

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FROM:** FRIENDS OF THE BIG SUR COAST – [www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com](http://www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com)

**CONTACT:** Gary Pike, APR  
(415) 585-2100  
Pikecom@aol.com

**Photos Available via E-mail**

**GROUP FILES APPEAL ON AFTER-THE-FACT PERMIT ISSUED BY COUNTY TO JULIA  
PFEIFFER BURNS STATE PARK FOR LARGE-SCALE TREE-CUTTING PROJECT**

***Group Wants Clean Up and Better Plan to Protect Endangered Species Habitat***

**BIG SUR, CA — August 20, 2004** — A number of concerned citizens from the Monterey area have formed a group, set up an informative website and hired an attorney to appeal a permit issued by the Monterey County Planning Department. Last May, the Department of Parks and Recreation applied for, and received, an after-the-fact permit for a large-scale tree-cutting project it initiated on the coastal edge of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park without a permit. The County Planning Department's staff determined that Parks had already cut over 2,500 trees and shrubs, including full-grown eucalyptus trees, without a proper implementation plan or the required Coastal Development Permit. Parks had simply pushed those trees over the cliff. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors will hear the appeal next Tuesday at 10:30 am in Salinas.

“Parks has circumvented Federal, State, and County laws and regulations by implementing a project without a permit to haphazardly cut 4,500 trees and shrubs in one of the most beautiful coves along the California coast,” said land use attorney, John Briscoe. “If any private property owner had implemented such a plan they would have paid significant fines and would likely be sitting in jail right now.”

Dozens of the fallen trees crushed Seacliff buckwheat, a vital habitat for an endangered species. Some of the 50-foot long tree trunks slid into the emerald blue cove where the wave action turned the logs into battering rams smashing the intertidal zone. Over 1,000 acres of the state park are located underwater below the cove's high tide level. Details of the appeal are outlined by the group at [www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com](http://www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com).

**GROUP FILES APPEAL ON PERMIT ISSUED TO STATE PARKS /AUGUST 20, 2004/PAGE 2**

The 35-acre project site where the trees were cut and fell over the cliff is in the world famous and picturesque cove where McWay Falls cascades 80 feet into the ocean near Saddle Rock, an environmentally sensitive area along the coast that not only includes a historic natural heritage viewshed but crucial habitat for the endangered Smith blue butterfly and riparian habitat.

The surprisingly small and subtly beautiful Smith's blue butterfly, (*Euphilotes enoptes smithi*), was officially recognized in 1976 as an Endangered Species. It was one of the first insects to receive protection through Federal Endangered status. The endangered butterfly feeds, mates, and lays their eggs exclusively on the flower heads of the Seacliff buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*).

The group, Friends of the Big Sur Coast, is asking the Board of Supervisors to uphold its appeal and require the planning department to work with Parks so that fallen debris is removed from the beachside slopes and riparian habitat and native plants are restored in the area. “Friends” also wants the Park to implement a maintenance program to ensure that non-native plants that have been cut do not regrow. If Parks can correct its previous unpermitted actions the group would support the county issuing a permit after Parks restores the site and develops an appropriate plan.

Friends of the Big Sur Coast supports the removal of exotic, non-native species from the park and forestlands throughout Big Sur and Monterey where appropriate. The group believes removal plans need to be implemented with sensitivity and respect for existing native flora and fauna – especially where endangered species and their crucial habitat are involved. The informative website the group has set up is [www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com](http://www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com).

Friends of the Big Sur Coast is a group of concerned citizens dedicated to monitoring development and environmental restoration or repair projects, both public and private, along the Monterey County coastline that may impact the environmental quality of the region. They strive to assure that equal treatment is given to each project’s permit applicant by the government agencies responsible for upholding the laws designed to protect the region for the enjoyment of all local and State residents, and the many visitors from throughout the world.