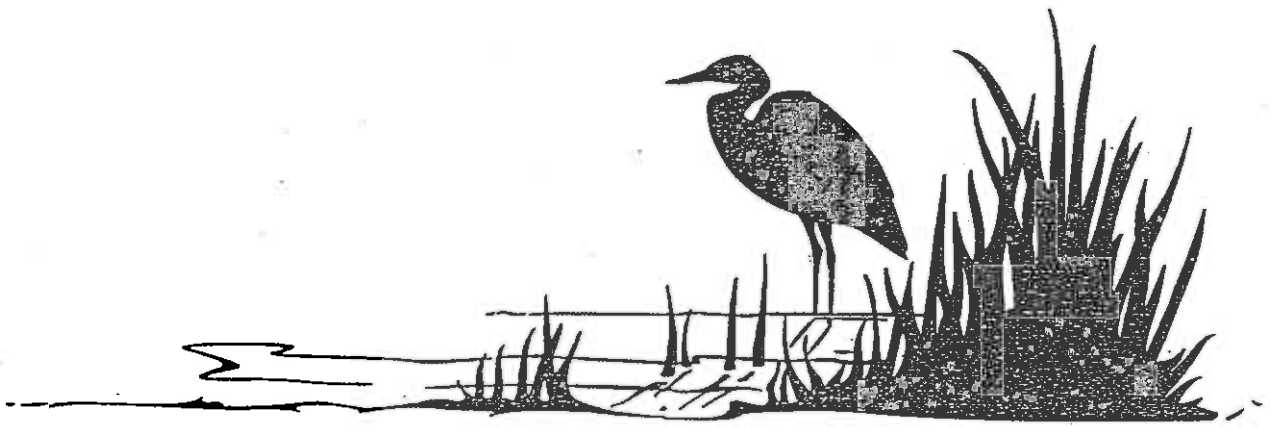


**MISSION TRAIL  
NATURE PRESERVE  
MASTER PLAN**



## **MISSION TRAIL NATURE PRESERVE**

### **MASTER PLAN**

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## **MISSION TRAIL NATURE PRESERVE MASTER PLAN**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

#### **HISTORY OF THE PARK**

Mission Trail Nature Preserve, designated a nature park in 1979, approved by the Carmel-by-the-Sea Forest and Beach Commission and adopted by the City Council, has been established as a natural parkland for passive recreational use. The park boundaries encompass 35 acres of unspoiled native vegetation and includes the Flanders Mansion, the Lester Rowntree Native Plant Garden and the meadow off Martin Road.

The Preserve affords the user the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of seasonal growth and change of flora and fauna, to walk the trails, and to take in the grandeur of the expansive vistas, particularly those of the Fish Ranch, Point Lobos, Carmel Mission, and Carmel Bay.

Stately pines, oaks and a pure stand of toyon dominate the northern reaches of the Preserve, while a dense stand of willow shrouds the low-lying flood plain to the south.

During any season of the year various birds (more than 50 species) can be seen, and displays of native grasses, trees, shrubs, and wildflowers can be viewed as one hikes along the three miles of trails within the Nature Preserve boundaries. Each new season announces the subtle alterations in the character of the Preserve vegetation and provides new color displays for the avid occasional hiker.

### **B. MASTER PLAN**

Most of Mission Trail Nature Preserve is designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). ESHA's are defined in Section 30107.5 of the California Coastal Act of 1976 as "any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and

developments.” In a natural setting, ESHA’s would be fully self-sustaining and would not need active management. Mission Trail Nature Preserve an isolated remnant of a larger environmentally sensitive area, is now surrounded by urban development. Active management is essential if resource values of this habitat are to be protected and preserved.

The purpose of the Master Plan is twofold:

1. To establish and maintain long-range goals for preservation and use of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve.
2. To guide the City in its decision making process concerning the management of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve.

The Master plan has evolved over a period of years through data gathered from a report prepared by Jones and Stokes Associates, staff analysis, and public input. It consists of both written policies and a physical map of the park. Throughout the process, citizen input evaluating past City actions and suggesting further directions has been actively encouraged. The Mission Trail Park Advisory Committee was assigned the task of preparing the Master Plan by the City Council. Its members are: Russell Gifford, Roberta Bialek, Tim Zorach, Steve Brooks, and Wayne Earls (non-voting members are Gary Olsen, representative from the Rowntree Native Plant Garden and Maxine Jennings, representative from the Recreation Commission).

