

HISTORY AND CULTURE



Nipomo is located on California's lovely central coast. Although a small rural community, Nipomo is rich in history and culture. The first recorded settlers of this lovely area were the Chumash Indian Tribe, which has roots along the entire Central California coast. Nestled among Eucalyptus groves, Nipomo (the Indian word ne-po-mah means "foot of the hill") sits at the foot of the Santa Lucia Mountain range and to the west, the majestic Pacific Ocean.



CHUMASH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The Chumash refer to their tribe as the "first people", and the sea as their first home. Known as the "seashell people", they relied on the sea for much of their sustenance. Similar to many indigenous people, they recognized their dependency on the world in which they lived and honored the earth and seasons with celebrations of reverence and gratitude. Interestingly the Chumash were gifted astronomers and the art of astrology was used to guide the tribe in important decisions. They were a people who experienced the world in flux and realized "the only constant is change."

A SEA CAPTAIN

Modern day Nipomo was founded by a man of the sea, Captain William G. Dana of Boston. After receiving a land grant from the Mexican Government in 1839, he built his family home which became known as the Dana Adobe. The Dana Adobe was strategically located on the mission trail and served as a way station for weary travelers from Santa Barbara Mission to the San Luis Obispo Mission, it was also designated as an exchange point on California's first official mail route between Monterey and Los Angeles. Currently, the Dana Adobe has received two grants from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment, for physical restoration. The historical significance and role played in California's early history were important factors in receiving these grants.



AGRICULTURE

Surrounded by citrus groves and farmland, a community rich in agriculture, Nipomo is famous for Dorothea Lange's photograph *Migrant Mother*, taken during the Great Depression in 1936. This powerful image evokes compassion for the hardship our ancestors endured.



ENVIRONMENT

Nipomo is blessed with beautiful coastal weather, and is sometimes referred to as a Mediterranean climate, featuring ocean breezes and mild temperatures year round. On average, temperatures rise to 80 degrees in the summer and dip to 42 degrees during the winter, also known as the rainy season. This weather provides a most desirable climate for agriculture, and many outdoor activities; such as horseback riding, gardening, exploring the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes and hiking Osco Flaco Lake.

FLORA

Although, coastal live oaks are native to Nipomo, the area is also home to the non-native Blue Gum Eucalyptus. Many of these trees were planted in the early 1900's, with the idea of being harvested and sold as hardwood. The Eucalyptus groves still exist and are a great attractor to the Monarch Butterflies for hibernation and migration. The Monarch Butterfly hibernations are a popular draw to many visitors, who enjoy the wonder and beauty of this tiny, yet extraordinary creature.

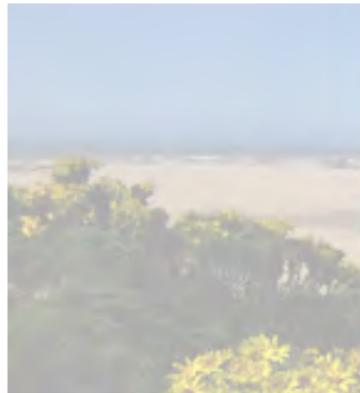


ENVIRONMENT , CONT . . .

As a rural landscape, there are many wildflowers and flora which exist in their natural state. The Nipomo Native Garden is a community-based, non-profit organization which provides information and education about native flora. They have also undertaken the restoration to native habitat a twelve acre portion of Nipomo Regional Park.

MISSION STATEMENT

[The Nipomo Native Garden will provide opportunities for education, conservation, restoration, research and recreation using plants of the Nipomo Mesa Guadalupe Dunes complex. The plants will be organized in an associative framework to illustrate plant community dynamics demonstrating the unique character and rich biological heritage of the Nipomo Mesa.]



DUNES

THE GUADALUPE-NIPOMO DUNES

Known for its spectacular beauty, the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex is a major feature and attraction in the Nipomo area and home to a unique ecosystem. One of California's 13 original coastal dune systems, only four remain relatively intact. The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes comprises the second largest coastal dune system in the state and is among the most scenic and treasured of California's wild places.

Although there are several areas of the dunes, Nipomo is closest to The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Wildlife Refuge, and Osco Flaco Creek and Lake.

The Dunes are home to a myriad of wild creatures, from bobcats, beetles and kangaroo rats who nightly leave their prints in the sand. In the estuary, migratory shorebirds feed, rest and recharge for the next stage of their journey, while ducks, herons, frogs and muskrats ply the inland waters. Deer browse shrubs and undergrowth, their young hidden in tall grass, safe from prowling cougars. Foxes, coyote and black bear thrive here. The dunes support one of the few remaining nesting areas for the California least tern and the Western snowy plover, two of California's most endangered shorebirds.

