

ASLOMAR

STATE BEACH AND CONFERENCE GROUNDS
VISITOR GUIDE ISSUE 14



WELCOME!

On behalf of California State Parks and our concessionaire partner, Aramark, we warmly welcome you to *Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds*. One of the most unique parks in our state, Asilomar's location is unparalleled. Situated at the tip of the Monterey Peninsula, Asilomar's guest rooms are spread throughout the native Monterey pine and coast live oak forest, all within view and walking distance of the majestic



Eric Abma,
Asilomar State Park Superintendent

Pacific Ocean. Julia Morgan's signature Arts and Crafts style of architecture makes up the Historic Core of this property, immersing guests in the sense of place experienced by Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) campers of the early 1900s.

Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds was purchased by the State of California in 1956 with the intent of operating a financially sustainable park – a goal in which it has succeeded. Our partnership with Aramark enables Asilomar to maintain financial independence: operating entirely free of state funding. Through lodging costs and purchases at Asilomar 100% of the park's budget is generated by you, the park visitor.

Thank you for enabling State Parks to preserve Asilomar for generations to come!

Make the Most of Your Asilomar Visit

Whether you are here to meet and confer with colleagues, reaffirm family ties, or are visiting as an overnight guest, there are many ways to experience Asilomar's unique "spirit of place":

- Take a self-guided tour of Asilomar. Self-guided tours are available on your cell phone or from a brochure. Brochures are found at the State Parks Desk in the Phoebe Hearst Social Hall, or from our website: <https://www.parks.ca.gov/asilomar> - follow the "Self-Guided Tours" link.
- Get to know Asilomar with State Park staff on "The Asilomar Ramble", a tour covering many topics unique to Asilomar, including its beginnings as the YWCA's first West Coast conference grounds, star architect Julia Morgan's work here, the natural environment, and Asilomar's history as a California State Park.
- Get Social! Tag, Tweet, Post, Pin,

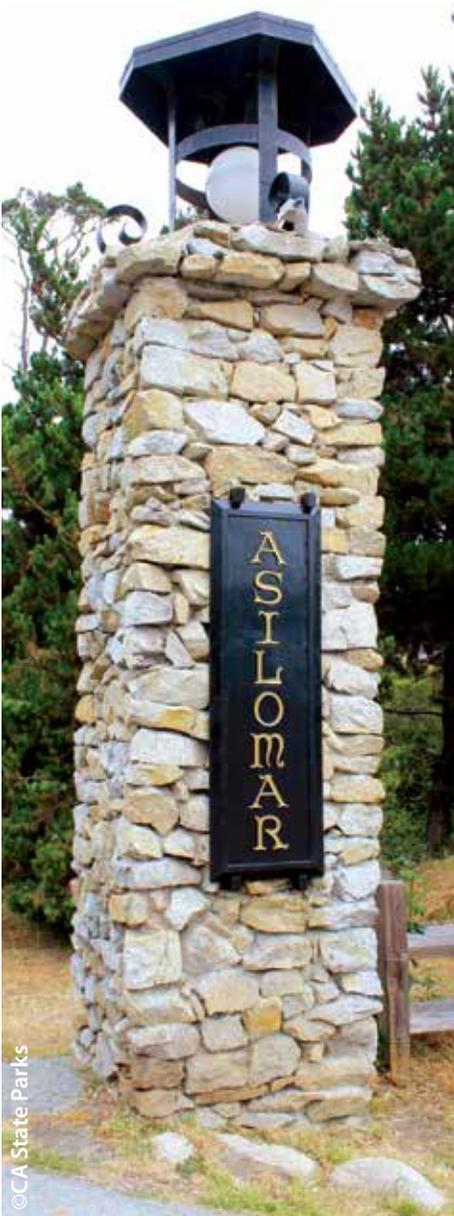


etc. Asilomar... We would like to be part of your adventure! Please include Asilomar in your social life:

- <https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaStateParks>
- <https://twitter.com/CAStateParks>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/CaliforniaStateParks>
- <https://castateparks.wordpress.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/castateparks/asilomar-state-beach/>
- #InventYourAdventure



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- Stretch your legs! Walking or running routes are plentiful at Asilomar. Enjoy the raised vistas from the Asilomar Dunes Boardwalk, or head across the street, to find the sandy shores of Asilomar State Beach, or north on the Asilomar Coast trail which meanders along the rocky tide pools and quiet coves.

This special length of coast is a California State Beach, and the off shore waters are protected by California as a State Marine Reserve, as well as Federal regulation as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. These protections ensure marine life is abundant here, so keep your eyes peeled! On a regular basis you can see Sea Otters, Gray Whales, Invertebrates (in the tide pools), and if you are lucky you may spot Orca or Blue Whales!

Help Make Asilomar Better!

Your ideas and feedback play a major role in determining just how successful we are at Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds, and

we would like to hear from you: California State Parks asilomar.beach@parks.ca.gov Asilomar State Beach Office, 804 Crocker Avenue, Pacific Grove, CA 93950.

Aramark collects guest survey cards, which are available from the Park Store, the Front Desk, and the Crocker Dining Hall. Online surveys are available at MyGuestExperience.com

We are pleased to have you here and hope you enjoy your stay!

**Eric Abma, Superintendent
Asilomar State Beach and
Conference Grounds**



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ARAMARK



Enos Esquivel
General Manager, Asilomar Conference Grounds

Aramark would like to welcome you to the Monterey Peninsula and Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds.

In September 2009, California State Parks awarded Aramark the concession to operate the Asilomar Conference Grounds. Aramark is proud to include this "Refuge by the Sea" among the treasured properties it manages throughout the United States including State Parks, National Parks and Forests, cultural attractions and conference centers.

In California, Aramark also has the privilege of operating at Hearst Castle - another unit of California State Parks. In 2016, Aramark was awarded the management contract for Yosemite National Park. In partnership with its clients, Aramark seeks to enhance the guest experience by offering industry-leading hospitality, conference services, environmental stewardship and corporate social responsibility. Here at Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds, Aramark staff directly supports California State Parks in its mission to preserve and protect, while we focus on

our core mission of delivering experiences that enrich and nourish the lives of our visitors.

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is at the core of what we do at Asilomar. We recognize that operating our business in a way that limits negative impact on the environment is critically important to the site, to Asilomar, the Monterey Peninsula community,



and the globe. Our daily operations have been assessed for their impact on the environment and methods for reducing impact have been put into place. Some of our greatest conservation needs are in the areas of *energy, water, and solid waste management.*

Here is how we have addressed some of these issues in recent years and plan for continued progress in overall conservation.

Energy Conservation – The property is currently undergoing upgrades to energy efficient LED lighting with a total of 85% converted so far.

Water Conservation – The introduction of *Water City* - a state of the art water recycling system, was installed in 2016, allowing reclamation of up to 75% of the water used for housekeeping operations.

Solid Waste Management – We have a robust composting

program, *Clean the World* soap recycling program, and community outreach events.

You can also help us meet our goals by:

- Using the trash and recycling bins provided on property
- Turning off the faucet while washing your hands and brushing teeth
- Turning out the lights and turning off the heat when leaving your guest or meeting room
- Walking or biking around the property rather than driving your car

Let us know if you see additional areas where we can make environmental improvements.

Healthy Foods

In the spirit of encouraging healthy people and a healthy planet, Aramark chefs work hard to ensure that we focus on providing organic, seasonal and local produce and proteins (meat, fish and dairy). Guests can expect the freshest ingredients prepared to retain the food's maximum flavor and optimum health benefits.

Our meals offer goodness and high quality - a priority for a good diet. Our cooking style includes fish and meats as a main staple, incorporating vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seeds, nuts and legumes as often as possible. Our focus is on balance and moderation to provide healthy meals. This not only applies to the quantity of food served, but also to the flavorings incorporated during preparation. We emphasize a cooking style that promotes nourishing foods.

The **Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program** helps consumers and businesses



Aramark and CA State Parks employees at Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds Park Unit

make seafood choices for healthy oceans. As a Seafood Watch Partner, Asilomar's menu recommendations indicate which seafood items are "Best Choices" or "Good Alternatives"; menus do not include items to "Avoid". The earth's oceans have supplied humans with food and have created a livelihood for millions of people for thousands of years. At Aramark we are working with Seafood Watch to do our part to contribute to better ocean management practices.

Healthy Mind and Body

As a unit of California State Parks, Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds is open to

the public 365 days a year. Part of the California State Parks mission is to "provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California." Asilomar is the perfect place to relax, recharge and renew. Some of the activities you can enjoy at Asilomar include walking the scenic Natural Dunes Boardwalk, relaxing in front of the Social Hall's granite rock fireplace, or learning Asilomar's stories on a guided State Park tour. To learn more about all there is to do at Asilomar, please visit www.VisitAsilomar.com.

—Contributed by the Aramark team at Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds



Phoebe A. Hearst Social Hall

YWCA BUILDS ASILOMAR

Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall Entry, c. 1915

Asilomar, a National Historic Landmark

The Young Women's Christian Association created Asilomar in 1913 as a conference ground for its Pacific Coast chapters, for like-minded social, educational and religious organizations, and as a vacation camp for families, girls and women. Purchased by the State of California in 1956, Asilomar became a National Historic Landmark in 1987 for its extraordinary Arts and Crafts architecture and "as a monumental achievement in the context of the career of Julia Morgan", the first woman awarded the American Institute of Architecture's Gold Medal.

