

Portola Overlook

A Proposal Related to the Newly Authorized Cotoni-Coast Dairies
Component of the expanded California Coastal National Monument

Proclaimed by President Barack Obama

January 12, 2017

(Revised February 2, 2017)

The proposal advanced here enhances recognition of the values of the new Cotoni-Coast Dairies component of the newly expanded and proclaimed California Coastal National Monument on the California coast near Santa Cruz, California. This proposal is shared in the interests of hopefully eventually being incorporated as a central element of the Management Plan which will be formulated by the manager of this landscape, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is the feeling of those advancing this proposal that this idea should perhaps constitute THE central guiding element of the Monument's management and administration because of its central national historical importance to not only the Monument itself, but to the California coastal region of the state. It well might constitute its central, unique feature of greatest importance.

The facts and history related to this idea were not known or developed before the legal creation of the Monument, so the central justification for creating the monument never was advanced in any manner as an argument for the creation of the Monument. But in retrospect, had more been known of the land's visual attributes as tied to the history of the area, this historic theme probably would and should have been stated as THE central justification for creating this Cotoni-Coast Dairies component of the monument. This element alone would seem to unquestionably represent national significance to justify national monument status of the land.

Three North Coast neighbors (identified below as supporters of this idea) hiked over some parts of its terrain in the interests of becoming more familiar with the Coast Dairies area's resource attributes. We stopped to rest at a spot affording a nice view out toward the ocean and Clay suggested we move over closer to the edge of the plateau to get a better view. Jim said NO, as we were going to do that when we come back later, retracing some of our travels to arrive back at this same spot.

During our discussions while hiking onward, Gray asked Clay if he felt that there were any merits of the land which sufficiently related to the National Park Service/system that might be considered for the property. Clay responded that he felt not, but wanted to think about that a bit more before finally responding (this has later relevance).

We finally returned to the spot of our initial ocean view and Jim led us over to the edge of the viewpoint. WOW! It offered a 180 degree sweeping view of the ocean, stretching from the little village of Davenport to the north, to encompass the entire Monterey Bay to the south! Astoundingly, the only visual elements of post-indigenous human civilization were but two: the Davenport cement plant tower and a small quick glimpse of a car traveling on Coast Highway One below! And, we saw a landscape that still contains extensive areas as the indigenous peoples had managed extensive coastal prairies with

minimal brush invasion. HERE WAS A VIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA COAST, ESSENTIALLY UNFETTERED BY ANY VISUAL SEMBLANCE OF POST-INDIGENOUS HUMAN CIVILIZATION, LIKE WHAT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE BEEN SEEN AND EXPERIENCED BY THE EXPLORING PORTOLA EXPEDITION ALONG THE CALIFORNIA COAST OVER 247 YEARS AGO!! How unique is THAT situation in the nation's most populous state of 30 + million people?!

With regard to the two visual intrusions: the closed Davenport cement plant tower will most likely be removed at a time not far ahead, and the flash of an automobile at one point on the Coast Highway straight ahead could easily be hidden by planted native vegetation at the highway's edge.

On more detailed discussion of this outstanding visual attribute, Jim mentioned that he knew of one or several similar view points offering the same type of unencumbered view on other parts of the property. Because the area is now closed to access, we have not since explored more area to document that with some precision, but this matter warrants being inventoried promptly.

The three of us agreed that we believe that this attribute of the property (stated in bold type above), is deserving of being adopted as a central purpose of the Monument's existence, and that following that, obviously, a total commitment be established not to violate the principle of there being no visual marks of post-indigenous civilization on the landscape from such key vantage points to be sacrosanct in the management of the landscape by the BLM. Moreover, and a bit more challenging, it should be the strongly adopted effort of the BLM to work with all land owners and land management regulators within such designated view sheds to help perpetually sustain the objective of preventing no visible marks of post-indigenous human disturbance, construction or land manipulation within the view shed of designated viewpoints.

Checking the diaries of expedition/exploration leader Gaspar de Portola, it is of major interest to note entries related to travels near this (now) Monument area. Traveling northward from near San Diego to San Francisco, a diary entry on October 17, 1769, indicates their campsite on the San Lorenzo River at what is now the town of Santa Cruz. Encampment the next night (October 18) was at Coja Creek (now named Majors Creek), followed the next night (October 19) at today's Scott Creek. Each of these latter creeks geographically bracket the physical south and north boundaries of the Coast Dairies land parcel, respectively.

Now, to circle back to the previous question of Grey about any role for the National Park Service/system related to this area. Clay's answer was now YES, but mainly from the standpoint of the above discussion of the historic view shed stimulating a big generic idea, but NO with relevance to this monument land itself.

