

• ROCK • SUN • COMMUNITY • WIND • ADVENTURE • OCEAN • WINE • FAMILY • FLOWERS • EMBARCADERO • SAND •

KITE • SHELLS • FISH TACOS • ART • WAVES • BREEZE • FISHING BOAT • BEACH

Morro Bay

CALIFORNIA

SHOPPING • SUCCULENTS • SUNSHINE • FISH • HIKING • TREES • VOLUNTEERS

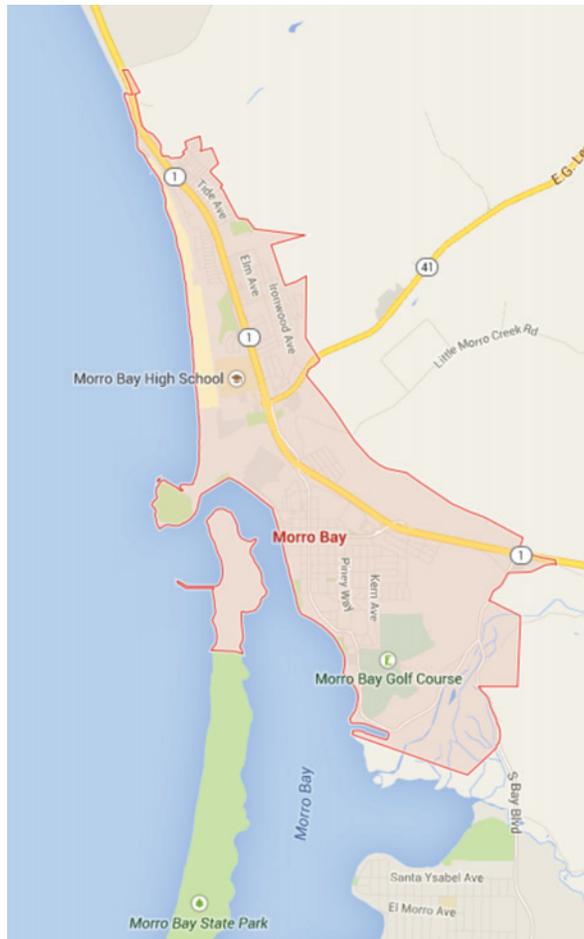


• SAILING • BENCHES • SURFING • COFFEE • CRAB • FRIENDSHIP • HARBOR • EARTH • CYCLING • DINING • BIRDS •

Maps of Morro Bay

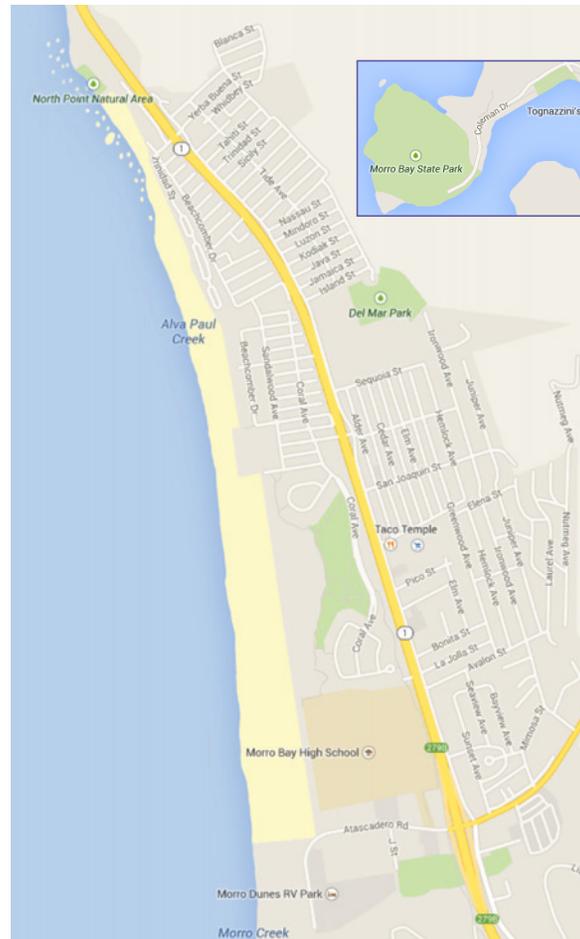
Morro Bay Overview

Morro Bay is located along Highway 1, halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.



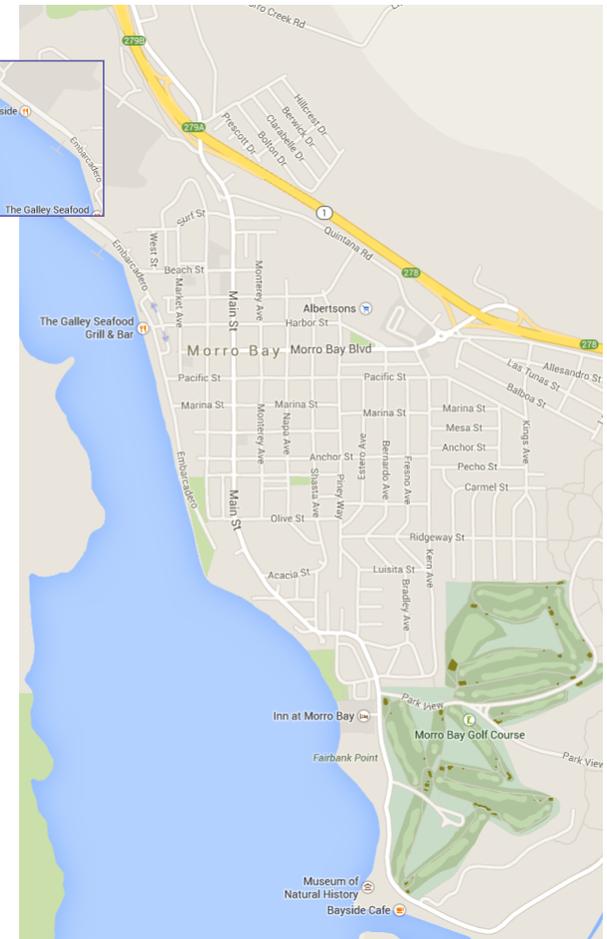
North Morro Bay

Full ocean views capped with North Point, a park with a beach access stairway to great tide pooling.



South Morro Bay

The heart of the city and home to the Embarcadero, which boasts great dining, shopping and activities.



GOOGLEMAPS.COM/DATA CSUMB SFML, CA OPC, DIGITALGLOBE, LANDSAT, USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY

About Morro Bay



FAST FACTS

- **Population:** 10,234; Morro Bay is a coastal city in San Luis Obispo County, California. As of the 2010 census, the population of the city was 10,234, down from 10,350 at the 2000 census.
- **Morro Bay in Bloom Website:** www.MorroBayInBloom.org
- **Morro Bay Website:** www.morro-bay.ca.us
- **AIB Committee Chair Contact:** Walter Heath, 805-550-4492
- **City Staff Contact:** David Buckingham, City Manager, 805-772-6205, dbuckingham@morro-bay.ca.us
- **Mayor (and co-founder of Morro Bay in Bloom):** Jamie Irons, 805-550-6595, jirons@morro-bay.ca.us
- **City Area in Square Miles:** 10.3
- **Acres of Active Recreation:** 50.9
- **Acres of Passive Recreation:** 10.9
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Walter Heath, 805-550-4492

MORRO BAY HISTORY & DEMOGRAPHICS

- California's scenic Highway 1 runs through the city.
- The modern history of Morro Bay as a town began in 1864 when Franklin Riley built a home on land in the current downtown. Morro Bay incorporated as a city in 1964, mostly as a result of Pacific Gas & Electric Company's

