



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Channel Islands National Park

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Channel Islands National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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National Park Service Proposes to Restore Coastal Wetland

Channel Islands National Park Superintendent Russell Galipeau announced today that the National Park Service (NPS) is proposing to restore a portion of the historic coastal wetland and associated stream channel at Prisoners Harbor on Santa Cruz Island.


Prisoners Harbor, once the largest coastal wetland on the Channel Islands, was important for floodwater storage and habitat for wildlife and native plants. Coastal wetlands in California are increasingly rare—over 90% have been eliminated.

The NPS is exploring options for protecting and restoring the many resources at Prisoners Harbor with consideration of all significant natural and cultural features and functions. The NPS will develop alternative actions that consider impacts to ecological systems, historic and archeological resources, and visitor experience.

The park is seeking public input to assist with identifying environmental issues and developing a suitable range of alternative actions that include ecological restoration, removing fill from the former coastal wetland, reconnecting the stream with its floodplain, removing non-native eucalyptus in the lower Cañada del Puerto, protecting archeological sites, preserving the integrity of the historic landscape, and providing a compatible visitor experience.

Public involvement will be essential throughout the planning process. During the first stage, called “scoping,” the public may provide input regarding issues and alternative actions that should be considered. The 45-day public scoping period ends on July 27, 2008.

The public is invited to attend open house forums to obtain additional information and submit comments concerning the issues and alternatives that should be considered in the planning process. An open house will be held on July 1, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Channel Islands National Park Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center at 1901 Spinnaker Drive in the Ventura Harbor. On July 2, 2008, an open house will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Santa Barbara Public Library at 40 E. Anapamu Street in Santa Barbara.



A Notice of Intent for an Environmental Impact Statement for this project has been published in the Federal Register. A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project is expected to be completed and available for public comment by fall of 2008.

Prisoners Harbor has an extensive legacy of human occupation including Chumash habitation, fishing and ranching. In the late 1800s island owners rerouted and channelized the creek, filled in the adjacent wetland with gravels from the surrounding hills and creek bed, and introduced non-native plants such as eucalyptus and stone pines. These actions reduced the ecological value of the coastal wetland system and resulted in diminished habitat quality for island species, such as the endangered island barberry, Santa Cruz Island silver lotus, island fox, island scrub-jay, and migratory waterfowl.

The project extends over 50 acres of land owned by Channel Islands National Park and The Nature Conservancy. The NPS and The Nature Conservancy have similar mandates of conservation and will collaborate on any proposed actions on the island.

To be included on the mailing list for this project, please provide your name, address, and phone number to Paula Power at 805-658-5784 or paula_power@nps.gov. Comments may be submitted in writing to Prisoners Harbor Coastal Wetland Restoration Project, 1901 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001 or online at the NPS planning website: www.parkplanning.nps.gov.

This publication is available on line at: www.nps.gov/chis/parknews/newsreleases.htm