent to this environmental determination must be reviewed by the Environmental Coordinator's Office and may require a new environmental determination for the project. By signing this agreement, the owner(s) agrees to and accepts the incorporation of the above measures into the proposed project description.

D. Leib  
Signature of Owner(s)

October 23, 1998  
Date

Duane P. Leib  
Name of Owner - Print

3-98-095  
Exhibit 3, p. 3

RECEIVED

DEC 08 1998

PARKING LAYOUT  
ELFIN FOREST NATURAL AREA

CALIFORNIA  
COASTAL COMMISSION  
CENTRAL COAST AREA

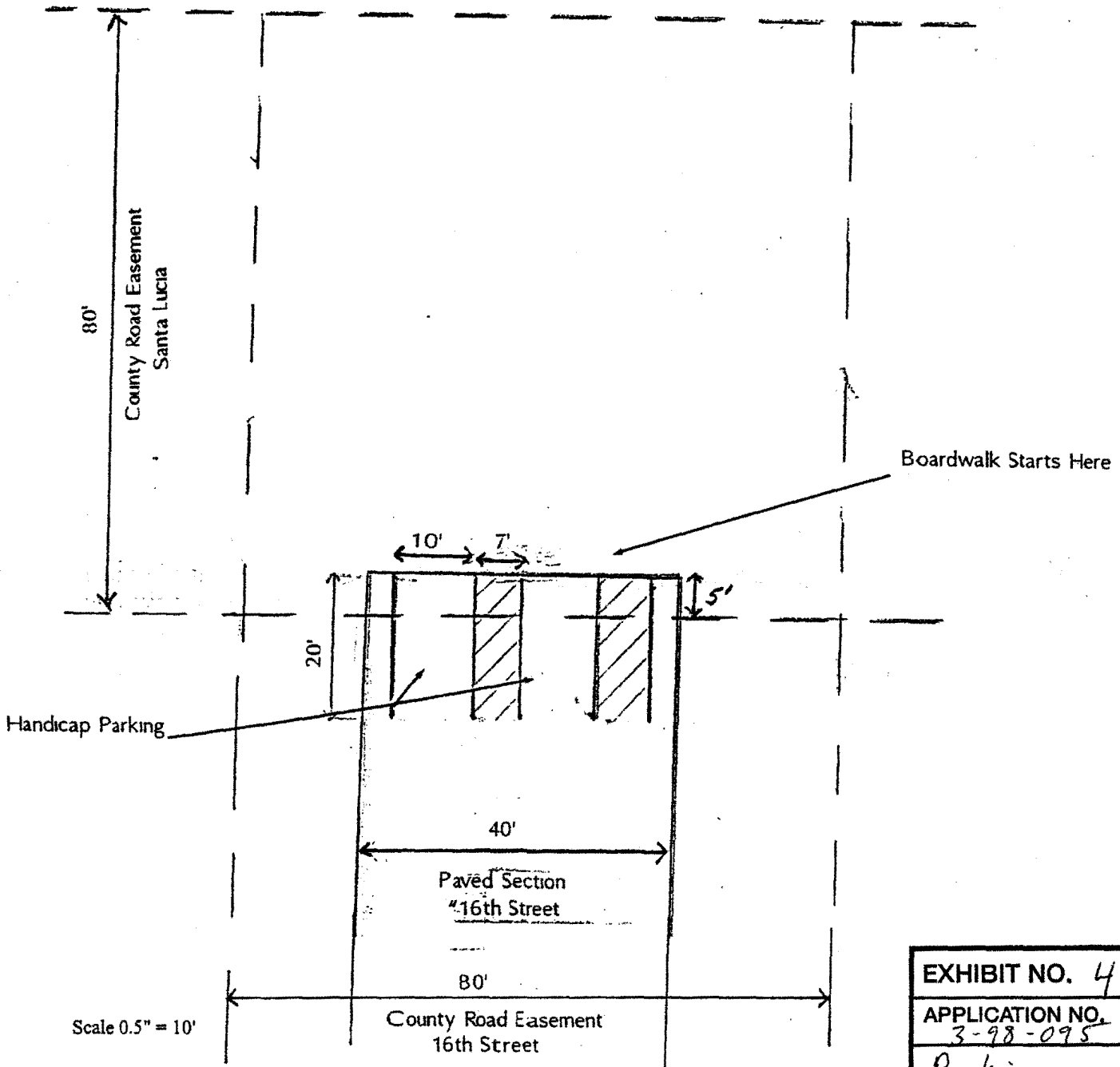


EXHIBIT NO. 4

APPLICATION NO.  
3-98-095

Parking  
Improvements



# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, Room 370 • SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA 95060-2050 • 805/881-2450



AUG 21 1998

August 17, 1998

CALIFORNIA  
COASTAL COMMISSION  
CENTRAL COAST AREA

LAURENCE L. LAURENT  
SUPERVISOR DISTRICT TWO

Mr. Steve Guiney  
California Coastal Commission  
725 Front Street, Suite 300  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Guiney:

I'd like to express my support in the strongest terms imaginable for the proposed Elfin Forest boardwalk in Los Osos. The Elfin Forest has long been considered a local treasure by the citizens of Los Osos and neighboring communities. With the help of the Small Wilderness Area Preservation program, the community raised the funds to purchase this unique habitat in 1994, protecting it from future development and preserving it forever for public benefit. It is a lovely and beloved little fragment of wildness which provides much-needed habitat protection and a place for individual restoration and reflection in this highly urbanized area.

The boardwalk project from the 16th Street parking area to a pair of coastal overlooks has been a part of the long-range vision of the forest since its inception. A raised boardwalk will provide handicapped access and protect the fragile terrain from erosion. Hundreds of people visit the forest every week, and the collective impact of their presence on the informal network of trails is beginning to show. A boardwalk will