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

Founded on the East Coast in the second half of the 19th century, the Young Women's Christian Association grew alongside the women's movement. Inspired by late nineteenth-century Evangelical Protestantism, some of the women of the YWCA fought for women's suffrage, educational rights, better working conditions, and safer and cleaner cities. The

YWCA's ultimate aim was "to help girls to be physically, mentally, and spiritually fit." By the early years of the twentieth century, YWCA branches were located in every major American city and on nearly every college campus in California. Virtually every branch included an employment bureau. The YWCA operated more than 100 boarding houses that offered recreation, education, meals and the company of other young women. The YWCA sought to promote "wholesome recreation and social enjoyment" for young women. To this end, their annual meetings were often held in campgrounds and other outdoor settings.

The Hotel Capitola in Capitola, California, within easy reach of the

ocean, mountains, and forests, served as the conference site until 1911 when Phoebe Hearst invited the group to hold the 1912 conference at her estate in Pleasanton. Mrs. Hearst, long considered a "fairy godmother" to the Pacific Coast Branch, provided the 1912 "Hacienda Conference" with a hilltop campground equipped with tents and iron beds for more than 350 young women. She stocked a huge dining tent, and even built roads up the hillside to smooth the way for the fleet of autos that shuttled girls from the train depot.

Mrs. Hearst invited some of the Bay Area's most influential women to hear firsthand about the YWCA's work and the plan to build a permanent conference center. Hearst paid the cost of the food and equipment while the girls' conference fees were added to the fund set aside to purchase a permanent camp.

YWCA's West Coast leadership had negotiated a deal with a Monterey Peninsula real estate developer, Pacific Improvement Company (PIC). In spite of the objections of several members, who feared that Pacific Grove's



YWCA Summer Camp Uniform, c. 1918

climate might be too harsh for young women, the PIC agreed to deed the YWCA with 30 acres of land "facing the ocean" between the famed Seventeen-Mile Drive and the Pacific Ocean. The YWCA agreed to make \$30,000 in improvements within 10 years, and would pay one dollar per acre per annum in 'taxes'.

The YWCA wasted little time in hiring Bay Area architect Julia Morgan, who had connections to the Hearst family and was then completing plans for the YWCA building in Oakland. Surveyors went to work in February 1913, and by June a site had been cleared and work begun on the Administration Building, later named the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall. When the girls arrived in early August, they were greeted by a huge, round dining tent shipped in by Mrs. Hearst, and temporary tent houses. The tent houses had solid redwood frames shingled roofs, canvas drapes for walls, hardwood floors, and a veranda to ensure "a neighborly atmosphere." Each had fifteen rooms equipped with a pair of

iron beds, and electric lights and showers. Girls could open the drapes and slide their beds partway onto the veranda to enjoy the fresh ocean air.

The First National Summer Conference Camp, 1913

Asilomar became part of a national system of conference facilities operated by the YWCA and the first that it owned outright. Initially, the grounds were to be known as "Guardamar," but that was a name no one seemed to like. Phoebe Hearst suggested that the girls name the grounds and proposed a contest to excite interest. Contest rules insisted that the name be something "Californian, preferably Spanish, and must suggest either the peculiar natural charm of the place, or the purpose for which it is to be used, or, better still, both." Helen Salisbury, a Stanford University graduate, won a five-dollar gold coin for her winning entry. She combined the Spanish word *asilo*, which means haven or refuge, with *mar*, meaning sea, to form "Asilomar" – a refuge by the sea.

The opening conference began Sunday, August 3, 1913. Classes and lectures – on topics ranging from the international work of the YWCA to the power of the American common schools – were scheduled over the next 10 days. While much of the week was devoted to Bible study and training for missionary work, girls were encouraged to bring a nice dress for visiting Monterey and Carmel, and a pair of tramping shoes for hiking the coast. Afternoons were free and every night the girls enjoyed bonfires. The highlight of the week was the pageant, "The Ministering of the Gift," starring 400 costumed girls and the Monterey Presidio Band.

Asilomar

YWCA's leadership expected Asilomar to pay its own way, but also sought donations to fulfill an ambitious building plan. Armed with large sums from wealthy philanthropists, including Mrs. Hearst, Ellen Browning Scripps, Olivia and Catherine Stokes, as well as donations from several thousand ordinary girls,



YWCA Pacific Field Committee, 1913. Phoebe Hearst, fifth from right wearing Chinese garment.



Asilomar Tent Houses, 1923. Dickinson Collection.

the YWCA expanded the grounds and added several new buildings. By 1920, they had added twenty acres and several Julia Morgan-designed buildings: Grace Dodge Chapel-Auditorium, Visitors Lodge, the Guest Inn, the Health Cottage, Class Hall, Crocker Dining Hall, Stuck-Up Inn, as well as a warehouse and a maintenance shop.

To pay for its annual operations the YWCA charged the girls \$1.50 per day for room and board (about \$37.00 in 2017) and leased the grounds to groups sympathetic to its cause. The Young Men's Christian Association and the Epworth League began holding their annual conferences at Asilomar starting in 1914. The California Press Association made an annual excursion to Asilomar, as did the California Grange, the Chinese Student Association, the Japanese Student Association and many others. In the winter of 1920-21 Asilomar opened at other times during the year, in part to keep up with the demand, but also to keep money flowing into its coffers.

Stuck-Ups and Pirates

To assist the YWCA mission at

Asilomar, volunteer opportunities were offered to college-age YWCA members. In exchange for room and board, the young women were involved in camp leadership activities along with chores such as washing dishes, mopping and sweeping floors during conferences. Despite the hard and time-consuming work, only a few positions were available each summer, and the supply of young women often exceeded the demand.

Initial dismay and vocal reluctance to menial tasks earned the 1913 recruits the nickname, 'Stuck-Ups'. It was a title gamely embraced, and, in 1918 would grace the name of their Julia Morgan-designed lodge.

In 1922, the YWCA hired young men to assist at camp. They did some of the heavy lifting required at Asilomar by serving as porters, bus boys, and dishwashers. Known as the "Pirates," they became central to an annual conference tradition of dressing in pirate costumes and 'raiding' Crocker Dining Hall during lunch time. That many of them took liberties with the dessert tray led to their original name, "Pie Rats", later morphed

to "Pirates". The Stuck-ups and Pirates have become some of the most memorable characters in the history of Asilomar. Today, their stories and photos hang in the hallways of Stuck-up Inn and Pirates' Den lodges.

A Resort by the Sea

In the Depression years of the early 1930s, the YWCA found its donors less willing and able to fund Asilomar's deficits. Short of cash, the YWCA's National Board closed Asilomar, and put it on the market. Nevertheless, demand for Asilomar's facilities was still strong. Winifred Heard of Berkeley, who had been involved with Asilomar since 1928, used her connections in the Bay Area's spiritual community, to organize several conferences that not only helped pay for maintenance and upkeep but also helped shape Asilomar's future. Despite Heard's efforts, the YWCA



Baseball in the Dunes at Asilomar, 1915. Grogan Collection.



Stuck Ups, 1927

continued to pursue a buyer for Asilomar.

In 1936, the YWCA leased Asilomar to the Visel brothers, operators of a ranch in Carpinteria, California. The YWCA apparently also gave them an option to buy the grounds for \$100,000. Paulson Visel, with his wife Beatrice, his brother David and mother Elizabeth, moved onto the grounds and began an energetic program to restore Asilomar's glory as a conference facility while reinventing it as seaside resort and auto camp.

The effort to turn Asilomar into a resort-by-the-sea ended in 1941 when the Visels walked away from the opportunity to buy the grounds. The National Board of the YWCA then leased the grounds to the National Youth Administration (NYA), a unit of the New Deal-era Works Progress Administration that offered education and employment training to unemployed youth. The NYA used Asilomar's grounds to house and train young people for the expected wartime industries while providing an opportunity for structured recreation.

With the start of World War II, the NYA's mission came to an

end, but the influx of people into California made sure that Asilomar did not stay empty for long. Families of military personnel associated with Fort Ord took up residence at Asilomar during the first half of 1942 and stayed until 1946.

The Friends of Asilomar

Following World War II, YWCA members were torn between their emotional attachment to the grounds and its inability to produce enough revenue to pay for its upkeep. As the YWCA entertained purchase offers for Asilomar, Heard and other volunteers convinced the YWCA to let them operate the facility. The YWCA loaned Asilomar enough money to reopen its conference facilities and to replace roofs and add a coat of "Asilomar Green" paint. The Friends of Asilomar also began to plan for Asilomar's long-term survival.

Perhaps the most consequential decision they made was the hiring of manager Roma Philbrook, in 1949. An experienced hospital administrator, Philbrook would remain at Asilomar until the end of 1977, overseeing its transformation from primarily a weekend and summer meeting facility to a

year-round, full-service conference grounds.

In 1952, the YWCA negotiated a deal with an Oakland funeral home director who planned to convert Asilomar to an end-of-life home for 400 persons over age 65. At about the same time, Asilomar's neighbor, the Del Monte Company, offered to buy the several hundred thousand cubic feet of sand west of the Chapel near the Circle. The Friends of Asilomar objected to both deals but knew that they had to provide an alternative in order to save Asilomar. A group of concerned citizens in neighboring Pacific Grove formed a "Save Asilomar" committee and actively lobbied the State to buy Asilomar.

