The Gleitsman Award

For People Who Make a Difference

Nomination Form

Nominee Kathleen Goddard Jones
Organization People for the Nipomo Dunes National Seashore
Address 2860 Halcyon Rd.
City Arroyo Grande State CA Zip 93420
Phone 805-489-3707

Please describe what motivated the nominee to *make a difference.*

Mrs. Jones has dedicated the last 28 years of her life (she is in her 80's) to conservation of wild areas, in particular the Nipomo Dunes, a fragile 12,000 acre area of coastal dunes and wetlands in Central California exhibiting many rare plant and wildlife species. Her motivation is a deep love and caring about the land and its flora and fauna. She is a dedicated, persistent individual who has lived to see many of her goals succeed - the public acquisition of one of the most sensitive areas in the dunes and the establishment of a Nipomo Dunes Preserve, to be managed by the Nature Conservancy. (See articles attached)

What steps did the nominee take to bring about change?

1. Actively campaigned for conservation and against harmful development projects such as the proposed siting of a nuclear power plant on the dunes, off-road vehicles and a proposed multi-use harbor which would have had major impacts on the dunes.
2. Founded the local non-profit group - People for the Nipomo Dunes National Seashore to advocate for the dunes.
3. Wrote many, many letters in support of conservation of the dunes. Attended many meetings of regulatory bodies, etc.
4. Actively solicited support of Proposition 70, the Calif. Coastal Wildlife and Parkland Bond of 1988 which provided funds to the State to acquire properties in the dunes.

Please describe the impact the nominee's actions have had on our lives.

A 3,300 acre Nipomo Dunes Preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy has been established in large part as a result of their efforts. This will be open to the public. A nuclear power plant was stopped elsewhere and off-road vehicles were restricted. Rare plants and animals have been protected.

If possible, please list other references for this nominee.

Name Elizabeth Scott Graham Affiliation People for Nipomo Dunes
Phone 805-481-4467

Name Ken Wiley Affiliation The Nature Conservancy
Phone 805-546-8878

Please feel free to include any background material - articles, letters, or stories - that will help the Panel of Judges assess the merits of each nominee.

You may list my name as a Gleitsman Award Nominator: Yes ✓ No ____

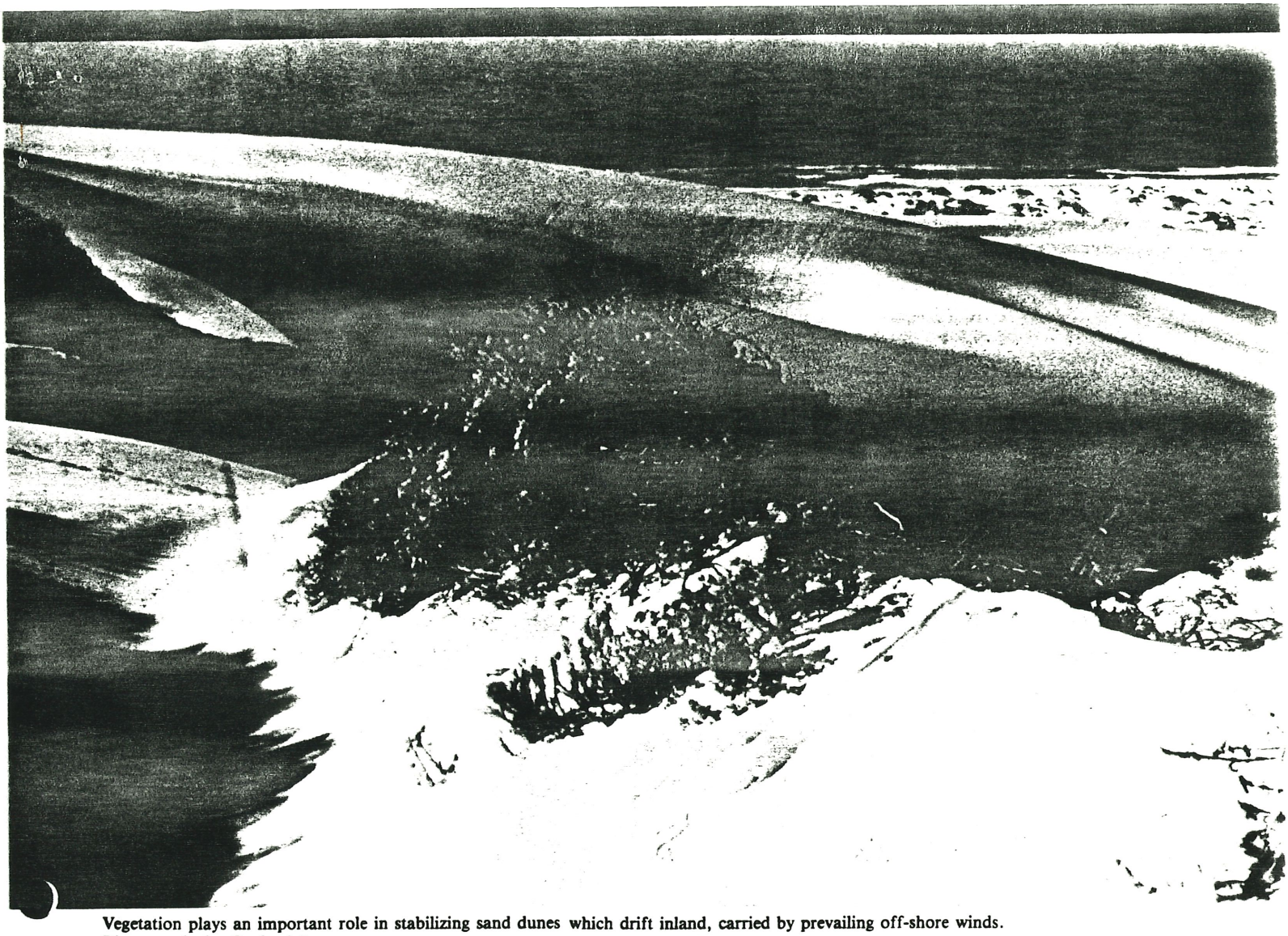
Your name: Carol J. Arnold
Organization: State Coastal Conservancy
Address: 1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
City Oakland State CA Zip 94612
Phone 415-464-1015

