

Palmer's Point Enhancement Project

Annual Report



North Coast Redwoods District

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Prepared by Michelle Forys

Environmental Scientist

INTRODUCTION

Palmer's Point found within Patrick's Point State Park (PPSP).is a very popular area along the north coast of California for many ocean related activities, such as rocky intertidal habitat exploration, whale watching, and seal and sea lion viewing. Many local and out of the area school groups, from kindergarten to college students, visit the tide pools at Palmer's Point to study and learn about this fragile coastal ecosystem.

In 1999, the dredge *M/V Stuyvesant* (the "*Stuyvesant*") spilled at least 2,100 gallons of Intermediate Fuel Oil 180 into the Pacific Ocean near the mouth of Humboldt Bay, California (DARP 2007). The expanse of the spilled oil reached from the mouth of the Eel River to PPSP. Both state and federal law require that liability be established for natural resource damages caused by the oil spill and require the responsible parties to make the environment whole for the damage and loss of natural resources resulting from the oil spill into navigable and/or marine waters (DARP 2007). To fulfill this mandate the Stuyvesant Trustee Council was established. The Stuyvesant Trustee Council was designated and authorized to act on behalf of the public to assess and recover natural resource damages and to plan and implement actions to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of the affected natural resources injured as a result of the oil spill (DARP 2007). A Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment (DARP) was prepared for this oil spill and describes the injuries resulting from the spill and proposes restoration alternatives (DARP 2007). As part of this process the Stuyvesant Trustee Council identified and evaluated restoration alternatives and provided the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed restoration alternatives (DARP 2007).

One of the proposed projects put forth by the DARP was the Palmer's Point Enhancement Project (DAPR 2007). The Palmer's Point Enhancement Project was designed to compensate for losses of recreational uses by humans and to provide a beneficial impact through educational and access opportunities (DARP 2007). This project should greatly enhance the outdoor experience and increase the visitor's appreciation of this unique ecosystem by providing high quality interpretation, education, and protection of our delicate coastal ecosystem.

PROJECT LOCATION

Located within Patrick's Point State Park, Palmer's Point is along the southern boundary of the Park (Figure 1). The project area includes the day use area at Palmer's Point and the rocky intertidal habitat to the north.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The project proposed three components which aim to enhance the visitor's experience and increase their appreciation of this fragile ecosystem by providing increased interpretation and educational opportunities. In addition, the monitoring of the rocky intertidal habitat will provide baseline data that will help in the protection of our delicate coastline. The three components of this project include facilities and trail enhancement, interpretation, and monitoring. This report focuses on the accomplishments that occurred during 2011. The majority of the work completed in 2011 included the instillation of the facility and trail enhancements, completion of the interpretative elements, and the continuation of the rocky intertidal habitat monitoring and guided tide pool walks.

FACILITIES AND TRAIL ENHANCEMENT

The project proposed the enhancement of two undeveloped vista points at Palmers Point by creating two new viewing areas with interpretative signs at each location, improving the parking lot, and replacing the fencing surrounding the portable outhouse. All enhancements are designed to meet ADA standards. The instillation of two new viewing areas, interpretative signs, and benches have been completed. The improvements to the parking lot will be completed by March 2012. Photos 1 through 13 show before and after the instillation of the viewing areas and interpretative signs.

INTERPRETATION

There are three elements to the proposed interpretation enhancements. These elements included the development and instillation of six interpretative signs, the DVD reproduction of an educational tide pool video, and the development and printing of a colored tide pool brochure. All interpretation elements are completed. The tide pool etiquette DVDs have been distributed to local school teachers that bring their classes to Palmer's Point. The PPSP visitor center has given out over 1,000 rocky intertidal habitat brochures to Park visitors. Multiple rocky intertidal habitat guided walks and campfire programs have been conducted by the PPSP Interpretative Specialist. In 2011, approximately 416 people attended one of the guided walks and approximately 370 people attended one of the six tide pool campfire programs given at PPSP. An additional 1,067 people from various schools watched the tide pool etiquette DVD and then had a self-guided tide pool walk.

ROCKY INTERTIDAL HABITAT MONITORING

The establishment of baseline data for this popular rocky intertidal habitat will enable California State Parks to monitor the health of this natural resource. The baseline monitoring and assessment will also help determine the success or failure of the educational materials produced. In addition, should any future natural or human made disasters occur, the baseline data will allow for the assessment of impacts. This portion of the project includes the consolidation of all existing information on the rocky intertidal habitat at PPSP and the design and implementation of the baseline monitoring.

