

You picked them! Now, read all about the winners ... inside!

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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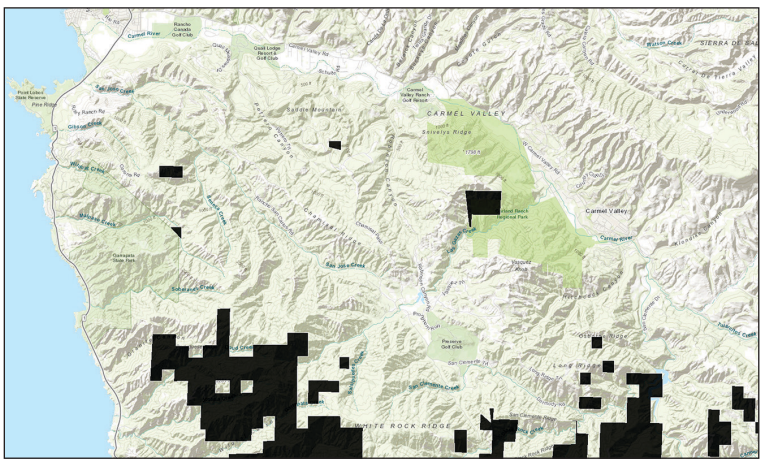
TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

## BLM designations raise concerns about fracking

■ Large areas of county listed for possible oil exploration

By CHRIS COUNTS

WITH THE federal government announcing Oct. 4 that more than 720,000 acres of federal land in Central California, including the Monterey County coast, are open for possible oil and gas exploration and development,



MAP/BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

This map, with Point Lobos at the upper left and Carmel Valley at the top, shows some the portions of Monterey County that have been opened up for possible oil and gas leasing by the federal government. Actually producing oil on one of them is another story, however.

could the petroleum industry soon set up shop in Big Sur and Carmel Valley?

While a federal official told The Pine Cone it is highly unlikely that such activity would ever happen in those scenic areas, an attorney for a nonprofit environmental group said people should be worried.

Meanwhile, a map produced by the Bureau of Land Management shows a large patchwork of steep land located just north of residential neighborhoods in Palo Colorado Canyon in Big Sur that someone in the petroleum industry could potentially lease — although BLM spokesperson Serena Baker suggested oil and gas development won't happen there.

It's also unclear whether oil exists beneath the Santa Lucia mountain range.

"Most new oil and gas development is anticipated to occur in or near existing oil fields in Fresno County," Baker said.

Baker said any proposal to extract oil or gas would have to pass a thorough environmental review, which would seem nearly impossible given the area's steep topography, rich flora and fauna, presence of threatened or endangered plants and animals, and devoted environmental activists.

"This decision does not authorize any actual drilling for exploration or development of oil and gas resources," she explained. "Any future proposals for leasing

See **OIL** page 15A

## Anti-Cal Am group asks state board to block desal plant

By KELLY NIX

ACTIVISTS FIGHTING California American Water's proposed desalination plant stepped up their efforts to block the plant this week by sending the California Coastal Commission a list of the names of 28 elected officials they say oppose the \$329 million project, which would provide the Monterey Peninsula with a longterm, drought-proof water supply.

On Monday, anti-Cal Am group Public Water Now also held a press conference at Colton Hall in Monterey with some of the officials speaking out against the Cal Am desal project, which coastal commissioners are expected to decide on at a meeting in November in Half Moon Bay.

The one-page letter to the commission — which contains the names of many who have long fought Cal Am and the desal plant — contends that the project would harm the environment and impact groundwater supplies. It also says the Peninsula can get all the water it needs by reclaiming wastewater.

See **DESAL** page 16A

## CARMEL COUNCILMAN JOINS ANTI-DESAL EFFORT

By MARY SCHLEY

THE ONLY public official from Carmel to sign a letter urging the California Coastal Commission not to approve a permit for Cal Am's proposed desalination plant is city councilman Jeff Baron, who said Tuesday he believes a project that will turn wastewater into drinking water will cost less and provide enough for Monterey Peninsula residents and business owners.

"We have less expensive sources for the amount of water that we need," he said.

