

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Meeting on Acquisition of Property for Montana de Oro State Park on January 31 in San Luis Obispo

The California Department of Parks and Recreation will hold a hearing to receive public comments on the acquisition of approximately 33,000 acres of land in the Irish Hills area of San Luis Obispo County. The property would expand Montana de Oro State Park. The hearing will be held at San Luis Obispo County's Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Avenue, in San Luis Obispo on Thursday, January 31, 2002 starting at 7:00 p.m. The facility has adjacent public parking and is accessible to persons with disabilities.

The acreage is bounded on the west by Montana de Oro State Park, on the east by Highway 101, on the south by the Pacific Ocean and on the north by the City of San Luis Obispo and the Los Osos Valley. A \$13 million state budget allotment from the "Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000" (Proposition 12) is currently available for initial acquisitions. The purpose of the hearing is to record comments from local public officials and the general public on reasons these properties should or should not be acquired, and to what extent, for state park purposes. A brief introductory presentation by DPR staff will precede the formal receipt of comments.

The Irish Hills area is a remote and spectacular stretch of unprotected and mostly undeveloped coastline providing a relatively intact example of historic coastal California. The area serves as a home to a multitude of sensitive biological resources including several endangered plants and animals and their coastal habitats. Current activities on the lands are minimal, consisting of power generation, grazing, nature resource protection, and pockets of residential development. Public access is generally limited to the winding See and Prefumo Canyon Roads. Current ownership is a mosaic of public and private lands ranging in parcel size from a few acres in small residential lots to 12,000 acres owned by PG&E. Acquisition by State Parks could provide an opportunity for a landscape scale conservation effort, watershed and view shed protection, coastal trail development and habitat linkages.

The public notice for the meeting and a map of the proposed zone of acquisition interest have been provided to the San Luis Obispo City Library for posting. They are also available at www.parks.ca.gov.

Written comments will also be accepted at the hearing or subsequent to the hearing if received no later than February 14, 2002. Written comments may be either mailed to Warren Westrup, Chief, Office of Acquisition and Real Property Services, California Department of Parks and Recreation, One Capitol Mall, Suite 500, Sacramento, CA 95814, faxed to (916) 327-7307 or e-mailed to smill@parks.ca.gov. As required by law, DPR will then provide the State Legislature a summary of the public comments prior to any acquisition.

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