- construction of a power plant in 1955.
- The power plant, which closed in 2014, is situated on 100 acres of prime coastal land.
- Morro Bay's annual city budget is approximately \$11.5 million. Transient occupancy taxes (a lodging tax paid by visitors) accounts for 20% of revenue.
- Morro Bay's economy has become more dependent on tourism since the closing of the power plant. Hospitality and retail sector employment comprises approximately 35% of total local employment.
- Recent demographic trends indicate Morro Bay is becoming more of a bedroom community for people who work in other cities throughout the county, mostly for those who work at the California Men's Colony, Atascadero State Hospital, California Polytechnic State University or Cuesta College, or at other businesses in the city of San Luis Obispo, which is enjoying growth in the information technology and software engineering sectors. The current population mix of Morro Bay is evenly split between retired people and people in their wage-earning years, a significant change that has taken place over the past 10 years.
- The commercial-fishing industry based in Morro Bay is a significant part of the economy. Morro Bay is one of 15 working fishing ports in California. Catch value has increased over the past 6 years after years of decline.

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Welcome!



Dear America in Bloom Judges,

On behalf of the Morro Bay community, I would like to welcome the judges from America in Bloom to our City. Our beautiful natural setting here on the Central Coast of California is bookended between the coastal mountain range and the Pacific Ocean. Blessed with such a spectacular backdrop, we have a special challenge to enhance our public spaces in ways that honor these gifts from nature.

An attractive community draws visitors and is a source of pride for local businesses and residents. Raising the aesthetic appeal of our city also attracts realtors and developers, enticing commercial development and providing appealing neighborhoods for families.

However, Morro Bay in Bloom is much more than just planting flowers to beautify our neighborhoods and business districts. Morro Bay in Bloom's vision includes increasing the number of attractive gathering places for our residents and focusing on environmental stewardship and the sustainability of our way of living which honors our community's fishing and agricultural heritage. Along with the visual beautification that Morro Bay in Bloom promotes, appropriate plant selection for our climate and best practices for conserving our water provide critically important benefits for our future.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation of Morro Bay in Bloom and all of our dedicated community beautification volunteers and organizations who tirelessly continue to build pride in our community. Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Jamie L. Irons
Mayor Jamie Irons
City of Morro Bay

★ Morro Bay

President's Message

Welcome to Morro Bay in Bloom!

Morro Bay in Bloom has experienced a year of considerable growth since our last Community Profile. Our volunteers, to whom I admiringly refer as **Bloomies**, are engaging their interests and designing projects that are significantly improving our community. The following project list indicates the breadth of our volunteers' interests and the merits of the America in Bloom program that facilitates their dynamism:

- **The planting of 50 Monterey cypress trees in November 2014 to restore a windbreak for overwintering Monarch butterflies** is part of a larger strategy to educate the public and to improve Monarch habitat. Members of **Morro Bay in Bloom's** Monarch butterfly working group were named as investigators in a study that will establish an experimental station in Morro Bay.
- **Showing the public that rainwater can be collected and stored for irrigation use** in an attractive manner was the impetus for applying for a grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program to install an operational rainwater-harvesting system and interpretive panel at the busiest thoroughfare/plaza in the city, Centennial Parkway. A local civil engineer provided the design, city staff provided the know-how, a **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteer** provided the concept design for the interpretive panel and other **Bloomies** are spreading the word on rainwater harvesting benefits.
- **One enterprising Bloomie decided that welcome signs do not fulfill their function unless they are seen.** She assembled a working group that designed colorful landscapes for the areas beneath five exist-

ing welcome signs and specified the drought-tolerant plants. She then personally walked the designs through the approval process, and the city council approved a modest budget to complete the project.

- **Bloomies are forming alliances with other civic-minded groups.** Two members of the heritage-preservation group led **Bloomies** and members of the Morro Bay Historical Society through an inventory of all of the interpretive signage the public sees as part of a larger strategy to commemorate significant events, places, and people of Morro Bay's history by means of interpretive panels strategically placed around the city.
- **The Morro Bay Surfboard Art Festival is a unique Morro Bay event.** It's not because this novel celebration of the surfboard art form was written about in the Los Angeles Times. It's not that one of the beneficiaries of the event, Project Surf Camp, fosters self-esteem and growth among people with special needs through water sports and play. It was the combined total of moments of wistful day-dreaming and appreciation elicited by the presence of art in ordinary places that typifies the Morro Bay experience.

The premise behind **Morro Bay in Bloom** is simple and shared by many organizations in our city. Our organization is a vehicle for people who want to improve their community. You can read about other projects, large and small, in this Community Profile. I feel privileged to be the one who gets to brag about what our volunteers do.



**BEAUTIFYING MORRO BAY
2 HOURS AT A TIME!**

The premise behind Morro Bay in Bloom is simple and shared by many organizations in our city. Our organization is a vehicle for people who want to improve their community.

WALTER HEATH
Morro Bay in Bloom President

Floral Displays

Municipal

- The Public Works Department has 11 volunteer groups active in its Adopt-A-Park program.
- **Morro Bay in Bloom (MBIB) volunteers** greatly improved the concrete planter and the adjacent planting bed at the top of Centennial Stairway. This project emerged from our Centennial Parkway Adopt-A-Park partnership with the Public Works Department to demonstrate the variety of colors provided by succulents. Fourteen months after planting, these succulents are providing abundant cuttings for propagation.
- **MBIB volunteers** have incorporated drought-tolerant color in the designs of “mini-landscapes” Bloomies are installing around municipal welcome signs at five locations. As one of the action-item outcomes of the *2015 Local Economic Action Plan (LEAP)*, the City Council approved funding in April, 2015, for **MBIB** to implement these designs.
- The Morro Bay Boulevard roundabout at one of the gateways to the city incorporates drought-tolerant color from bougainvillea and other plants.

The earth laughs in flowers.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Commercial

- **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** are rehabilitating the landscaping at the Visitor Center including the addition of floral displays. The project began with Bloomies removing high water-demand plantings (many were dying or dead) and 8 cubic yards of soil in order to make room for mulch. Next, **Bloomies** capped an ineffective and wasteful pop-up sprinkler system and replaced it with drip irrigation. Succulent plantings define the borders of planted areas and form a colorful collage in containers near the entrance to the Visitor Center. The extensive use of *Salvia* in the central planting bed provides a mass of color and attracts hummingbirds and butterflies.
- Coalesce Bookstore maintains a delightful courtyard where floral displays and bromeliads are mixed in a calming landscape design.

- Examples of colorful floral displays featuring drought-tolerant plantings and/or drip irrigation in commercial settings include:
 - Best Western El Rancho Inn, 2460 Main Street.
 - Dorn's Restaurant, 801 Market Street.
 - Garden Gallery, 680 Embarcadero.
 - The plaza outside Dolphin Shirt Company, 715 Embarcadero.
 - Beach House Bungalow Inn & Suites, 1050 Morro Avenue.

Residential Settings

- Examples of colorful floral displays featuring drought-tolerant plantings and/or drip irrigation in residential settings include:
- The residence at 448 Estero Avenue exhibits a wide selection of Mediterranean plants and flowers.



Floral Displays

- At 708 Cabrillo Place, a mature low water-impact garden is in place, showing the brilliance of succulents and drought-tolerant grasses.
- 3030 Beachcomber Drive features another collection of various succulent species.
- The garden at 751 Cabrillo Place consists almost entirely of native plants with seasonal floral displays.
- The garden at 305 Bernardo Avenue features drought-tolerant and flowering native plants.