concentrate foot traffic onto a designated pathway, and discourage hikers from imposing further damage. This will not only eliminate erosion and soil compaction, it will reduce dust and other impacts to the fragile native plants which grow throughout the forest area. The slightly elevated walkway will also have benefits to many species which will seek shelter beneath it, and the good news is that the proposed boardwalk route was recently staked and surveyed by qualified biologists who found no species of concern along the route.

This is a project which has been slowly working its way through the planning and regulatory process. We are now up against a funding deadline, and must have the work started by November of this year and completed by June 30, 1999, in order to utilize the grant funding we have already qualified for.

It is my hope that you will be able to recommend approval of the boardwalk to the Commission as soon as possible so that it can be agendized by October. It is critical that this worthwhile project, which has the support of the vast majority of Los Osos and other county residents, be completed in the quickest possible time. Please give me a call if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

*Laurence L. Laurent*  
Laurence L. Laurent  
District 2 Supervisor

EXHIBIT NO. 5, p. 1
APPLICATION NO. 3-98-095
Letters of
Support



## SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION

LOS OSOS/MORRO BAY CHAPTER

P.O. Box 6442 Los Osos, CA 93412

Message Telephone: (805) ~~528-2579~~ 546-1179

Steve Guiney  
California Coastal Commission  
725 Front Street, Suite 300  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### ADVISORS

Leslie Bowker, Ph.D.

Ecologist

David Chipping, Ph.D.

Geologist

Charles Dills

Archeologist

Steve Eabry

Morro Bay Estuary Task Force

Tim Gallagher

SLO County Parks

Myron Graham

Audubon

Jim Havlena

C.P.A.

Don Hoffman, President

Natural History Association

Bob Jones

SLO Land Conservancy

David Kell, Ph.D.

Botanist

Bud Laurent

SLO County Supervisor

Bud & Alice Meyer

C.N.P.S.

Bill Newman, President

Friends of the Estuary

Aryan Roest, Ph.D.

