General Introduction:

(Stephen) Just a bit north of here was the first place where the Japanese navy attacked the North American coastline. Pearl Harbor had occurred several months before and the country was already on edge. On February 23, 1942, seven Japanese submarines opened fire on the Ellwood Oil Field just a little way up the coast from here at Coal Oil Point. There are several theories about why the attack happened: to test American defenses after Pearl Harbor, to cause panic, and even that the attack was revenge by the Japanese commander for being laughed at years earlier by Americans when he slipped and fell on a cactus while refueling here at Santa Barbara. Regardless of the intent, the attack was one that caused minimal damage but effects were devastating since the attack is cited as helping to justify the internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the US.

(Theo) This attack was a very visible moment of violence that was intimately tied to the strategic importance of fossil fuel extraction and refuelling here. But, besides this flashpoint, and of course Platform Holly in the distance, you might be wondering where is the oil at Coal Oil Point? Where's the controversy, what's the story here? Well I hope you are because that's exactly what we were wondering when we got here, and that's what we're going to be talking about today. We're standing on what was, in the 1930s, a node in a vast network of oil development that spanned Santa Barbara county, and yet in many ways oil's presence here has since been made invisible, erased over the past few decades. Each of us is going to present on a different period in Coal Oil Point's history but the strand weaving our individual stories and arguments together is going to be that of invisibility, erasure, and making the invisible visible. We'll then be reconvening back here at the tables afterward to field some questions and suggest avenues of further investigation.

(Nicky) Despite its name, Coal Oil Point, platform Holly, and the natural oil seeps, oil and especially oil politics is invisible here. We have three great rapid-fire discussions today that are going to make that history visible. You will be learning about ranching with the Campbells with me, the ARCO flashpoint in the 1980s with Stephen, and the current restoration and conservation efforts and their relationship to oil with Theo. We're going to divide you into three groups and you will rotate between presentations in your groups every 10 minute, returning here at the end to answer any questions you may have together. Our goal today is to make the invisible -- invisible infrastructures, invisible political contestation, the invisiblilizing consequences of conservation efforts -- visible. Because time is limited and there's a lot of information we want to share with you, we'll ask that you save any questions you might have about each individual presentation until we all reconvene after the presentations. So we'll count you off into three groups or so and you'll rotate with your group [proceed to count people off]. If you're number one come with me, if you're group two go with Stephen and if you're group three meet up with Theo.

Nicky

Goleta's unofficial motto is "the Good Land."The Goleta Valley has the natural blessings of a fertile soil, a mild climate, and a close proximity to the Pacific Ocean. The Chumash Indians lived off of this land and for miles around for over 13 thousand years with a population of 18 thousand before European colonization. Notably, they would use the tar that washed up on the beach as sealant for various products they would make,

including their boats, tomols, that they made out of redwood planks (we're in the southernmost region of the redwood belt). This was first reported by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's ship on Monday, October 16, 1542. He actually followed their example and repaired two of his own ships in the same manner.

Besides Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Captain James Cook's navigator, George Vancouver, also wrote in his logs that the ocean near Goleta was covered with an oily surface in all directions. Apparently, the oil was so thick it made the ocean shine iridescent. Many other explorers reported similarly.

This area was a Mexican land grant, becoming Rancho Dos Pueblos in the 1840s. It was primarily used as ranchland, with sheep and cattle grazing. You can't really tell now, with all of the buildings and campus infrastructure that surround this point. The ranching history perhaps further contributes to the mystical, seemingly-timeless Spanish fantasy past that plays out in the architecture we walk through on State Street downtown while running errands or enjoying a night out.

The landscape used to look very differently. A flood event in the winter of 1861 transformed several estuaries into salt marshes. You can see them if you walk some of the trails further into the Reserve. Due to the recent drought, these marshes have all but dried. The coastline itself also constantly changes the appearance of the land -- the Reserve currently plants and maintains native grasses in order to stabilize its constant erosion.