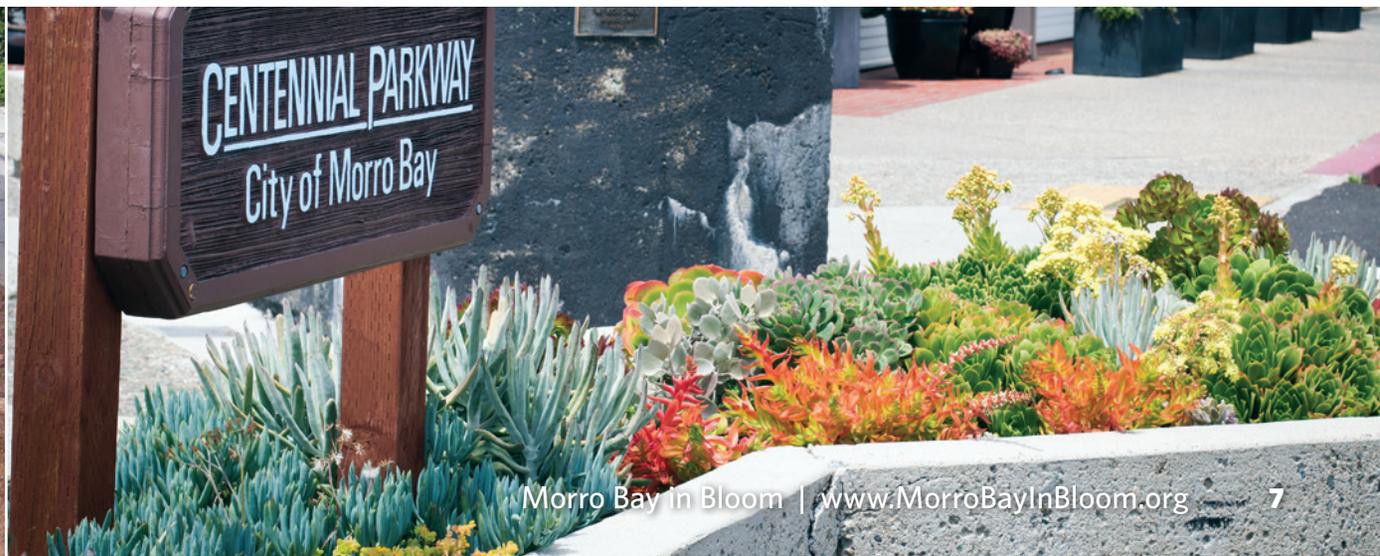
Community Involvement

- Morro Bay's Garden Club produces the annual "Dahlia Daze" event every September to showcase the official city flower. Seminars, an exhibit, and a juried flower show promote dahlias to the public. The 2014 event featured a parade and a Dahlia King and Queen.
- Students from the middle school, mentored by **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers**, planted dahlias in a small but prominent bed at the Visitor Center as a public-service project. The project will include a sign indicating that the dahlia is the city flower. 🌸

Adopt-A-Park: The Groups & Organizations Contributing

The City of Morro Bay Public Works Department has 11 groups or organizations involved in their Adopt-A-Park program, which helps get the community involved with the maintenance and upkeep of the parks located throughout the city.

Morro Bay in Bloom	Centennial Parkway
Morro Bay Guerrilla Gardening Club	Shasta Pocket Park
Rotary Club of Morro Bay	Morro Bay Boulevard Roundabout
Eco Rotary Club of Morro Bay	Bayshore Bluffs
The Garden Club	Shasta Pocket Park and Harbor Walk Entrance
Embarcadero Inn Staff	Mariner Park
Morro Bay Yacht Club	Tidelands Park
Teen Action Club	Lila Keiser Park
Morro Cove Homeowners Association	Morro Cove
Morro Bay Beautiful	Anchor Memorial Park
Morro Bay Pups	Jody Gianinni Family Dog Park



Landscaped Areas

Municipal

- The Public Works Department staff maintains 62 acres of parks within the city limits.
 - The Public Works Department management discontinued irrigation of ornamental turf while maintaining electronically-controlled irrigation of approximately 2 acres of turf playing fields.
 - **Bloomies**, under the direction of plant biologists, will be involved in the post-construction restoration of dune plant habitat following the July, 2015, completion of a bike/pedestrian bridge at the mouth of Morro Creek and boardwalk that will enable residents in northern Morro Bay to ride or walk safely to Morro Rock, the beaches and the dockside commercial/retail area (Embarcadero).
 - The trial installation of a small pop-up downtown gathering place (also known as a “parklet”) in December, 2014, is being evaluated and additional parklet locations are being discussed.
 - Smart irrigation controllers with operating weather-station feedback determine when irrigated areas of parks receive water.
- The Harbor Walk that stretches from a small park adjacent to the power-plant outfall to Morro Rock provides stunning views of the harbor to the south and of the native dunes and Morro Strand State Beach to the north. The Harbor Walk and the newly-completed boardwalk to the bike/pedestrian bridge are part of the California Coastal Trail and the Pacific Bicycle Trail networks. The Harbor Walk lies within 9 acres of Coleman Park, which is dedicated to the man who is credited with advocating for the groundwork of the post-World War II conversion from naval base to modern waterfront.
 - Morro Rock Beach lies immediately adjacent to Morro Rock, a registered state historic landmark and a designated bird sanctuary for the Peregrine falcon and other bird species. The Harbor Department staffs two lifeguard towers from Memorial Day until Labor Day on this beach, which is known for the rough ocean environment and sandy dunes that are characteristic of Northern California beaches.
 - Tidelands Park, at the southern end of the waterfront, is a picturesque picnic location with a nautically-themed play area that is popular with families. The park’s location, amenities and area (2 acres) has made it the traditional community gathering place for Fourth of July activities.
- North Point Park consists of 1.3 acres perched on a bluff that overlooks tide pools. A stairway connects the two areas, making North Point a popular destination at low tides. Wild flowers bloom each spring in the non-irrigated meadow.
 - Cloisters Park, on the former site of a historic hotel, features a preserved wetland and nature reserve. A boardwalk runs adjacent to wild dune habitat.
 - Bayshore Bluffs Park consists of 3.2 acres of natural meadow and maintained park space and features a pollinator garden planted by Girl Scouts.
 - City Park hosts Art in the Park, a showcase for hand-crafted arts and jewelry that is sponsored by the Morro Bay Art Association on Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day weekends.
 - Located in a densely-populated residential area, Monte Young Park features a children’s play area,



Landscaped Areas

picnicking areas, open space, a public restroom, and a unique set of tennis courts facing east/west.

- Del Mar Park is a nine-acre park in northern Morro Bay that has a panoramic view of Estero Bay. Del Mar Park features dog parks for large and small dogs, outdoor courts for basketball, tennis and pickle ball, a small amphitheater, children's play area, barbecue pits, picnic tables, a large meadow, and horseshoe pits.
- Lila Keiser Park is a ten-acre park named for the city councilmember who helped secure the land lease from Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Lila Keiser Park is home to many of the playing fields in Morro Bay, a covered picnic area and children's play area.
- Other waterfront parks include Anchor Memorial Park and Mariner Memorial Park, dedicated to those who lost their lives at sea.
- Centennial Parkway features one of two permanent, large-scale, outdoor chessboards in the U.S.A. The original set of chess pieces and Centennial Stairway are made of redwood salvaged from two dismantled city water tanks. Thousands pass through this

vital link between the dockside commercial/retail area (Embarcadero) and Market Street hotels.