In 1951, as part of its plan to protect California's coast, the California Department of Natural Resources Division of Beaches & Parks purchased nearby Moss Beach (Asilomar Beach) and parts of the rocky shoreline south of the Point Pinos lighthouse reservation. By 1952, the State Parks Commission announced that it was interested in buying the conference grounds and nearby dunes, which it would set aside forever as a wild and undeveloped area. The Commission authored



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Asilomar Foundation Members, left to right: Elizabeth Gordon; Bernise May; Winifred Heard; Roma Philbrook; Maude Empey, 1954.

a bill to fund the purchase of Asilomar and 18 other properties, which passed with little difficulty. Nevertheless, Governor Goodwin Knight pocket vetoed the bill, arguing that the nearly \$16 million package violated the long-standing principal that State funds be matched with private donations or local allocations. Winifred Heard convinced the YWCA to donate half the \$700,000 appraised value to the state. She then convinced her friend Joseph Knowland, Chairman of the Parks Commission, Democratic State Senator, Fred Farr, and Republican State Assemblyman, Alan Pattee, to broker a deal in which the City of Pacific Grove would manage the grounds for 25 years, reinvesting all surplus revenues into maintenance and new buildings. On July 1, 1956, the state merged the conference grounds with Asilomar State Beach Park under the management of the non-profit Pacific Grove-Asilomar Operating Corporation (PG-AOC).

Concessionaires

Under the concession agreement with the PG-AOC, and with Roma Philbrook's continued

management, Asilomar began several decades of profitable operations. Plans were put into place in 1958, calling for full utilization of the grounds, "First Class" housing, more parking, and a modern infrastructure.

Expansion and modernization of Asilomar began in 1959 with the opening of the Surf and Sand Complex and the Corporation Yard. A remodeled and expanded dining facility followed, with the Pacific Grove Rotary Club inaugurating the new Seascape dining room in 1961. In 1969, State Parks terminated the operating agreement with Pacific Grove and assumed control over the Pacific Grove-Asilomar Operating Corporation. Roma Philbrook remained, however, and Asilomar's expansion continued across Asilomar Avenue into East Woods with the addition of the State Parks' training facility and accompanying housing. Though Roma Philbrook departed in 1977, expansion continued until the completion of the Forest Lodge and Fireside complexes in 1981.

Throughout Asilomar's years of expansion, concern grew over the

conference grounds' impact on the environment. In the 1980s, State Parks began a systematic program of dune restoration that continues to this day. Forest restoration, which had begun as early as 1959, also continues as the effects of pitch canker, fragmentation, and other impacts on the Monterey pine-coast live oak forest are monitored and analyzed.

In 1993 the State cancelled the concession contract with the Pacific Grove-Asilomar Operating Corporation, awarding it to the Delaware North Corporation in 1996. In September 2009, California State Parks signed a twenty-year concession agreement with ARAMARK Sports & Entertainment to operate the conference grounds and lodging business.

Asilomar State Beach & Conference Grounds

The Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds park unit now contains nearly 60 buildings located on 107 acres with a world-renowned beach, gently rolling sand dunes, and a Monterey pine-Coast Live Oak forest. A major State Parks project funded with concessionaire contributions and completed in 2014, brought Asilomar into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project included mobility upgrades to conference grounds pathways, several remodeled accessible lodge rooms, and improved building accessibility throughout the property.

Asilomar has an annual visitation of more than 400,000 people including conference attendees, attendees, overnight guests, and vacationers to the beach, dunes and coastal trail who revel in the spectacular views of this "Refuge by the Sea".

RESTORATION

© CA State Parks. Elmer Schmidt, c. 1920

Phoebe Hearst Social Hall Terrace Restoration Project

– a California State Parks and Aramark Collaboration

On an autumn afternoon in 1912, a small group of “pioneer workers and dreamers” gathered at the edge of the Pacific Ocean at the site now known as Asilomar. The Young Women’s Christian

Association (YWCA) had decided to build a permanent conference site, the first owned and operated by a women’s group in the United States. The initial survey group included Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst, Mrs. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, Mrs. Mary Merrill, Miss Ella Schooley, and Miss Julia Morgan. Accompanying them was

a representative for the real estate development firm known as the Pacific Improvement Company (PIC), Mr. A.D. Shepherd. The PIC had offered thirty acres of land to the YWCA for its new conference grounds with the stipulation that they pay land taxes and add \$30,000 in improvements within ten years.



In the words of Mary Merrill (first director of Asilomar), "Together we wandered through the picturesque camping grounds of old Monterey and Pacific Grove, over the sand dunes, on thru the pine trees, gathering inspiration every moment from the glimpse of the ocean, blue in its tranquility; the scene growing more fascinating and captivating at every turn, until we reached the marvelous beach, the boundary of our possessions to be. Retracing our steps, with Miss Morgan in our lead, who visualized for us the future sites for the various buildings, we decided then and there that we could and would meet the requirements of the company [PIC] and recommended to the National Board that this offer be accepted. Thus the vision of the Conference Grounds and Vacation Camp of the National Board became a reality."¹

A key member of the group of "dreamers" was Julia Morgan, first woman to receive a license to practice architecture in the state of California. Morgan's

design aesthetic for the Asilomar Conference Grounds buildings drew inspiration – and materials – from the local setting. The buildings at Asilomar embrace the California Arts and Crafts style that emphasizes nature, site, and local materials. Milled redwood paneling and roof trusses were harvested locally; rubble stone pillars sourced from the nearby seashore. With topographic maps supplied by the PIC, Morgan drew the initial plans for the grounds, linking building sites with walking paths and utility roads. She planned for three buildings around the wooded campus circle that served as the primary sites for socializing (Phoebe Hearst Social Hall), spiritual uplift (Grace Dodge Chapel), and sustenance (Mary Ann Crocker Dining Hall). Phoebe A. Hearst Social Hall, originally called the Administration Building, was completed in 1913. This attractive building has a large, welcoming fireplace, cozy reading areas, and, during the early years of YWCA ownership, housed class rooms, a

bureau of information, post office, book store, and tea room/shop where post cards and photographs were sold. Outside, the building's full-width concrete terrace, with a tiered semi-circular stairway, afforded a view towards the ocean. The building's entry doors offered a rustic embrace and welcomed campers to Asilomar – "Refuge by the Sea." The concrete terrace was demolished in 1973 and a wood deck constructed in its place.

The wood deck did not retain Morgan's original design intent, as it restricted the view of the natural environment from the interior and the view of the building from the grounds. Restoration of the concrete terrace returns the building to its original design, reestablishes a unique view shed, and strengthens the historical integrity and value of this National Historic Landmark property.

California State Parks prepared the terrace restoration design and consulted on all ecological, architectural, and historical issues related to the project. Asilomar concessionaire, Aramark, managed the construction project, completed March, 2017. Your comments on the restoration project are welcome and we encourage you to share your thoughts with California State Parks by calling the Asilomar State Park Office: (831) 646-6440.



1. YWCA Publication, "The Story of Asilomar" c. 1924

ARCHITECTURE

Julia Morgan

When Julia Morgan designed Asilomar Conference Grounds for the YWCA, women in California had only recently secured the right to vote. The women of the YWCA knew that they were on the verge

of something great. Morgan's college friend, Oakland Chapter President, Grace Fischer said that the YWCA "is not an experiment." The investment in Asilomar was one way to prove it.

Julia Morgan was the right

person to carry the YWCA's vision forward. In 1894 she graduated with an engineering degree from the University of California, Berkeley—only the fourth woman to do so. In 1898 she became the first woman admitted to the École



Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall Interior, c. 1915. Julia Morgan, Architect

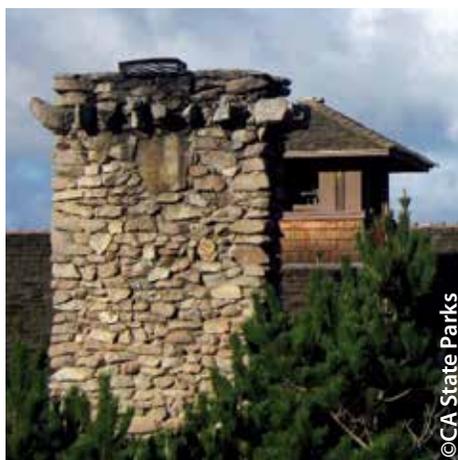


©CA State Parks, Peter Nichols

Merrill Hall Interior. Julia Morgan, Architect

des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where, in 1902, she graduated with a Master's Degree in Architecture. In 1904, after working with the University of California's architect, John Galen Howard, Morgan became the first woman to earn a license to practice architecture in California. She opened her own office in San Francisco that same year.

Throughout her career, Morgan



©CA State Parks

demonstrated an ability to work in an extraordinary array of architectural styles. Trained in the classicism of the Beaux-Arts, her designs for Asilomar reflect an innovative vernacular approach to Arts and Craft architecture known as the First Bay Tradition. She set this standard at Asilomar with the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Social Hall, the first permanent building on the grounds. The Social Hall features natural materials including local granite and unpainted redwood. Hidden behind the dunes and set among the trees, it remains the center of life at Asilomar.

