

Bill Gung

PLANNING & CONSERVATION LEAGUE

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TODAY

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## *Fred Keeley Named New Executive Director of PCL and PCL Foundation*



**F**red Keeley, who served as Speaker pro Tempore of the California State Assembly in the last two legislative sessions, has been named as Executive Director of the Planning and Conservation League and the PCL Foundation.

Mr. Keeley was a recognized leader of the environmental forces in the Assembly for the last six years. He was PCL's Legislator of the Year in 1999 and 2001, and also received an award from the California League of Conservation Voters. He also was named Legislator of the Year by the year by the prestigious California Journal in 2002. He unfortunately had to leave the Legislature due to term limits.

Mr. Keeley was the force behind Proposition 12, the \$2.1 billion park and wildlife bond act that was approved by the voters in 2000. He also authored Proposition 40, a similar \$2.6 billion measure which was approved in 2002 by a wide margin. These two measures alone provided more funding for parks and wildlife than almost all previous bond acts combined! They also broke new ground in recognizing

the open space and recreational needs of low income people and communities of color.

Mr. Keeley also was a leader on such critical issues as energy conservation, disposal of radioactive waste, and forestry. His office was often a meeting place for environmental advocates.

Beginning as chief of staff to then Assembly Member Sam Farr, who now represents the Monterey-Santa Cruz area in Congress, Mr. Keeley went on to be elected to two terms on the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, where he served with former PCL President and General Counsel Gary Patton. In 1996, he ran successfully for the Assembly, representing the Monterey Bay area.

As a member of the Assembly, Mr. Keeley was often called on by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Governor to handle the most sensitive tasks, including the energy crisis, the investigation of Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quakenbush, and matters before the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which he chaired. He was asked by the Governor to become Director of Finance, arguably the most influen-

tial cabinet position in state government, but chose to lead PCL instead.

"I am convinced that PCL is positioned to continue its role as California's most influential environmental lobbying organization, and I look forward to working with our members, the Legislature, the Governor, and other environmental organizations. California faces tremendous environmental problems that urgently need solutions, but we have a Legislature and Administration that is willing to address these problems," said Mr. Keeley, on taking the helm at PCL in early January.

PCL President Sage Sweetwood noted that Mr. Keeley's acceptance of this position is a confirmation of the prestige PCL has in the Legislature, and with opinion leaders throughout California.

If you have a moment, please send Fred a welcoming note c/o PCL, 926 J Street, Suite 612, Sacramento, CA 95814, (or [fkeeley@pcl.org](mailto:fkeeley@pcl.org)) telling him of your interests and priorities. Given the environmental problems California faces, he needs your views, interest, and support. ♦



## CALIFORNIA TODAY

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(Dear Senator / Assembly Member \_\_\_\_\_)

Write the Governor at the same address

State officials' addresses can be found on the internet at  
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For your legislators' address, phone, or e-mail, go to  
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### PCL STAFF

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# DEAR FRIENDS

**T**his is the last California Today I will be writing, so please forgive me for being a bit personal. I will now confess to being the author of the last 120 issues of California Today!

Some people have asked me: "What have PCL's greatest accomplishments been during the 20 years you were Executive Director?" My answer is twofold: first, we helped protect hundreds of thousands of acres of the best of California: the coast, wetlands, wildlife habitat, urban parks for underserved communities, and open space. Second, we employed dozens of tremendous environmental activists who went on to leadership positions throughout the United States.

In the first category, our work is exemplified by the photo accompanying this article. It is of the East-West Ranch, saved through the work of our PCL Foundation Board member Harriet Burgess of the American Land Conservancy. She used the land conservation tax credit which PCL sponsored, and which was carried by State Senator Jack

O'Connell. It took six years to pass the tax credit, but this photo makes it clear that it was worthwhile.

There are hundreds of such photos, showing the land saved through all the bond acts and other ballot and legislative measures we worked on.

In the second category, PCL has always given a very high priority to developing talented people who would go on in their careers to be leaders in the conservation movement. While we have lost track of some of our great interns, here is our most current list of PCL alumni active in the conservation movement. Also I have listed on page 6 our tremendously talented current PCL staff. Your support over the years made their development as conservationists possible. You should be very proud of them, and yourself.