Signature Carol J Arnold Date 10/30/89

Please return this Nomination Form by October 31, 1989 to:

The Gleitsman Foundation
2017 Pacific Avenue
Venice, CA 90291

If you have any questions, please call Shana Weiss at 213/305-8010. Thank you.



Vegetation plays an important role in stabilizing sand dunes which drift inland, carried by prevailing off-shore winds. Photographs by Gaylord Jones.

THE NIPOMO DUNES

by Kathleen Goddard Jones

Protection of the Nipomo Dunes, an eighteen square mile dune-lagoon-lake system, has resulted in a twenty-two year long battle between conservationists, oil and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) interests. And full protection is not assured yet. Located at the heart of California's central coast in southern San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County, the Nipomo Dunes' ecosystem is one of the most fragile in California. Parts of this large dune system have been referred to in the past as the Santa Maria Dunes, the Pismo Dunes, the Oceano Dunes, the Callender Dunes, the Mussel Rock Dunes, the Guadalupe Dunes, and the Oso Flaco Dunes. Over the last twenty years, however, the name Nipomo Dunes took precedence over other names because it was recognized that the dunes are a part of the ancient Pre-Flandrian sand-dune mass, the Nipomo Mesa, extending inland for ten miles. "Nipomo" is a Chumash Indian word meaning "at the foot of the hills" which accurately describes the dune system. The Department of Parks and Recreation now calls the complex the Pismo to Point Sal State Beach Complex.

Recognizing that the Nipomo Dunes' ecological and scenic values are of national significance, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1980 designated them a National Natural Landmark and placed them in the National Registry of Natural Landmarks. His brief in support of this designation states:

