

Seacliff Improvement Association

Winter 2025

Announcing our First Quarter Membership Gathering:

SIA returns to the Aptos Library!

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 6:30 pm

The Betty Leonard Community Room, 7695 Soquel Drive, Aptos

Our guest: ***Sarah Christensen***

Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County
Regional Transportation Commission



Sarah has 20 years of experience in planning, and implementation of major capital projects, including the Highway 1 Bus on Shoulder auxiliary lanes. She will share the latest news on this project along with an update on the construction progress on the Mar Vista Pedestrian bridge and the Rail Trail. If you want to learn how regional transportation works, this meeting is for you!

We are so glad to return to the Aptos Library for our membership meetings and hope you can join us to welcome Sarah and celebrate the new meeting room. RSVP by March 8th to: info@seacliffimprovement.org

**As a community service, the Seacliff Improvement Association
sends this newsletter to more than 1,000 Seacliff Households!**

The association acts on behalf of our Seacliff neighborhood:

- Collaborating with local governmental agencies to improve Seacliff
- Publishing informative quarterly newsletters and hosting membership meetings about important Seacliff issues; sending email alerts informing you of local government developments
- Improving our Seacliff neighborhood, increasing property values and making Seacliff an even *greater* place to live

*Membership is open to **all** Seacliff residents, businesses, and property owners.* We hope you enjoy this newsletter. To learn more about how we care for our neighborhood, visit: [SIA Membership](#) and join today, *thank you!*



Hello To All My Friends And Neighbors In Seacliff!

Kim De Serpa
Second District Supervisor

I'm excited to share an update as I settle into my new role on the Board of Supervisors, having taken office on January 6th. After my first four weeks, I'm still in the early stages of learning and assessing, and I wanted to give you all a quick snapshot of what's been going on.

During this time, my team and I have been diving into the nuts and bolts of County services, budgets, and all the things that make our community function. My staff, Chief of Staff Maureen McCarty and Analyst Gigi Kelbert, have been absolutely instrumental as we find our footing.

Maureen brings decades of experience, having worked for Senator Joe Simitian, Senator Mark Stone, and Assemblymember Gail Pellerin. A longtime resident of Aptos, she's thrilled to be part of the team. Gigi, who's run multiple campaigns for me, has a strong background in legal and civic engagement. She's been a resident of Aptos for over 25 years as well, and her knowledge and experience make her a key part of our work. Both are talented, friendly, and excellent problem-solvers. If there's an issue you need help with, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here for you at the Board of Supervisors office: 831-454-2200.

A lot of our time is spent at the office on 701 Ocean Street, setting up systems, meeting with department leaders, and learning the ins and outs of County services and budget. The changing federal landscape means we may lose some critical funding for services here, which is a concern shared by counties across the nation. We're living in a VUCA world—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Much like I experienced in 2012 on the school board, I've seen how tough budget challenges can get. Back then, the state budget crisis forced us to make difficult decisions to prevent our district from going into receivership. Though the process was tough, I'm proud of how we rebuilt the school budget and reintroduced vital programs like arts, music, sports, and language as the state economy recovered. I'm determined to approach our County's budget challenges with the same dedication, keeping a close eye on our finances and making tough calls as needed. My focus is on ensuring fiscal solvency and, above all, the well-being of our community.

In my prior life as a clinical social worker, I lived by the motto "Help Starts Here." I approach each situation with a deep understanding of the person in front of me—what their needs are, what challenges they're facing. Without this step, I can't provide effective help. I see my current role as an extension of that work—an ongoing assessment of our community's needs. Over the past 18 months, I've been meeting with many of you to hear your concerns, ideas, and pain points. Now that I'm in office, I'm applying that same mindset to learning how our County government serves us. I've been truly impressed with the County staff—a dedicated, educated, and compassionate group of people who show up every day to serve our community. Are there areas for improvement? Absolutely, and that's where you and I come in. Thank you to everyone who has already reached out to me with your ideas. I'm deeply committed to this work, and I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and serve our community together.

