

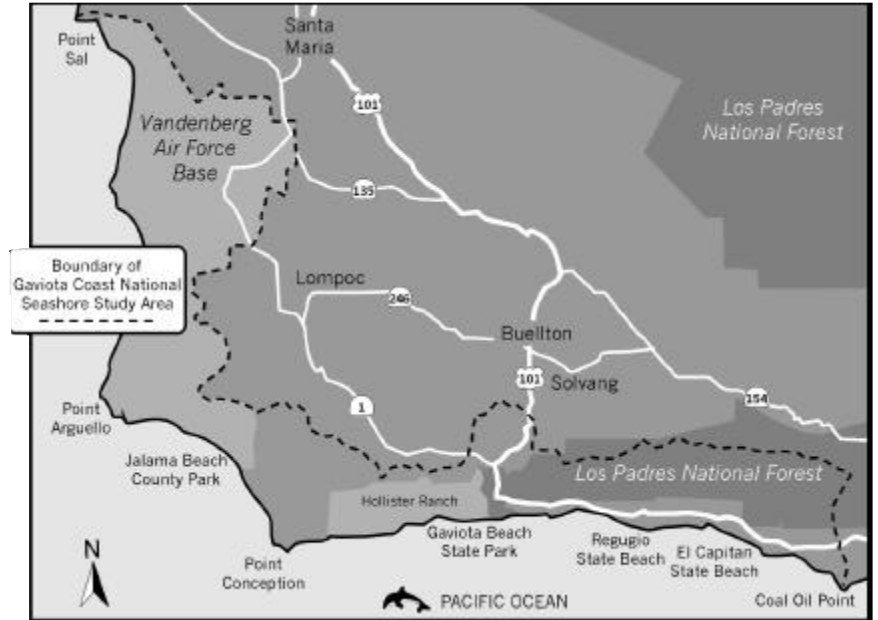
## History of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy

The vision of the **Conservancy** is the permanent protection of the Gaviota Coast's unique natural, scenic, agricultural, recreational, and cultural resources.

The Gaviota Coast Conservancy (GCC) is a private, non-profit organization that promotes the permanent protection of the Gaviota Coast's unique natural, scenic, agricultural, recreational, and cultural resources. Working through partnerships with other land conservation organizations, local landowners, resource agencies, and government entities, the GCC is promoting long-term strategies to protect the Gaviota Coast from the rapid urban expansion that threatens this region.

The current effort to conserve the resources of the Gaviota Coast was begun in 1991 by Bob Keats. Bob requested and received support from the National Board of Directors of the Surfrider Foundation for the formation of the Santa Barbara chapter of Surfrider Foundation. Under Bob's leadership, the Santa Barbara chapter created a task force to oppose the Hyatt hotel project at Haskell's beach and to prevent the urbanization of the Gaviota Coast. At Surfrider, Bob established a task force to begin the campaign to establish a national seashore on the coast.

In April 1994, the Santa Barbara Chapter of the Audubon Society, under the leadership of Lee Moldaver, coordinated a conference entitled "Coastal Preservation Conference 1994." Co-sponsored by the Coastal Resources Information Center and the University of Califor-



nia, Santa Barbara, this conference focused local attention on the Gaviota Coast.

The Coastal Preservation Conference sparked a great deal of interest from local activists and the community at large. In May 1994, a group of citizens joined efforts with the purpose of creating a non-profit organization for protecting the present rural character of the Gaviota Coast. From this effort the Gaviota

*(continued on page 3)*

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**Inside this issue...**

Gaviota Coast Conservancy History . . . . .1  
Point Reyes National Seashore, a Model for our Coast . . . . .2  
The Western Gull . . . . .3

## A Conservation Model for our Coast

Point Reyes National Seashore in West Marin, only one hour from San Francisco, is a stunning environment. The headlands of Point Reyes, often windswept and shrouded in fog, is the site of the lighthouse illuminating the foggiest stretch of coastline in the Western U.S. On a sunny day the view to the south encompasses the sandy beaches of Drakes Bay and the cliffs of the



*National Park Service Graphic*

### What is a National Seashore?

A National Seashore is one of a dozen categories of National Park. The designation, in itself, will not prevent development and involuntary condemnation will not be used to acquire land.