The Format of the Master Plan is similar to the City’s General Plan. It is divided into sections relating to specific areas of the Nature Preserves, physical features, fire suppression, vegetation, trails and public use. Within each of these sections, goals are established, objectives identified, followed by policies supporting the objectives. It is intended that all policies under each objective have equal weight. Naturally, when making decisions based on the policies in this Master Plan, some policies will have greater bearing on the matter at hand than do other policies under the same objective.

The identification number of goals, objectives, and policies in the Mission Trail Nature Preserve Master Plan is correlated to the numbering order in the adopted Local Coastal Program of Carmel-by-the-Sea and thus may not appear in sequential order in this Plan.

## **C. VEGETATION**

Mission Trail Nature Preserve supports a mosaic of vegetation consisting of a Monterey pine forest on inland granitic bedrock and old dunes, central coast arroyo willow riparian forest, box elder and cottonwood trees, wetland drainage, wet meadow, coast live oak woodland, coastal terrace prairie, and horticultural plantings.

### **G5-8      Preserve the forested tranquil atmosphere of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve.**

O5-25      Preserve and enhance the vegetative diversity in Mission Trail Nature Preserve consisting of Monterey pine forest, central coast willow riparian forest, wet meadow, coast live oak woodland, redwood, box elder, cottonwood, coastal terrace prairie, and horticultural plantings.

P5-270     Continue the annual Monterey pine seedling planting during the winter of each year (using the seed collecting guidelines of the Genetic Resources Conservation Program of the University of California at Davis, in order to maintain appropriate genetic diversity). Enhance efforts to replant and maintain native tree species similar to nearby native riparian vegetation.

P5-118     Avoid removal or pruning of native riparian vegetation except for drainage channel and road/trail clearance and/or for the purpose of new native indigenous tree/shrub establishment.

O5-26      Enhance coastal terrace prairie on the west and south facing slopes in the Martin Road parcel and between the Outlet meadow and Ladera Drive.

P5-119     Remove by hand nonnative shrubs and their roots invading these areas during late spring when soils are moist and before seed/seed pods become viable.

- P5-120      Avoid further erosion and loss of native coastal and terrace vegetation.
- O5-27        Reduce the introduction and population of invasive horticultural species in the Preserve.
- P5-129      Provide residents of adjacent properties with a list of plants that are compatible with the native vegetation of the Preserve. Encourage use of this list as a guide for planting private landscapes. Additionally, provide a list of invasive plants to avoid.
- P5-122      Organize volunteer work groups to remove nonnative plants from the Preserve. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection crews from Gabilan Camp could be used to assist this effort.
- O5-29        Monitor and protect the Hickman's onion population found in the Preserve.
- P5-126      Consider retaining a qualified volunteer botanist to monitor the population of Hickman's onion to determine if current management practices and public use of the coastal terrace prairie are affecting the viability of the population.
- P5-127      Limit access in the coastal terrace prairie during winter and spring months when the soil disturbance could affect the species.
- O5-30        Maintain and enhance habitat for Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat (a special status wildlife species), in accordance with recommendations of a qualified wildlife biologist.
- P5-128      Consider retaining a volunteer biologist to monitor the rat's population and develop a management plan to help ensure its survival.

**D. WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN HABITATS**

Central coast arroyo willow riparian forest occurs as a dense, multi-layered forest along the western boundary of the park. Riparian forest also occurs along a perennial drainage near the western boundary of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve. The riparian forest is characterized by a canopy layer of black cottonwood and arroyo willow and a sub-canopy of shrub-size arroyo willow and dogwood.

Wet meadow dominates the southern end of the Preserve. The wet meadow is characterized by a mix of wet meadow species, grassland species, and introduced grasses.

**G5-9        Protect, maintain and enhance the rare coastal habitats and associated plants and animals within Mission Trail Nature Preserve.**

- O5-31        Maintain natural drainage patterns except where erosion or human safety problems may be created. Maintain the existing creek bed and preclude it from becoming debris clogged. Encourage/allow the channelized ditch to revert to a more natural channel in order to enhance the park's wetlands (riparian forest, wet meadow) and natural character.
  
- P5-131      Remove fallen trees and limbs from the stream channels as needed. Place natural boulders and creek cobbles to prevent erosion only in situations where private property or public safety is at risk.
  
- O5-28        Prepare annual maintenance plans for habitats within the Preserve. Encourage native vegetation to re-establish on sites previously mowed, cut, or invaded by exotic species.
  
- P5-123      Allow willows to grow in the riparian corridor and the wet meadow.
  