Warmly,

Kim De Serpa

Seacliff State Beach Report

Adele Eberhart

The Seacliff Improvement Association's efforts to preserve an open accessible field and meadow adjacent to the upper parking lot at Seacliff State Beach began over 25 years ago. This effort grew out a community desire to preserve the bluff area



Native Garden along the Seacliff Bluff

after it was considered for potential development as the site for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Center. Through collaboration with State Parks, the initial "native species garden" pilot site was established by volunteers in 2006. This small area has been nurtured and cared for by neighbors, most especially by Cheri Nilsson, with key assistance and oversight by Auggie Ceballos, State Parks Maintenance Supervisor and a Seacliff neighbor. Cheri and Auggie also cleared and established walking paths diagonally across the field from San Benito to the top of the stairs to Seacliff State Beach and the circumference pathway around the perimeter. These paths have become integral to life in Seacliff, providing neighbors and visitors bluff top recreational opportunities as well as direct access, via the stairs or roadside path, to the beach.



Seaside Daisy

Currently, the SIA's State Park Working Group is further envisioning an expansion of a Native species and Wildflower Garden across the field while maintaining and improving walking paths. We hope to collaborate with State Parks Santa Cruz District, members of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the Native Plant Nursery at Half Moon Bay, the Horticulture Program at Cabrillo College, the Pajaro Valley School District and others. Neighbors Pat Lordan and Ingrid Marianne will assist with design.

Once established, the field could formally become an environmental classroom, educating school children and other groups about indigenous plants and habitats. With partnerships in the broader Aptos and Santa Cruz County community, we can emulate the success of Coastside State Parks Association Half Moon Bay restoration teams who now sponsor a Coastal Wildflower Day scheduled this year for May 4, 2025. <https://www.coastsidestateparks.org/cwd> Our vision is to create an attractive focal point that will have multiple uses in line with State Parks mission of preservation, recreation and education. We want the area to be an asset to the community and an opportunity for the region for education, volunteerism and service projects.

Later this month, an SIA team has been invited to assist State Parks "Seacliff Resilience" Planner, Scott Rohlf, continuing the effort to establish native plant berm at Rio del Mar Beach near Aptos Creek and the Esplanade. Fifteen SIA volunteers consisting of your SIA Board members, this committee and other interested neighbors will pitch in to support this effort. Stay tuned for notification of the date and time, and to sign up to volunteer.



Douglas Iris

Share ideas or questions you have regarding the Seacliff State Beach Field and Meadow preservation endeavors or other Seacliff State Beach preservation activity, with either of the committee chairs, Adele Eberhart: eberhart.adele@gmail.com or Dr. Brent Lay: brentclay@gmail.com .

Update on County Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment

David Carlson, Resource Planner,
Community Development & Infrastructure, County of Santa Cruz

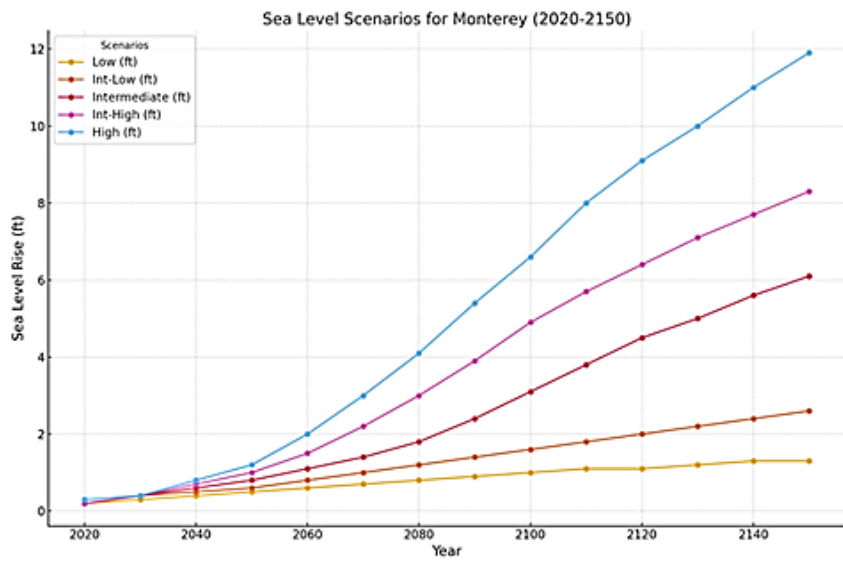


Santa Cruz County's breathtaking coastline, a treasured place for residents and visitors alike, is at risk as rising seas and coastal erosion threaten its future.

The County has endured a long history of coastal storm-related impacts, with recent events causing severe flooding on roads, in neighborhoods, and at businesses, as well as accelerated bluff erosion and damage to infrastructure. As sea levels continue to rise, the extent of coastal hazards is expected to grow, increasing risks to communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure.