Centennial Parkway, extending from water's edge up Centennial Stairway to Market Street, has been transformed by **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** through the Adopt-A-Park program. Drought-tolerant plantings near the public-dock outlook were installed and are maintained by Bloomies.

Morro Bay in Bloom was awarded a grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program for the installation of two rainwater-harvesting systems and interpretive signage at the restroom building. Bloomies removed invasive species from the hillside beneath Centennial Stairway, stabilized the hillside with jute gridding and, in partnership with city staff, installed drip irrigation line so that it will be ready for planting when water becomes available.

Centennial Parkway was opened to the public in 1975, designed as a pedestrian link between the

Points of Interest

BEACHES

- Coleman Beach, Coleman Park, 101 Coleman Drive
- Morro Beach, 200 Coleman Drive (northwest of Morro Rock)
- Morro Strand State Beach, Highway 1 & Yerba Buena Street
- No Name Beach, 200 Coleman Drive (south of Morro Rock)
- North Point Beach (pet-friendly), Highway 1 (between Morro Bay & Cayucos)
- Sandspit Beach, South of Morro Rock, across the bay

MUSEUMS

- Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street
- Morro Bay Estuary Center, 601 Embarcadero (2nd floor)
- Morro Bay Skateboard Museum, 601 Embarcadero
- Museum of Natural History (kids 16 & younger), 20 State Park Road

TRAILS

- Black Hill (3-mile trail), Morro Bay State Park, 201 State Park Road
- Cerro Cabrillo Peak (2.5-mile trail), Morro Bay State Park
- Cloister Walk (2-mile trail), Cloister Park, Highway 1 & San Jacinto
- Harbor Walk (0.5-mile trail), Morro Bay Harbor, 200 Coleman Drive

— Discover Morro Bay | www.MorroBayInBloom.org



Landscaped Areas

dockside commercial area (Embarcadero) and downtown. Between the top of Centennial Stairway and the downtown center at Morro Bay Boulevard and Main Street is a low-traffic, low development area that attracts neither pedestrians nor interest. Visitors travel up and down Centennial Stairway but rarely venture into downtown. **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** have proposed a landscaped pedestrian mall and history walk concept that will be part of the conversation regarding how to re-energize this area.

- Although the Morro Bay library is county-operated, the library property is owned by the City of Morro Bay. The library is a vital and vibrant cultural institution, having recently been remodeled after greater than \$500,000 was raised by residents. On all sides of the building and in its parking lot the library had planted areas, medians and borders that were overgrown, weedy and neglected. Due entirely to almost two years of effort by **Bloomies**, many of these areas are thriving following conversion to drip irrigation and replanting with drought-tolerant planting.

Commercial

Examples of well-landscaped areas featuring drought-tolerant plantings and/or drip irrigation in commercial settings include:

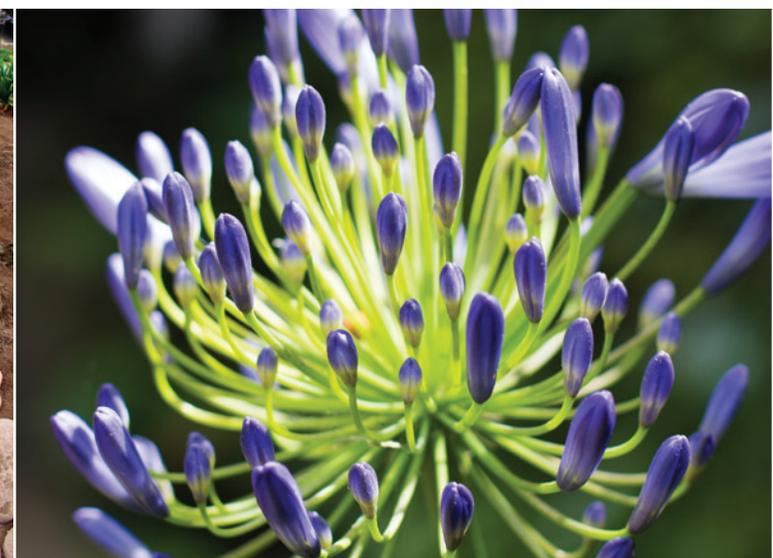
- Lemos Pet Supply, 1320 Main Street, is a new building with limited but appropriate landscaping that is drought tolerant.
- The garden behind Top Dog Coffee, 857 Main Street, uses container plantings to define seating areas.
- Morro Bay Visitor Center, 255 Morro Bay Boulevard: The planters, borders and a small bed at the Visitors' Center were irrigated by a wasteful pop-up sprinkler system. **Morro Bay in Bloom** transformed the site by removing excess soil, by converting the irrigation system to drip and by planting plants that attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
- Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 695 Harbor Street: Next door to the library, the Chamber of Commerce was also virtually neglected until **Morro Bay in Bloom** offered its services. **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** have planted, pulled weeds,

mulched, patched potholes and renovated irrigation at the Chamber.

- The plaza outside Dolphin Shirt Company, 715 Embarcadero.
- Beach House Bungalow Inn & Suites, 1050 Morro Avenue.

Residential

- The Morro Bay Chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) presents an annual Garden Tour that showcases local residential gardens.
- Examples of well-landscaped areas featuring drought-tolerant plantings and/or drip irrigation in residential settings include:
 - The residence at 448 Estero Avenue exhibits a wide selection of Mediterranean plants and flowers.
 - At 708 Cabrillo Place, a mature low water-impact garden is in place, showing the brilliance of succulents and drought-tolerant grasses.
 - 3030 Beachcomber Drive features another collection of various succulent species.



Landscaped Areas

- The garden at 751 Cabrillo Place consists almost entirely of native plants with seasonal floral displays.
- The garden at 305 Bernardo Avenue features drought-tolerant and flowering native plants.

Community Involvement

- The Public Works Department has arranged with community volunteer groups to assist with the maintenance of public parks via the Adopt-A-Park program. Collectively, this effort is a major boost to the appearance of Morro Bay's public spaces.
- "Flash" street-tree planting: 24 volunteers, including a large contingent of **Bloomies**, dug holes and properly planted 10 street trees in 90 minutes throughout the downtown core in November, 2014. The trees are being watered by the staff of nearby local businesses.
- In 2014, **Bloomies** were assisted in their efforts by AmeriCorps cadets, Grizzly Youth Academy cadets, members of the Morro Bay Teen Center and local families. 🌱

Make the Deserts Bloom!

This is the rallying cry for communities from Israel to Palm Springs. When human determination is catalyzed by water, deserts can indeed be made to bloom. Famously, areas of Phoenix became humid due to extensive irrigation despite being in one of the driest places in America.

But water is increasingly scarce in the Southwest, including Morro Bay. The city is in its fourth consecutive year of below normal rainfall, with about 6.5 inches to date, far below the 50-year average of 16-18 inches. The State Water Project, which is Morro Bay's primary source of potable water, will release less than 20% of nominal needs in 2015. On April 3, 2015, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) imposed a mandatory statewide 25% cut in municipal water use.

This is a core reality for living in Morro Bay. As long as the eastern Pacific high pressure ridge continues, and it is projected to continue, the storm track will stay north of its historic route, producing dry weather in the Southwest and cold, snowy winters in the Northeast. We might be experiencing the "new normal."