A National Seashore designation would establish sufficient public interest to justify using public and private funds to acquire land and easements. As a result, private landowners would find a ready market for their land, when and if they wish to sell it.

southern Seashore. From this promontory, turning to view the mainland, the vista exposes the ridgeline of the Park, heavily timbered in mature forest. Inland from the ridgeline is a sheltered valley formed by the San Andreas Fault with a warmer climate and pastoral topography. The environmental scope of the Park is breathtaking.

But it was threatened in an earlier time. The pressures of urbanization, heightened by the proximity to San Francisco and the bucolic character of the coastline, were sweeping toward this unique landscape. Before the establishment of the National Seashore, in the early 1960s, Limantour Beach, the heart of the Seashore, was subdivided and foundations were being dug on the fragile sandspit separating the ocean from Drake's Estero for vacation homes for urbanites. Equally threatening, the ridgeline was being logged of old

growth forests. Elected officials, local citizens, and the Sierra Club joined forces in a preservation effort that bore fruit in the establishment of the Point Reyes National Seashore in 1962. The foundations were removed, the land restored, but it was a very close call.

Moving forward in time and south in space, change the particulars and we have the Gaviota Coast. The land is threatened, as developers are poised with shovels in hand. But, the public is aroused and our legislators are sensitive to conservation issues. The National Park Service is about to undertake a feasibility study on establishing a National Seashore on our coast.

Take heart and consider the wisdom of Mark Twain; "History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme."

— Phil McKenna

# Coastline

## Our Goals

The Goals of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy are:

- To create a National Seashore, incorporating public and private land ownership.
- To conserve undeveloped land on the Gaviota Coast, including all undeveloped shoreline parcels between Coal Oil Point and Gaviota.
- To develop a long-term preservation strategy utilizing multiple and diverse management techniques.
- To maximize broad-based community support.
- To recognize private land ownership as one of the key components of the preservation strategy.
- To protect and enhance biological diversity.
- To maintain agricultural land in agricultural use.
- To protect and interpret the region's cultural heritage.
- To enhance public use, enjoyment, and appreciation through education and interpretation of the Gaviota Coast's resources.
- To provide appropriate recreational opportunities.
- To preserve and enhance the scenic quality of the region.
- To promote legislation and policy to further these goals.



Photo by Rich Reid

## History

*(continued from page 1)*

Coast Conservancy was incorporated as a non-profit, public benefit organization in 1996.

Since our inception the GCC has spearheaded the effort to bring the various and diverse interest of the coast together to form a coastal preservation strategy. We have worked with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, seeking to help landowners develop effective strategies for preserving agricultural land and open space. We have promoted the establishment of a national seashore and have succeeded in beginning a National Park Service feasibility study. We have organized several field trips on the coast for policy makers and conservation organizations so that they might better understand our coastal issues. We have been successful in keeping conservation issues in the forefront of the public's mind through our public outreach and partnerships with organizations such as the Sierra Club.

## The Western Gull

In 1769, a member of Don Gaspar de Portola's expedition from San Diego to the San Francisco Bay shot a seagull while looking for firewood in the Gaviota Pass. From that point on the area became permanently known as Gaviota, the Spanish word for seagull.

The western gull is a common resident of marine environments, coastal sloughs, landfills, trashcans, and lagoons on the Gaviota Coast. These gulls nest predominantly on the Channel Islands, although some nesting has been observed on Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Natural food sources for the western gull include anchovies, rockfishes, and a variety of invertebrates from the intertidal area. A species that has adapted to the proliferation of humans, western gulls also feed on trash and are abundant near the Tajiguas Landfill.

The western gull is firmly entrenched in the history and habitats (natural and human made) of the Gaviota Coast.

## Gaviota Coast Conservancy Membership Form

Individual . . . . . \$25

GCC may use my name as a supporter.

Senior  Student  Low Income . . . \$10

Business . . . . . \$40

Contact me for GCC use of the business name.

Donation to help the Gaviota Coast Conservancy (with or without membership) . . . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to help! Contact me for volunteer opportunities.

Make checks out to Gaviota Coast Conservancy. Mail to: GCC, PO Box 1099, Goleta, CA 93116, or call 805-563-7976.

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*Preserving Our Coastal Heritage*