

Peace, Love and Public Access: Saving Cuesta Inlet

By Linda Parks and Kirsten Hertz, Save Cuesta Inlet Non-Profit

Unlike the Joni Mitchell song, we do know what we have before it's gone, and we don't want to lose it.

With a rallying cry of "Peace, Love, and Public Access" the Los Osos community has come together to form "Save Cuesta Inlet" (SCI) to preserve Morro Bay estuary's southern inlet. Many outdoor enthusiasts have come to rely on the 13-acre inlet as a place to stroll, walk dogs, take in the iconic view of Morro Rock, or launch their kayak or paddle board from its shores.

Consequently, it came as quite the wake up call when this little piece of paradise was put up for sale. With the potential of Cuesta Inlet being fenced off from the public and developed, SCI began its effort to negotiate its purchase for a park, preserving public access in perpetuity. Their plan is to clean it up, remove abandoned boats, allow passive recreation in designated areas, and protect its environmentally sensitive habitat that supports rare and endangered plants.

The asking price for this property is \$1,000,000. SCI has worked diligently to raise money to purchase Cuesta Inlet and has already raised close to \$200,000 from gifts of all sizes. While there's a big gap between what's been raised and the asking price, it is anticipated that other funds such as habitat conservation and park funds, State bonds, mitigation funds, and grants can make up the difference.

We are heartened by the support for public acquisition expressed by our Community Service District, our County Supervisor, Bruce Gibson, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and many others.

Unfortunately, with the recent decision by the Coastal Commission that ended a three decade long moratorium, Cuesta Inlet is now threatened more than ever. The property owners are seeking to have the property designated as seven separate lots to increase its value and its ability to be developed, and an approval could come as soon as October.

As a result, SCI has stepped up its efforts. Your support is welcomed and can make a real difference now at this crucial juncture. We are thankful to our volunteers and contributors who are committed partners in trying to save this place of peace that we love so all can enjoy it for years to come. **To learn more, please go to savecuestainlet.org.**

Peace, Love, and Public Access!



Cuesta Inlet's popularity can be measured in the sheer number of kayaks on its shores. At last count, some 400 kayaks can be found there as well as a dozen or so catamarans and sail boats. The property is located at 1745 Doris Avenue. Photo by Linda Parks (no photo credit needed).