Vertebrate Zoologist

Dave Sears

State Parks

### SWAP FOUNDERS

Ansel Adams

Norman Cousins

Beulah Edmiston

Dorothy Erskine

Bernice Fink

Mrs. James E. Higman

Lois Crozier Hogle

Barbara Hopper

Marilyn Horne

Melvin Lane

Mark Larkin

Mrs. George Marshall

Margaret Owings

Mrs. William Pentony

Benjamin Polk

Emily Polk

Edgar Wayburn

Peggy Wayburn

24 August, 1998

Dear Mr Guiney:

San Luis Obispo County Parks Department is applying for a coastal permit to install a hard surface access and interpretive trail (boardwalk) at the Los Osos Elfin Forest Natural Area. I am writing on behalf of SWAP membership and the community of Los Osos in support of this project.

As you may be aware, the Los Osos Morro Bay Chapter of Small Wilderness Area Preservation is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) organization of approximately 500 members. In 1985 the Chapter organized with the expressed purpose of the preservation of the 90-acre parcel known as the "Elfin Forest" on the southeastern shore of Morro Bay. The last large, privately owned and undeveloped parcel immediately adjacent to Morro Bay National Estuary and Morro Bay State Park, the forest was proposed for subdivision into 300 residential lots. A successful public awareness campaign and the efforts of the late Assemblyman Eric Seastrand led to the acquisition of the northernmost 52 acres for \$1,500,000.00 in 1988. In 1991 SWAP entered into a collaborative effort with San Luis Obispo County to acquire the remaining 38 acres as a permanent natural area. SWAP spearheaded a successful funding effort raising \$205,000.00 in donations and \$1,350,000.00 in grants from state and federal agencies to complete the acquisition of the entire 90-acre property by 1994.

Since 1994, SWAP has been working under an "Adopt-A-Park" agreement with San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation to develop and implement a natural resource management plan for the Elfin Forest. The property features several ecological habitats: salt marsh, riparian woodland fringe, coastal dune scrub, pygmy oak woodland, and chaparral. In addition to Federally listed Morro Manzanita, Morro Shoulder Band Dune Snail, and Morro Bay Kangaroo Rat habitat, Native American (Chumash) middens exist

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 2

on site. The County has completed the Area Management Plan and SWAP is currently undertaking habitat restoration projects and providing ongoing interpretive programs. To facilitate educational and interpretive experiences, provide access in compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), protect cultural features, and halt erosion and vegetation destruction, a hard surface trail has been proposed. The trail proposed is a "loop" approximately 3600 feet long and 5 feet wide with "turnouts", or rest areas spaced along the entire length. Two overlooks, each approximately 200 square feet, roughly 65 and 85 feet above sea level will overlook the Morro Bay National Estuary. The enhanced trail, turnouts, and overlooks will be constructed on piers to reduce the amount of disturbance (2-4 inches of ground clearance). Allowing for an 8 foot "construction corridor", the total area of disturbance will be approximately 30,000 square feet.

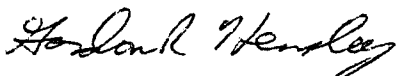
A 1996 usage survey documents that an average of 50 persons per day currently visit the Elfin Forest. SLOCO Access, an advocacy group for the disabled, estimates that 10% of the 225,000 persons living in our county have mobility impairment and 14.2% are over the age of 65. At present access to the forest is limited to use of unimproved trails over loose sand that is too difficult for persons with mobility or health impairments, families with small children, or school groups. Our vision is to complete the construction of the interpretive trail/boardwalk access to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide protection to this unique natural area
- Facilitate outdoor education and interpretive natural history experiences
- Improve access to the Elfin Forest Natural Area for disabled, senior, and school groups

To finance this dream, San Luis Obispo County Parks has received a \$167,000 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Grant from the California Department of Transportation to partially fund the Elfin Forest Interpretive Trail. This grant will expire in April 1999, so time is of the essence. To assist the County in achieving the project time schedule, SWAP has committed to raise an additional \$33,000 to fund any necessary environmental studies, additional design work, revegetation, etc to bring this project to conclusion. To date, SWAP has received approximately \$18,000 in additional grants and gifts. Our efforts are currently focused on raising the remaining \$15,000 estimated need to complete the project.