I look forward to working with you in my new role as President of the PCL Foundation, where we will build an endowment to make it possible to attract talented and capable people like Fred Keeley to work for us in the years to come! ♦



*East-West Ranch, saved through the work of our PCL Foundation Board member Harriet Burgess of the American Land Conservancy*

## CEQA Comments: We Make It Easier

**R**esponding to numerous requests for help in preparing letters commenting on environmental impact reports prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, PCL Foundation staff has developed a web-based archive that promises to make writing CEQA comments easier. Submitting well-written and thoughtful CEQA comment letters is the first and most fundamental step you can take to influence decision-makers when they are making land use decisions that could have significant environmental effects in your community. The PCLF CEQA archive is located on the Land Use page of PCL's website at [www.pclprograms.org/landuse](http://www.pclprograms.org/landuse). Click on the Archives link. All letters are archived in electronic format for easy viewing and downloading.

We encourage you to submit comment letters of your own that you think could be a model to others and to learn from the letters in the archive when you have CEQA comment letters of your own to write.

We are in the planning stages for a CEQA workshop in Sonoma and a General Plan workshop in Merced. Please check out the Workshops web page at [www.pclprograms.org](http://www.pclprograms.org). Click on the Workshops link. We are always looking to partner with groups and individuals to bring workshops to areas we haven't visited, so if you would like to see a workshop held in your area, please contact either David Shorey ([dshorey@pcl.org](mailto:dshorey@pcl.org), 916-313-4524) or Marc de la Vergne ([mdelavergne@pcl.org](mailto:mdelavergne@pcl.org), 916-313-4520) ♦

## Turkeys Rampant

**T**he Department of Fish and Game began releasing turkeys into California in the early part of the 20th Century so they could be hunted. Releases continued throughout the century. The turkeys are native to the Rio Grande Valley and other parts of the country, but not to California.

Hunters like shooting the big birds, and they are also attractive wildlife to some extent in rural neighborhoods, but homeowners often wish the birds would go elsewhere when the turkeys roost, and cover cars and other personal property with major droppings. Of even greater concern is the damage they do by eating native plants,

frogs, salamanders, and other wildlife.

PCL intern Marin Lemieux has prepared a short publication on the status of releasing wild turkeys in California. (You can order a copy using the enclosed envelope.) The California Native Plant Society, a PCL Board Member, has fought wild turkey releases because some of California's rarest plants rate very high on turkey menus. The Jumping Frog Institute has also noted the danger turkeys pose to rare frog populations in the Sierra Nevada.

Recently the Department of Fish and Game proposed to release another subspecies of turkeys: the

## Buttons to the Smithsonian

**P**CL Foundation President (and former Executive Director) Jerry Meral has long been a collector of environmental buttons. He began collecting in 1970, and he has accumulated more than 1550 buttons. But what to do with them, now that he is moving to Marin County? He talked to the Smithsonian Institution, and they were very interested. They view the buttons as part of American environmental history, and have asked to add them to their collection. They also asked Jerry to write a short history for each button. That took a while, needless to say!

The buttons have now been shipped off to the Smithsonian, and will be displayed there at various times, as well as being loaned to other museums around the country for displays on environmental subjects. ♦



# *Benefit Assessment Districts: A Funding Source for The Environment*

## *New PCL Foundation Publication*

**B**ack in the 14th Century in England, some property owners were concerned about coastal erosion threatening their castles by the sea. So they decided to tax themselves to build a sea wall, basing the tax on the benefits to their individual properties.

While today we would urge them to not build too close to the coast, thus avoiding the need for destructive seawalls, we can praise their foresight in developing a new funding source that can now be used to protect threatened open space, coastal, and parkland: the Benefit Assessment District (BD).

The concept of these BDs is relatively simple. Property increases in value when various amenities are provided. For example, if flood control is provided and a house is less likely to be flooded, its value goes up. Similarly, numerous studies have shown that having well-maintained recreational facilities or open space nearby increases the value of property.

The use of these districts was widespread throughout California since the 1970's, and especially since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which restricted the use of property tax. After the passage of Prop. 13, a wide variety of park and other districts turned to BDs as a means of raising badly needed funds to expand and maintain parks. A California Supreme Court decision confirmed that taxpayers who lived in the general vicinity of park improvements gained property value.