Totally unrelated to the Monument, Clay has been working separately on a big idea, which could incorporate a smaller idea emanating from the above Portola Overlook experience. Several professional colleagues and Clay have been formulating an idea

for espousing a collateral, augmenting fund, The Great American Heritage Trust Fund (GAHTF), to essentially parallel the existing (federal) Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)—but to be funded totally with corporate contributions. The LWCF, managed by the NPS, has been in existence for 52 years and is the central federal funding source for ALL parks and open space preservation efforts in America, operating at all levels of government (federal, state and local). It's authorized funding level is \$900 million annually, which level it almost never reaches.

Coincidentally, one of the principal colleagues here in developing the GAHTF idea is Marty Rosen, former creator and (now retired) CEO of the Trust For Public Land (TPL) in San Francisco. Recall that this National Monument constitutes open space land which was initially saved as such by the diligent work of Marty and his TPL organization, subsequently being donated to the BLM for ownership and management.

A key component (with many others) of this new trust fund might be the creation of a new national (but possibly state operated) land protection system called Historic American Landscapes (name still open for discussion), which embraces open space (essentially undeveloped) lands which represent typical, residual samples of original, disappearing, American landscapes and ecosystems as representatives of exactly that—before they are all gone. The nascent idea for this was highly stimulated and reinforced by the Portola Overlook experience here. In a sense, the Historic American Landscape idea was principally born, or at least strengthened, of/by the Portola Overlook experience!

Examples are the once-extensive Sierra Nevada Mountains foothill lava/rock fields of grass/blue oak/digger pine and the extensive California Poppy hillsides of the Tehachapi Mountains. These types of disappearing ecosystems/landscapes which are not much or at all purposefully represented in existing park/open space protective systems would be primary targets. Candidates would need to be essentially yet natural in their basic character which they are chosen to represent, and not much encumbered with the marks of post-indigenous human civilization. They are remnants of primitive American, and are fast disappearing—permanently. Specific criteria are yet being developed. These areas may embrace distant views and grander view sheds, but not necessarily. The Portola Overlook advocated here would qualify, but it is not anticipated to include it in the GAHTF effort, or any locations already within the protected federal estate.

We hope that what is advocated herein might, after ample examination and discussion, be considered for adoption by the BLM as it moves forward to develop its management plan for the new Cotoni-Coast Dairies segment of the California Coastal National Monument.

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Timeline of the Portolá expedition

from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This **Timeline of the Portolá expedition** tracks the progress during 1769 and 1770 of the first European exploration of the Spanish possession of Alta California, present-day California, United States. Missionary Juan Crespi kept a diary detailing the group's daily progress and detailed descriptions of their location, allowing modern researchers to reconstruct their journey. Portions of other diaries by Gaspar de Portolá, engineer Miguel Costansó, missionary Junípero Serra, army officer Jose de Canizares, and Sergeant José Ortega also survived. When analyzed as a whole, they provide detailed daily information on the route traveled and camping locations, as well as descriptions of the country and its native inhabitants.

Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 About the diaries
- 3 January to June in Baja California
- 4 Month by month in Alta California
- 5 References
- 6 External links



Statue of Gaspar de Portolá in Pacifica, California, near the expedition's November 1 camp

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The Portolá expedition was the brainchild of José de Gálvez, *visitador* (inspector general, a personal representative of the king) in New Spain. On his recommendation, King Charles III of Spain authorized Gálvez to explore Alta California and establish the first permanent Spanish presence there.^[1] Gálvez was supported in the planning of an expedition by Carlos Francisco de Croix (Viceroy of New Spain), and Father Junípero Serra (head of the Franciscan mission to the Californias).

Gálvez and Serra met in November, 1768, to plan the expedition. The goals set were to establish two Presidios and nearby missions – at San Diego and Monterrey (one "r" has since been dropped). These places had been described and given names 166 years before by the maritime explorations of Sebastián Vizcaíno. In addition, the name San Carlos Borromeo was chosen for the mission at Monterrey.^[2]

expedition. Second in command was Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada, commander of the Presidio at Loreto. Serra headed the Franciscan missionary contingent. Three ships were also assigned: two to follow the land march up the coast and keep the expedition supplied from the naval depot at La Paz (on the Baja Peninsula), and another ship to connect La Paz with the mainland at San Blas.

The expedition set out in 1769 and marched from Baja California to San Diego; then from San Diego to the San Francisco Peninsula and back. Rivera led the first group, consisting mainly of soldiers, scouts and engineers to prepare the road and deal with hostile natives. Portolá and Serra followed in a second group with the civilians, livestock and baggage. Serra stayed with the new mission in San Diego while Portolá and Rivera took a smaller group north.

