



October 1, 2009

Contact: Malei Weir  
mw@mooncatcher.com  
(805) 239-0020

## HOLLYWOOD'S "LOST CITY" TO BE SPOTLIGHTED AT GUADALUPE DUNES IN 2010

### Towering Dunes on California's Central Coast Beckon Visitors with Breathtaking Views, Abundant Wildlife and Movie Artifacts

SANTA MARIA VALLEY, CA—In advance of a momentous year ahead, the Dunes Center in Guadalupe, California has launched a **new web site, new tour map and enhanced educational exhibits** to help visitors get the most out of their experience at the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex, an 18-mile stretch of Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County coastline studded with towering mountains of sand.

"The Guadalupe-Nipomo dunes are one of California's natural treasures, yet many people are still unaware of them, because they are off the beaten path," said Gina Keough, manager of the Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau.

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex is one of the most ecologically significant and largest intact coastal dune ecosystems on earth. A major portion of the nearly 22,000 acres is under public management and open for recreation. More than 1,400 species of animals call the dunes home. The dunes are easily accessible from scenic Highway 1 in the Santa Maria Valley.

The dunes are also where famed director Cecil B. DeMille filmed his silent epic *The Ten Commandments*. Other films, including *The Pirates of the Caribbean* starring Johnny Depp, have also featured the dunes.

**In the summer of 2010, filmmaker Peter Brosnan plans to premiere his own movie documenting his 20-year quest to unearth artifacts from DeMille's Egyptian-themed set from beneath the sands.** An official date for the release of Brosnan's film has not been set.

DeMille's massive "City of The Pharaoh" became a lost city after it was torn down, abandoned and ultimately buried by the crew and, later, by the shifting sands. Building the city required 1,600 laborers, 500 tons of statuary, a half million feet of lumber and 75 miles of reinforcing cable. The set featured 21 five-ton sphinxes and 110-foot walls flanked by statues of Ramses. Some of the smaller items have been recovered, but the larger set pieces have yet to be unearthed.

Visitors to the nonprofit Dunes Center, however, do not have to wait for the release of Brosnan's film to see some of the movie's recovered artifacts, as several are currently on display at the center. The Dunes Center also features several family-friendly exhibits that showcase the remarkable biodiversity, geology and history of the dunes.

The Dunes Center also offers ongoing guided walks and hikes, as well as children's activities. For information on visiting the Dunes Center, visit the new web site at [www.dunescenter.org](http://www.dunescenter.org). This month, the center produced a new map to help visitors find their way around the dunes. The map

and admission to the Dunes Center are complimentary. However, a \$2 charitable donation is requested when visiting.

The three most popular dunes destinations are all easily accessible from the Dunes Center. Visitors wishing to drive straight to the oceanfront can take Main Street west into the heart of the Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Preserve. Nearby Oso Flaco Lake Road leads to a convenient parking area, from where visitors can take a 30-minute stroll along a boardwalk through the dunes and to the beach. And those feeling even more adventurous can hike across the dunes into the heart of the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes National Wildlife Refuge.

Better yet, the dunes occupy the western perimeter of the Santa Maria Valley, which offers visitors a host of additional exciting experiences, from fine wine tasting and miles of strawberries to world-class theater, championship golf courses to renowned barbecue.

For more information on the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex and the Dunes Center, visit [www.dunescenter.org](http://www.dunescenter.org) on the web or call (805) 343-2455. The Dunes Center is located at 1055 Guadalupe Street (Highway 1) in Guadalupe, California. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For more information on visiting the Santa Maria Valley, please see [www.santamaria.com](http://www.santamaria.com).

###