With the construction of the majestic Merrill Hall in 1928 Morgan's work at Asilomar came to a close. Set where the sandy dunes meet the Monterey pine-oak forest and featuring native materials, open ceilings and imposing

fireplaces, Morgan's buildings inspire appreciation for architecture and for the natural environment.

John Carl Warnecke

In 1957 Asilomar's management hired San Francisco architect John Carl Warnecke to develop a "Master Plan" for the park's modernization and expansion. Born in Oakland in 1919, Warnecke was the son of Oakland architect Carl I. Warnecke. Before he retired, John Carl Warnecke's internationally recognized firm designed the Soviet Embassy in Washington, DC, the U.S. Naval Academy Library, international airports, university buildings, and the Hawaii State Capitol. He became acquainted with John and Jacqueline Kennedy, and after JFK's assassination, Warnecke designed the presidential gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery.

When he was hired at Asilomar he was probably best known for designing the Mira Vista School in Richmond, California. What caught the eye of Asilomar manager Roma Philbrook, however, was the recently completed Mark Thomas Inn in Monterey. With wood board siding and landscaping that honors the forested hillside setting, it was a clear demonstration of Warnecke's contextual approach to architecture.

Warnecke's plan for Asilomar called for expanding its capacity and improving its facilities with the



©CA State Parks

addition of “First Class” housing. Nevertheless, Asilomar should not become “crowded,” Warnecke said. Lodging, meeting, and dining hall additions were to be “accomplished without destroying the easy relationship of buildings to the land.”

Starting with the Surf and Sand Complex, the Corporation Yard, Woodlands and Seascape, followed by Sea Galaxy, View Crescent and the Long Views Group, Warnecke used exposed wood beams and wood shake exterior cladding to compliment Morgan’s precedent. His Second and Third Bay Tradition designs use glass to link his building interiors with the natural world outside. Warnecke hired San Francisco interior designer, Jean Coblenz, who furnished the modern rooms in burnt orange and gold to contrast with the coastal fog, and sienna, cerulean blue and olive greens to harmonize with Asilomar’s extraordinary landscape.

North Woods, East Woods, Fireside and Forest Lodge

In 1970, Asilomar’s management razed the Julia Morgan-designed Guest Inn and the last of the YWCA’s Long Houses to make room for the North Woods Complex. Designed by San Francisco architects Smith, Barker & Hanssen, North Woods was



©CA State Parks, Peter Nichols

Surf and Sand Meeting Room. JC Warnecke, Architect

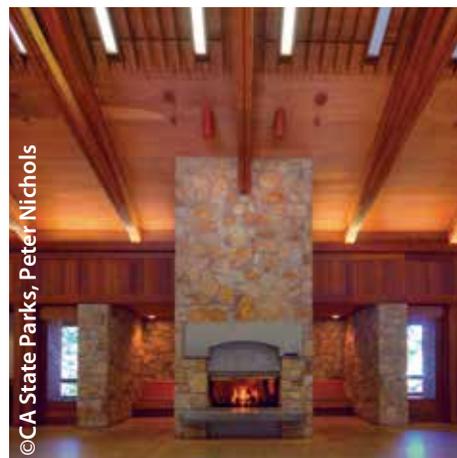
meant to satisfy the growing demand for modern lodging first awakened by Warnecke’s Surf and Sand Complex.

In 1974 the conference grounds expanded across Asilomar Avenue with the addition of East Woods. At the same time California State Parks opened its Center for Continuous Learning, later renamed in honor of one of the Department’s most distinguished

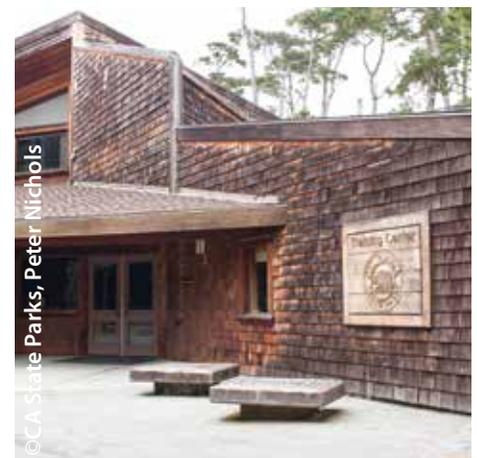
leaders, the William Penn Mott, Jr. State Park Training Center. In 1981 Asilomar completed its expansion with the opening of the Fireside and Forest Lodge complexes. In keeping with the rustic spirit of the older buildings on the grounds, all the newer buildings feature unfinished wood and rugged stone exteriors that harmonize with the local environment.



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Left to right: North Woods, Fireside/Farr Forum, Mott Training Center.

HABITATS

Asilomar Dunes Natural Preserve

Asilomar's 35 acres of sand dunes represent the last remaining area of contiguous, undeveloped dunes in Pacific Grove. Once covering some 480 acres along the western edge of the Monterey Peninsula, the sand dunes have changed dramatically since Europeans began to settle here in the 1700s. Logging, cattle grazing, sand mining and development have damaged and removed much of the original dune ecosystem.

The degraded dunes permitted loose sand to blow away in the wind and, as years passed, the towering dunes shrank drastically. The native plants that had historically provided

stability to the dune sands and habitat for native animals had been reduced to small remnant patches through continued unregulated use of the dunes.

Aggressive efforts to control drifting sand that was engulfing the buildings included using heavy equipment to remove drift sand away from the buildings. Non-native ice plant was encouraged to grow due to its ability to stabilize drifting sand. By the early 1980s the dunes were a relatively flat area existing almost exclusively of ice plant.

Ice plant provides neither food nor shelter to native wildlife and aggressively out-competes native plants by usurping the nutrients, water and space needed for growth. The natural undulating shape of the dunes was degraded, allowing wind and salt spray to move inland unabated. This caused the wind-twisted pines closest to the sea to die and put additional stress on the inland plants usually protected by the dunes.

Something Had to be Done

State Parks staff and the concessionaire agreed that strong action had to be taken if the dunes were to be saved. They embarked

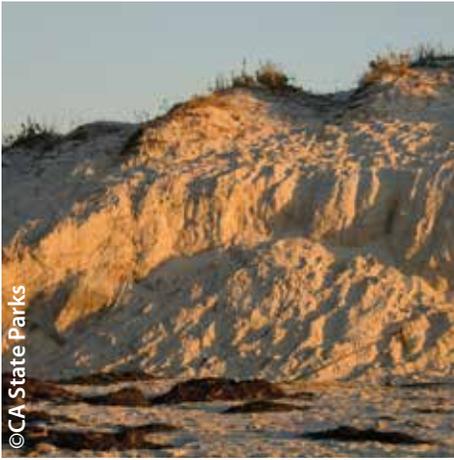
on an ambitious project in 1984 to restore the dunes to its "pre-European-influence" condition by creating a self-sustaining ecosystem.

Luckily, amidst the desolation, a few isolated pockets of relatively pristine habitat remained. These became the models upon which guidelines were developed for the restoration work as well as seed banks for the propagation of native plants.

The restoration project goal was to preserve the dune environment in its natural condition while accommodating public use. This seemingly simple goal required many years of work and ingenuity to accomplish. The first challenge was to collect enough native seeds from the isolated pockets of native habitat remaining. Second, was to build a plant nursery to begin the delicate process of propagating and growing the plants. Next, all non-native plants had to be eliminated from the dunes using environmentally safe methods. Heavy equipment was used to sculpt the dunes in the same way the prevailing winds would have done. Once the dunes were reshaped, they were replanted by



Degraded sand dunes with invasive, non-native ice plant.



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hand and hydroseeded. A split-rail fence was put around the restored dunes to protect it from unwanted trampling.

Each step of the way, local citizens volunteered their efforts to help State Parks staff meet these challenges. In time, the dunes habitat began to resemble its earlier pristine state as native plants took hold and thrived. The plant nursery provided an economical source of dunes plants. To date, more than 400,000 plants representing 25 different native plant species have been grown and planted in the dunes and along the shoreline bluffs. The dunes currently are dominated by native plants and are home to special status plants and animals like Menzies' Wallflower, Black Legless Lizard and Red-shouldered Hawk.

Monterey Pines

Since Europeans first viewed the pines along the fog shrouded Monterey peninsula over 400 years ago, the beauty of Monterey pine forests has been valued by explorers, scientists, nature lovers and artists alike. The Monterey pine forest is an integral part of the "sense of place" at Asilomar and has been celebrated in song and verse by visitors over the years.

Monterey pines are the most widely planted pine in the world. It is planted for its stately grace in gardens and public landscapes as well as for its economic value. Fast growth and quality wood from selective breeding make it ideal for the global timber industry. Monterey pines are extensively grown in New Zealand, Australia, Chile, South Africa and the Mediterranean region. The native Monterey pine forests in California are of great importance to these forest industries as they function



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Photos T to B: Red-shouldered Hawk; Menzies' Wallflower; Black Legless Lizard

as banks of genetic diversity for the development of new strains of Monterey pines.

Thousands of years ago, native Monterey pine forests grew in fragmented pockets throughout California. Due to shifts in climate, and, more recently, to urban and agricultural development, these majestic native pines are now one



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Asilomar's Monterey pine forest

of the rarest forest ecosystems in the world. They are limited to a narrow stretch of California's coast in San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo counties as well as two islands off the west coast of Baja, Mexico. The largest and most diverse remaining Monterey pine forests are here on the Monterey Peninsula.

