



Dear Members:

I am saddened to tell you that the Morro Bay Open Space Alliance (MBOSA) Board has decided to slowly shut down the organization over the next year or so. There's no lack of useful and important things for us to do to help preserve open space, but the Board is tired: many of us have been serving for far longer than our bylaws permit.

Current Board members will remain formally on the Board as we wind down the organization, ready to begin working again if a clear and effective project is available. To keep going, the organization needs a new Chair and new Board members who will contribute their time and talents to the important projects we could be doing.

The rest of this letter is about the condition of the organization and our plans for closing down. I hope you will read it all. If it prompts you to want to become active on the Board, to actually commit some time to important projects and activities, please let us know! Our decision is not final until about a year from now, and you may be the reason we continue.

A Short History of MBOSA

In 2015 the City of Morro Bay held a public workshop to identify the policies and activities its citizens were most interested in. The idea was to find out where people wanted to put resources.

One of the most favored ideas was to establish and keep open space in and around the City, including a green belt. We are lucky in that so much of our town already borders on open space such as the State Park, the bay and ocean, and the hills that surround us but are hard (if not impossible) to develop.

A few of us started meeting to figure out how and if we could create an organization to achieve this goal. We had good role models in the Cayucos Land Conservancy and the Land Conservancy of SLO County, so the basic solution was not a mystery. What was hard about it was the same thing we face now: who will commit the time and energy to make it happen?

We managed to incorporate as a 501 c 3 non profit organization with an appropriate set of bylaws and received IRS approval in July 2016. Since that time, we have had an active Board and regular meetings. Board membership fluctuated normally in the early years but has been fairly stable since 2020. The formal structure of meetings, minutes, annual filings and taxes, and such, has been effective.

We have also been able to raise money. MBOSA's first conservation action was to purchase a conservation easement on Eagle Rock. The parcel had been slated for development but was delayed by neighborhood action. MBOSA stepped in after the court delay and raised \$265,000 (thank you!) over the period 2017 to 2020 to purchase an easement from the owner, the City of Morro Bay (the City is still the fee owner). We formally transferred the management of the easement to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program for perpetuity.



Our second conservation action was to raise money toward the Toro Coast Preserve. Beginning in 2021 we raised funds (thank you again!) that will help purchase about 1500 acres of open space on the bluffs over north Morro Bay. The first two phases of this 3-phase project are completed; our partners, the Cayucos Land Conservancy and Land Conservancy of SLO, are already beginning work on the final phase 3. When done, the property will be taken over by SLO County Parks for a permanent public park complete with trails and facilities.

Most recently we have supported the education and outreach efforts of the [SLO Beaver Brigade](#) in their efforts to slowly reintroduce beavers as natural conservation engineers on SLO County waterways.

Allocating the Money We Have Raised

The first \$265,000 we raised was spent to purchase the Eagle Rock conservation easement. Today we have about \$65,000 on hand. Here is how we plan to use it:

Toro Coast Preserve:	\$40,000 will be contributed to phase 2 soon
Toro Coast trails:	\$15 to \$20,000 for trail construction
Eagle Rock monument:	~ \$1500 for a peace pole and bronze plaque
One year's maintenance:	~ \$1620 for insurance; filings; bookkeeper; website

The only number here that is absolutely firm is the \$40,000 contribution to the Toro Coast Preserve purchase.

But our commitment to you is that every penny will be spent on conservation with the exception of the amount needed to maintain our formal existence for one year.

Stop Raising Money through Memberships and Donations

Beginning immediately, we will not seek nor will we accept donations or membership contributions. We are working to make our website reflect this.

If new people want to join the Board in the near future to work on specific projects, we will revise this policy and let you know. Again, the Board will remain intact for about the next year to be available in case a clear opportunity to do something useful comes up.

Projects We Could Do If You Want To Step Up



We have said there's no lack of useful and important things we could do to preserve and promote open space. Here's a partial list—if any of these things seems really important to you —enough so that you want to make a commitment of time and talent—we are here to help for the next year at least.

Toro Coast Preserve: Phase 3 of the project is beginning right now. If you want to be part of a large effort to make the TCP come to life, let us know.

Panorama Tanks site: A big challenge but one that is important to a lot of our neighbors is the planned residential development on the site where the jet fuel tanks were. We think that parcel might be available to purchase for about \$3 to \$4 million. This is a big stretch, but it's feasible with a lot of work.

Morro Creek agriculture zone: A very useful project would be to research the parcels on Morro Creek east of the City. It might be possible to find owners who would consider selling a conservation easement to maintain parcels as open space/agriculture.

Renewable Energy Impact: The planned battery storage plant and potential offshore wind farm will impact the City, though we're not sure how at this point. This is a more diffuse project but may become important during the next year.

Education: There is almost no end to the valuable education MBOSA could do if you want to take the organization in that direction. MBOSA could be an important source of information on the marine sanctuary; the energy projects; Toro Coast Preserve; and open space/environmental/wildlife topics generally.

Shutting Down in One Year

If we cannot re-start MBOSA within the next year, we will take steps to terminate it permanently. The State of California and the Feds require some formal steps to do this, including removing the tax-exempt status of the organization. If there are any funds left at that point, they will be donated to one of our land conservation partners such as the Cayucos Land Conservancy.

Thank YOU for your Support

We know MBOSA means a lot to you, as it does to us. It has been supported by a lot of neighbors and organizations and businesses. We are part of a village that cares for its members, and you have been an important part of that.

We do not take this slow shutting down casually. We do it with tangible regrets. We hope some of you will step up to continue the good work we do.

We wish all of you the best for the coming year.
Board of MBOSA