



# STATE PARK UPDATE



September 2010

## Crystal Cove State Park - Moro Public Use Conversion

### Project on Track for Spring 2011 Completion

Over this past summer, much progress has been made towards completion of the long-awaited Moro Public Use Conversion project at Crystal Cove State Park. Although the project has experienced some frustrating funding, permitting, and weather delays since construction began in the Fall of 2008, the \$12M project remains fully funded and is a top priority development project for the Department. Public opening is expected in early 2011 and will offer park day use visitors and campers full access to the park's 2,791 acres of inland wilderness and coastal shoreline public lands.



(Pictured: Project site September 1, 2010)

### Shared Entry Improvements – Traffic Circulation

The jointly planned improvements to the PCH entry and traffic circulation routes are approximately 75% complete. Additional paving, utility pole removal, signage, landscaping, and signal light relocation are underway and are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

### Project History

The *Crystal Cove State Park General Plan*, which includes public use plans for the Moro area of the 2,791 acre park, was approved following public input in 1982. On May 7, 2002, State Parks circulated the Moro Conversion project's Draft Environmental Impact Report inviting public comment and input for the

project. A Final Environmental Impact Report was certified and a Final Notice of Determination was filed with the State Clearing House on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002. State Parks presented preliminary plan drawings to the State Public Works Board on September 13, 2002 which were approved and authorized further plan design and development. Based on public input, State Parks made several adjustments to the project to further reduce potential impacts including:

- Expanding the buffer area between the school and the campground.
- Removing a planned pedestrian crossing and intersection signal light at PCH and Moro Creek.
- Improved beach access at Moro Creek tunnel.
- Development of a campground operations plan to, at minimum: Restrict campfires/smoke during school hours, set camping fees, regulate length of camping vehicles, set camping duration limits, dedicate 50% of campsites to low-impact camping use (tents, van conversions, pop-ups), and set camping check-in times.
- Designation of two campsites for park volunteer camp host sites for increased security and safety.

In Spring 2002, State Parks entered into a Joint Development Agreement with the Laguna Beach Unified School District to plan, permit, fund and construct shared facilities mutually benefitting Crystal Cove State Park and the El Morro Elementary School including: Design cost sharing and savings, integrated sewer systems, PCH entrance/exit traffic circulation, and storm water treatment.

In October of 2004 the California Coastal Commission unanimously approved the park conversion project with overwhelming public support for the project's day use and camping recreational opportunities, limited impacts to sensitive natural and cultural areas, restoration of natural habitats, and improvements to public access to coastal and inland areas of the park. A Coastal Development Permit (CDP 5-04-297) was issued on August 9, 2005.

Under terms of a negotiated settlement agreement, former tenants of El Morro Village Mobile Home Park vacated state park property on February 28, 2006 and were permitted to abandon their trailers in place. State Parks completed trailer removal, clean-up, sewer system leach field retirement, and habitat restoration activities in Spring of 2008.

**Funding, Contract Award, 2009 Bond Delay**

The project was approved in the Governor’s 2007/2008 budget and is financed by voter approved Proposition 12 park bond funds. State Parks awarded a \$12 million public works project in June of 2008 to successful bidder Los Angeles Engineering, Inc. During 2009 the project experienced a nearly year-long delay due to the state’s economic downturn and temporary suspension of over 5,000 California bond-funded projects resulting from the poor cash position of California’s Pooled Money Investment Account.

**Project Highlights**

Once completed, the Moro Conversion project will provide public coastal access improvements, a sixty site family campground, two hundred day use parking

spaces, park and school entrance traffic improvements, road and trail improvements, habitat restoration, removal of power and telephone poles/lines, day use picnic areas, Moro creek restoration, beach restoration, interpretive exhibits, an outdoor educational amphitheatre, public restrooms, and a combination lifeguard/beach restroom facility.

**Community Outreach**

El Morro Elementary School and State Parks representatives meet regularly to discuss project updates and explore the best ways to ensure minimum project impacts and a continued complimentary relationship for future operations. State Park officials are available to provide project information and updates to any interested individual, group, or organization.

**Public Information – Contact Us**

For more information about the project please feel free to contact us at (949) 494-3539, write to Crystal Cove State Park, 8471 North Coast Highway, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