The Forest at Asilomar

Asilomar's forest currently covers approximately 45 acres with 16

acres covered with hardscape: roads, trails and buildings. It is dominated by Monterey pines with a sub-canopy of coast live oaks and intermixed with planted non-native Monterey cypress. Historically, the pine canopy in the Asilomar area was dominated by trees that became established between 1850 and 1910 (McBride and Stone, 1976). A major fire in 1901 burned many trees; but, in some parts of the Asilomar forest,

many older pines— 50, 65, and 75 year old survived (Smith 1994). Monterey pines are well adapted to regenerating after fires as most cones remain closed until exposed to high temperatures. It is estimated that tens of thousands of young pine seedlings per acre can be established after a fire.

Pitch Canker

Pitch canker is a disease caused by a fungus (*Fusarium circinatum*). It was first recognized in California in 1986 and affects many of California's native pines including Monterey pines. In 1993, pitch canker was first identified within native Monterey pine stands at Asilomar and in the Del Monte Forest of Pebble Beach. By 1994, it had spread to all the native stands of Monterey pines in California.

As early as 1997, pitch canker at Asilomar was found in 78 percent of its pines; by January 2001, less than two percent of pines were free of pitch canker symptoms. Since 1991 over 60 percent of Asilomar's pines greater than six inches in diameter have died - a staggering mortality rate!

Native bark, cone and twig beetles carry the fungus pathogen to branch tips and cone whorls. Needles on the tips of infected branches fade to yellow, then to rust, and fall from the tree. Advanced symptoms of pitch canker disease include resin extruding on the surface of the shoots, branches, exposed roots and trunks. Trees with advanced symptoms of the disease have significant crown dieback due to the large number of infected branch tips.

Each area of the tree showing symptoms is a separate infection. Removing diseased parts of a tree does not stop the infection.

Currently, there has been no demonstrated way to control the effects of pitch canker through the use of insecticides and fungicides or other methods.

Progress and Ongoing Challenges

Over the years since pitch canker was recognized on California's central coast, the understanding of how to manage pitch canker-infected Monterey pine forests has changed significantly. Early methods, such as inoculating seedlings with the disease to screen them for resistance, showed promise in the greenhouse, but long-term results in the forest were disappointing. Work is continuing to identify the genes responsible for resistance and to develop reliable germination methods.

Today, the Asilomar State Park resource staff grows native Monterey pines from seeds taken from within the park. There is no direct link between the resistance or susceptibility to pitch canker of a parent tree and the seedlings it produces. Seeds are collected from trees with and without pitch canker symptoms in a way that ensures a high degree of genetic diversity. The seedlings are grown in 3-gallon pots to ensure robust seedlings to transplant. Another method used to encourage natural recruitment of pines is the placement of woodchips, made from dead Monterey pine trees in the park, and supplemented with chipped pine cones. This seed-dense media is spread in areas that have conditions conducive to pine growth.



Pine tree with pitch canker

The chipped material suppresses the growth of non-native annuals and increases survival for natural pine seedlings (trees not grown in the nursery and hand-planted). While pitch canker has been a primary cause for the rapid decline of Monterey pines at Asilomar, the degradation of the forest ecosystem has been affected by other factors as well.

Forest Fragmentation

The pine and oak forest was thinned for the construction of buildings in 1913 and continued until 1981. Thirty-five percent of Asilomar's forest is fragmented with buildings, parking lots, roadways and pathways. This fragmentation prevents the pines from developing a dense canopy.

Competition from Invasive Plants

The pine canopy that once created ideal growing conditions for native understory plants is now lost. Longer periods of sunlight weaken the shade-tolerant plants and dry out the soil. Conditions on the forest floor now favor non-natives. Weedy annual grasses, herbs, vines, shrubs and trees are included in the more than 60 species of non-native plants that occur at Asilomar.



Asilomar plant nursery

Coast Live Oaks

A less apparent threat to the forest comes from the Monterey pine's closest neighbor—the coast live oak. In a mature pine forest, the two live harmoniously with oaks surviving beneath the pine's canopy. However, the longer-lived oaks can eventually dominate the forest as the young pine seedlings are unable to regenerate under the shade of the oaks.

Non-native Wildlife

The loss of native vegetation has reduced or eliminated native wildlife populations. The void is being filled with non-native species such as house sparrows, Eurasian Collared-Doves, starlings, and red fox squirrels.

The Forest Plan Strategy

In 2007, State Parks updated its Asilomar Forest Management Plan. It establishes a framework of protection, restoration, and maintenance for the Monterey pine forest ecosystem.

We will never replicate the pre-European forest conditions at Asilomar with today's landscape of buildings, parking lots, and roadways, but we can work

towards a mosaic of representative trees and try to mimic small areas of remnant vegetation on less developed sites in the park.

A number of healthy trees, resistant to pitch canker, have been planted and are now thriving. To assist successful reforestation, many trees are partially screened. The screen protects from heavy winds, offers passive shade (preventing the soil from drying out quickly), and protects the young tree from the trampling and browsing of local Black-tailed deer, as well as rubbing from the bucks during the fall rut season.

Growing native Monterey pines in the plant nursery will continue for many years. To achieve reforestation at Asilomar, we estimate that 560 pine trees per year over a five-year period need to survive outplanting.

The removal of non-native plants and oaks that inhibit the growth of pines is performed on a selective basis. Cypress trees are not native to Asilomar; they were planted aggressively when there were concerns that all the Monterey pines would die. Many cypress trees have grown quite

large since the early 90s and now prevent the regeneration of the Monterey pines by overshadowing. An active program is underway to control the number of cypresses.

In the ecological context of the forest, dune soil and topography play a significant role in shaping the forest at Asilomar. In other words, preserving the sand dunes protects the pine forest.

The soil in young dunes nearest the coast is little more than loose sand. It is composed of loose deposits of quartz and feldspar sands with high permeability, low water-holding capacity and low organic matter. As pines grow on the eastern edge of the dunes, a change in plant species growing under the trees is more weighted to a pine forest rather than a dune. Further inland, the soils are associated with the oldest dune parent material with clay and iron in the subsoil and higher organic matter. The water-holding capacity in the soil is significantly higher. The end result is larger pines and oaks and the establishment of forest vegetation.

The topography of the conference grounds ranges in elevation from sea level to 90 feet above sea level. The entire property lies over partially stabilized dunes of differing ages, creating wide and gentle slopes. The topography of these surfaces plays a significant role in soil and vegetation development.

Where the topography consists of a ridge-swale pattern, moisture tends to accumulate in the lower swale (valley of the dunes) areas, creating favorable conditions for plants. Ridges offer the swale areas protection from wind and salt spray. As pines develop and spread laterally along the eastern edge of the dunes, wind patterns are altered by the trees. The



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Some dead pines are intentionally left standing for acorn woodpeckers. The trees are used for nesting sites, graneries to store acorns, and to hunt for insects.

wind-topped pines push wind currents up and away from the surface, providing a wind barrier for the forest vegetation.

Further inland in the Asilomar forest, the topography of ridges is wide, gentle slopes. Pines and cypresses exist on these ridges as well as in the lower swale areas, reaching their greatest heights due to the fact that they are largely sheltered from wind.

A diversity of habitat vegetation in the forest is important for managing the health of wildlife populations. The many wildlife species that occur at Asilomar have various needs for nesting, food and cover. These requirements vary seasonally, depending on the life cycle of the plants and animals. Animals that nest or den in one habitat area are likely to forage

or get water in one or more other habitat areas. The ability to move between habitat areas for these purposes is critical. The health of trees and vegetation in different zones is key to their livelihood on the Asilomar grounds.

A Snapshot of Asilomar's Forest Today

It is evident when taking a quick examination of the Asilomar forest that it is in poor condition as a result of the advanced age of most of the trees, forest fragmentation from development, and disease. But a closer look will reveal sites in the forest where young healthy trees have been planted or growing naturally and are thriving. In the years to come, this reforestation will create a juvenile forest stage at Asilomar which will

provide local wildlife with pockets of dense, small tree habitat that has not been available for many years. The denser tree growth and increased shade will also slow – and probably help reduce - the growth of invasive non-native plants.

It is important to take reforestation action now. In 50 years a new generation of park visitors will be experiencing the results of the forest we save today. With increasing stressors on our natural environment, like climate change, a robust effort is needed to restore Asilomar's forest. A focus on creating a multi-aged, genetically diverse forest may make this habitat more resilient to future challenges. Every small effort on our part will ensure that Asilomar's Monterey pine forest ecosystem continues to exist and thrive for future generations.

The State Beach and Blue Pacific

The craggy coves and a long stretch of sand on Asilomar State Beach offer a myriad of places to explore. Here, you'll find treasures everywhere. As you explore, keep in mind that each form of marine life, from seabirds to the smallest invertebrates, plants, and rocks, is protected in this marine reserve. Asilomar State Beach is one of several Marine Protected Areas in the Monterey Bay Sanctuary.



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California's Marine Protected Areas form a network which includes many different marine habitats – including Asilomar's rocky coast tide pools.