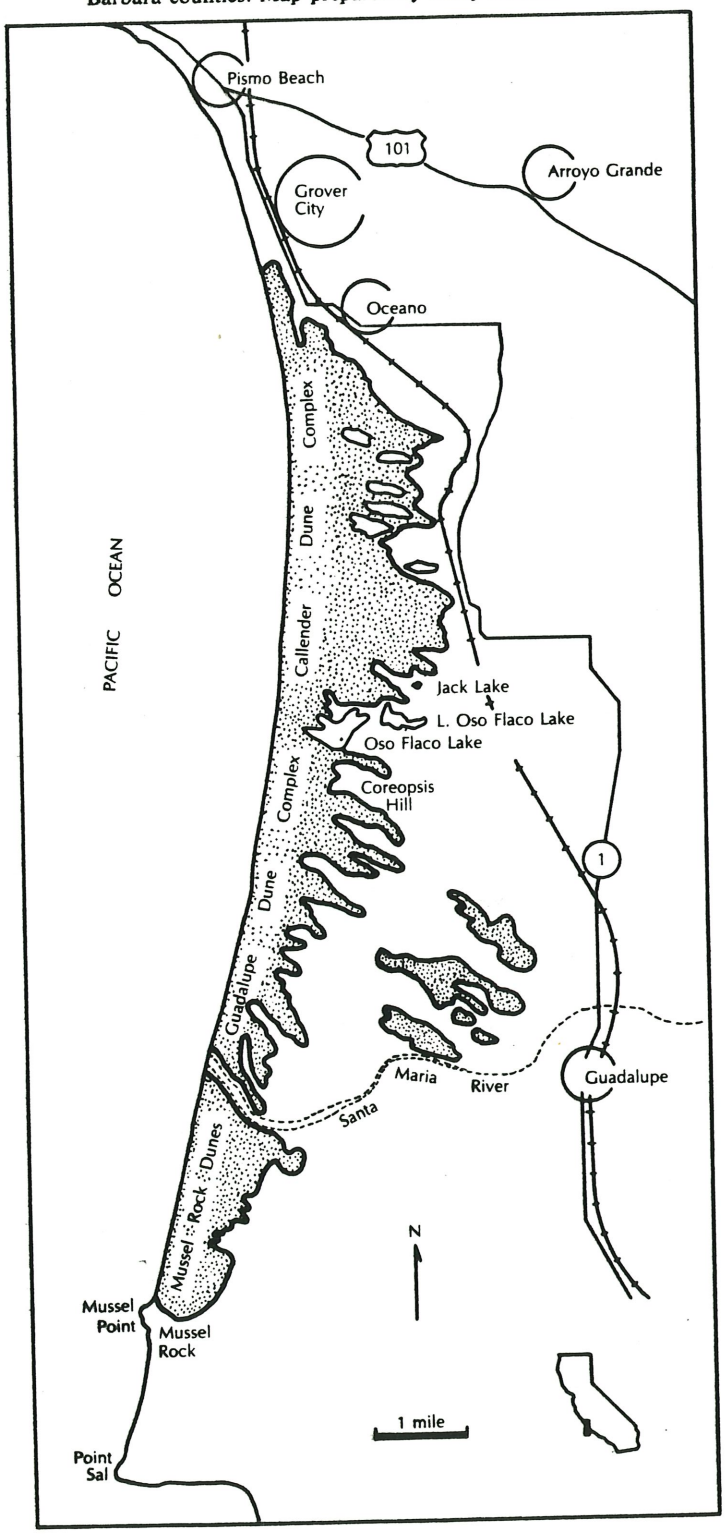
"The Nipomo Dunes-Point Sal Coastal Area contains the largest, relatively undisturbed coastal dune tract in California . . . Five major plant communities are well represented and the flora exhibits the highest rate or

This is an example of the type of advocacy Kathleen Jones has devoted her life to.

Fremontia, Calif. Native Plant Society, Jan. 1984

endemism of any dune area in western North America. Dune succession is exceptionally well displayed. No comparable area on the Pacific Coast possesses a similar series of freshwater lagoons and lakes so well preserved, with minimal cultural intrusions and harboring such great species diversity. The area serves as habitat for both rare and endangered plants and animals besides being one of the most scenically attractive areas in southern California."

The Nipomo Dunes, a complex of dune systems and lakes, is located in southern San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara counties. Map prepared by Larry Loeher.



The type locality population of the rare, highly localized Nipomo mesa lupine has been reduced to six plants by OHV activity. The other known population is threatened by development.

View From the Air

To get an overview of the area, we invite you to join us on an airplane flight over the length of the Nipomo Dune Complex. From a small airplane departing from Oceano Airport, we see to the south a vast white and wind-sculptured wilderness laced with green glades and graced with blue lakes. The dunes flow inland from the ocean like continuing waves, broken here and there by swirls of green vegetation in dune hollows, and they extend to the south for twelve miles. Long fingers of coastal dune scrub extend from inland dunes into agricultural lands which disappear into the east.

Beneath us we can see Pismo Creek with specks of sea ducks on its quiet lagoon, then small Meadow Creek, flowing out of the Pismo Lake State Natural Preserve, and larger Arroyo Grande Creek coming all the way from Lopez Canyon in the distant Santa Lucia

Wilderness mountains to the east. We see many OHVs in the Pismo Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area (SVRA), where vehicle tracks criss-cross both vegetation and open barren dunes.

