

FROM: FRIENDS OF THE BIG SUR COAST – www.friendsofthebigsurcoast.com

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

Photos Available via E-mail

**MONTEREY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ORDERS CLEANUP AND
RESTORATION FOR J. PFEIFFER BURNS STATE PARK TREE-CUTTING FIASCO**

State to Pay Fine for Unpermitted Work and Must Remove Fallen Trees

MONTEREY, CA — August 25, 2004 — The Monterey County Board of Supervisors upheld an appeal by Friends of the Big Sur Coast yesterday with respect to an after-the-fact permit issued by county planning for a project to remove over 4,500 trees in Julia Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. The supervisors decided that Parks must first clean up the largest fallen trees on the cliffs and restore the area with native plants that were destroyed when they cut the first 2,500 trees. They also decided that the State must pay fees for the permit that had been waived by the planning staff and an additional fine for initiating the work without adequate permits.

Last May, the state Department of Parks and Recreation applied for, and received, an after-the-fact permit for a large-scale tree-cutting project it initiated without a permit on the coastal edge of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park. 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 the cut trees over the cliff.

"We are encouraged to see that the supervisors overrode the planning staff to avoid preferential treatment for Parks," said land use attorney, John Briscoe. "We will be monitoring the new plan presented to the supervisors by the planning department staff to assure the clean up and restoration is completed before a final permit is approved for the poorly planned project."

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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.

The group, Friends of the Big Sur Coast, asked 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 wanted the Park to implement a maintenance program to ensure that non-native plants that have been cut do not regrow. If county planning staff and Parks can come up with a plan to correct its previous unpermitted actions the group would support the county issuing a permit after Parks restores the site and develops an appropriate plan.

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.

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.

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