It is our hope that Coastal Commission staff will be able to make a favorable recommendation on this project and expedite the application process.

Sincerely,



Gordon R. Hensley, Chairman

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 3

ANDREA H. SEASTRAND  
22d DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEES  
SCIENCE

TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0522

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1216 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3601  
  
DISTRICT OFFICES:  
1525 STATE STREET, SUITE 208  
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101  
(805) 899-3578  
  
778 OSOS STREET, SUITE A-2  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401  
(805) 541-0170

September 7, 1995

Ron DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

As you are no doubt aware, I have long been an advocate of Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) and their activities to preserve and protect the El Moro Elfin Forest on Morro Bay. As such, I continue to support efforts designed to enhance the ecology of the area and encourage you to give all due consideration to SWAP's grant application for funds from the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program.

SWAP has entered into an Adopt-a-Park agreement with the County of San Luis Obispo and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a management plan for the entire forest. An integral part of that plan consists of building a boardwalk that would provide access to persons with limited mobility to representative areas of the pygmy oak groves and plant communities on the property. I am encouraged by the volunteerism and energy of SWAP and recognize this project to be not only environmentally pleasing, but also beneficial to the tourist economy of the area.

I look forward to your favorable review of this grant application.

Sincerely,

**COPY**

Andrea Seastrand  
Member of Congress

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 4

## DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



San Luis Obispo Coast District  
20 South Higuera Street, Suite 311  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401  
(805) 549-3312/FAX (805) 541-4799

September 21, 1995

Ron De Carli  
Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Dear Mr. De Carlin

We have reviewed the proposal developed by SWAP for a grant to develop trail head facilities and parking for the Elfin Forest. The concept of a trail head, parking and an interpretive overlook meets a significant public need. The site selected and land use conforms with our 1988 General Plan for Morro Bay State Park.

We fully endorse the effort to provide these facilities and support their request for the grant. Safe trail access is important to SWAP, San Luis Obispo County and State Parks.

State Parks staff will work closely with SWAP throughout the design and permitting process to provide for the best possible State Park facility.

Sincerely,

David L. Sears  
District Superintendent

cc: Jeff Loring

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 5

**ALIFORNIA STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY**

10. BROADWAY, SUITE 1100  
 ID, CA 94612-2530  
 41-1015  
 EPHONE 510/286-1015  
 X 510/286-0470



September 27, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
 San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
 1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: Elfin Forest  
 Los Osos

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

I am writing in support of SWAP's application for funding to construct a boardwalk that would provide access to persons with limited mobility to the pygmy oak groves and other plant communities within the Elfin Forest and to viewpoints of Morro Bay.

The Coastal Conservancy helped with the negotiations and provided funds to San Luis Obispo County to assist with the acquisition of the remaining 38 acres of the Elfin Forest that was still in private ownership.

SWAP has been a leader in getting this project done from the beginning. The group has displayed remarkable leadership ability and follow through, and would be an excellent organization for promoting this much need coastal access project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

*Carol Arnold*

Carol Arnold  
 Program Manager

3-98-095  
 Exhibit 5, p.6



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

*Kenneth F. Palmer, Superintendent*

Rancho El Chorro • Highway One • Post Office Box 8105 • San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8105

(805) 543-7732

FAX (805) 541-1105

September 22, 1995

Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 302  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

The staff of the Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School have been long time supporters of the efforts of Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP). We were extremely pleased when the remaining 38 acres of the Elfin Forest were purchased.

The Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School, the environmental education program operated by the Office of the San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of School, offers county elementary students the opportunity to experience nature firsthand. Presently, the Naturalists lead estuarine field studies in the Morro Bay Estuary. It is our hope to expand these offerings to include the Elfin Forest as this is a critical part of the Morro Bay watershed.

Students with limited abilities do participate in the Rancho El Chorro programs. The addition of a boardwalk to designated areas of the Elfin Forest which would provide access to persons of limited abilities would enable all students to participate in these worthwhile educational programs.