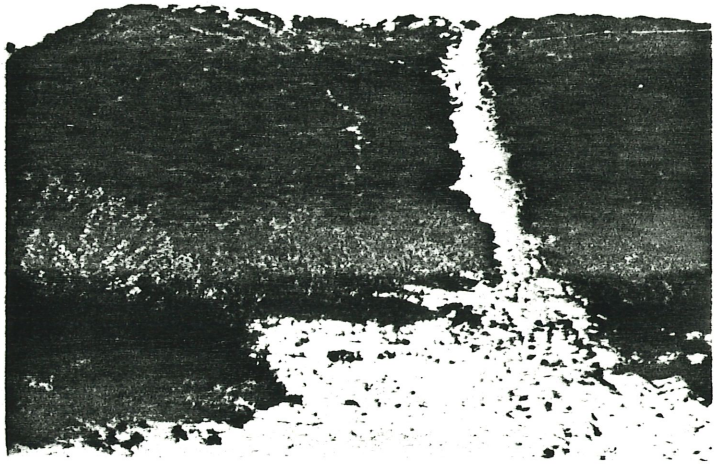
Flying south, we see a cluster of ten freshwater lakes. These lakes are fed by sustained seepage and intermittent overflow from peat bogs of Black Lake Canyon to the east. The lakes are surrounded by a native riparian community of grey-green arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis* var. *bigelovii*) and shiny, dark-leaved wax-myrtle (*Myrica californica*). This community occurs in several other moist places in the dunes. The yellow pond-lily (*Nuphar polysepalum*) reaches the southernmost limit of its range in the Black Lake area and blooms from February into the summer. Alice Eastwood on April 23, 1937, noted that she and John Thomas Howell found a small lupine "near the little pond with the yellow water-lilies." This is the rare, highly localized annual *Lupinus nipomensis*. Of the two known colonies of this species, the type locality population has been reduced to only six plants because of OHVs while the other small population is severely threatened by incipient development. Efforts are being made to protect these few surviving rare and endangered plants by the San Luis Obispo County Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

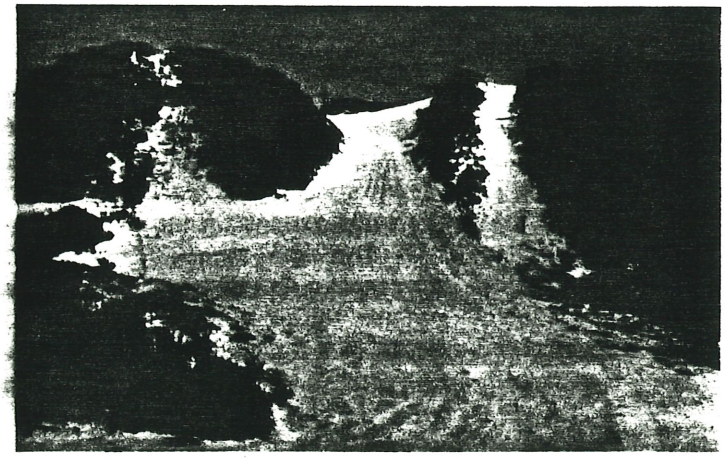
Jack Lake

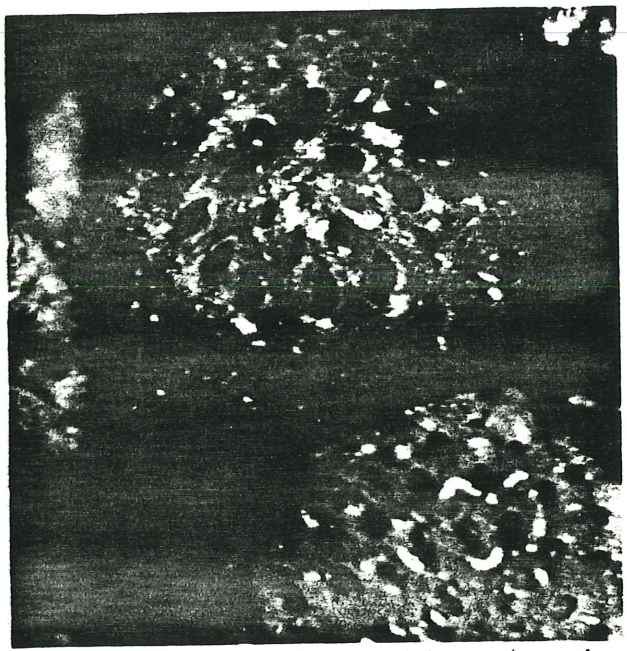
During the past ten years OHV activity has steadily advanced on the flanks of tall white dunes which now almost surround Jack Lake. At its moist fringes the rare and endangered La Graciosa thistle or white marsh thistle (*Cirsium loncholepis*) is scattered in cushions of soft field sedge (*Carex pansa*) along marshy footpaths edged by the shiny yellow flowers of silver weed (*Potentilla egedii* var. *groenlandica*). Above marshy flats of nettles and tangles of wild blackberry rises a long, wide trough of dry shifting white sand abundantly filled with two rare endemic mints. We call this site "Dune Mint Ridge" where the fleshy-leaved *Monardella crispa* and the thin crinkly-leaved *Monardella undulata* var. *frutescens* integrate in fragrant company.