In your Winter 2024 newsletter, I described how the County of Santa Cruz is conducting a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment as part of its Local Coastal Program (LCP), specifically focused on addressing existing and future coastal hazards. The LCP is a state-mandated plan that guides land use and development along the coast to balance environmental protection, public access, and sustainable growth.

The project is both a data-driven assessment of the County's vulnerabilities to coastal hazards, including sea level rise, and an update of coastal land use policies protecting property values, public access to the coast, and preserving the coastline's natural beauty for future generations.



Source: Ocean Protection Council (2024)

Our consulting team has been analyzing existing conditions and conducting the coastal hazards vulnerability assessment. This includes data collection, policy and literature review and socio-economic work to provide a complete picture of the sea level rise vulnerabilities facing the County.

Community engagement is a key component of this project and includes a variety of outreach methods. A Community Working Group (CWG) comprised of community members from across the County representing different voices and issue areas are helping the County and the consultant team by providing input on a shared vision for our coast. The Seacliff Improvement Association is represented on the CWG by Karen Grellas, and we very much appreciate her dedication and time commitment to sort through the complex technical information and policy issues and provide community perspective to help shape policies that govern future coastal development projects and, ultimately, what the Santa Cruz County coast will look like in 50 years.

Continued on page 5

There are other avenues for community members to participate. The [Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Project](#) has launched and we are actively updating content. On the project webpage there are now two important links that the County will be monitoring. We encourage you to share this with your friends, families, colleagues and neighbors. An email link for questions and feedback which will contribute to the FAQs document about this project. We also encourage you to [subscribe](#) to our project newsletter.

This is a simple way to keep everyone informed while helping us to build a mailing list for future project updates and engagement opportunities, allowing us to gather input from a broader audience. Other outreach methods in the planning stages include a community survey and community meeting, which will be announced through the website and project update emails.

Participate in the California Coastal Commission Strategic Plan Update!

The Coastal Commission is seeking early public feedback to inform its forthcoming 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. This plan will guide their work to protect and enhance California's coast and ocean over the next five years and is built on the current [2021-2025 Strategic Plan](#). Join a virtual listening session on Zoom to share your priorities for the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan update:

- Monday, March 17th from 3:30-4:30pm -- [Register Here](#)
- Wednesday, March 19th from 5:30-6:30pm -- [Register Here](#)

If you are unable to attend a listening session, please provide your feedback by 11:59 p.m. Monday, March 31, 2025 using the [Public Input Form](#) or by emailing: StrategicPlanComments@coastal.ca.gov.

Take the SIA Passenger Rail Survey

The Seacliff Improvement Association has represented our neighborhood in stakeholder and community meetings, reporting the progress of passenger rail and the rail trail to our members since before the rail corridor was purchased by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission in 2012.



We are conducting a survey now because current concept plans show a new potential stop in New Brighton, serving Cabrillo College, which will affect Seacliff if and when passenger rail passes through our neighborhood. We seek to understand your views to help us represent Seacliff in any future rail development. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and is **ONLY** about passenger rail. The survey is open to SIA members and the Seacliff community; your responses will remain confidential. The survey is open until March 25, 2025, with results reported in our next newsletter.

[SIA Passenger Rail Survey](#)

Welcome our New Sheriff! Rebecca Downing



Meet the newest member of the Aptos Community Policing Team, Travis Huntsman. Travis grew up all over Santa Cruz County, including Aptos, where he is the new service sergeant at the Aptos Safety Center. He always wanted to be a sheriff for our county but personal circumstances sent him in other directions until he took a job in security at the Boardwalk. After enrolling in the Cabrillo College Criminal Justice program, Travis found his home and began his career with the sheriff's department in 2008.

Before leading Community Policing at the Aptos Safety Center, Travis worked as a Patrol Deputy, Court Bailiff, School Resource Officer, Field Training Officer, Alcohol Enforcement Officer, and is an FBI Certified Bomb Tech and Bomb Squad Commander. During this time, he also served as a representative of the Deputy Sheriff's Association, including President of the organization in 2020.

The Community Policing Team builds partnerships with local organizations and community members working together on specific community issues. Although Aptos has a low crime rate, there are law-enforcement issues requiring attention; the goal is to always mediate conflicts and to de-escalate them using communication and other resolution techniques. The Aptos Safety Center provides a variety of services including non-emergency reports, Neighborhood Watch presentations, agency referrals, abandoned vehicle services, and the patrol of County parks.

One resource Sergeant Huntsman invites us to explore and acquaint ourselves with is the website for the [Santa Cruz County Sheriff Department](#). The [I Need To...](#) page is especially helpful for finding information, forms, documents and requests for services and reports.