The entire community applauds the enormous amount of work that has gone into the preservation of the Elfin Forest and will continue to support educational and recreational uses of this very special habitat. The Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School staff supports SWAP in their efforts to build a boardwalk. Please give their grant application to the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program careful consideration. Every child deserves a chance to visit this enchanted forest.

Sincerely,

Celeste Royer, Program Director  
Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School

cc:

Rosemary Bowker, President  
Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter SWAP

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 7



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

*Kenneth F. Palmer, Superintendent*

Rancho El Chorro • Highway One • Post Office Box 8105 • San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8105

(805) 543-7732

FAX (805) 541-1105

September 25, 1995

Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 302  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

The Office of the San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools has been a long time supporter of the efforts of the Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP). We were extremely pleased when the remaining 38 acres of the Elfin Forest were purchased.

The Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School, our Environmental Education Program, offers county elementary students the opportunity to study local habitats. Presently, our program includes estuarine field studies in the Morro Bay Estuary. We hope to expand our program to include the Elfin Forest, as this is a critical part of the Morro Bay watershed.

Students with limited abilities do participate in the Rancho El Chorro Programs. The addition of a boardwalk to designated areas of the Elfin Forest, which would provide access to persons of limited abilities, would enable all students to participate in these worthwhile educational programs.

The entire community applauds the enormous amount of work that has gone into the preservation of the Elfin Forest thus far, and will continue to support educational and recreational uses of this very special place. The Office of the San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools offers its support to SWAP in their efforts to build a boardwalk. Please give their application to the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program careful consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth F. Palmer, Ph.D.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CR/lk

pc: Rosemary Bowker, President ✓  
Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter SWAP

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 8





**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA**

San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools  
Rancho El Chorro - Highway One  
Post Office Box 8105, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8105  
Phone: (805) 543-7732 / FAX: (805) 546-0646

September 7, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

I am writing in support of the Elfin Forest grant application that would provide access to persons with limited mobility to access the forest. The educational benefit for the entire community is certainly clear. Too often however, those with physical limitations are denied those educational opportunities. This project is the only way that those students with physical limitations will be able to participate with their peers in the various programs offered by the ecological reserve.

This project will enable those classes run by the San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools to participate and enjoy the Elfin Forest. It will also enable those students who are in every school in our county to participate and enjoy the Elfin Forest with their classmates.

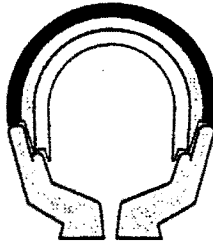
I am very hopeful that the grant application will be funded for this very worthwhile project.

Sincerely,

Anne Stone  
Program Specialist, SELPA

AS:ks

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.9



**FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, INC.**

*A comprehensive teaching and rehabilitative service  
for developmentally handicapped and physically disabled adults*

September 8, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli,

I would like to offer strong support for the funding of a Transportation Enhancement Activities Program boardwalk at the Elfin Forest. We represent over three hundred developmentally disabled and physically disabled adults in San Luis Obispo County.

The folks we serve live independently and participate in all of the usual community recreation activities. Approximately half of them are non-ambulatory and would love the opportunity to explore the Elfin Forest. I believe access to that area would be a valuable addition to the well being of our citizens.

Please let me know if there is anything further I can do.

Best wishes,

\_\_\_\_\_  
FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL, INC.

David R. Singleton  
Executive Director

DRS:sa

cc: Rosemary Bowker ✓

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.10

# CAL POLY

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93407

DISABLED STUDENT SERVICES  
(805) 756-1395

September 1, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

This letter is written in support of the grant application being presented to the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program for improvements providing access to the Elfin Forest for persons with limited mobility.

Disabled Student Services lends its wholehearted support to such a venture not only in the name of the 200+ mobility impaired students in the Cal Poly Community, but also on behalf of those dealing with "hidden" disabilities and the growing numbers of people who are living into a gracious if less mobile old age.

The Elfin Forest area is an educational goldmine in its opportunities to observe natural habitats for plant and animal life indigenous to our Central Coast area. With numerous local school systems, a junior college and a university in close proximity, its value as an educative tool is obvious.