- P5-124      Consider removal of both intentionally introduced plants and invasives by instituting an annual program

through joint efforts of contract workers and volunteers.

- P5-125 Research the most appropriate time for mowing grasses to encourage the growth of native plants and discourage exotics and schedule accordingly.
- P5-130 Prohibit cleaning of City maintenance equipment in the Preserve.

**E. DRAINAGE**

Two main perennial drains and smaller drainages transect Mission Trail Nature Preserve. The main perennial drainage begins at the northern end of the Preserve, runs along the western boundary, and forks near the center. At the northern end, the drainage bottom is generally un-vegetated. The canyon sides are vegetated with Monterey pine and coast live oak with a dense understory of French broom, German ivy, English ivy, and California blackberry. French broom dominates the banks along the northern portion of the drainage, grading into a dense central coast arroyo willow riparian forest (near 11<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to the Preserve at Willow Trail.) Redwood, bay tree (*Umbellularia californica*), and bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.) also occur in localized portions of the drainage.

**G5-10 To preserve the natural drainage of Mission Trail Nature Preserve and enhance wetlands.**

- P5-132 Repair stream bank deterioration as it occurs, and remove inert debris and new growth to the extent that they prohibit water flow within the established channel. Projects of this nature shall be reviewed by the Forest and Beach Commission, similar to its review of street projects.
- P5-133 Maintain a box culvert inlet adjacent to Rio Road to prevent flooding.
- P5-134 Consult with appropriate agencies regarding wetland management.



**P5-135 Preclude manmade objects from inhibiting drainage along the road in Mission Trail Nature Preserve.**

P5-136 Maintain the shoulders and cross flows on the Preserve bed to insure surface water can easily enter the creek.

P5-137 Clean and grade road shoulders and maintain culverts at least twice yearly, to insure continuous drainage. Trimming by the Forest, Parks, and Beach Department will be conducted to the extent necessary to allow access by the City maintenance equipment and fire apparatus.

**F. PUBLIC USES**

Mission Trail Nature Preserve is open to the public for passive recreational use. Primary uses include hiking, jogging, birding, and relaxation in a quiet natural setting. There are five Preserve entrances: Mountain View Avenue, Rio road, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Martin Road, and Hatton Road. These entrances lead to a series of trails meandering throughout the Preserve. This series of trails exceeds three miles in length and is intended for foot traffic only.

**O5-32 Provide reasonable low-impact uses of Mission Trails Nature Preserve for the enjoyment of its natural surroundings and plant and wildlife inhabitants.**

P5-138 Maintain and make available an up-to-date printed brochure that offers Preserve users helpful information. The brochure would also offer appropriate explanations for Preserve use restrictions.

O5-38 Manage environmentally sensitive habitats in Mission Trail Nature Preserve to maintain and enhance their natural integrity. Preserve and protect the Mission Trail Nature Preserve native plant, wild animal and bird population.

**G. LESTER ROWNTREE NATIVE PLANT GARDEN**

The Lester Rowntree Native Plant Garden was created to provide a quiet nature study area where native California trees, shrubs and plants are grown for exhibition and study and displayed to enhance the natural beauty of the area. It is located just off Hatton Road and is approximately one acre in size.

**O5-33      Maintain the Rowntree Native Plant Garden, within Mission Trail Nature Preserve as an area where the general public can view and study native California plants and trees. The goal is that the knowledge gained will lead to an expanded use of California native plants in private landscapes.**

P5-144      Create and maintain a demonstration garden for native flowers in Mission Trail Nature Preserve.

P5-145      Label native plants and areas in the garden at Mission Trail Preserve with identifying and explanatory information.

O5-34      Consider establishing a Volunteer Committee to assist the Forest, Parks, and Beach Director and staff in the responsibility for the garden at Mission Trail Nature Preserve.

P5-146      Maintain communication between Forest and Beach Commission and Monterey Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

P5-147      Recruit and train volunteers to plant, weed, water and care for the garden in Mission Trail Nature Preserve under the direction of the Forest, Parks, and Beach Department staff.

P5-148      Schedule and advertise volunteer work days as needed to maintain the garden in Mission Trail Nature Preserve.

## **H. FLANDERS MANSION**

The Flanders' Mansion, called "Outlands" by Mrs. Grace Flanders, was completed in May of 1925. At that time the Flanders family moved in and the mansion remained in private hands until 1971 when the City of Carmel purchased it for \$275,000. The Mansion is an intrinsic part of Mission Trail Nature Preserve and the surrounding area. Any use found for the Mansion should satisfy the following goals.