Asilomar's White Sand

Santa Lucia granodiorite rock forms the rocky coast along Asilomar State Beach. This dense, hard rock is comprised of large rectangular crystals of orthoclase feldspar, gray translucent quartz, creamy plagioclase feldspar, and black biotite mica. It formed over 100 million years ago from a molten mass deep in the earth under the ocean. It was transported here through massive uplifts and plate tectonics. This movement most likely caused the fissures you see in the rocks today. These cracks weaken the integrity of the rock, making it more vulnerable to erosion. Over time, the erosion of these rocks eventually wears down to fine white sand. This sand is suspended in the sea water and, in time, deposited onto the beach by wave action.

Marine Life

Shells scattered on the beach are actually the cast-off external coverings of sea creatures. These shells are efficiently recycled back into nature by other marine animals and the pounding surf. The hermit crab uses the empty shells to create its own protective home. The giant green sea anemone attaches pieces of shell to its skin for disguise and for protection from the sun. Other shells are ground up by the motion of the waves and made available for marine animals to make new shells. A world of marine organisms thrive under the white beach sand—worms, crabs, shrimp, and some creatures so small they can live in the tiny spaces between the grains of sand. When sea water washes



over the beach, it percolates down, carrying with it plankton and dissolved oxygen that nourishes these marine animals. Each species that calls the rocky habitat home must be able to survive the crashing waves and submersion during high tides and the exposure to drying winds, sun, and rain during low tides. As you explore the tide pools, remember not to remove rocks, animals, plants or shells.

Harbor Seals

Harbor seals are in Monterey Bay year round. Frequently seen hauled out onto rocky outcroppings at low tide, these 300-pound marine mammals rest after feeding cycles. They are considered to be one of the world's finest deep-sea divers. Although they breathe air as we do, seals are built to remain underwater for remarkable periods— a dive of up to 30 minutes and 300 foot depth is possible. Harbor seals spend time on dry land to molt, give birth, nurse, and care for their pups.

Whales

Every year, starting in late summer into fall, migrating humpback whales appear in Monterey Bay waters. The whales spend their summers in cold, nutrient-rich northern Pacific water, feeding on small fish and krill. When winter approaches, the whales travel south to the warmer waters of the tropic seas.

As humpbacks and blue whales

depart Monterey, the Pacific gray whales begin arriving in November. Sightings increase each day until their numbers peak around the second week in January. Pacific gray whales travel round trip, about 12,000 miles each year, from the Chukchi Sea between Alaska and Russia to their breeding grounds in Baja California, Mexico, and then back to the Chukchi Sea.

Sea Otters

The sea otter is undeniably one of the most popular animals in Monterey Bay. Sea otters are fairly easy to spot because they spend most of their time floating on their backs, eating or sleeping in giant kelp fronds on the surface of the ocean. Its scientific name, *Enhydra lutris*, means "otter in the water." This name is most fitting because otters spend almost all their lives in the ocean—they eat, sleep, mate, give birth, and feed their young at sea.

They are the most aquatic of all otters. Otters are the only marine mammal without a layer of fat to keep it warm in the cold ocean. It relies on its thick fur to keep it warm. The fur is the thickest of any animal in the world. It is so dense, it would be impossible to part it with a comb and see its skin. Otters have two types of fur— guard hairs are long, coarse strands, and the under fur is shorter, finer hairs. Clean fur is a matter of life and death for otters; it must be groomed and cleaned constantly. Otters use their sharp claws as a comb to scratch and brush the fur to untangle and clean it. The otter's coat is loose on its body so it can pull it around to clean areas that are hard to reach.

Giant Kelp

Several different species of large, brown algae or kelp grow just offshore. The "beds" of floating fronds and bulbs are frequently

seen on the water's surface. Kelp, also known as seaweed, attracts feeding sea otters, circling gulls, and diving cormorants. All this activity hints at the riches that lie below the ocean's surface.

Giant kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) is the most common algae in the forest. It grips rocks on the ocean bottom with "holdfasts" and uses air-filled bulbs found at the base of each kelp blade to float the long fronds to the surface. This floating ability enables the kelp, which can reach over 90 feet high, to rise towards sunlight so photosynthesis can take place.

Giant kelp contains algin, a chemical common in many products we use. The extracted algin is an effective emulsifier and suspension agent in salad dressing, ice cream, fruit drinks, water-based paints, adhesives, food wrappers, toothpaste, surgical jellies and hand lotion.

Tide Pools

Along the rocky shoreline, tide pools form as sea water washes over the rocks and fills the natural depressions. Tide pools range from small, shallow puddles high up on shore to large, deep pools nearer the sea. The best time to explore tide pools is during the lowest of low tides that occur during a full moon or new moon phase.

Tide pools are home to dozens of different animals and plants. When sea water flows into the pools, it brings fresh oxygen and food to its inhabitants. Some animals spend their whole lives in one pool while others swim in and out with the tides. Between tides, some smaller pools are exposed to the air and begin. Many of the animals take shelter under cool, damp rocks and moist seaweeds so their bodies do not dry out before the tide comes in again.

The coastline at Asilomar is part of the Asilomar State Marine Preserve. All plants and animals are protected by law. No fishing or collecting is allowed.

Tide pools closest to shore are home to the hardiest plants and animals. Some kelp varieties in this zone need "drying time" in order to release spores. Snails, limpets, and some barnacles nestle onto rocks and in crevices while hermit crabs scurry along the pool's edge.

The next level in the intertidal zone is home to more delicate species, those which can only survive out of water less than six hours. This is where multi-colored sea stars drape over rocks and goose-necked barnacles and black mussels pack into tight mosaic

crowds. In the waterfilled pools, sea anemones open in flower-like shapes as their tentacles capture prey with a sharp paralyzing sting. If you are lucky, you may spot an immature green-colored, purple spiny sea urchin wedged in the rocks.

Brilliantly colored nudibranchs and sponges are found in the deepest pools. Small sculpin fish and rock prickleback dart about in search of food among the surf grass.

For all its splendid display, life in the tide pools is harsh. Forever at the mercy of the elements and constantly vulnerable to predators, the tide pool plants and animals exist in an endless dance between life and death.



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BIRD LIFE OF ASILOMAR

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As with most parks, Asilomar has its resident birds, whose calls and habits are so familiar to the staff that we rarely have to look around to know who is scratching in the undergrowth. Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, the boisterous Acorn Woodpeckers and precocious California Scrub-Jays are

all common Monterey pine forest residents that are seen at nearly every bird outing. On the sandy beach, the seasonality of shorebirds makes them a little bit sparser, but during Spring and Fall migration, you may be treated to sights of Whimbrels, Marbled Godwits, Willets and Sanderlings. The mascot

of the rocky intertidal habitat would have to be the Black Oystercatcher, a bird seen year-round foraging for hard-shelled invertebrates in the continuously changing tide pools. While Asilomar has a respectable number of roughly 80 species seen regularly, our overall species list, including rarities and more infrequent visitors, totals 225 species. This is an enormous number of birds for a small 107-acre park.

Asilomar benefits from having five distinct ecological zones that provide a variety of habitats for wildlife, starting with a Monterey pine forest at the eastern edge of the park and ending up on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Coastal access helps increase our number of bird species. Offshore, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary protects habitat that seabirds utilize while the short continental shelf allows for more open-ocean species to be sighted from shore with spotting scopes. It is definitely recommended that you bring your binoculars on any outing around the park, even to and from meals at the dining hall. You never know who might fly across your path!



White-tailed Kite

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Standing next to historic Merrill Hall, designed by famed architect Julia Morgan (see article pg. 13) you are immersed in Asilomar's native Monterey pine forest. There are both Monterey pines and coast live oaks in this habitat, and these native trees provide food and shelter for many of our forest birds. The pine trees are host to many insect species that insectivorous bird species such as the Chestnut-backed Chickadee and Pygmy Nuthatch rely on. Their dense, high canopies hide the nests of raptors such as the Red-shouldered Hawk and White-tailed Kites, who prefer to nest in the safety of the tallest trees in the forest. The coast live oak is an evergreen oak species that can produce tons of acorns during "mast years", which are years when the acorn crop is especially robust. Before the acorns even hit the ground, the flashy Acorn Woodpecker is busy collecting and storing them in granary trees that the family group will utilize throughout the winter months. To find a granary tree, look for trees with hundreds of dime-sized holes all over the bark with acorns placed in the holes. These woodpeckers also use the lampposts around the park to store acorns, much to the dislike of our maintenance staff. You'll also see the California Scrub-Jay caching acorns for the winter. The jays stash their acorns in the ground within their territories instead of in the trees like the Acorn Woodpecker. In this way, they are inadvertently helping to propagate the oak trees, since they don't always dig up what they bury and the acorns can germinate in the spring!

All through the Transition Forest and the Dune habitat, you'll likely see a black and white flycatcher species called a Black Phoebe.



They sit in open areas on perches fairly low to the ground and look around for flying insects to eat. They sally out and pluck the bug out of mid-air and then return to their same lookout perch to scan for more meals. The Black Phoebe is so common, it is seen on every bird walk. Another frequently seen bird species is the White-crowned Sparrow, who is unquestionably the master of the dune habitat. They scurry around beneath the dune plants like little mice, typically seen out of the corner of your eye. They search on the ground for insects and seeds. In the spring, the males are to be found sitting atop blooming yellow bush lupines, singing their hearts out. Declaring this area as his territory, his call also invites any indecisive female sparrows to stop by and see what he has to offer. Other sparrow species seen in the dunes are Song Sparrows and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Barn Swallows and Violet-green

Swallows are seen flying high over the dunes catching bugs in the summer months and both nest on park grounds. The Barn Swallows build mud nests in the underground parking area and the Violet-green Swallows use cavities in trees as well as nest boxes that are built and maintained by state parks staff.