Faced with this increased use of BDs, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association promoted Proposition 218 in 1996. It changed the way BDs worked. Formerly, property owners could protest the creation of a BD, but it took a majority of property owners to block a new district, and this very rarely happened. After the passage of Prop. 218, it now takes a majority of property owners to approve the creation of a new district.

Voting under Prop. 218 is unusual. Only property owners in the proposed new district can vote, and they get the same number of votes as they will pay in tax dollars. Voting is conducted by mail, and property owners have 45 days to send in their ballots.

Despite this strict new voting requirement, park and open space districts are learning how to operate under Prop. 218. A number of park districts have proposed new BDs to property owners, and they have been approved. Given this success, PCL's Jerry Meral recommended to the Santa Clara Open Space Authority and the Southern California Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority that they consider the creation of new BDs to fund open space acquisition and maintenance, and fire prevention in open space areas.

Meral worked with the Authorities and the SCI consulting firm to develop proposals that property owners could accept, and the districts were approved. Over the life of these new districts, hundreds of millions of dollars will be devoted

to the purposes of open space protection and maintenance, the equivalent of a state park bond act.

In order to inform the public and local agencies about the possible uses of this new funding tool, the PCL Foundation has issued "Benefit Assessment Districts", a publication explaining how these districts work, and how local conservationists can work with their park and open space agencies to generate new funding for these purposes. Jerry Meral is the author of this publication.

To order this publication, please use the enclosed envelope. ♦

## *Turkeys Rampant*

*Continued from page 3*

Merriam's race, into the Sierra Nevada. They would range as high as 10,000 feet, providing new targets for hunters in the Sierra. But the National Park Service protested, arguing that they would compete with quail and other native species. When CNPS forced the Department to prepare an Environmental Impact Report, the Department backed down, at least for the time being.

PCL intends to follow this issue in the future, since our native plants and animals have enough problems without competition from this intrusive bird.

We thank PCL member Mary Belkin for bringing this problem to our attention. She noted the problem in her Shasta County neighborhood, and urged us to look into it. ♦

## 20th Annual PCL Foundation Symposium: California's Major Environmental Challenges

**P**CL is pleased to announce our 2003 Legislative Symposium, to be held on Saturday, April 26, at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park.

The concept of the 2003 Symposium will be to focus on the continued cutting of trees on private lands in California without sufficient protection for water quality, fisheries, wildlife, and old growth values; and the continued export of huge amounts of water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California with consequent damage to fisheries, wildlife, and other natural values.

We hope to bring together such interest groups as Forests Forever, Sierra Club, and Defenders of Wildlife, as well as members of the Board of Forestry, and the Director

of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. On the water front we will invite Northern California and Southern California environmental groups; Bay Area water organizations, such as East Bay MUD; Central Valley organizations, such as the Farm Water Alliance; Southern California water organizations, such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; representatives of water recycling and seawater desalting organizations; and commercial and sport fishing organizations.

This year's Symposium will be held in partnership with the Environmental Technology Center at Sonoma State University, a dynamic, interactive and integrative facility where faculty, students, and community members can work together in education, applied research, and

collaborative projects on energy and the environment. Incorporating sustainable building techniques and a wide range of design features that minimize energy use, this "building that teaches" is projected to consume only 20% of the energy allowed by the state code for similar buildings and features environmentally responsible building materials, passive solar heating and cooling, daylighting and shading, "smart building" control technologies, and energy and water-efficient landscaping. We are very pleased to be able to offer not only symposium sessions in the building, but tours of the facility as well.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Symposium, please use the enclosed envelope to request a brochure, or visit the PCL website at: [www.pcl.org](http://www.pcl.org). ♦

## Coastal Commission Chaos

**T**he California Court of Appeals has ruled that the makeup of the California Coastal Commission is unconstitutional. The Commission is made up of four appointees of the Assembly, the Senate, and the Governor. The legislative appointees serve at the pleasure of the appointing body, and can be removed at any time. The Court ruled that this gave the Legislature too much power in the day to day operation of an administrative body, violating the principal of separation of powers between the

Legislature and the Governor.

This could be cured quickly by simply making the appointees subject to fixed four year terms. But the Court of Appeals also called into question whether an administrative body should have a majority of members appointed by the Legislature. They did not settle this issue, and the Attorney General has asked the Court to clarify this question.