Baron based his decision in part on Monterey Peninsula Water Management District general manager David Stoldt's recent report concluding the water-reclamation project known as Pure Water Monterey could be expanded to meet the Peninsula's long-term water needs.

See **BARON** page 17A

## LEGENDARY COACH RETURNS TO CHS DIAMOND

By DENNIS TAYLOR

HIS SON, Nicholas, was 5 years old, ready to play tee ball, and twin daughters Peyton and Keegan were 3 when Mike Kelly stepped down as Carmel High's varsity baseball coach after the 2007 season.

The coach had always preached "family first" to his players, and it was time to walk the talk, set an example, and do what was right for his family. He also had an insurance business to run.

But walking away wasn't easy. How could it be? In 14 seasons as head coach of the Padres, Kelly and his teams had compiled a win-loss record of 342-88, winning 12 consecutive league titles, and seven Central Coast Section championships. His 1996 team, which went 29-2, was ranked No. 1 in California at the Division 2 level, No. 5 overall.

"Yeah, I had withdrawal pains — big time," Kelly admitted. "I was just wishing at the time that there could be 28 hours in a day, instead of 24."

Those hours haven't changed, but Kelly's situation has: His kids are in their late teens and the business is on solid footing, which is why Kelly officially accepted an offer this week to return as head coach of one of the most successful high school baseball programs in California history.

"His resume kind of speaks for itself," said Carmel athletic director Golden Anderson, who played for Kelly's first two title teams in '96 and '97. "My own experience with Mike as a player was that he was great at putting people in a position to be successful. That's a philosophy I also carry with me as a coach today."

A smooth handoff

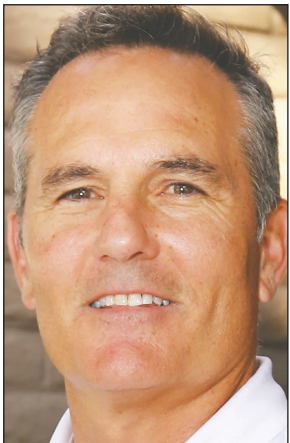
The opportunity for Kelly to return was created in June when Randall Bispo stepped down after coaching the Padres for 12 seasons, during which he won 229 games and

six league titles. Bispo's teams qualified for the postseason 11 times and reached the CCS finals in 2014.

"Randall and (assistant coach) Cody Torres did a great job and left the program in really good shape," Kelly said. "It's not like stepping into a situation where I have to start from scratch, and I'm very appreciative of that. It's going to be a very smooth handoff."

Indeed, Kelly appears to be positioned to pick up where he left off. He'll inherit about a dozen veterans of a team that was 19-9 overall, including an 18-3 record in the Mission Division of the Pacific Coast Athletic League. Included on that roster are cousins Rowan and Jabin Trosky, and J.T. Byrne — all first-team all-division infielders. Another

See **BASEBALL** page 16A



Mike Kelly

## Tiny owl rescued from car dealer's service bay

By KELLY NIX

A BURROWING owl that was trapped inside a Seaside automotive dealership for two days was rescued by SPCA for Monterey County Saturday, the nonprofit reported this week.

The small owl flew inside the service department of Val Strough Honda last week and couldn't get himself out. The SPCA was contacted and came to the bird's rescue by capturing it and treating it for mild dehydration. Spokeswoman Beth Brookhouser said the bird was exhausted by the time he was caught on Oct. 19.

"We took him back to our Wildlife Rescue Center to examine him," Brookhouser told The Pine Cone. "Thankfully, he was healthy. He was just a little dehydrated and exhausted after going two days without eating. After receiving subcutaneous fluids and a snack, he was ready to go, so we released him that same day."

A 'much better place'

The bird was released near Seaside State Beach, where such burrowing owls have been seen, and which is a "much better place for an owl," Brookhouser said.

Burrowing owls are small, long-legged birds whose diet mostly consists of bugs and small mammals. The species has "become rare" in areas because of loss of habitat, according to the Audubon Society.

"Cowboys sometimes called these owls 'howdy birds' because they seemed to nod in greeting from the entrances to their burrows in prairie-dog towns," the organization says.



PHOTO/COURTESY SPCA

He looks nervous but this little owl was probably a lot happier after he was freed from a car dealership service building last week.