Providing access to such areas as the pygmy oak groves to anyone with the desire and curiosity to see them is a goal to which all of us should aspire, but in these times of fast paced, technological living with stresses and pressures at their highest, it can be not only a pleasure but a lifeline.

Please keep us informed of the progress of your efforts and good luck.

Sincerely,



William Bailey  
Director, Disabled Student Services

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.11

LOS OSOS/BAYWOOD PARK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P. O. Box 6282  
Los Osos, CA 93412  
805-528-4884; Fax 528-8401

September 7, 1995

Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

It is our understanding that SWAP (Small Wilderness Area Preservation) will submit an application for grant funds to be used to improve accessibility to the Elfin Forest. We write this letter in support of their efforts.

SWAP is one of our leading community organizations with respect to community service. Their efforts are always inclusive of all residents, and have brought much benefit to Los Osos/Baywood Park and to San Luis Obispo County.

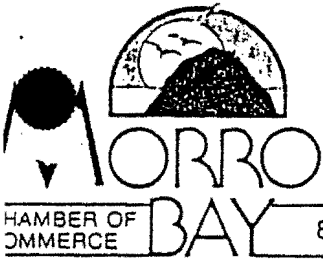
Their request for financial aid in continuing their community service is wholly supported by our Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for assisting SWAP in their service to and promotion of our community.

Sincerely,

Cheri Grimm, President  
LOBP Chamber of Commerce

bcc: Jerry Dietz  
P.O. Box 6442  
Los Osos, CA 93402  
528-7136

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.12



895 NAPA, SUITE A-1 MORRO BAY, CA 93442 (805) 772-4467 FAX: (805) 772-2107

September 22, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo Ca 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli,

The Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of the Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) is working with Mr. Tim Gallagher, SLO County Park Facilities Manager, to prepare an application for funding from the Transportation Enhancement Act. Funding from T.E.A. are to be used to provide access for persons of all abilities to see the Elfin Forest Natural Area.

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce believes that the Natural Areas of SLO County bring many visitors. Unfortunately, persons with limited mobility have a difficult time accessing those areas.

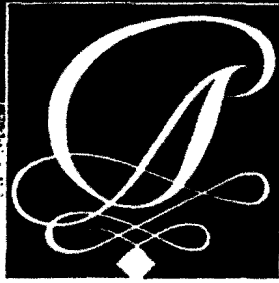
SWAP, having had successful fund raising efforts during the acquisition of the Elfin Forest, has demonstrated the ability to raise the matching funds from the community required under this grant.

The Morro Bay Chamber believes that access to the Elfin Forest for handicapped persons would be of great value to local residents as well as visitors to our area. You are urged to approve their application for funding.

Sincerely,

Suedene Nelson  
Executive Manager  
Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.13



Pandora and Company

September 12, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli  
Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Re: Elfin Forest Boardwalk

Dear Mr. DeCarli:

We need your help and support! To us in Los Osos, the Elfin Forest offers magic spaces for quiet contemplation, wonderful opportunities for passive recreation, and the potential to understand a little more about our coastal environment.

As you probably know, after the purchase of the remaining 38 acres of the Elfin Forest by San Luis Obispo County as an ecological reserve, SWAP entered into an Adopt-A-Park agreement to work with the County and California Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a management plan for the entire Elfin Forest.

According to the County Park Master Plan from the last decade, Los Osos is dramatically "under parked" for its population. We have experienced some growth since the master plan was completed and with our sewer issue about to be resolved we expect more new developments to be built within the next 36 months. These developments make park lands even more important. Since a great percentage of our population in Los Osos are people over 65—who have different needs than our younger residents—the Elfin Forest makes an ideal passive park setting.

The members of SWAP are in the process of preparing a grant application for funds from the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program to build a boardwalk. This would provide access to persons with limited mobility to

representative areas of the pygmy oak groves and plant communities in the Elfin Forest as well as to viewpoints overlooking Morro Bay. Currently the only access is over sand trails and these are difficult or impossible for people who are physically challenged.