Water conservation considerations are part of every activity **Morro Bay in Bloom** undertakes, from what we plant, to how we irrigate (if at all), to

OUR FAVORITE DROUGHT-TOLERANT COASTAL PLANTS

- *Salvia greggii*, v. 'Hot Lips'
- *Salvia greggii*, v. 'Furman's Red'
- *Salvia elegans* (a.k.a. Pineapple Sage)
- *Verbena lilacina*
- *Erigeron glaucus* (a.k.a. Seaside Daisy)
- *Calandrinia spectabilis*
- *Melaleuca nesophila*
- *Leucadendron salignum*, v. 'Winter Red'

A CLOSER LOOK: FAST FACTS BY THE NUMBERS

4	6.5	25
Consecutive years of below normal rainfall for Morro Bay	Inches of rainfall to date (early May), far below average	Percent cut in municipal water imposed statewide

how we engage and educate our fellow residents in conservation tactics. At the community-wide level, the City is in the process of upgrading and re-certifying its desalination plant and has embarked on a project to replace the waste water treatment plant with a new water reclamation facility that will help to recharge groundwater and irrigate crops in local valleys.



Urban Forestry

Municipal

- Morro Bay's urban forest consists of 1,500 trees, 675 of which are in public right-of-way. Each tree that is in the public right-of-way has its GPS coordinates recorded in an inventory, and trees in non-residential areas are marked with a medallion.
- Public Works Department staff published an update of the *Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP)* in mid-2014. The *UFMP* includes descriptions of environmental conditions in different locations within the City and identifies appropriate tree species for those locations. See www.morro-bay.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/7702
- The Fire Department is coordinating with State Park biologists in a project to remove dead Monterey pines and replace them with a native species, Monterey cypress.

Commercial

- Newton Cultivation, a Morro Bay company, raised 50 Monterey cypress trees for the 50th anniversary tree planting.

- Wood chips from commercial tree-pruning operations are available to the public at no charge from piles situated at a highly-visible location.

Residential

- The Morro Bay Volunteer Tree Committee (MBVTC) worked with city staff to draft a "Landmark Tree" ordinance that was included in the City's first Urban Forest Management Program. The MBVTC then followed up with a separate proposal identifying approximately 27 trees that, in their professional opinion, qualified as Landmark Trees under the criteria set forth in the adopted ordinance. These nominations were supported by city staff and adopted by City Council as Landmark Trees. A Landmark Tree list and map are available to the public.

Community Involvement

- The development of the *UFMP* was a collaborative effort between City staff and the Morro Bay Volunteer Tree Committee, an *ad hoc* group that includes

landscapers, biologists and arborists. The Volunteer Tree Committee includes **Morro Bay in Bloom participants**.

- 50 trees for 50 years: The 50th anniversary committee planned the planting of 50 trees to mark the 50th anniversary of the City's incorporation in 1964. Monterey Cypress trees were raised from seeds by a Morro Bay company. **Morro Bay in Bloom** arranged with the superintendent of the Morro Bay Golf Course for the trees to be planted to provide a windbreak for the Eucalyptus grove that provides wintering habitat for Monarch butterflies. Bloomies, along with members of other civic organizations, met for an afternoon of education and planting.
- "Flash" street-tree planting: 24 volunteers, including a large contingent of **Bloomies**, dug holes and properly planted 10 street trees in 90 minutes throughout the downtown core in November, 2014. The trees are watered by the staff of nearby local businesses. 🌱



Urban Forestry

Volunteers Plant 50 Monterey Cypress Trees to Provide Windbreak for Monarch Grove

More than 50 volunteers showed up on November 1, 2014 to celebrate Morro Bay's 50th anniversary of incorporation as a city by planting 50 Monterey cypress trees at Morro Bay Golf Course. As the trees grow, they will provide windbreak for a grove of Eucalyptus trees where Monarch butterflies overwinter. Monarchs require still air in order to cluster for warmth. Planting holes were pre-dug by County parks staff under the watchful eye of an archaeologist and a Chumash tribe shaman. Volunteers were trained on proper tree-planting technique. The event concluded with a social mixer and Monarch butterfly education by a retired California Polytechnic State University biology professor and Monarch expert.

FAST FACTS

What: More than 50 volunteers planted 50 Monterey cypress trees to celebrate Morro Bay's 50th anniversary

When: November 1, 2014

Where: At Morro Bay Golf Course

Why: To provide windbreak for a grove of Eucalyptus trees where Monarch butterflies overwinter

How: Planting holes were pre-dug by County parks staff, volunteers trained on proper tree-planting technique



Environmental Efforts

Municipal

- The Public Works Department continues to educate residential and commercial water users on water conservation. (See judges' tour packet for examples.)
- Plans for construction of a new water reclamation facility proceed following selection of a site that is safely removed from the coast. The new plant design will be at least capable of adaptation to tertiary treatment sometime in the future, which will make the treated water available for irrigation.
- Proposals are expected by May 21, 2015, and complete conversion of all water customers' water meters from mechanical meters to digital "smart" meters is expected by December 2016. The new meters will measure water use more precisely and water usage data will be reported in gallons instead of units of 748 gallons/unit. Water usage data will be accessible to customers in real-time with remote access capability, enabling faster detection of plumbing leaks. The existing mechanical

- meters also leak, so replacement should further reduce overall water usage. Customer education will facilitate use of the data generated by the new water meters as a water-conservation tool.
- The Harbor Department's public showers and boat-rinse stations are metered with coin-operated systems. The free outdoor rinse showers at Morro Rock restroom were shut off.
 - All Harbor Department personnel are trained hazardous-material first responders. The Harbor Department has the oil-containment capability to contain the largest expected spill from Morro Bay vessels.
 - A new state-of-the-art Harbor Department oil-collection center (below) was built for the purpose of collection and recycling of used oil and filters, oil absorbent pads, used engine coolant and batteries.
 - The Fire Department has a pervious concrete pad for washing equipment and testing pumps that filters water and returns it to a 15,000-gallon cistern. Water from the cistern is used to irrigate site landscaping.

- The Public Works Department has installed 6 CalSense irrigation controllers with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system controls and weather station feedback that regulate irrigation of (among other areas) turf playing fields.
- Low-flow Sloan valves have been installed at every toilet and urinal where they would work in city-owned buildings
- All city-owned hand wash sinks have been retrofitted with touchless, 0.5 GPM flow faucets.
- Commercial kitchen water heaters at the Morro Bay Community Center have been replaced with tankless water heaters.
- Water heaters at all three public shower facilities have been replaced with tankless water heaters.
- The July 2015 completion of the bike/pedestrian bridge at the mouth of Morro Creek and the Harbor Walk extension will provide a much easier route for bicyclists and pedestrians on a four-mile route from northern Morro Bay to the waterfront (Embarcadero) and downtown.



Environmental Efforts

- The City of Morro Bay is cooperating with San Luis Obispo County officials to designate and properly mark city streets in northern Morro Bay as bike routes to provide the critical segment of a continuous bicycle-friendly trail between Morro Bay and Cayucos, the next town north of Morro Bay.
- Morro Bay was named a Bicycle Friendly City by the League of American Bicyclists in November 2014.
- In order to provide safe bicycle crossing of Atascadero Road in front of the high school, a grant was obtained to provide an additional crosswalk, green painted bike lanes and user-activated flashing crosswalk lights. Completed in 2015.
- Local fixed route bus service is provided throughout the city. Dial-A-Ride service offers curb-to-curb transportation for Morro Bay residents by arrangement.
- The Police Department has a Bicycle Patrol Unit.
- The Public Works Department has retrofitted 110 path fixtures, parking lot fixtures, building wall

- packs, flagpole lights and restroom fixtures with 13W & 20W LED fixtures. The replaced fixtures were 70, 100, 150 and 400 watt metal halide and high pressure sodium fixtures. All of the old fixtures were sent to recycling for proper disposal.
- A 5.98 kW photovoltaic system was installed in 2014 at Rockies Teen Center.
- Greater than 1200 34-watt fluorescent tube lamps in city buildings were changed to 28-watt fluorescent tube lamps.
- All work-station surge protectors have been replaced with motion sensitive surge protectors that turn off electronics when not in use.
- Several fully programmable, internet-accessible thermostats have been installed in city offices.
- 35 incandescent and fluorescent exit signs in city-owned facilities have been replaced with LED fixtures.
- City Council approved the purchase of photovoltaic systems for our Community Center, the Veteran's Memorial Building, and the Police Station. Upgrades were made to the HVAC systems at the Harbor

Patrol, Recreation Department, Police Department, City Hall, and other Morro Bay office buildings through a low interest California Energy Commission loan program.