Travis has been in his current position for just a couple of months and is looking forward to serving the greater Aptos Community and meeting local residents. To reach Travis, call the Safety Center at: 662-0690.

New Owners at The Med!

Rebecca Downing

Husband and wife team Anthony Dolansky and Elaine Nguyen have purchased our local watering hole, The Mediterranean, at 265 Center Avenue. The couple grew up in the Bay Area and both had careers in the hospitality industry, most recently in southern California. With their recent move to Aptos "The Med" was the type of business they were looking to own and manage.



Anthony Dolansky and Elaine Nguyen

A few upgrades, including a new sound system are in the works but this local Seacliff favorite will look much the same and regular patrons will feel right at home. They are excited to become a part of the community and look forward to contributing to the vibrant local business scene.

Learn more about our association...

including our history, bylaws, activities, and newsletter archive by visiting our website:

[Seacliff Improvement Association](https://seacliffimprovement.org)

Our membership meets quarterly, and our board of directors meets on the second Tuesday of the month. All are welcome to join us. Contact us if you wish to attend a board meeting:

info@seacliffimprovement.org

We thank all 285 member households for your continued support!



Start Planting NOW for our 2025 Beautification Awards

Brent Lay



This spring we will again be celebrating those in our Seacliff community whose landscaping brightens our neighborhood with the Seacliff Beautification Awards.

Committee members will soon be walking the various areas of our Seacliff neighborhood, looking for candidates. Nominations are usually completed at the end of April. If you have ever hoped to win, now is the time to show your garden some love, and this could be your year!

Winners are presented our Beautification Award sign to display the in their yard and also receive a \$50 gift certificate from Dig Gardens.

This year's winners will be announced at the SIA Ice Cream Social in June. If you know a neighbor who has spruced up their front yard, you may nominate them by writing to: info@seacliffimprovement.org. Please include a photo, the address, and brief description of the reason you are nominating them and include any special story you know about them or their home. See you in the garden!

Seacliff Improvement Association 2024 Final Treasurer's Report

	YTD
Ending Balance from Dec 2023	\$22,940.13
INCOME:	
Membership Dues	\$5,986.50
General Donations	\$3,399.14
Annual Dinner	\$2,116.50
Beachgate Trail Donations	\$100.00
Wells Fargo Account Interest	\$2.24
America Walks Grant	\$1,500.01
TOTAL INCOME:	\$13,104.39
EXPENSES:	
Membership Reimbursement	\$100.00
Beachgate Trail Expenses	\$1,045.00
Annual Dinner	\$2,055.87
Insurance	\$414.00
Membership Meetings Expenses	\$30.44
Mini Park	\$1,396.18
Newsletter	\$3,597.63
Nonprofit registration fees	\$20.00
Post Box Annual Rental	\$200.00
Seacliff Street Fair	\$404.78
Website Hosting, Security and Admin	\$1,778.64
Zoom Annual Subscription	\$159.90
Aptos Village Stroll	\$1,418.60
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$12,621.04
ENDING CASH BALANCE:	\$23,423.48
Beachgate Trail YTD Balance:	\$3,810.62

Reference list for neighborhood issues

Have a Concern?	Contact	Contact Information
Noise	Santa Cruz County Sheriff	24 hour non-emergency: 471-1121
Abandoned Vehicle Please provide:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and Color • Make and model • License plate number and length of abandonment 	Santa Cruz County Sheriff	Santa Cruz County Sheriff Vehicle Abandonment 831- 454-7602
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Blocking the street • Parking in a no-parking zone • Non-injury accidents 	California Highway Patrol	796-2160 or visit: California Highway Patrol
Animal Control/Barking	Santa Cruz Animal Shelter	Santa Cruz Animal Shelter
Code Compliance	Santa Cruz County Planning Department	Santa Cruz County Code Compliance
Emergency Road or Sanitation Issue	Public Works 24 hour Service Line	831-477-3999

Explore County resources and report neighborhood concerns, including: potholes, bicycle and pedestrian hazards, encampments, or illegal dumping to the County at:
[My Santa Cruz County](#)

Seacliff Community Contacts

Santa Cruz County Representative	2nd District Supervisor, Kim De Serpa	454-2200
Central Fire District	Jason Nee Fire Chief	479-6842
The Aptos Village Safety Center	Sergeant Travis Huntsman	662-0690
Seacliff State Beach	Park Office	685-6442 or 685-6500