The project includes the baseline monitoring of the rocky intertidal habitat at Palmer's Point and the establishment of permanent monitoring plots. In spring and summer of 2009, baseline data was collected using two (band transect surveys and point-count surveys) of the three macroplot transect sampling designs. Monitoring continued in 2010 with the establishment of permanent photo plots and sea star plots. In addition, mobile species were monitored using a quadrat sampling method along the transect lines within the macroplot. This spring and summer, monitoring of the rocky intertidal habitat at Palmer's Point continued with the resampling of the permanent photo plots and sea star plots. The data collected over the previous three years is being analyzed and a report summarizing the findings will be completed this winter. The permanent monitoring plots will be monitored on an annual basis and the three transect sampling designs will be conducted every 5 years depending on funding availability.

As part of establishing a good working knowledge of the species found within the intertidal rocky habitat at Palmer's Point any new algae species discovered were collected, processed, and made into herbarium samples. Each herbarium sample was photographed

and labeled according to standard labeling protocols. All pressed specimens are being kept in an appropriate storage area at the NCRD office.

PROEJCT TIMELINE

The proposed project timeline was delayed due to unforeseen staffing levels and other DARP related projects (Dune Restoration and Snowy Plover Nest Protection Project) taking priority. As such, some of the tasks were not completed by the original proposed completion date. The majority of the tasks have now been completed. Table 1.0 summarizes the tasks that have been completed to date. Table 2.0 summarizes the remaining tasks to be completed and the estimated date of completion.

Table 1.0. Proposed tasks and the date of completion for the Palmer's Point Enhancement Project.

Tasks to be Completed	Month of Completion	Tasks Completed to Date
Environmental Documentation (CEQA, coastal permits)	January 2010	Completed
Tide pool base line study and assessment	June 2012	Three seasons of monitoring (2009, 2010, 2011) completed
Design and produce brochure and reproduce video to DVD	January 2011	Completed
Development and fabrication of interpretative signs	August 2009	Completed
State Park Interpretative Specialist (Tide pool guided tours)	September 2012	Three seasons of guided tours (2009, 2010, 2011) completed
Instillation of trails and trail marker, fence railings, viewing platforms, benches, and interpretative signs	February 2011	Completed

Table 2.0. Revised project timeline for the completion of the Palmer's Point Enhancement Project.

Tasks to be Completed	Completion Timeline
Pave and stripe parking area	January 2012
Tide pool base line study and assessment (four seasons)	June 2012
Interpretive guided tide pool tours (four season)	October 2012
Final annual project report and monitoring report	December 2012

PROJECT EXPENDITURES

The proposed budget of \$102,000.00 was based on preliminary estimates and was to be spent over a four year period (2008-2011). Actual costs have varied due to unforeseen costs associated with the actual implementation of the project. The project expenditures through 2011 have been summarized below in Table 3.0 It was recently discovered that the CSP administration will not be asking for the \$10,200.00 originally budgeted. These funds have been shifted to help fund a fourth year of monitoring and interpretation walks.

Table 3.0. Project tasks and associated expenditures through 2011 for the Palmer's Point Enhancement Project.

Tasks	Estimated Cost
Tide pool base line study and assessment monitoring (3 seasons)	\$32,497.47
Trail improvements (Planning, CEQA, Coastal Development Permit)	\$2,000.00
Instillation of trails, trail markers, fencing, railings, interpretative signs, and parking lot improvements	\$15,042.30
Interpretive signs (6), design and fabrication	\$11,724.37
State Park Interpretive Specialist (3 seasons of guided tide pool tours)	\$1,232.31
Educational brochure and DVD replication	\$5,039.00
Total Budget Spent to Date	\$77,950.57

LITERATURE CITED

Hampton, Steve, Matt Zafonte, Julie Yamamoto, Katherine Verrue-Slater, Daniel Welsh, Charlene Hall, Janet Whitlock, Charles McKinley (Stuyvesant Trustee Council). 2007. Stuyvesant/Humboldt Coast Oil Spill Final Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment. California Department of Fish and Game, California State Lands Commission, United States Fish and Wildlife Service.



Palmer's Point Enhancement Project

FIGURE 1
Project Location



Photo 1. Before the installation of the southern trail and new portable toilet fence.



Photo 2. After the installation of the southern trail and new portable toilet fence.



Photo 3. Before the installation of the southern viewing area and trail.



Photo 4. After the installation of the southern viewing area and trail.



Photo 5. Before the installation of the northern viewing area.



Photo 6. After the installation of the northern viewing area.



Photo 7. Before the installation of the trail head.



Photo 8. After the installation of the trail head.



Photo 9. Whale interpretative sign after installation.



Photo 10. Pinniped interpretative sign after installation.



Photo 11. Rocky intertidal habitat interpretative sign after installation.



Photo 12. Geology of Patrick's Point State Park interpretative sign after installation.



Photo 13. Rules and regulations sign after installation.