Speaking of grasses, the invasive species Pampas Grass was introduced to the area in 1872 and quickly spread all over Goleta. It was finally eradicated from the reserve in 2000. 1872 was also the year that eucalyptus was introduced to the area by none other than Ellwood Cooper, of Ellwood Mesa fame. He was the first major eucalyptus planter in southern California and a rancher. He even wrote a book on the matter called *Eucalytology*. Within four years of owning his property, in 1876, there were roughly 150,000 eucalpts planted over his 100-acres, though you probably wouldn't guess that now, looking out around this area. Famous botantist Frederick Clements would join this tradition of conservation and preservation work in the area through his experimental gardens on the premises, later, in 1927.

Goleta was a mostly sleepy ranchland from the time it entered the Union to the turn of the century. By 1900, ranchers of the area, many Euro-American, grazed animals and have some distance from Santa Barbara, about 10 miles south of here. Many ranchers

during this time were small enterprises or large families sustaining themselves. Rusticators, or wealthy outsiders who come into rural areas to get away from "society," did not really enter the area until 1920.

In 1920, Colonel Colin Campbell bought 500 acres of the land that now makes up Coal Oil Point and the West Campus of UCSB. Campbell was a Scottish career military man in the Central Indian Horse Regiment. He wanted a large amount of land to build a polo field and breed Cairn terrier dogs. Campbell's wife, Nancy Leiter Campbell, was the daughter of the Marshall Field magnate Levi Leiter, so the couple had millions of dollars between them. After purchasing the property, Campbell dredged the slough to make a harbor, introduced another invasive species: olive trees (and even more eucalyptus). He spent over $1 million, in today's dollars that would be over $11 million, in that year to make his house a home. And a home he did build -- 30 rooms and 18 bathrooms over 20,000 square feet and two stories, in, of course, the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Colonel only lived here for three years, until his death in 1923. His wife Nancy lived here until her death in 1930. They were buried at this cross, **in front of us,** until they were exhumed and moved a few decades later to a family crypt in Washington, DC. Colin Campbell Jr and his wife, Elizabeth, moved to the property shortly after. They maintained the rusticating life of their parents, establishing a landing strip for friends to land planes from Hollywood.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, oil industries began to dot the immediate coast in earnest. The Ellwood Field here produced over 1 million barrels in the first quarter of 1929. We are currently standing on the land leased to the Bolsa Chica Oil Company, which built a 900-foot pier into the sea and drilled 4,700-feet below. Workers would take a pipe with an attached weight and manually bring the pipe up and down to bring oil up. It would flow through pipes, usually placed on the piers, towards the shore for processing. It was a crude way to extract the crude oil. The Scott McIntosh Company, another large oil company at the time, was closer to Isla Vista. Their drilling pier would have cost $200,000 at this time. There were 9 permits, 9 different small oil enterprises, between here and the Ellwood tank farm, which hopefully you will be able to make out in the map in your packets. Wells were drilled onshore as well, where there was also an abundance of storage and processing facilities.

Much of the early drilling in this area was short-lived. The technology could not keep up with the oil, and by the early 1940s most production in this immediate area moved offshore.

The Campbells divorced in 1940, and tried to sell the property in 1941. World War II, and the Japanese attack in 1942 especially, changed the look, feel, and desirability of the coastal reprieve, and made it nearly impossible to sell. The Campbells finally found a buyer in Helena Devereux in 1945.

Devereux created the Western Devereux School for those with different abilities in 1946. She was ahead of her time in terms of teaching and caring for the differently abled. She sold most of the property, except the land of her school, to UCSB in 1967. UCSB purchased the rest of the property in 2007.