Jack Lake Meadow's drier slopes are colorful in spring, summer, and fall, which is typical of the inland Callender Dunes. Among the dominant shrubs are mock heather (*Haplopappus ericoides* or *Ericameria aricoides*), yellow Lupinus arboreus and silver dune lupine (*Lupinus chamissonis*). Goldfields (*Lasthenia chrysostoma*), coastal tidy tips (*Layia glandulosa*), sky-blue larkspur (*Delphinium parryi* var. *blochmaniae*), dune Chinese houses (*Collinsia bartsiaefolia* var. *bartsiaefolia*), and the curled fiddlenecks of *Amsinckia spectabilis* var. *microcarpa* are scattered in the grassy openings between shrubs. Later in the summer several endemic *Chorizanthe* and comet's plume (*Senecio blochmaniae*) bloom and the wreath-flower (*Stephanomeria virgata*) turns some grassy areas to a fragile lavender. These plants are all fairly common in the coastal habitat of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. Over the hill from Jack Lake,

Off-highway vehicle destruction of a sand dune and its vegetation shown in three successive years, 1977, 1978 and 1979. Once uncovered, the sand easily erodes. OHV activity is gradually being restricted.







The unique, wild, beach strawberry population growing south of Oso Flaco Lakes has been used to develop cultivated varieties of strawberries grown commercially in California.

in Long Valley, the endemic dune blue phlox (*Eriastrum densifolium* var. *densifolium*) occurs with circular mounds of sand almond (*Prunus fasciculata* var. *punctata*) up to fifteen feet in diameter. Thick arroyo willow obscures even a glimpse of the shadowed water as we skim over Lettuce Lake.

Below to our right in the fenced-in SVRA, dune buggies legally race in a parabolic blowout bowl in the dunes, all vegetation long obliterated. A very large Indian shell mound, nearby, is now covered by a network of vehicle tracks.

Oso Flaco Lakes

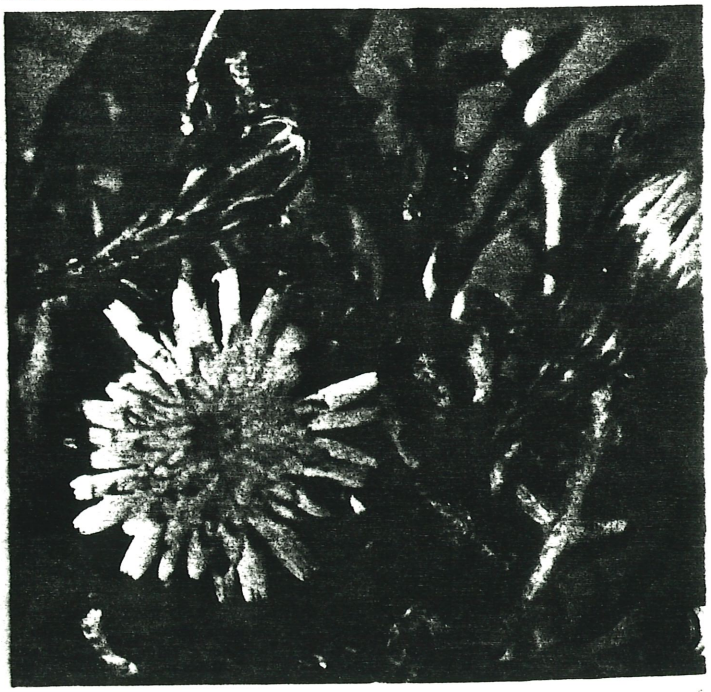
Very quickly, we are above the sparkling blue waters of Oso Flaco and Little Oso Flaco lakes, nestled in a landscape of rolling white sand dunes. Oso Flaco means "Skinny Bear" lake named by Gaspar de Portola in 1769. He sent a few of his soldiers out to hunt meat for dinner. Legend relates that the hunters returned with "a lean bear." Portola chewed and chewed the bear meat, but finally rested his jaws, heaved a sigh, and commented, "Alas, oso flaco" (skinny bear)—the name remains. A rare watercress of Oso Flaco Lake, *Cardamine gambelii,* known to early Spanish explorers as a scurvy preventative, and a succulent and spineless gooseberry (*Ribes divaricatum*) grow in damp glades. These too must have once graced Portola's table.

The seventy acre Oso Flaco Lake is a shallow, productive, even eutrophic, lake. The marshy fringes are green with bur-reed (*Sparganium eurycarpum* var. *greenei*), cat-tails (*Typha latifolia*), bulrushes (*Scirpus californicus,* and probably *Scirpus cernuus*), common tules (*Scirpus acutus*) and tussocks of *Carex cusickii.* Bright yellow flowers of silver weed (*Potentilla egedii* var. *groenlandica*) float along the edges of the shore. The rare and endangered swamp cress (*Cardamine gambii*) twines up bulrush stems and ornaments tall tules with clusters of small white blossoms, while muskrats chug in and out of the reeds and rare Least Terns feed in the lake and nest nearby.