Using the crosswalk to safely traverse Sunset Avenue, you'll arrive at the Sandy Shore habitat. Most of our classic shorebirds such as the Willets, Whimbrels, Marbled Godwits and Sanderlings fuel up at Asilomar on their flights north towards the Arctic Circle for spring migration and again coming back south towards Central and South America in the fall. These species have long, sensitive beaks used for probing in the wet sand at the ocean's edge. They forage for sand crabs, marine worms and other small invertebrates. The decomposing kelp of the beach wrack is another source of tasty



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arthropods, so some shorebirds may be seen further up the beach as well. If your goal is to see these beach specialists, it's best to arrive early in the morning. Most shorebirds are shy and certainly not up for sharing the beach with noisy children or jubilant dogs. These birds will retreat further north to the rocky coastline to rest and recuperate. North of the sandy beach, the rocky shoreline has its specialist species as well. Opposite of the flexible, sensitive beaks of the sandy shore birds, the shore birds of the *rocky intertidal habitat* have sturdy, hard beaks that they use for prying open mussels and barnacles. This is the domain of the Black Oystercatcher, one of the most striking shorebird species on the west coast. They do not catch or consume oysters at all. Whoever named them didn't know their natural history! They mostly prey on limpets and mussels, hard-shelled invertebrates that are

exposed only at low tide. Recent research has revealed a shockingly low success rate for oystercatcher nests around the Monterey peninsula. These birds nest on the coastal rocks in order to be close to their food source, but they are frequently disturbed by people tidepooling and recreating in these same areas. While a definite reason for their low success rate has not been determined, State Parks and local governments erect temporary fences and signage during the breeding season in order to offer them some protection.

Looking offshore from the Asilomar Coast Trail, you are viewing the surface waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. This stretch of ocean, from Point Pinos in Pacific Grove south to Point Joe in Pebble Beach, is designated as a marine reserve, which means that no fishing or collecting of marine life is allowed. This level of protection allows for

some stunning marine wildlife to thrive! Diving birds such as Pelagic Cormorants and Brown Pelicans forage in the kelp forest that is just offshore. The Brown Pelican dramatically dives from as high as 65 feet in the air and plunges into the sea, opening its beak at the last moment to scoop up the unsuspecting fish. Their gular pouch can hold up to 2.6 gallons of water! Pelagic Cormorants dive from the surface of the water and propel themselves after their prey using only their webbed feet. They eat small fish species such as sand lance, capelin and juvenile rockfish.

Further out to sea, *pelagic* or open-ocean bird species are present, although rarely viewed by the casual observer. If you want to see seabirds, you'll need a powerful spotting scope and some strong north-west winds to blow the birds closer to shore. The Procellariiform order includes albatrosses, shearwaters, fulmars

and petrels and they are all truly pelagic, coming to shore only to breed. These birds are also affectionately called “tube-noses” due to their tubular nostrils that connect with their salt gland. This salt gland acts like a second kidney and allows the birds to excrete excess salt, as seawater is the only water source available to them. These birds forage for krill squid, small fish and marine zooplankton. Marine plastic is one of the many anthropogenic problems these birds face. Floating plastic out at sea is mistaken for food and consumed by the birds and often fed to their chicks. Many of the chicks die from starvation as they are literally filled up with plastic, leaving no room for actual food. Everyday we makes choices to purchase single-use plastic items, to go for convenience instead of planning ahead or not thinking through where this plastic product

will ultimately end up. Putting something in the trash does not make it magically disappear. It’s best to try and reduce our consumption of non-essential plastic items.

Each one of us has the power to make a positive difference in the world. We hope you’ll be inspired by the unique and stunning wildlife that you see and keep the memories of your visit to Asilomar at the forefront of your mind, even after you’ve returned home.

As you enjoy the beauty of the central coast, whether in the tide pools on the coast or in the forested inland areas, it’s good to keep in mind these guidelines for wildlife watching in the park:

Please stay on designated trails. Native animals rely on these distinct, special habitats to live and staying on marked trails will help preserve those areas of the park.

Do not feed the animals. Our

native species all have special skills to obtain the appropriate food and their activities are integral to the health of the ecosystem. Feeding wildlife also habituates them to humans and can increase the chances of dangerous human/wildlife conflicts.

Keep pets on a leash, both at the beach and in the forest. Many birds are passing through on a long migration and could be on their last leg, trying to get some more energy to keep going. A joyous but oblivious dog charging through a flock of foraging birds could be harmful for some of those individuals. Think about how you play a role in the habitat.

Get to know our Asilomar birds while you are here! State Parks-led bird tours are offered regularly; a schedule is posted at the State Parks desk in the Hearst Social Hall. A self-guided bird brochure with identified habitats is also available here.

Black Oystercatcher



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10 THINGS TO KNOW



Stay Safe and Protect the Environment While You Visit Asilomar

1. State Beach and Conference Grounds is a California State Park open to all – conference attendees, overnight lodgers, and day visitors. Lock doors and windows to your room and vehicle.

2. Speed limit is 10 mph. Please be aware of pedestrians (including families with children), wildlife, and weather when driving on conference grounds roads.

3. Park only in designated spaces. No camper or motorhome parking on premises or on perimeter streets is allowed.

4. Asilomar recycles! Recycling containers are located next to most meeting rooms throughout the conference grounds and at the entrances to Asilomar State Beach.

5. Keep Asilomar Beautiful by discarding cigarette butts in ash receptacles. California law prohibits smoking inside all Asilomar buildings or within 20

feet of doorways and windows when outside.

6. Walk on established paths and roads to preserve vegetation and prevent soil erosion. Remember, “Plants grow by the inch, but die by the foot!”

7. Dogs on leash are welcome at Asilomar while en route to the beach or coast trail. State law requires dogs to be on a 6-foot leash at all times due to safety, environmental, and disposal concerns. Only actively working service dogs are allowed inside buildings.

8. Open campfires or bonfires are not allowed on Asilomar State Beach due to safety, environmental, and

disposal concerns. Wood from the conference grounds fire pit and lodge fireplaces should not be burned at Asilomar State Beach.

9. Asilomar State Beach is part of the Monterey Peninsula Marine Protected Areas Network. In this “No Take Zone”, animals, plants and natural features are protected by State and Federal laws - please refrain from picking up or collecting shells, animals, rocks, or plants. Help protect our amazing tide pools for future visitors by exploring this habitat with your eyes – mobile phone memories and selfies are encouraged!

10. Asilomar is a sanctuary for a diversity of wildlife which YOU can protect by not feeding or teasing the animals. Feeding animals and birds causes animal nourishment problems, ecosystem imbalance, and potential harm to humans. Although rare, mountain lion sightings on Asilomar grounds and in the dunes habitat have occurred. Report all mountain lion sightings to the Asilomar State Park Ranger office.



BEACH MOBILITY



©CA State Parks

Beach Wheelchair and Beach Walker Help Make Asilomar State Beach More Accessible

People who use wheelchairs or walkers can now enjoy a day at the beach, going where conventional equipment can't take them – to the water's edge. A versatile, sand-friendly beach wheelchair, as well as a sand-friendly beach walker, are available free-of-charge to visitors at Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds.

The new equipment was acquired through the California Coastal Commission's Whale Tail Grants Program, which distributes funds from the sales of California's WHALE TAIL® Coastal Protection License Plate and donations to the "Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund" listed on the California state tax form.

Florida-based Deming Designs' "DeBug" beach wheelchair incorporates Wheeleez wheels to navigate sand, and rear suspension is designed to allow all four wheels to remain in contact with the ground when moving across uneven terrain, giving users a stable ride. Swing-away arm rests are easily removable

for lateral transfers. The Deming beach walker is constructed of lightweight aluminum, is based on conventional walker design, and also has the Wheeleez wheels to easily navigate sand. Asilomar State Beach was selected by the California Coastal Commission to serve as the pilot site for the beach walker in 2017.

Advance reservations for equipment use are recommended. To reserve the wheelchair or the walker, contact the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds Front Desk: (831) 372-8016. The equipment is loaned out on a daily basis and is available to be used at Asilomar State Beach or other coastal parks in Monterey County.

- **An all-terrain beach wheelchair and beach walker are available for guests with mobility limitations – please check at the front desk.**
- **A TTY device for guest use is available at the Conference Grounds front desk; dial 711TTY relay service.**
- **This publication can be made available in alternate formats by contacting the Asilomar State Park office at (831) 646-6440.**
- **California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to your visit, visitors with disabilities who need assistance or wish to request accessible accommodations may do so through the Conference Grounds website: www.VisitAsilomar.com or by calling (831) 372-8016.**



COVER ARTIST

Cover Artist: Christine Crozier

"My art is for people who want to see themselves in the work, to let the artwork take them to a time and place where they feel happy, maybe younger and more carefree."

You can feel Christine's infectious enthusiasm in her expressive oil paintings. Her art invites us to look at the everyday occurrences in our own lives with fresh eyes.