Directed by Rivera's scouts, the road followed established native paths as much as possible (the southern and central California coastal areas were found to have the densest native population of any region north of central Mexico), and blazing new trails where necessary. The two main requirements for a camping place were an adequate supply of drinkable fresh water and forage for the livestock. For that reason, most of the campsites were near creeks, ponds or springs. All three of the main land expedition diaries give daily distances traveled in leagues. As used at that time, one Spanish league equaled about 2.6 miles. A typical day's march covered 2–4 leagues, with frequent rest days.

The following year (1770), Portolá returned north as far as Monterrey to establish the second Presidio there and to establish a new provincial seat. Serra came north by sea to make the Mission San Carlos Borromeo del rio Carmelo (moved a few miles south from its original Monterrey location) his headquarters. Portolá's successor as governor, Pedro Fages, found an easier inland route later in 1770 from Monterrey to San Francisco Bay, and further explored the eastern side of the bay in 1772 (accompanied again by padre Juan Crespi, who again kept a diary).

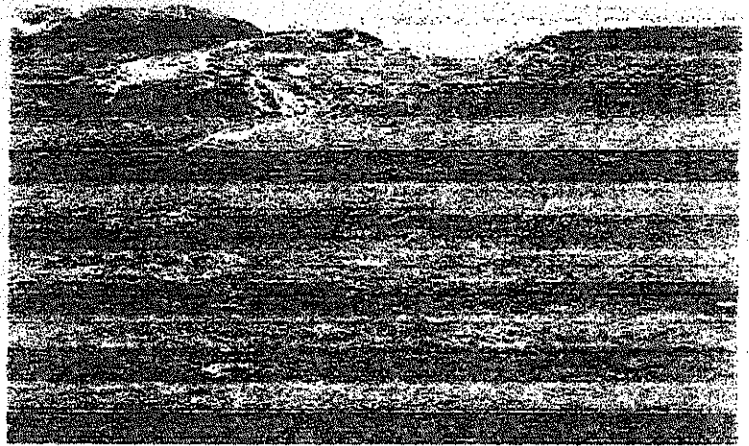
The 1776 expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza used the official Portolá expedition report (drawn from the diaries) to follow mostly in the footsteps of Portolá from Mission San Gabriel to Monterrey, taking the Fages route from Monterrey to San Francisco Bay. Much of today's Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in coastal California was previously the Portolá trail. Sixteen of the twenty-one Spanish Missions of California were established along the Portolá route.

About the diaries

The Crespi diary is the most complete of the three land expedition accounts, because Crespi was the only diarist present during the entire expedition. It includes nearly all of the information found in the other two, plus many extra details about the country and the native peoples. Herbert Bolton translated Crespi's diary to English and annotated it with modern references.^[3] Bolton added information about the modern campsite locations, as shown below. Bolton also included maps with his "best guess" of the expedition's march routes, superimposed on modern California maps.

Ignacio Vila, captain of the *San Carlos* — one of three ships supporting the expedition — also kept a diary that has survived, but he only sailed as far as San Diego, and never joined the expedition on land. Free online translations of both Vila's and Costansó's diaries are available.^[4] Fages also wrote, in 1775, an after-the-fact account of the 1769–70 expedition.^[5]