During the 1930s and 1940s a group of mystics, nudists, artists, writers, and hermits known as the "Dunites" inhabited the Dunes. They believed that the Dunes were a center of creative energy and even published a magazine called "The Dune Forum." Although this group was far outside the mainstream, perhaps they were aware of the healing energy of the Nipomo area.



WELLNESS RETREAT CENTER

Kripalu (Krih-PAH-loo) means "being compassionate" in Sanskrit. Kripalu yoga is named after Swami Kripalu (1913-1981), a yoga master known in India for his deep compassion and intense spiritual practice. Kripalu yoga draws on this energy of compassion to meet you exactly where you are. Yoga poses are practiced without the goal of perfection, but rather in order to explore what is happening now in your body and mind. This allows you to feel, observe, and witness how energy, emotion, and thoughts are flowing through you.

A rural community with a strong historical mixture of Native American culture, agriculture, horse ranches, and breathtaking ocean dunes, interspersed with healing Eucalyptus trees... What an awesome place for a Wellness Retreat Center.

THE CONCEPT

The environment and energy of Nipomo would be the perfect place for a "green" Wellness Retreat Center. For the purpose of this document, the following quote is used to clarify the meaning of "green."

WELLNESS RETREAT CENTER, CONT . . .

The concept of the Green Spa Network began over four years ago when a group of spa leaders met to explore ways to encourage **sustainability** in the industry. "GSN founding Seed Spa, Osmosis, is in the process of implementing a suite of eco-friendly programs. These include: an innovative energy system that will significantly reduce heating and cooling costs; water recycling, natural, fair-trade products and a Green Spa Experience that utilizes organic therapies to re-connect guests with the natural world. *"Osmosis sees its ongoing greening process as an important first step in shifting the image of a spa visit away from one of merely pampering indulgence to an all-encompassing, holistic experience, grounded in wellness for our guests and for the planet,"* says GSN seed spa member and Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary Founder Michael Stusser.



The Wellness Retreat Center **physical properties** would involve green sustainable construction that takes into consideration the landscape in which it is built. A lovely example {pictured left} is this community center which Architects EM2N in Zurich Switzerland built. ["The architects based their design on the notion that "Not the building alone is the Community Center, but the entire park." With this in mind, EM2N started on a contemporary structure that would make a statement on its own, while also speaking to its surroundings."] Essentially the structure could be made to fit the landscape as opposed to altering the landscape to fit the structure, leaving **minimal impact** on the environment.

The Wellness Retreat Center could serve a two-fold purpose. One possibility would include a structure with multiple branches, connected by open or glass enclosed pathways connecting one structure to another. One area would serve overnight spa guests and one area could be utilized for local community functions and classes. Many activities and programs could be utilized by spa guests as well as the local community. For example Kripalu yoga and Tai Chi classes could be attended by spa guests as well as seniors. Work-

shops and nature walks on native plants, local fauna and the geography of the dunes could be attended by spa guests as well as community members.

Community rooms could be used for local community meetings or utilized by corporate executives that have chosen the Wellness Retreat Center as a retreat for employees, a place to relax and renew and establish better working relationships. Essentially the Wellness Retreat Center would serve as a **community gathering point** and also cater to visitors seeking a **relaxing, nurturing environment**.

The energy which would propel the center would be one of inclusion. The Wellness Retreat Center welcomes seniors and young people as well as overnight guests. The Wellness Retreat Center would be inclusive as opposed to exclusive, where all would be treated graciously in a low stress environment. This is a place of **healing and peace**.

The spa would offer traditional spa services such as all types of massage, facials, as well as more esoteric services such as aromatherapy, Reiki, energy balancing, mediation, again these service would also be offered to the local community.

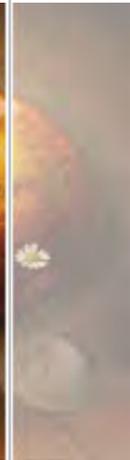
GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Concerts, recitals, seminars/workshops, instructional recreation classes (fitness, arts & crafts, dance, karate, etc.), wedding receptions, community group meetings, youth parties, open gym, indoor sports leagues/clinics (basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc.), senior nutrition lunch program, senior citizen outreach services (blood pressure checks, support services, tax counseling, Project CARE, etc.), youth/teen after school activities, public forums and community special events.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Youth programs would perhaps promote education on sustainable agriculture, preserving the beauty and natural habitat of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, being taught to work with and honor our natural resources. **Senior programs** would include information and support for health related issues and healing, classes in grief therapy and support for caregivers. Gentle toning and movement for physical well-being.

The Wellness Retreat Center is a **welcoming** place for all of Nipomo, as well as visitors to this beautiful area.





WELLNESS RETREAT CENTER
PROJECT FOR XSENSE AUTHENTIC PLACES

JODY HARMON
MARCH 28, 2011