- Every address receives weekly curbside pickup of recyclables, compostable waste and garbage.
- Free hazardous waste and electronics disposal is available every Saturday at a recycling facility on the waste-water treatment plant property.
- The city chips pruning waste and makes the chips available free-of-charge to the public
- City energy conservation measures include solar-energy trash compactors in public places, solar panels and LED lighting.
- Dune restoration with native plants continues at Morro Strand State Beach, which lies within the city limits.
- The general plan and local coastal plan update processes will engage hundreds of residents on environmental, land use, housing, open space, conservation, noise, safety and transportation issues.



Environmental Efforts

Commercial

- Commercial recycle-for-cash outlets, distinct from curbside recyclables pickup, are available at two locations.
- The rainwater catchment system at Estero Community Garden was installed at cost by local contractors.
- Local stores have not provided plastic shopping bags since 2012. Paper bags cost \$0.10.
- Shine Café sends its food waste to a local pig farm.
- Spencer's Market granted permission for the use of the lot adjacent to their store to be developed by a volunteer group as a pocket park. The pocket park is irrigated by a city-permitted greywater system that is fed by the store's produce-wash station.

Residential

- A residential greywater system at 448 Estero uses shower, laundry and dish water to irrigate the garden.
- Rainwater catchment systems at 2230 Hemlock and 220 Andros supplement potable water for irrigation.

Community Involvement

- An annual city-wide yard sale in April reduces waste and enables re-use of items. The 2015 event attracted 5,000-8,000 out-of-town guests.
- **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** are managing the installation of an 800-gallon rainwater harvesting system at Centennial Parkway. This project is a cooperative community involvement effort funded by a grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), led by MBIB, with the full partnership of the City of Morro Bay. This project emphasizes education, so will include an interpretive panel explaining how small-scale rainwater harvesting works, with QR codes to link smartphone users to more complete information. **Bloomies** will conduct educational outreach to the community, citing this project as an example that can be scaled to suit individual buildings.
- **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** conducted a hands-on, water-wise gardening curriculum during Discovery Days at the elementary school.

Students designed and planted individual succulent dish gardens and planted large succulent dish gardens for the rest of the school community to enjoy.

- Recently, as many as 10,000 Monarch butterflies have wintered in a Eucalyptus grove on the Morro Bay Golf Course that once held as many as 60,000. The habitat suffers due to a loss of wind-sheltering trees due to pine pitch canker.

Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers initiated a cooperative project with a retired California Polytechnic State University biologist, the golf course superintendent and a local civil engineer to renovate and restore the habitat and also to provide public education. This cooperative community project began with the planting of 50 Monterey Cypress trees and will eventually include an interpretive area near the grove, a sheltered path across the golf course for visitors, and signage. In the current phase, a local civil engineer is performing the preliminary analysis for the sheltered walkway on a *pro bono* basis, a prerequisite for seeking grant funding.



Environmental Efforts

- **Morro Bay in Bloom** was recently named to collect data for a study that will be implemented by Cal Poly professor Francis Villablanca. **Bloomies** will be collecting data from October 2015 until March 2016 as part of a study of the effects of native and non-native milkweed species feeding on the mortality of Monarch butterflies.
- Eelgrass is the foundation plant of the Morro Bay Estuary. It is the source of a rich variety of life, an incubator of food sources for many organisms, and the direct food source for other species, including the Brant goose. Intertidal eelgrass habitat has shrunk dramatically over the past 10 years, so the MBNEP began a restoration program that relies heavily on volunteer participation. Greater than 200 trained volunteers, including 20+ **Bloomies**, bundled healthy bare root transplants that were harvested from successful beds in the estuary during 25 two-hour shifts over five days in August 2014. Trained volunteer divers planted trays of transplants very soon after bundling in 45 pilot plots

over 2.2 acres. A total of 826 volunteer hours were expended in the 2014 effort.

- A greenbelt committee was formed as a result of the *Local Economic Action Plan (LEAP)* process to discover and recommend ways to add to our greenbelt. Potential benefits include increased property values, recreational opportunities, trails, preserved agricultural operations, natural resources (water, energy, timber, carbon credits), habitat restoration, nature preserves, flood management and reduced runoff.
- The city manager has asked the Citizens' Bicycle Committee to submit a request for bicycle racks, including type and location, to "dramatically improve" bicycle parking. In 2015, ten bicycle racks with a total capacity of 32 bicycles are being installed, primarily in the downtown business district.
- The annual Winter Bird Festival, produced entirely by volunteers, raises awareness of the area's unique ecosystem. The Winter Bird Festival celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2016 and remains of the most

popular bird festivals on the west coast of North America.

- The Estero Bay Community Garden enables residents to grow their own produce. The community garden is proud of its rainwater-harvesting system that was completed with in-kind contributions from local contractors.
- The Public Works Department, Morro Bay National Estuary Program and California State Parks partner with volunteers to replenish the supply of mutt mitts at 14 city parks and 9 state-park locations. Greater than 200,000 mutt mitts were made available to the public at city parks alone during 2014.
- ECO Rotary Club presented their 3rd annual ECO Fair for environmental awareness during which volunteer and community organizations meet the public.
- The Marine Mammal Center and Pacific Wildlife Care, staffed mostly by volunteers, have extensive wildlife rehabilitation facilities on the power-plant property. 🌱



Heritage Preservation

Municipal

- The City of Morro Bay is partnering with volunteers of the Central Coast Maritime Museum Association to develop a suitable site for a Morro Bay Maritime Interpretive Center.

Commercial

- Central Coast Music, 365 Morro Bay Boulevard. This store was, at one time, a theater, dance hall and the first movie house in Morro Bay. Elements of the theater, including the stage and the projection booth, have been preserved.
- Morro Bay Library Mural, 625 Harbor Street. Installed in 1985 by dozens of volunteers under the direction of mural designer and tile artist Peter Ladochy, missing tiles have been replaced on several occasions by volunteer crews.
- Ramos Gallery, 407 Morro Bay Boulevard. This building was a church and the stained-glass windows at the rear of the building can still be seen.
- Bayshore Realty, 560 Morro Bay Boulevard. This building was originally built as a home for the par-

ents of Edward Caccia, who purchased the entire block of Morro Bay Boulevard from Shasta to Napa Streets in 1917 for \$2,500.

- Ocean View Garage, 936 Main Street. This garage was restored by Ron McIntosh, founder of the Cruisin' Morro Bay Car Show.