This is a rare opportunity—as the Elfin Forest becomes regionally known—for the community, San Luis Obispo County and people like you who have the foresight and vision to make the Elfin Forest into a multi-use park. That is why it is vital to make the forest usable for people of all ages and levels of ability. Currently, Los Osos has no access to natural areas to persons of limited abilities. Please support SWAP in this effort. The educational and recreational benefits gained by access to the Elfin Forest via boardwalk will be of major benefit to our county.

Please lend your help to this worthwhile project.

Sincerely,



Candora Nash-Karner  
County Parks Commission, District 2

cc: / Rosemary Bowker, President  
Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter SWAP

Bud Laurent, Supervisor  
District 2

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p.15



**mergingtimes**

2850 GENESEO ROAD

PASO ROBLES, CA 93446

8 0 5 - 2 3 8 - 0 1 8 6

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

September 14, 1995

Dear Mr. DeCarli,

I am sending this letter to voice my support of funding for the Elfin Forest Boardwalk. Over the past three years that mergingtimes has been in production, our readers have shown an interest and a need for accessible recreational opportunities and I believe that such access, with your support, can be achieved in the Elfin Forest.

Enhancing our community by designing with the inclusion of all people in mind is beneficial for both people with mobility/physical impairments and for our community at large. Opening areas of the pygmy oak groves and the wide variety of plant life to people who are wheelchair users will allow a broadening population - including friends and families of people with mobility impairments - to enjoy the educational and recreational opportunities that such a project would present.

Our county is extremely fortunate to be in the position that we can build toward a totally inclusive environment and we are very blessed to have people with vision interested in working toward that goal in all aspects of our society. An accessible boardwalk within the Elfin Forest would be beneficial to San Luis Obispo County residents and to a tourist population who would recognize our county as a desirable vacation destination.

Thank you for your consideration of funding such a valuable project and for helping build a strong and accessible community.

Sincerely,

Flicka Dukes  
Editor/Publisher

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 16



# SCORE®

Service Corps of Retired Executives Association  
Active Corps of Executives (ACE) Association

*Sponsored by U. S. Small Business Administration*

*"We volunteer our expertise to cultivate  
America's economic growth"*

## *San Luis Obispo County Chapter No. 597*

September 14, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. DeCarli,

Our organization endorses the effort set forth by the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of the Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) organization in supporting the SLO County Park people in preparing an application for Transportation Enhancement Act funds.

The project they are proposing, i.e., increasing access to the Elfin Forest, located in the County Park and State Park in Los Osos, by building a boardwalk so that all people, including handicapped have access to its natural beauty will have beneficial financial implications for the county.

Since tourism is a major attraction in our area, providing another "handicapped accessible" facility in the county will make it a more desirable place to visit, thereby increasing the number of visitors who will require overnight accommodations, restaurant facilities, and other amenities.

SWAPs track record in raising the money for the original purchase of the Elfin Forest, leaves me optimistic in that they will be able to raise the required matching funds required in this grant.

Very truly yours,

JEROME L. DEITZ  
Chapter Chair (Acting)

398-095  
Exhibit 5, p 17

31. August, 1995

Ron DiCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street, Suite 202  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Greetings Mr. DiCarli:

I'd like to endorse the proposed handicapped access boardwalk for the Elfin Forest in Los Osos. Access to the Elfin Forest to all our community is essential.

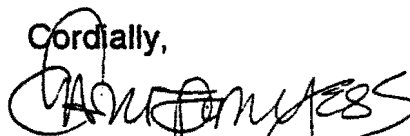
Those in wheelchairs may not be highly vocal, however we as a community have a responsibility to work together to increase access to public areas. The more access offered this sector of the community, the more we'll hear from them, and the more we'll be able to include this group's talents and strengths in our community.