Willow/wax-myrtle growth is so dense where Oso Flaco Creek flows out of Oso Flaco Lake that it forms tunnels where the sun never penetrates. A riparian corridor follows the creek through wetlands and foredunes to the ocean, providing habitat for over a hundred species of birds. In the moist dampness of thickets of willow and wax-myrtle are found a variety of fungi. In small meadows among the wind-pruned thickets is a rush, *Juncus lesueurii,* a tall Hooker's evening-primrose (*Oenothera hookeri* subsp. *montereyensis*) and a year-round intermittent blooming goldenrod (*Solidago confinis*).

One of California's southern most populations of *Fragaria chiloensis,* a wild beach strawberry, occurs among stands of *Juncus lesueurii* in this riparian area. Dr. Royce Bringhurst of U.C. Davis has been studying wild beach strawberries at Oso Flaco Lake for over thirty years. The wild beach strawberry has been used in developing California cultivated strawberry varieties because of traits such as drought tolerance, high

The rare but not endangered "dunedelion" is found in the foredunes south of Oso Flaco Lake and on Coreopsis Hill.



Coreopsis gigantea, growing up to eight feet tall, creates bright patches of gold on Coreopsis Hill from late February into April.

resistance to salinity, low requirement for fertilizer, and resistance to strawberry root diseases. The Oso Flaco population contains unique strawberry plants not found in any other dune population in the species' range, a thin coastal strip from Alaska to Oso Flaco, California. They are of special interest to commercial strawberry production and have been designated a rare population type according to the National Council on Gene Resources.

Before the invasion of dune vehicles, the sand dunes encircling Oso Flaco Lake were carpeted with pink-lavender sand verbena (*Abronia umbellata*), yellow sand verbena (*Abronia latifolia*), the rare crisp dune mint (*Monardella crispa*), the rare and endangered dunes Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja mollis*), and comet's plume (*Senecio blochmaniae*), a bright attraction for every passing monarch butterfly. Unfortunately over the years vehicular recreation in the dunes has increased from hundreds to thousands, and the plants are practically gone. The Oso Flaco causeway became a favored major access of OHVs to the dunes. Only a year ago, in 1982, these contoured slopes of white sand were alive with three-wheeled ATCs (All Terrain Cycles) as well as other types of OHVs. Finally, after Labor Day weekend 1982, the State Department of Parks and Recreation began a remedial control program. Firm regulations were established and publicized and fencing installed as a part of the permit requirement of the Local Coastal Program by the California Coastal Commission mandated by the California Coastal Act of 1976. The extensive Oso Flaco wetlands have been fenced and are now off-limits to OHV recreation. This spring seedlings of many plants have begun to appear and some tranquility has returned to the area. Much more needs to be done; but a heartening beginning has been made.

Coreopsis Hill

Flying along to the south, we enter the Guadalupe Dunes Complex, soon spotting the highlight of the Nipomo Dunes, a flowering dune garden of one hundred acres, called Coreopsis Hill. Late in February and lasting into April, the hill bursts into golden color from flowers of the coreopsis (*Coreopsis gigantea*), which grows up to eight feet tall. It is found on coastal bluffs from southern San Luis Obispo County to Baja California, including the Channel Islands. Candelabra-like branches emerging from a stout leathery trunk support large daisy heads atop slender flexible stems. March and April are the peak blooming months, however, there is a year-round succession of color. As the coreopsis dry and wither, Blochman's larkspur (*Delphinium parryi* var. *blochmaniae*) continues to flower; prickly phlox (*Leptdactylon californicum*) strikes up new color, and white woodland star (*Lithophragma affinis*) and goldback fern (*Pityrogramma triangularis*) can still be found in a moist draw on the north side. The diminutive poppy (*Meconella linearis* var. *pulchella*), with three petals white and three petals yellow, creates sunny stands of color in

A diminutive poppy, *Meconella linearis* var. *pulchella* creates sunny stands of color in the grass on Coreopsis Hill.

the grass; *Phacelia douglasii* carpets all footpaths with frail lavender-blue; a sand verbena (*Abronia umbellata*), a lavender-pink species, is found in open sandy spaces with *Croton californicus.* Popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*), blue-dicks (*Dichelostemma pulchellum*) and owl's clover (*Orthocarpus purpurascens*) are everywhere; while the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* var. *maritima*) with its distinctive orange center in yellow petals is abundant. A large black cottonwood grove (*Populus trichocarpa*) stretches all along the lower north slope of Coreopsis Hill, merging into arroyo willow thickets in marshlands at the bottom. This black cottonwood grove has an extensive understory of bracken fern and a large colony of Blochman's leafy lavender daisy (*Erigeron foliosus* var. *blochmaniae*), listed as rare but not endangered. In late spring one can walk Coreopsis Hill, now ankle-deep in blooming golden pincushion (*Chaenactis lanosa* var. *denudata*), "dunedelion" (*Malacothrix californica* var. *succulenta*) and field daisy (*Senecio californica*). Summer brings the flowering of the opulent yellow native cactus (*Opuntia phaeacantha*) on the lower south-facing slope, purple pincushion (*Pholisma paniculatum*), and a rich sky blue phlox (*Eriastrum densifolium* var. *densifolium*). In late summer, the orange-yellow stalks of live-forever (*Dudleya lanceolata*) stand out above the browning grasses while the chorizanthes are turning from flower to fruit. In autumn, mock heather blossoms attract flocks of arriving Monarch butterflies when the grassland meadows of Coreopsis Hill are a lavender mist of wreath-flower (*Stephanomeria virgata*). The only flower rewards during winter days are the white and sometimes rosy-tinged daisy-blooms of *Corethrogyne filaginafolia* var. *robusta,* which we call the Christmas aster. The cycle of Coreopsis Hill comes full circle with the formation in cold January of the first feathery tufts of *Coreopsis gigantea* foliage.

