



MORRO COAST
AUDUBON
SOCIETY

Dear Morro Coast Audubon Society Members,

September, 2011

Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) is pleased to inform its members of another successful year of continuing its mission of conservation and restoration of ecosystems. Additionally, MCAS offers free community programs and field trips and supports ongoing research at Hi Mountain Condor Lookout and the Western Snowy Plover Recovery Program. MCAS thanks members of the organization and members of the local community for their support!

Now, however, MCAS faces what may be the most **daunting challenge** of its 45 year existence. The "crown jewel" of MCAS, the Sweet Springs Nature Preserve in Los Osos, is expanding to include an additional 8 acres (currently known as East Sweet Springs). MCAS acquired East Sweet Springs in 2008, but has been unable to open the property to the public due to a variety of permitting requirements. With the help of the San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy, MCAS has moved forward and applied for a Minor Use Permit (MUP) from the County, which would implement a number of access improvements, including trails, some built in accordance with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards, benches, signage, a viewing platform overlooking the shore, removal of exotic vegetation and restoration of a variety of native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.

So what is DAUNTING about this plan? The price tag! MCAS estimates that the cost of opening East Sweet Springs to the public as planned will be in the neighborhood of \$200,000. While some of these costs will hopefully be covered by existing and future grant monies, MCAS estimates that at least over half of the \$200,000 still needs to be raised in another manner. This is where MCAS and community members are needed to help!

1. Donate pro-bono (or reduced rate) services. Examples thus far include: Clinton Iwanicha, architect, donated his services pro bono to construct the architectural drawings for the MUP. Richard Rose has agreed to donate his landscaping services to construct the ADA parking space pro bono, and Kate Ballantyne, archeologist, will be donating future services.
2. Donate generously to MCAS. Gifts of ANY amount are appreciated.
3. **VOLUNTEER** to help restore the property. MCAS needs literally thousands of volunteer hours to realize the vision of what the preserve can become.

Thanks to grant funding, MCAS will initiate the restoration efforts in a designated portion of East Sweet Springs with a kickoff party on Saturday, September 24th from 9am to 1pm. After brief introductory remarks from community leaders, volunteers will begin the restoration process by removing invasive weeds under the direction of experienced crew leaders. Tools, tips and refreshments will be provided. Please volunteer and plan to join the efforts!

We look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you on 24th! Thanks!

Stephanie Little

President, Morro Coast Audubon Society (TIN: 23-7165021)

*P.S. To be notified when the newsletter is posted, or membership questions (rvalvo@sbcglobal.net)
Need reminders of upcoming programs and field trips? Join the MCAS Alert! (mstiles@calpoly.edu)*