Stephen's Script

- At this site, we will be focusing today on the ARCO (Atlantic Richfield Company Oil and Gas) flashpoint in the 1980s.
- Platform Holly built in 1966 by ARCO in state waters. ARCO was the operator but the site was jointly owned by Mobil as well. Holly has 32 oil wells in the Southern Ellwood Oil Field and it is about two miles from COP.
- The California State Lands Commission approved exploratory drilling in 1980 and allowed ARCO to do preliminary ocean floor installations.
- ARCO wanted to put 3 more offshore oil platforms near Coal Oil Point (Heron A and B, Holly A and B which would be connected to the current Platform Holly, and Haven A and B) and onshore facilities (roughly 40 something new structures which can be seen on other documents). Heron would have had 74-80 wells, Holly A and B would have 30-80 (current Holly has 32), and Haven would have 35-70. Another plan in 1986 called for a platform called Hawk instead of Holly B but that plan was abandoned.
- If this plan would have been approved, it would have led to the first new platforms placed in state-controlled waters since the famous 1969 spill.
- Haven would be located in the Embarcadero Field which is the furthest north. Holly is in the South Ellwood Field. Heron would have been in the Coal Oil Point Field. Heron would have been more or less where we are looking.
- In terms of economic impact, the project would have yielded 800-900 temporary construction jobs and 100-125 permanent jobs.
- First full proposal submitted in 1983 by ARCO but this would go back and forth and ARCO would submit an amended plan in 1985 (amended version was actually more intense with more platforms and more activity in more oil fields due to new discoveries).
- Of course, in order to be evaluated, an Environmental Impact Statement was created by the State Lands Commission, the County of Santa Barbara, and the US Army Corps of Engineers. They started this in 1983 but again resumed after the new 1985 proposal. In this report, we see the UC Santa Barbara really asserting itself as a player with a lot to lose if this project goes through. Chancellor Aldrich was especially outspoken against the plan but Heron, in particular, since the area surrounding it had the most sensitive habitats.
- Lots of environment and local groups got involved including the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club got involved. They even offered legal support to the state in court via their legal defense fund. Robert Sollen was a key member in

writing these letters and he was also a member of GOO (Get Oil Out) and an important journalist in the area.

- The state denied project in 1987 for the offshore facility. The later decision in fall of 1987 to block the onshore facilities as well. Lots of bad blood at this point. ARCO sued for nearly 800 million dollars as they stated that California acted in bad faith. ARCO actually tried to argue that they were discriminated against and stated in statements made to the state. In court, they argued that the state couldn't control their leased property essentially.
- Controller Gray Davis and Lt. Gov. Leo T. McCarthy voted to block ARCO and stated that it would be "irresponsible" to allow unrestricted development of all existing leases. Some of the cited reasons included air and noise pollution and UCSB's marine research in the area. Commercial fishing also under threat. Tourism loss also a reason.
- Here we see the way in which oil companies operate with a financial sense of omnitemporality. They are able to go bankrupt and not have to pay to close sites (as we saw at Rincon Island) or they can sue prior to a site being opened and acquire capital that way.
- ARCO closed their Goleta offices in 1988. But, continued their suit.
- A state court ruled in favor of the SLC in 1990. ARCO considered extended reach reaching drilling to compensate for their inability to construct new platforms but they didn't find this technically feasible.
- ARCO gave up rights to drill further in 1991 in exchange for land in Long Beach. On this site, we again see the theme of invisibility as an ARCO engineer stated that people would not be able to "see, her, or smell" any more than they could at the current site. They surrendered leases 308 and 309 (areas near what would have been Heron) to the state who then made the areas into sanctuaries.
- ARCO left the area in 1993 and Platform Holly was sold totally to Mobil who then told it to Venoco which went Bankrupt in 2015. The platform is now being decommissioned by the state.

Theo

Introduction to theme: contemporary relationships between conservation and oil

- Here we are at Coal Oil Point Nature Reserve: How I've related to COP is similar to most Isla Vista residents
    - It's where I'd try and fail to learn to surf, get sunburned after refusing sunscreen, go on beachwalks
    - Story about being accosted by police
    - Tempting to force this into a narrative about resource securitization and inherent coercion of oil frontiers
- Argument and theme
    - how the contemporary relationships between conservation, restoration and oil development allows us to relate to Coal Oil Point in a way that is abstracted from the politics of oil.
    - the relationship between environmental conservation, restoration and oil here demonstrates how history of oil development is made invisible, materially and discursively, erasing relations of power and contestation

- But also want to complicate that because restoration and conservation can also be used strategically to lock oil underground
- Interested in what the juxtaposition of platform and plovers reveals about different environmentalist discourses in SB

Of Snowy Plovers and Oil Platforms: How restoration and conservation erases oil's history