Residential

- Criddle House, 2738 Main Street. A house built in the 1940s by a quarry worker, Art Criddle, from stones quarried from Morro Rock.
- Castle Adobe, 1600 Preston Lane. An adobe house that was built in 1930 by Miles Castle using a pressed-earth process. The home is still owned and occupied by the Castle family.
- Kilpatrick House, 340 Olive Street. Built in 1929 by plein air artist Aaron Kilpatrick.
- Stirling House, 370 Olive (picture included below). Originally, this house was a hunting lodge.
- 900 Ridgeway. Purchased in 1928 by artist A. Harold Knott and his wife Rachel. The home is still owned by the Knott family.

Community Involvement

- A **Morro Bay in Bloom** volunteer initiated the Hidden History Project as a cooperative venture with members of the Morro Bay Historical Society and the Recreation Department. The purpose is to collect information about forgotten but significant elements of Morro Bay's history and to re-introduce these people, events and topics to residents and visitors by means of interpretive panels installed where people gather and circulate.
- Volunteers with the Central Coast Maritime Museum Association are restoring a tugboat, the *Alma*, that is eligible for listing on the U.S. Department of Interior's National Register of Historic Places. The *Alma* gained notoriety when, on the morning of December 23, 1941, under the command of Merle Molinari of Cayucos, she headed north toward Point Piedras Blancas and rescued crew members of the Union Oil tanker *Montebello*, which had been torpedoed and sunk earlier that morning by a Japanese submarine.



Heritage Preservation

- An historic painting in Morro Bay is awaiting a recovery and restoration effort. The painting is by Charles Hoxsey "Robby" Robinson (1862-1945), who came west to Morro Bay to be the art director of a Works Progress Administration recreation center in Morro Bay, teaching art classes during the Great Depression. The painting was hung in the cafeteria/multi-purpose room of what was Morro Elementary School, now the sanctuary of Shoreline Calvary Church. The effort to acquire the painting from San Luis Coastal School District and raise funds to conserve it is just beginning.
- In order to ensure that the Hidden History project does not duplicate existing interpretive panels, **Morro Bay in Bloom** and Historical Society volunteers wanted to review existing panels. At the same time, the City was interested in a more complete inventory to assist in identifying signs needing maintenance or replacement. Therefore, the volunteers donated time and effort to provide the complete inventory to the City, with photos and descriptions of every public sign, public art and murals.

First Hand Account of Morro Bay Library Mural Installation

We started in July 1985, meeting at the Veterans Hall and the Recreation Building, whichever we could get, three times a week. [Mural designer] Peter Ladochy had received a gift of glass tiles from a Los Angeles firm, which were enough to do the whole wall ... Setting tile became a way of life for many of us, all summer and fall.

There were 16 to 24 people helping with this project, and we could refer to an approximately two-foot long miniature of the design. The pattern in full size was drawn on brown paper laid out on the floor, and then cut into pieces like jigsaw puzzle pieces which Peter then distributed to the workers ...

As more joined the workshops, a large percentage of the people of Morro Bay participated. Some helped to make paste, cooking it at home: Rabbitskin glue, a white glue made with water and wheat flour.

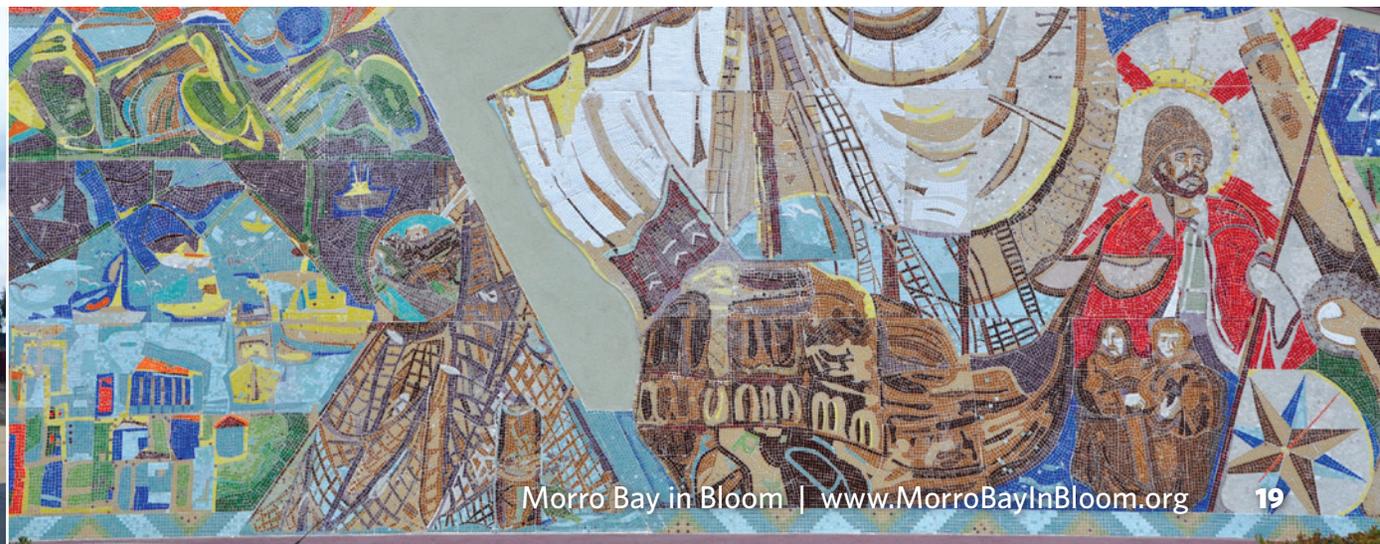
In the Community Room of the Library (the library was not open yet), the pieces were laid out on the floor as they were completed. Everyone was amazed as the pattern grew. It could be seen in its true colors in reverse, as the tile was glass.

In late fall, the scaffolding was in place and the mural started to go up on the west wall, while people were still working on the pieces for the other end. We were heading for the opening date of the library, December 21.

— *Written first-hand account of Morro Bay Library mural installation by Margaret Foster.*

- A self-guided mural-walk tour map was developed by a **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteer** and includes

information about each mural. The mural-walk tour map will be available at the Visitor Center and will be downloadable at www.morrobay.org.



Overall Impression

Municipal

- Let Us Know: This city-government website feature enables residents to report concerns or to make requests to virtually every city department. www.morro-bay.ca.us/RequestTracker.aspx
- The Fire Department enforces weed suppression measures enacted by city ordinance.
- The Police Department actively implements Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies. For example, police officers encourage building owners to plant shrubs in front of blank walls to discourage graffiti.
- The Police Department implemented a mobile-phone application in April, 2015, enabling citizens to notify police of crime tips, including photos. The Police Department receives location information with the photo and the sender's phone number.
- Police officers carry graffiti wipes that remove marks made by spray paint, permanent-marker ink, crayon, ballpoint-pen ink, etc.
- An active partnership exists among city departments, Morro Bay National Estuary Program staff

and volunteers to restock 14 mutt-mitt dispensers with greater than 200,000 mutt mitts each year for removal of dog waste by their owners.

- The Public Works Department is partnering with **Morro Bay in Bloom** and the PTA of Del Mar Elementary School to develop traffic-calming solutions for the routes to and from school, including a joint project of **Morro Bay in Bloom**, the school community and neighbors to paint a mural on the pavement of one of the busiest intersections.
- All new waterfront (Embarcadero) development must include coastal access for the public, including locations for viewing, public walkways and at least one public boat dock. Permitted developments frequently include public restrooms, recycling containers, interpretive signage and public art.
- The Harbor Department installed a "pelican proof" dumpster at the fish-cleaning station with signage addressing why pelicans should not be fed.
- A part-time Harbor Department employee tends

to waterfront trash receptacles, keeping them neat, clean and emptied between scheduled trash pick-ups.