- See Fray Juan Crespi diary (Bolton), pages 203–228
- 1 – The camp was moved a couple of miles closer to the bay, still on the river near present-day Blanco, about 4 miles from the bay. From the camp, Portolá, Constanzó, Crespi and five soldiers climbed a hill to get a view of the Monterey Bay for the first time. Exactly which hill is unclear, but it was within Fort Ord, a former U.S. army base that closed in 1994. The back country where the explorers climbed the hill was used for infantry training, so the low sandy hills are still mostly bare and accessible by hiking trails. From the hill, they could see Point Pinos, which defines the southern end of Monterey Bay and was one of the coastal landmarks they were looking for. It was decided to explore in that direction (the point no longer has many pines; it is occupied by a lighthouse and golf course at the western end of the city of Pacific Grove).
- 2–3 – The main camp remained in place while Captain Rivera took 8 soldiers to explore the Monterey Peninsula and farther south, seeing mouth of the Carmel River at today's Carmel River State Beach. They returned on the 3rd, still failing to recognize either Monterey harbor or the Carmel River as the places named and described by Vizcaíno.
- 4 – Portolá calls a meeting of the officers (including the two priests) and asks for a vote on whether to continue north or return to San Diego. All agree to continue.
- 5–6 – Sergeant Ortega departs with the scouts to mark the trail. They go as far as the Pajaro River, which they mistake for the Carmel River, and conclude that Vizcaíno's great port must not be much further on.
- 7 – The entire party sets out to the north, making camp in the vicinity of modern Castroville.
- 8–9 – Continuing north, staying inland of Elkhorn Slough, the expedition came to a deserted native village near the river seen by the scouts, a large stuffed bird is found, so the soldiers named the place *Río del Pájaro*, the name it retains today. Today, the river is the southern border of Santa Cruz County. Just across the river is the city of Watsonville. Because many of the men were ill, the party stayed an extra day. From this point on through Santa Cruz county, all of the native villages were found deserted.
- 10–14 – Staying a few miles inland because of the numerous estuaries and wetlands near the coast, the expedition crosses the Pajaro Valley and makes camp at one of the lakes north of Watsonville, possibly the one now called Pinto Lake. On this march, the expedition first saw the tree they called *palo colorado*, which translates as "redwood". Once again, the main party rested for several days at this camp while the scouts went ahead.
- 15 – Turning to the northwest to match the curve of the bay, the party crossed Corralitos Creek and headed toward a pass through the hills. The campsite was at a small lake, possibly the one known today as Corralitos Lagoon.
- 16 – Northwest, trending more and more toward west as the expedition nears the north end of Monterey Bay, along the route of today's Freedom Boulevard and back to Highway 1 near the coast, Bolton speculated that the camp this day was at Soquel Creek.
- 17 – Now heading due west, the party reaches a large river, crosses and makes camp on the west side. Crespi names the river San Lorenzo – still its name today. The campsite was in what is now downtown Santa Cruz, California.



View from the coastal sand dunes of Fort Ord, looking southwest toward Monterey

names *Santa Cruz*. The creek gave its name to Mission Santa Cruz in 1791, and still later to the county and city. Oddly, though, the creek is no longer called Santa Cruz. Camp for the night was at what is now called Majors Creek (Coja Creek at the time of Bolton's book), near the coast. This creek forms part of the western border of Wilder Ranch State Park.

- 19 – Following the coast as it curves more to the northwest, the next camp was at today's Scott Creek, a popular wind-surfing beach near the community of Swanton.
- 20–22 – Northwest to Waddell Creek, now part of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The explorers recognized Vizcaíno's Point Año Nuevo just ahead, but also some high cliffs blocking the way. The main party halts while the scouts go ahead.
- 23 – Passing the cliffs on the beach, the party crossed into today's San Mateo County. Traversing the level terrace that forms Point Año Nuevo, Bolton speculated that they camped at today's Gazos Creek.
- 24–26 – Heading now due north, mostly over level coastal terraces, a long march brought the explorers to the creek at present-day San Gregorio, California. Rest and recovery for the next two days.
- 27 – North to present-day Purisima Creek, not far south of Half Moon Bay
- 28–29 – North to one of the small creeks between Half Moon Bay and Pillar Point Harbor. Because of heavy rain and illness, the party rested the next day.
- 30 – Resuming the march north, the expedition camped at or near San Vicente Creek, in present-day Moss Beach, California.
- 31 – Blocked from easy progress near the beach by Montara Mountain and Pedro Mountain just to the north, the party climbs up and over. This spot has long been known as Devil's Slide, where the coast highway was in constant danger of sliding away into the Pacific Ocean. From the ridge, they recognized the "Bay of San Francisco" described in the "itinerary of the pilot Cabrera Bueno" (their guidebook). It is the large curve of coastline between the projecting end of the mountains below where they stood and Point Reyes far to the northwest. Offshore, they saw the Farallon Islands for the first time, also landmarks they were looking for. The sight convinced some, but not all of them that they had definitely passed the port of Monterey. Descending the ridge, they camped at San Pedro Creek, at the south end of today's city of Pacifica.



View north from San Pedro Mtn., Point Reyes in distance at far left, Pacifica to the right

November 1769

- See Fray Juan Crespí diary (Bolton), pages 229–243
- 1 – The expedition establishes a base at San Pedro Creek, while Ortega and the scouts depart on a 3-day mission to explore the area. None of the expedition diarists went with Ortega, and the diaries don't describe the exact route followed by the scouts, so it's not clear when the Ortega group first saw San Francisco Bay and where they were at that moment.
- 2 – Another group asks for and receives permission to go out hunting from the San Pedro Creek base. Constansó wrote (and Crespí's diary uses almost exactly the same words):

Several of the soldiers requested permission to go hunting, as many deer had been seen. Some of them went quite a long way from the camp and reached the top of the hills so that they did not return until after nightfall. They said that to the north of the bay they had seen an