- Precariousness of this place
  - Plovers Conservation area off limits to beachgoers but oil spill could wipe all that work off the map
  - Sign asking beachgoers to pick up after themselves and not disturb the plovers
  - Sign seems out of place when compared to platform Holly
  - Offshore production far greater threat to these birds than hikers, sunbathers, and surfers
- Discursively
  - Point is not a critique of restoration or conservation, it's of how beachgoers might interpret the juxtaposition of plover and platform
  - Conservation efforts asking up to pick up our litter when the whole beach is threatened by oil development directs attention away from the platforms and oil politics
  - Scales down the environmental crisis to a problem that can be resolved is we just look after our beach a little better
  - So conservation and restoration may help us construct a discursive erasure of the political economy of oil
  - Similarly the discourse around natural seeps used to divert attention from impacts of oil development. Venoco argued Holly was helping the environment
- Materially: decommissioning to restoration to conservation
  - Try to imagine what this place would have looked like in the 1920s
  - We're currently standing on Bolsa Chico Oil Company's permit. In 1929 they built a 900ft pier from here out to drill beneath the sea. Tens of millions of barrels of oil still lay beneath our feet.
  - The coastline was divided up into leases. Between here and the tank farm there were 9 different permits and 9 piers for offshore drilling
  - despite millions of barrels still existing beneath our feet, the oil available with the technology at the time ran out by the end of WW2.
  - Decommissioning the site and creating this protected area meant taking out all the infrastructure that was here.
  - So all that's visible of this time is the tank farm and a rusted metal beam half a mile down the beach
  - Restoration and conservation have literally erased the history of oil here. And in a way that's exactly what restoration is intended to do.

- Venoco supported the Nature Reserve and in doing so contributed to the erasure of oil history here

The Plover's Revenge: Restoration as Blockadia

- Plover's occupation as blockadia activists
  - Until Refugio oil spill in 2015 Venoco had worked in partnership with the Nature Reserve
  - In doing so it was actually engaging in a project that makes it much harder for the oil under our feet to be extracted
  - Because of the plovers and protected area oil companies no longer allowed to drill here, the area is protected. I like to think of the plovers as a our very own blockadia activists keeping fossil fuels in the ground
  - in all seriousness though, conservation can be strategically leveraged as part of a blockade to keep fossil fuels in the ground
- Broader context of opening up public lands to drilling
  - Public lands in California under increasing pressure to open up to oil drilling
  - Bears ears national monument in Utah also good example of creation of national monument to protect the land now under attack
  - To keep climate crisis under control we know we need to keep 80% of fossil fuels underground unburned and that we have about 6-12 years to do so.
  - Conservation can be used to contest power of industry which somewhat complicates environmental justice discourses about conservation being just a polite non-confrontational form of environmentalism

Conclusion

- Coal Oil Point reveals complicated relationship between oil and conservation and restoration
- On the one hand it can be used to erase and make invisible the history of oil development, scaling down environmental activism, and redirecting us towards efforts that may be incommensurate with the scale of the crisis.
- On the other, conservation can be used as a strategic intervention in the political economy of oil as environmental justice activists seek to challenge the power of the fossil fuel industry and force society onto a more just and sustainable path.
- In this one site we see these different and sometimes competing environmental discourses: Santa Barbara's classic mainstream polite white environmentalism or the contestation of power and the political economy of oil.
- Finally missing from all this is the question of restoration and the Chumash. Critical restoration or critical conservation forces us to consider what we're restoring the land to. If it is to its status before oil, ranching and settler's colonization, we need to recognize how the land changed in relation to how the Chumash used it. Thus critical restoration must concern itself with the question of indigenous sovereignty and who makes the decisions that affect this land.

Conclusion:

Coal Oil Point has undergone many transformations, from Chumash land to settlers forcing the Chumash off it to make way for ranching, to becoming a central node in the early development of oil infrastructure in Santa Barbara county, to a site of multimillion dollar controversy over offshore drilling, to a place where oil's presence has undergone an erasure through conservation and restoration, to a place of leisure and relaxation for Isla Vista's residents. In terms of future research on the site, there is still much to learn about the history of the Chumash here. This was a silence in the archive that we wanted to address more fully but had trouble doing so. You will see on some of the informational plaques around the site say supported by the Wishtoyo foundation – a Chumash nonprofit - which is involved in educational efforts here. And recently they have become known for their innovation with green technology so it's not surprising that they would be intimately involved here at Coal Oil Point. Hopefully, the site can act not only as a symbol for contested energy pasts but more sustainable and just energy futures.