Obviously legislation will have to be passed quickly to correct this problem. But some republicans have already said that their condition for voting for such a bill would

be to cut back on the powers of the Commission, an alternative not acceptable to PCL or the rest of the conservation community. This means that passing a bill by a two thirds margin in the current two year legislative session, which is what is required for a bill to take effect immediately, will not be possible. For that reason, Governor Davis has called a special session of the Legislature. Legislation passed during the special session goes into effect 90 days after the close of the

*continued on page 8*

## The PCL Staff

### PCL FORMER STAFF MEMBERS

**Autumn Bernstein:** PCL intern, became Greenbelt Alliance South Bay Field staff. Now environmental writer and activist.

**Corey Brown:** PCL General Counsel, became political director of the Trust for Public Land, western region, and is now Executive Director of the Big Sur Land Trust

**Maura Deering:** PCL legal assistant, now at Department of Toxic Substances Control at Cal EPA.

**Kim (Wally) Delfino:** PCL intern, now runs California office of Defenders of Wildlife

**Rachel Dinno:** PCL lobbyist, and then lobbyist for Nature Conservancy. Now political director and chief lobbyist for the Western Region of the Trust for Public Land.

**Lynn Dunbar:** Worked for us on Proposition 180, and then worked for the Archaeological Conservancy. She now is Director of Conservation Programs at the Mountain Lion Foundation.

**Tim Dunbar:** Tim worked for us on Proposition 180, and then worked for the American Farmland Trust. He currently works for the Mountain Lion Foundation.

**Esther Feldman:** PCL lobbyist, went to work for Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, then Trust for Public Land in LA, and now is President of Communities Conservation International.

**Ronni Flannery:** PCL attorney, then worked for a group fighting OHV's in Western US, now practices environmental law in Montana.

**Anne Hedges:** PCL staff member, now chief lobbyist for Montana Environmental Information Center.

**Steve Jacoby:** PCL fundraising staff. Then worked for Sacramento Tree Foundation, and now is a project manager for Wildlands, Inc.

**Jamie Phillips:** PCL policy staff. Now works with energy conservation groups and companies.

**Jennifer Jennings:** PCL legal affairs director. She has been raising two great kids, and has served on the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency Board.

**Jim Knox:** PCL Lobbyist. Now Executive Director, California Common Cause.

**Mary Madison:** PCL intern, now works for ICE Environmental Program at UC Davis.

**Tom Martens:** PCL fundraiser, then Executive Director of California Fish and Wildlife Foundation, now private environmental consultant.

**John McCaull:** PCL staff member. Then worked as political director for Audubon California, now is California Director of American Farmland Trust

**Julie Munger:** PCL intern, now world famous river guide, frequently doing environmental river trips.

**Janet Michaelson:** PCL intern and employee. Has worked for several conservation groups, now San Francisco Urban Tree Coordinator.

**Lilly Okamura:** PCL symposium coordinator and fundraiser. Now a planner with Santa Barbara County.

**Gary Patton:** PCL General Counsel, now Executive Director Landwatch Monterey County.

**Lynn Sadler:** PCL lobbyist, now Executive Director of the Mountain Lion Foundation.

**Teresa Schilling:** PCL campaign worker on Prop.70. Became CLCV media director, and now has her own environmental media company.

**Nathan Schumacher:** PCL Initiative staff, now public outreach specialist at Department of Toxic Substances Control at CalEPA.

**Jill Shirley:** PCL staff member, now works on environmental education for National Audubon Society.

**Kari Smith:** PCL intern, worked for various environmental groups, now with Power Light, a solar energy company.

**Kim Strickland:** PCL intern, now Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition South Bay field staff.

**Keith Wagner:** PCL intern, now environmental attorney with Bill Yeates representing environmental clients.

**John Watt:** PCL intern, now works for US Dept of Justice on environmental crimes.

### CURRENT PCL STAFF

General Counsel Sandy Spelliscy is widely regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and effective advocates for air and environmental quality in the Capitol.

Natural Resources Director Karen Douglas is a leader in the natural resources conservation community, and she is a major player in endangered species, Salton Sea, water, and other legislative issues.

PCL Foundation Associate Director Marc de la Vergne has gained a statewide reputation as an expert in local planning, land use initiatives, and environmental justice issues. We will long be indebted to him for his ability to convince foundations to provide support.