Christine Crozier's work encompasses murals created for some of America's most beautiful homes, as well as painting fine art oils in her own Monterey Peninsula neighborhood, and farther afield in Europe and Fiji. She is a



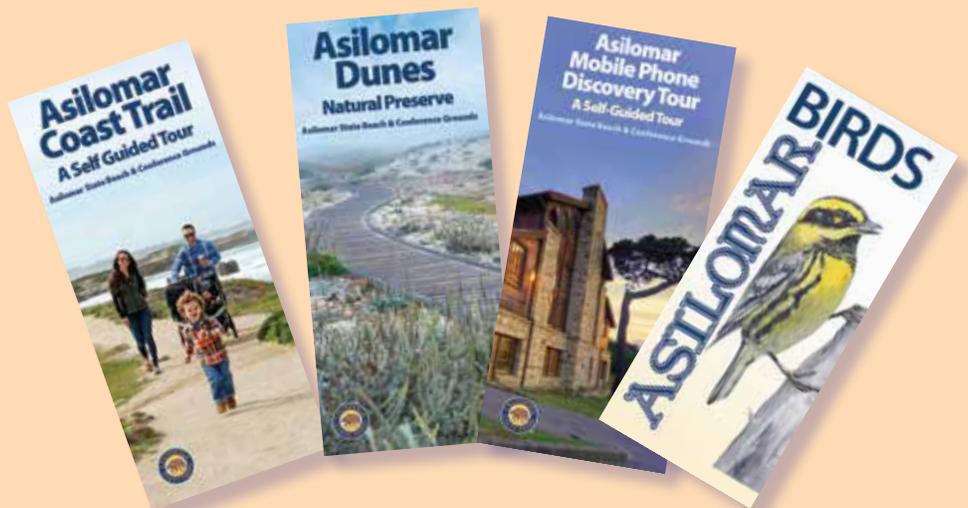
respected teacher who believes artists have a mission to foster the continual growth of the arts and an appreciation for beauty.

Collectors in North America,

Europe and the South Pacific have sought Christine's artwork. Her home and artwork have been showcased in the book, *Artists' Interiors*, by Laurie E. Dickson.

Christine is a founding member of the Monterey Bay Plein Air Painters' Association (MBPAPA), and served two terms as its president. A past president of the Carmel Art Association (CAA), and has been a CAA artist member since 2005. Art gallery representation includes the Carmel Art Association, Carmel; Cheryl Watts Gallery, Monterey, CA. To learn more about the artist, visit her website: www.christinecrozier.com

Discover and enrich your Asilomar experience with self-guided walk brochures available at the Hearst Social Hall. For a schedule of State Park-led tours of the Asilomar Conference Grounds, visit our website: www.parks.ca.gov/asilomar or call the State Park office: 831-646-6443.



SHORT DRIVES

There are many California State Parks located near Asilomar. You can explore the secluded trails of Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, discover the rich Spanish and Mexican heritage of Monterey State Historic Park and San Juan Bautista State Historic Park, and camp under starry skies at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. Park information is available at www.parks.ca.gov.

Monterey State Historic Park
(831) 649-7118

Point Lobos State Natural Reserve
(831) 624-4909

Pfeiffer Big Sur State Parks
(831) 667-0528

San Juan Bautista State Historic Park
(831) 623-4881

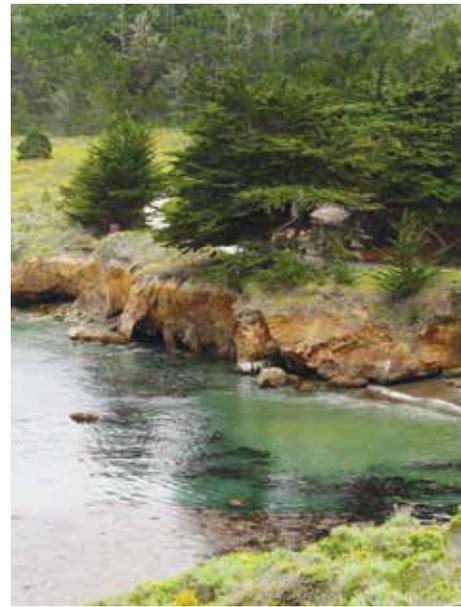
Other nearby State Parks

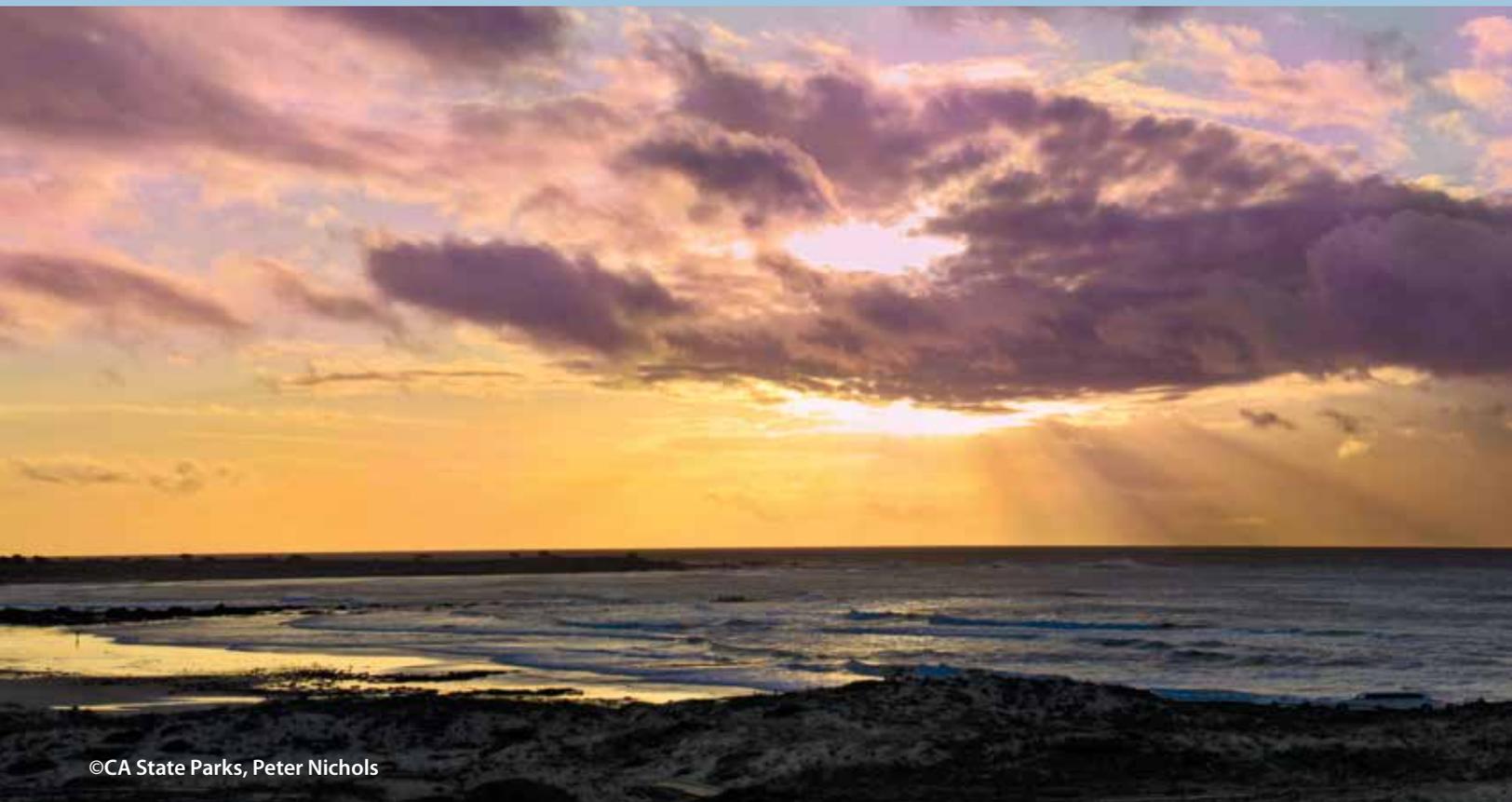
Carmel River State Beach
(831) 649-2836

Fort Ord Dunes State Park
(831) 649-2836

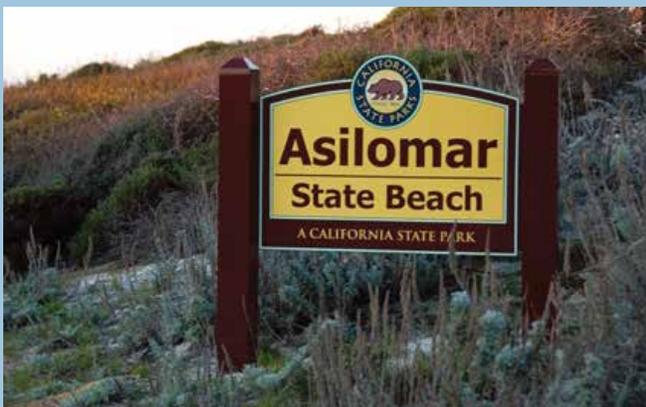
Marina State Beach
(831) 649-2836

Monterey State Beach
(831) 649-2836





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**Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds,
a Unit of California State Parks**



The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

California State Parks
P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call:

(800) 777-0369;

(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.

711, TTY relay service

www.parks.ca.gov

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