Commercial

- Red-flowering Eucalyptus trees in the downtown business district have been lighted to enhance the streetscape and improve shoppers' experiences. In April 2015, **Bloomies** joined Morro Rotary and EcoRotary volunteers to replace lights and repair electrical boxes as needed. **Bloomies** weeded and removed debris from the tree wells and planted succulents propagated from cuttings. The Morro Bay Merchants' Association paid for the lights.
- The Morro Bay Merchants' Association and **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** are discussing additional beautification of the tree wells along Morro Bay Boulevard and Main Street.
- The Guerrilla Gardening Club has a commercial business that provides zero-waste support to large events to reduce the amount of trash that goes to the landfill, to ensure recycling, and to reduce water and energy use.



Overall Impression

Residential

- The local waste-management company offers Spring Cleanup special pickups of large items during the week following the city-wide yard sale.

Community Involvement

- The Morro Bay Surfboard Art Festival, produced by **Morro Bay in Bloom**, is a novel public-art exhibit in its second year based on sustainable living and adaptive, artistic re-use of objects. Objects of art are created from surfboards that are no longer in regular use and exhibited at a free public exhibition at sponsoring businesses throughout Morro Bay from October 3 to November 2, 2015. The art will be auctioned for charity on November 7 at a gala event at the Morro Bay Golf Course.
- Civic beautification, historical preservation and visual art organizations in Morro Bay are meeting as a group at the initiation of **Morro Bay in Bloom** for the purpose of identifying projects that would benefit from collaboration. The fledgling group has adopted the name "Citizens' Beautification and

Heritage Committee."

- Two weekly farmers' markets, on Thursday and Saturday afternoons all year long, feature local produce, local-made food products and crafts.
- 56 miles of coastline and creeks were cleaned up on September 20th, 2014, at the 30th Annual Coastal Cleanup Day, including approximately 4 miles of the city's coastline. 1,129 volunteers participated countywide. 3,685 pounds of trash was picked up. The event's organizers encouraged participants to bring their own reusable containers so that the event will eventually become zero-waste.
- The Cruisin' Morro Bay Car Show, produced by a volunteer steering group and the Rotary Club of Morro Bay, is a free classic and rare car show that spans several blocks of Morro Bay Boulevard every May.
- The Lighted Boat Parade is a winter-season fixture every December drawing thousands of residents and visitors. This event is produced by volunteers.
- The Kite Festival is a colorful, volunteer-produced

- spectacle featuring amateur and professional kite flyers on the beach in spring. Morro Bay's spring wind is ideal for kite-flying. The 2015 event featured carnival rides. www.morrobaykitefestival.org
- Bands on the Run is a novel community fundraiser for Morro Bay High School music programs that features a half-marathon, 5K and 10K runs with musical entertainment.
- The "Stranded in Morro Bay" vintage trailer rally is in its third year as an event of the Central Coast Natural History Association, a volunteer fundraising organization for programs and amenities for local state parks, including the only natural history museum in the state-park system. The event features wine and food tasting, a craft show and concert.
- The Avocado and Margarita Festival is a popular event produced by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. The proceeds from food sold by Morro Bay non-profit organizations at this event provides operating funds for an entire year for some local non-profits. 🌱



Best Idea

The period since the last Community Profile was published has been one of growth for Morro Bay and for **Morro Bay in Bloom**. The following brilliant ideas, any one of which could qualify as a “best idea,” represent projects that will have significant impacts on the quality of life in Morro Bay.

Bike/Pedestrian Bridge: A sustained community effort was required to achieve a transportation route connecting northern and southern Morro Bay that bicyclists and pedestrians of all physical abilities can safely use. Brilliant community organization by the Citizens’ Bicycle Committee was welcomed by the Public Works Department and transportation grants were sought and won.

The project, which is under construction as of this writing, includes a 1500-foot extension of the pedestrian boardwalk that will connect with the Harbor Walk and a distinct 2,200-foot Class I bike path. A 130-foot long, 12.5-foot wide, clear-span pedestrian

and bicycle bridge over Morro Creek will connect northern Morro Bay to the Harbor Walk and waterfront.

The bridge is designed to be pre-fabricated and pre-engineered to span the creek without the need for support structures within the creek bed. The northern bridge abutment required excavation within the top of the Morro Creek bank, but pile driving will not be required. The bridge and boardwalk is expected to be completed by July 4, 2015.

Hidden History Project: An innovative concept that will bring elements of Morro Bay’s history into loca-

tions where the public gathers has the potential of becoming a creative place-making project in its own right. For the time being, the Hidden History Project is one of **Morro Bay in Bloom’s** most popular projects that also is being enjoyed by members of the Morro Bay Historical Society.

Rainwater Harvesting System Demonstration: The collection and storage of rain water for irrigation use has a triple benefit to consumers because it increases the supply of available water and decreases usage of conventional, paid sources of water. And, it’s free! An inch of rainfall falling on a 1,000-square foot roof in a 24-hour period will collect 600 gallons of water.

Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers proposed the installation of an operational rainwater harvesting, storage, and dispensing system in an area that receives a lot of foot traffic to show the public a simple and effective system and to encourage policy makers to develop incentives that will make more home and business installations possible.



Mural Walking Tour: Developed by a **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteer**, the mural-walking tour is a one-hour slice of Morro Bay public-art history that also facilitates a basic tour of the sights in our city. Visitor Center staff is pleased to have something to offer guests who come to them with an hour of sight-seeing to spare.

Conversions to Drip Irrigation: When operating properly, drip irrigation delivers water exclusively to the root zone of individual plants. Sprinkler irrigation is, at best, 40-50% efficient due to water lost because of evaporation and non-specific application. **Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers** played a significant role in converting two sites at which we regularly work from sprinkler irrigation to drip irrigation during late 2014-early 2015. **Bloomies** conducted the entire conversion process at one of these sites, the Visitor Center, and provided a lot of assistance for the conversion at the Library. **Bloomies** also performed major repairs to the irrigation system at the Chamber of Commerce. 🌱

Surfboard Art Festival: By the People and For the People!

The call went out as it does when a good swell is up. Mayor Jamie Irons chatted up the idea of an exhibition of surfboard art comprised of pieces from individual private collections. The event morphed from that first swell, cascading into a celebration of original expressions by artists of all ages and influences, including the fourth-grade class of Del Mar Elementary School. A Surfboard Art Festival by and for the people!

The Morro Bay Surfboard Art Festival became a community's passion. Old, used surfboards were gathered in early 2014 and presented to artists who then spread the word that something novel and fun was happening in Morro Bay. The artists prepped their boards for paint or other media, many for the first time in their artistic lives.

There was a vision. A free, public art exhibit of pieces that could be discovered where people move about in their daily lives. Instantaneous inspiration placed in everyday places. It would be, treasured moment by treasured moment, a beneficial interlude that everyone could experience, much as Morro Bay can be experienced as a place.



Morro Bay's Tourism Business Improvement District Board liked the idea, awarded a grant for publicity, Project Surf Camp was added as a beneficiary, and sponsors made a financial commitment to the success of the event.

The unveiling event at Forever Stoked Gallery was magical. The exhibit was received enthusiastically by sponsors and viewers. It was a labor of love even while it was harrowingly scary. We feel it's all worth doing again in 2015.





Beautifying Morro Bay 2 hours at a time!



MorroBayInBloom.org

P.O. BOX 782, MORRO BAY, CA 93443 | MORROBAYINBLOOM@GMAIL.COM