I've become particularly aware of the need for handicap access through my experiences as a teacher and YMCA camp director. As our state and federal agencies legislate more and more mainstreaming we find more physically challenged students and teachers in the classroom, more physically challenged kids and leaders at YCamp, and more physically challenged citizens visibly participating in community events. Two years ago a seventh grade girl in my class was unable to join the rest of the class as we ventured to the tide pools of Montana de Oro. Tide pools are truly a challenge in a wheelchair, and wheelchair tide pooling may be close to impossible. Wheelchairing through Los Osos sand trails is similarly impossible, but a simple boardwalk could open up the Elfin Forest to students like her.

As a resident in a retirement community I'm quite aware that many of my neighbors who are not in wheelchairs are still unable to navigate through soft sand trails. One neighbor has contributed substantially to the Elfin Forest project, yet has never seen it. She knows the sandy trails are unsafe for her. A boardwalk could open up the Elfin Forest to our neighbors like her, as well as those in wheelchairs and on walkers.

Thanks for considering the Transportation Enhancement Authority Program for the Elfin Forest Boardwalk.

Cordially,



Charlie Perryess  
800 Santa Ysabel  
Los Osos, CA 93402  
805/528/4691

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 18

September 23, 1995

Mr. Ronald L. DeCarli, Executive Director  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments  
1150 Osos Street Suite 202

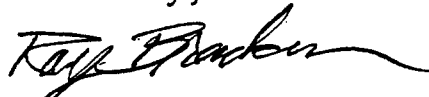
Dear Mr. DeCarli,

As a person with a physical handicap I strongly support the effort to construct a boardwalk access into the Elfin Forest. I wear leg braces and have limited mobility with the use of canes. For long distances and uneven terrain I use a wheelchair.

And, as an artist/photographer, I would certainly welcome the opportunity to gain access to one of the most enchanting places on the Central Coast. I hope you will do everything you can to obtain funding for this project.

In my opinion, boardwalk accesses into sensitive environments is a good idea for everyone, handicapped or not.

Sincerely,



Ray Bracken  
765 Highland Dr.  
Los Osos, CA 93402

cc: Rosemary Bowker, SWAP

3-98-095  
Exhibit 5, p. 19

December 15, 1998

Mr. Steve Monowitz  
CA Coastal Commission  
Central Coast Area  
725 Front Street, Suite 300  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-4508

RE: Elfin Forest Access Improvement Project, AP. # 3-98-095

Dear Mr. Monowitz:

I would like to comment on the Elfin Forest Access Improvement Project, Application # 3-98-095. I feel there is an error in the design of the proposed boardwalk.

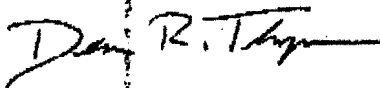
Many of the documents I have read state that the boardwalk is to be located in previously disturbed areas and will help prevent erosion. This is true for the southern portion along the ridge. The other areas are not eroded at all and the construction of the walkway will actually impact more plants than the present use. In addition to this, the eastern portion of the proposed boardwalk (the section closest to South Bay Blvd.) is pristine coastal scrub where no former trails exist. In order to build this section there would be extensive vegetation removal and soil displacement. I feel this disturbance could contribute to the spread of the invasive exotic velvet grass into an area where none presently exists. The route will also impact two previously undisturbed pygmy oak groves.

In several documents, mitigation measures such as revegetation have been suggested as a way to offset the impacts that will occur. I contend that most of the mitigation measures wouldn't even be needed if this eastern end of the boardwalk and the idea to make it a loop was abandoned. It's in this area where most of the damage will occur. The rest of the boardwalk would still exist, providing valuable handicapped access to this coastal resource. A small looping turnaround area could be provided in the "celestial meadow" area to "finish" the boardwalk. Users would still have the views and still get to experience a variety of terrain and habitats. There would be significantly less soil and vegetation disturbance and less mitigation needed to be done.

One other issue in the plans for this project that I do not feel was adequately addressed was the parking area at the end of 16th St. Especially in regard to how it will change the drainage in the area.

Thank you for considering my input on this matter and please keep me up to date on the progress of this application.

Sincerely,



Dean R. Thompson

EXHIBIT NO. 6

APPLICATION NO.

3-98-095

Letter of  
Concern