South of Coreopsis Hill are spread out the rest of the Guadalupe Dunes. This 6,000 acre network of inactive parabolic dunes has most of its richly diverse vegetation still intact. As we fly southward we observe that this is the widest of the three dune complexes, up to three miles from the seashore on the west to the agricultural fields on the east. Another large population of wild beach strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*) is now below us in a wide dune valley among *Equisetum* and sparse *Juncus lesueurii.* Here and there is a splash of red *Castilleja mollis* and purple *Monardella crispa.* Below is a pond of clear water with cat-tails and meandering willow woodlands and our favorite camping site called Hidden Willow Valley. As the foredunes flatten out into wide open sand-plains, we see the last substantial tract of pure coastal dune scrub left along the entire California coast. Twenty-five hundred acres of this very rich area of the Guadalupe Dunes belongs to the Mobil Oil Corporation. Six out of twelve rare plants of the Nipomo Dunes area occur here along with well over a hundred more common species. This

RARE PLANTS IN THE NIPOMO DUNES

Rare and endangered:

Dunes Indian Paintbrush or Soft-leaved Paintbrush	*Castilleja mollis*
La Graciosa Thistle, or White Marsh Thistle	*Cirsium loncholepis*
Surf Thistle or Crystalline Thistle	*Cirsium rhothophilum*
Beach Spectacle Pod	*Dithyrea maritima*
Nipomo Mesa Lupine	*Lupinus nipomensis*
Crisp Monardella	*Monardella crispa*
San Luis Obispo Monardella	*Monardella undulata* var. *frutescens*
Gambel's Watercress	*Nasturtium gambelii*

Rare but not endangered:

Blochman's Leafy Daisy	*Erigeron foliosus* var. *blochmaniae*
Dune malacothris, "Dunedelion"	*Malacothrix incana* var. *succulenta*
Curly-leaved Annual Dune Mint	*Monardella undulata* var. *undulata*
Sand Almond	*Prunus fasciculata* var. *punctata*

The dunes Indian paintbrush found in the Guadalupe Dunes is both rare and endangered.

unique and remote area is being destroyed by illegal OHVs and urgently needs to be fenced and posted without delay. The balance of the Guadalupe Dunes Complex is the 3,000 acre Leroy Lease that the Union Oil Company patrols and attempts to protect from OHV's. This oilfield is located along the Santa Maria River, a major source of sand for the Nipomo Dunes carried from the San Rafael Wilderness, the Sierra Madre Range, and the long Cuyama River Valley.

Mussel Rock and Point Sal

Suddenly a dune mass nearly five hundred feet high looms up under our plane. This dune, the highest along the entire California coast, is protected by the rugged volcanic barrier of the Mussel Point headland. It is called "The Devil's Slide" by the dune buggy people. In ten years of challenging their OHVs to climb it, thousands of giant coreopsis, surf thistle, beach morning-glory, ice-plant, beach strawberry, and Chamisso's lupine have been destroyed. The face of this dune area is now virtually bare. As we fly over Mussel Rock we can see a trail winding through rocks and scattered gardens of seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), live-forever (*Dudleya lanceolata*), cliff-clinging lizard-tail (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium* var. *artemisiae-folium*), sea-bluff goldenbush (*Happlopappus venetus* var. *sedoides*), wish-bone bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), seaside California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica* var. *maritima*), and the rare and endangered dunes Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja mollis*). The trail leads along precipitous cliffs through Mussel Rock Ravine with its coastal plantain, (*Plantago hirtella* var. *galeottiana*). A small creek dramatically splashes fifteen feet down to the beach.