Special Projects Director Tim McRae has continued to provide expert research and campaign assistance, as well as making PCL a real force to be reckoned with in preventing the abuse of our land by off highway vehicles. Fresno will be using natural gas instead of diesel buses in large part due to his efforts. He has recently added coastal protection to his workload.

Eddy Moore is a leader in California transportation policy. Without his work and ideas we could not have developed our transportation funding proposal.

Jennifer Palyash has worked on many programs for us, including forestry, environmental job research, urban parks, and several of our initiative and ballot measure campaigns. Through it all she has been our incomparable web-mistress, internet guru, and technology expert.

Tyrone Buckley, our newest staff member, is showing how PCL can best communicate and work with the environmental justice community throughout California.

Shelly McGill is making major strides in organizing our new major donor program.

Dave Shorey worked on the successful Proposition 40 campaign, and now is helping in a big way with foundation fundraising.

Administrative Director Luella Warren is incomparable. She has helped us achieve miracles in office efficiency and technology, while managing her terrific administrative staff.

Chris Smedley has quietly and efficiently managed our books, accounts, and business systems. The proof of his performance comes in the fact that we have always passed audits with flying colors.

Gustine Chavez manages our membership program in a way which attracts members to our cause, and keeps them happy.

Cortnee Beggs makes our office function more smoothly, and helps out everywhere.

Marion Guerard, our tireless courier, proves that it is never too late in life to make a meaningful contribution.

Melissa Wheeler does a great job in producing California Environmental News, and in helping throughout our organization. ♦

## Dear Friends:

**W**e all must be very thankful that Jerry Meral served this organization and our state with such distinction for more than two decades. His legacy of good planning, environmental protection and significant funding for both is not likely to be matched for a very long time. I certainly hope that each reader of this newsletter will join Jerry and his many friends on March 16th in Sacramento at the Elks Club for an evening of fun and celebration for Jerry. (More details concerning this event are contained in this newsletter.)

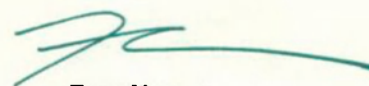
I also want to thank the Board of Directors of both the Planning & Conservation League and the Planning & Conservation League Foundation for their kindness and the confidence they are exhibiting in me by selecting me to serve as the new Executive Director of these two fine organizations.

While it will not be possible to duplicate Jerry Meral's great work, there are new challenges facing California that I hope to be able to address with the assistance of the boards of directors and a very talented staff.

Clearly, California is facing enormous challenges, ranging from a continuing increase in population of more than a half million people per year and the stress that such growth places on our environmental resources and social systems, to policy disputes as to the best way to create a California that we will be proud to pass on to the next generations.

Since the mid-1960's, PCL and PCL/F have been leaders in providing thoughtful, well-respected research, community-based training concerning California's environmental laws and planning policies, and have advanced some of the most important environmental and rational planning legislation in the state's history.

Certainly, Jerry Meral, the Board of Directors and the staff have set the bar very high. I hope that with the continued participation of Dr. Meral, Board members, and staff, we will be able to expand the capacity of both organizations to meet the contemporary challenges facing this, the largest and most diverse state in the nation. ♦



FRED KEELEY

## Coastal Commission Chaos

*Continued from page 5*

session, even if the bill is passed by majority vote.

PCL will give this issue our very highest priority. We support legislative appointments to the commission, since at times hostile governors such as Wilson and Deukmejian would have gutted the Commission if they had the power. Balance is what has kept the Commission working well for the past quarter century. ♦

## It's a ROAST!

**N**ow's your chance to join in a roast of Jerry Meral. Of course there will a long line waiting at the microphone to add their humorous and ironic comments. Naturally this is a fundraiser for PCL, but it will be a popular event, so order your tickets early. The event will be Sunday evening, March 16, at the Elks Club in Sacramento.

Please use the enclosed envelope to order your tickets. Don't miss the fun, and the chance to see old friends, PCL Board Members, and present and former PCL Staff. ♦



*Join in a roast of Jerry Meral*

## Meral Receives Conservation Service Citation from National Wildlife Federation

**O**utgoing PCL Executive Director Jerry Meral has received a Conservation Service Citation from the National Wildlife Federation. PCL is the California affiliate of the Federation. The Citation, which reads: "With deepest appreci-

ation for your outstanding commitment and contribution to protecting California's natural environment", was presented during a recent visit by NWF President Mark Van Putten to California. ♦



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