**P5-141**      **If retained by the City, preserve the Outlands property and grounds at Mission Trail Nature Preserve consistent with its status as a nationally registered historical resource.**

**P5-142**      **If retained by the City, utilize the Outlands property at Mission Trail Nature Preserve in a manner beneficial to the residents of Carmel-by-the-Sea while minimizing its expense to the City.**

**P5-143**      **If retained by the City, support uses at the Outlands property that are compatible with its location in Mission Trail Nature Preserve and adjacent to the Rowntree Native Plant Garden and Hatton Road neighborhood.**

## **I. STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

The ESHA boundaries could not be extended beyond the Preserve boundaries to include adjacent private land. Habitats do not follow man made area designations. Stewardship policies for ESHA and other areas within the City in included in the ESHA section of the adopted Local Use Plan of the Local Coastal Program.

## **J. PARKING AND ACCESS**

There is no private vehicle access to the Preserve proper. Vehicles may enter from Hatton Road via a driveway that leads to the Flanders' Mansion. Space is available for parking near the Mansion for a limited number of vehicles. The City has considered several parking alternatives

around the Mansion. However, a consensus as to the most appropriate location(s) has not been achieved.

**P5-140      Formalize a trail through Martin Meadows.**

**K.      USE OF MECHANIZED EQUIPMENT**

**G5-11      Maintain Mission Trail Nature Preserve using great care to avoid the degradation of resources.**

O5-35      Implement the Mission Trail Nature Preserve maintenance provisions.

P5-149      Repair stream bank deterioration as it occurs, and remove inert debris and new growth to the extent that they prohibit water flow within the established channel. (Annually: September – October.)

P5-150      Clean and grade road shoulders and maintain culverts to ensure continuous drainage. Trim vegetation to the extent necessary to allow access of equipment. (Annually: September – October.)

P5-151      Removal of fallen limbs and trees from the stream channels. (As needed.)

P5-152      Place rip-rap to prevent erosion only in situations where private property or public safety is at risk. (As needed.)

P5-153      Mow of meadow grasses to reduce the risk of fire (June.) if consistent with special status plant management needs.

P5-154      Maintain Serra trail to allow access of emergency vehicles. (Semi-annually.)

P5-155      Removal of dead/hazardous trees only as needed. Leave dead trunks in place when not hazardous to provide habitat for woodpeckers and other fauna.

P5-156 Conduct trail maintenance and clearance. (June – August.)

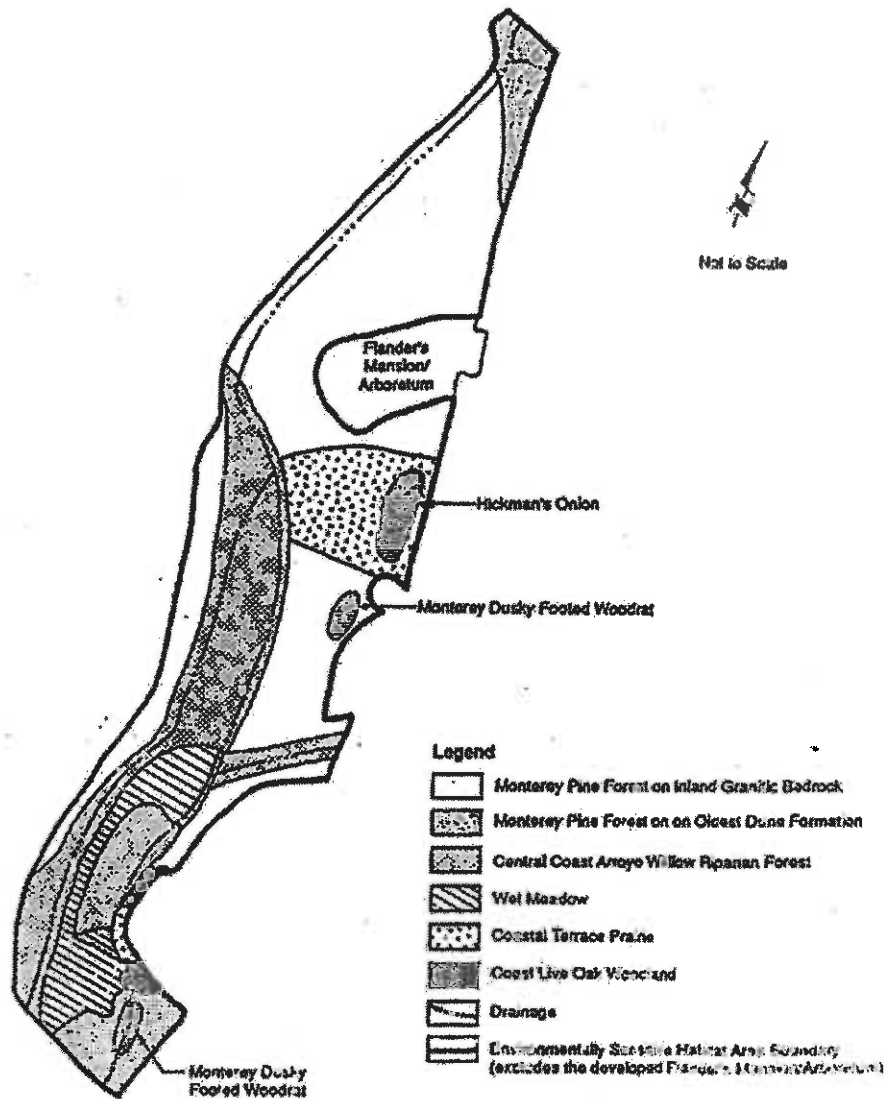
The Forest, Parks, and Beach Director is responsible for monitoring these activities and reporting to the Forest and Beach Commission scheduled tasks and their results. An annual report will be prepared for the Forest and Beach Commission review before submittal to the Coastal Commission.