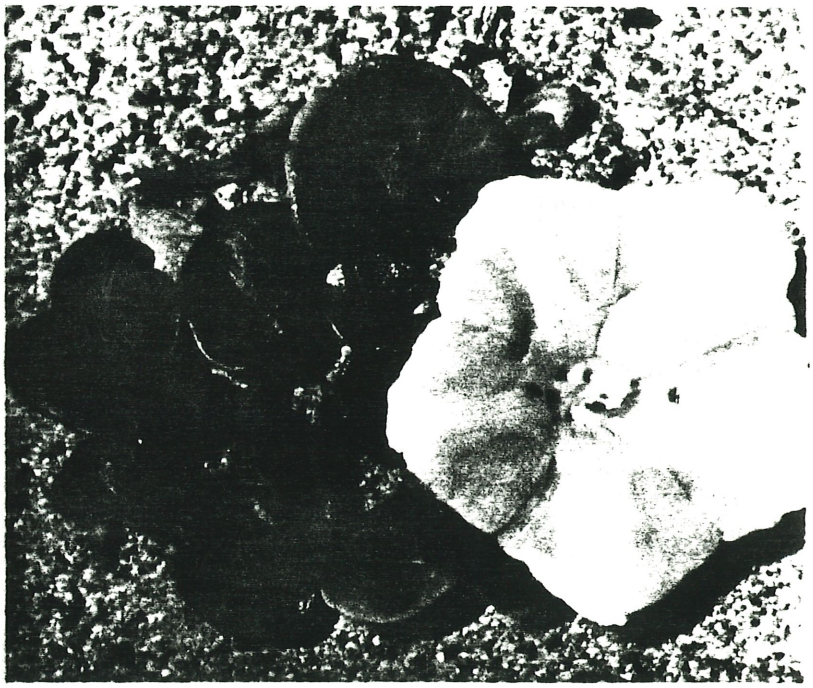
We now fly over Point Sal's deep secluded cove of white sand with bush lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*) and giant coreopsis massed on the cliffs above. At the sandy saddle of Point Sal, the diminutive poppy (*Meconella linearis*) braves the wind. We finally circle the remote state beach at Point Sal turning back to make the eighteen mile return flight to Oceano Airport.

We have flown over an area of about 12,000 acres, now called the Pismo to Point Sal Complex by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Someday maybe it will all be part of a great coastal state park or national seashore.

Present Status

With the 1982 State Park acquisitions, there are now approximately 3,000 acres of the Nipomo Dunes in state ownership. The State Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Coastal Commission, and San Luis Obispo County have agreed upon protective management policies for state-owned areas. The Union Oil Company now prohibits vehicle recreation in their Guadalupe oil field beside the Santa Maria River. After a long and acrimonious battle, steps to control the OHV's were finally taken late in 1982. Since that time

The leaves of the beach morning-glory (*Calystegia soldanella*) are quite succulent, typical of a harsh environment.



Looking north at Mussel Rock Point with Mussel Rock Dunes beyond.

the dunes at Oso Flaco have been closed to OHV's. No longer do thousands of campers, motor homes, station wagons, travel-alls and trailers (278,000 visitors clocked on one holiday weekend) crowd five rows deep along the beach. OHV destruction of parts of this great dune system is being brought partially under control by better enforcement and restrictive fencing. At the same time, a plan for restoration of damaged dunes is being implemented, including the proposal for an ambitious program to eliminate marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*). Seedlings and cuttings of native dune plants are being grown in nurseries to be planted in the same areas from which the seeds and cuttings were collected, thus protecting their gene pools.

Questions for the Future

While much progress has been made to acquire and protect the Nipomo Dunes, vast acres remain unprotected and open to abuse. The struggle continues, and questions remain to be answered: (1) Will the Mobil Oil Corporation fence and post their portion of the Guadalupe Dunes? (No patrols protect this 2,500 acre area.) (2) Will the Union Oil Company fence and post their Leroy Lease oil field? (Their patrols have not been entirely effective in stopping OHV trespass.) (3) Will the State Department of Parks and Recreation and the State Lands Commission agree to the installation of a strong pilings barrier across Oso Flaco Beach to prevent OHVs from driving south of Oso Flaco Creek, into the relatively unspoiled Mobil Oil Corporation property, and on to the Santa Maria River? (4) Will Santa Barbara County require the Husky Oil Company to eliminate OHVs from the Mussel Rock Dunes, as is being presently discussed? (5) Will the newly created State Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, operating within the State Department of Parks and Recreation, provide funding to install the barrier pilings, as required in the Local Coastal Plan permit? (6) Will money be forthcoming from the OHV funds to install additional fencing for sensitive areas like Coreopsis Hill? And very importantly: (7) will onshore oil facilities for Outer Continental Shelf oil be excluded from these unique and fragile coastal dunes?

The largest question of all is: Can protection be rallied for protection of this unique eighteen-mile section of the coast of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties? Isn't the largest and most beautiful coastal dune-lagoon-lake complex in California worth preserving?