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Contact: Janice Wolf  
(805) 543-2323

**2009 Environmental Award Winners to be Honored at Botanical Gardens**

*Injured seabirds, an elfin forest, an historic adobe – all saved and protected by this year's winners*

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA—Three individuals will be honored by the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation's (SLOCCF) 8<sup>th</sup> annual Environmental Awards in a special ceremony to be held on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This year's winners are recognized for their achievements in and contributions to the local environment in three distinct categories: Environmental Achievement of the Year, Sustained Environmental Contribution, and Environmental Initiative.

The top honor for 2009 goes to Herb Kandel, winner of the Environmental Achievement of the Year for his successful efforts to permanently protect the historic 129-acre landscape surrounding the Dana Adobe in Nipomo. This complex transaction required Kandel to arrange private interim financing from local philanthropists, develop strategic partnerships, and prepare a key grant. Working with the Land Conservancy of SLO County, the County Parks Department, and the Board of Supervisors, Kandel generated a vision of the Adobe as a local historical park. "He even took his vision to Sacramento to personally steward the grant proposal to the California Cultural and Historic Endowment," said his nominators. With interpretive education as just one of its uses, the Dana Adobe Historic Park is one of only a handful of remaining adobe structures in the county; and it's the first time in this county that a substantial amount of the historic surrounding landscape has also been preserved. "Without Herb," the nominees continued, "the project would not have happened."

The award for Sustained Environmental Contribution went to Pete Sarafian for his tireless work as Conservation Chair of the Los Osos/Morro Bay chapter of SWAP (Small Wilderness Area Preservation). In that capacity, Sarafian implements the Adopt-A-Park contract with the San Luis Obispo County Parks to act as stewards of the 90-acre El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Reserve in Los Osos. For more than a decade, Sarafian has raised thousands of dollars in grant money, hired workers to help him clear destructive plant species and then reseed with native vegetation, attended state and local classes, and written comprehensive reports. For SWAP alone, Sarafian gives over 500 hours a year in service to this uniquely beautiful locale.

For her unique and innovative solution to the tragedy of seabirds injured and killed by man-made fishing materials and over-feeding, Shelby S. Bohl won this year's Environmental Initiative Award.

Recognizing the disconnect between would-be rescuers of injured seabirds and those who know how to help them, Bohl founded PierWatch, an outreach and educational group that bridges that gap. Through posted signs, educational brochures, and strong relationships with City, Port, and County officials, Bohl gives tourists and locals alike the information they need to rescue injured sea life and call the experts – local animal rescue groups. Bohl’s efforts, which includes doing most of the foundational work herself at her own expense, have resulted in reduced seabird injuries and deaths, the education of tens of thousands, improved human health (signage discourages feeding wildlife which reduces bird waste on piers), and reduced city costs for cleanup and 911 calls.

Each recipient of this year’s Environmental Awards will receive \$2000 and will be feted at a special event to be held at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens on Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Keynote speaker Nita Vail, CEO of the California Rangeland Trust, will open the ceremony. Vail earned her B.A. in Agricultural Business Management from Cal Poly, and her MBA from the University of Santa Clara, Institute of Agriculture. She is a fourth generation rancher who was appointed by Governor Wilson in 1994 to serve as Assistant Secretary of Agricultural and Environmental Policy for the Department of Food and Agriculture.

The awards ceremony is open to the public. For more information or to attend the event, contact the Community Foundation at (805) 543-2323 or log on to [www.slocf.org](http://www.slocf.org).

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