**L. MAPS**

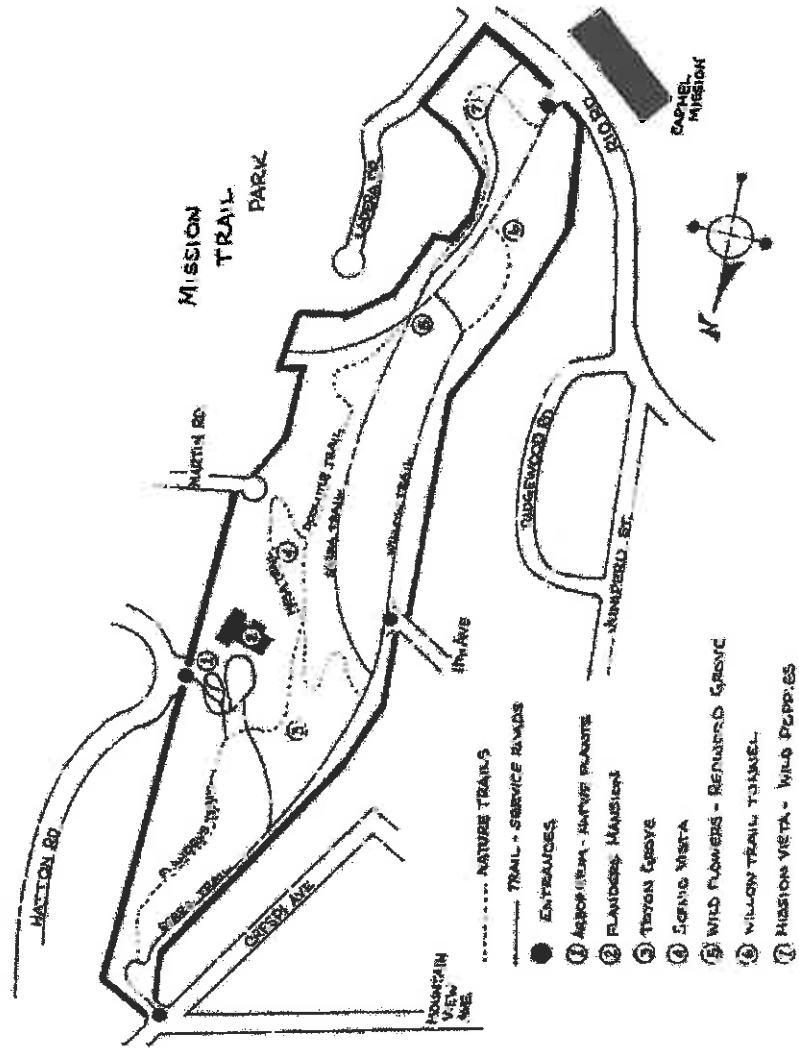
1. Jones and Stokes Associates, Inc. map: Location of Special –Status Species, Vegetation Types, and ESHA Boundary at Mission Trail Nature Preserve.
2. Map showing nature trail, service roads, and entrances to Mission Trail Nature Preserve.
3. Map of Park Overlay District adjacent to Mission Trail Nature Preserve.

**Map 1**

Map 1



Map 2



Map 3

