



President's Message *by Mike Lunsford*

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

While almost everyone seems to support the goal of preventing urban sprawl from spreading up the Gaviota Coast, the best method for protecting and stewarding the land for the future still raises debate. However, I am pleased to report important efforts moving ahead on several fronts.

State funding and tax credits secured by Senator O'Connell and Assemblywoman Jackson have been crucial for the work of the Land Trust, the California Coastal Conservancy, and The Trust for Public Land. Together, these groups have purchased permanent protection for almost 5,000 acres, and work is underway on an additional 1,400 acres.

In an exciting recent development, the County, UCSB, and the Monarch Point developer have agreed to coordinate planning for the Ellwood coast area. This is likely to lead to the permanent protection of a contiguous, coastal open space between Coal Oil Point and the Sandpiper golf course.

Resource studies of the Gaviota Coast by the National Park Service and the County are expected to be published this year. These documents will provide important information for three separate consensus-building efforts that are currently underway, the **Common Ground** group, the **Gaviota Coast Study Group**, and the **Coastal Allies**. Each group is seeking to develop a vision for the Gaviota Coast.

While these events give us reason for optimism, there is still so much to be done to ensure preservation of the Gaviota Coast. If you are wondering what you can do to help, here are three suggestions. Perhaps the easiest and most effective thing to do is to join the Gaviota Coast Conservancy (see info on back page). A large and growing membership



*Gaviota Coast Conservancy President Mike Lunsford
Photo by Rich Reid*

base is a powerful statement about the support of the community. Secondly, if you would like to offer your special skill or expertise, let us know. We have a growing list of talented people who we can turn to when we need them. Thirdly, if you are able to donate money, we can convert your monetary resources into actions to save the coast.

The Gaviota Coast has been recognized by the **California Wilderness Coalition** as one of its **top 10 threatened wild places**. This gives special attention to the Gaviota Coast as a critical piece of habitat and open space that is threatened by urban sprawl.

The designation was given because of the Gaviota Coast's exceptional biodiversity, location as a key marine transition zone, vital connections between the mountains and the sea, and long history of productive farming and ranching.

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VOTE MARCH 5 - See Prop 40 info on page 2

Good News on the Legislative Front

Proposition 40 would provide funds for land acquisition and habitat restoration

NPS Feasibility Study — Delayed but Moving Forward

The National Park Service is scheduled to complete the Gaviota Coast feasibility study in the summer of 2002. This study will consider a range of alternatives for the permanent protection of the coast. The Park Service has developed a Protection Strategies Worksheet to get public input on the types of protection strategies that should be considered and where they should be applied.

They will mail this to all on their mailing list, or you can order the worksheet by calling:

Martha Crusius
(510) 817-1447

or write:

NPS
1111 Jackson Street
Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

Operation of the National Park Service website, www.nps.gov, has been suspended until further notice.

Two California legislative actions last autumn and one new Proposition hold promise for efforts to preserve the Gaviota Coast.

Proposition 40

Two years ago, California voters approved **Props 12 and 13**. Prop 12 was the largest park-recreation open space bond in state history. Prop 13 was the largest water quality and management bond in a generation. Hopes were high that significant amounts of funding would filter their way into Santa Barbara County, or to the California Coastal Conservancy for land acquisition and conservation efforts on the Gaviota Coast. Unfortunately, the majority of the funds had already been pre-committed for major metropolitan areas, leaving very little for smaller, semi-rural counties like Santa Barbara.

Santa Barbara's disappointment was echoed in many other parts of the state in such strong tones that Planning & Conservation League leader Jerry Meral met with Resources Secretary Mary Nichols from the governor's office to immediately begin drafting a follow-up bond proposal specifically for park, recreation, open space, and habitat funding. Enormous efforts resulted in getting Prop 40 on the March ballot. Unlike its predecessors, the new proposal is primarily "open" or "competitive" money, with very few projects or funding sources earmarked by the legislature or special interests. That means that if Prop 40 passes, significant new land acquisition or habitat restoration funds would become eligible for investment on the Gaviota Coast. Naturally the Gaviota Coast Conservancy and the Land Trust of SB County view Prop 40 very positively.

The political reality, however, is that passing Prop 40 will be very difficult, and will require the vote of every possible supporter. If Prop 40 is to pass, all voters interested in recreation or the environment must remember to register and vote!

David Wass of Cox Cable's *Environmentally Yours* television show is a local coordinator for the Prop 40 campaign. For more information, you can reach Dave at 682-6962. All central coast environmental or conservation groups that have taken an official position on

Prop 40 **SUPPORT** it. At this point, all central coast elected state officials also **SUPPORT** Prop 40.

SB 497

In approving SB 497, the Sher bill, the state severely limits the ability of land speculators to develop sub-standard lots created through antiquated subdivisions, surveyors errors, or imperfect lot-line adjustments. The specific event that triggered creation of SB 497 was the highly publicized efforts of a development consortium, led by members of the Hearst family, to utilize such anomalies to expand either building rights or appraised market value along one of California's finest coastal areas near San Simeon in San Luis Obispo County. This law will severely impact developers intentions on the Gaviota Coast, where four land owners have sued the County in an effort to obtain lot line adjustments to enhance the development potential of their properties.

Governor Davis resisted tremendous lobbying pressure from "property rights" advocates and development interests seeking his veto of SB 497. Thanks also to state Senator O'Connell, and Assemblywoman HB Jackson who supported SB 497. State Senator McClintock opposed it.

If Prop. 40 is to pass, all voters interested in recreation or the environment must remember to register and vote!

Dos Pueblos Golf Course Lives On

Nearly 10 years after a golf course was first proposed for the Arco site at Naples Reef, and despite ongoing opposition by Surfrider Foundation and the environmental community, this project threatens to despoil a beautiful and pristine 200 acres on the Gaviota Coast just west of the Goleta urban boundary.

Originally denied by the County Planning Commission, the project was approved with a Conditional Use Permit by a pro-development Board of Supervisors.

The major concerns with the proposed golf course remain:

- ❖ Development of 200 coastal acres outside of the urban boundary line.
- ❖ Agriculture conversion of class 1 and 2 soils.
- ❖ Impact to sensitive habitats.
- ❖ Urban sprawl on the Gaviota Coast.
- ❖ Restrictions on coastal access.
- ❖ Pesticide and fertilizer runoff.
- ❖ Impacts to resident animal populations.

The site has a wonderful natural diversity of species and habitat that would cease to exist as a result of the project. There is a significant seal rookery at the mouth of Tomate Canyon. Hundreds of brown pelicans rest at Naples Point. Two pairs of rare black shouldered kites, bobcats and coyotes are just a few of the species regularly observed at the site. The site also has many vernal pools and native plant populations, such as native bunch grass. In Eagle Canyon just to the east, there is a major monarch butterfly winter roosting site, as well as endangered red of snowy egrets.

In the spring of 1999, Arco was applying for a permit extension for the golf course at the California Coastal Commission when new information was submitted demonstrating the presence of red legged frogs in Eagle Canyon. Fish and Wildlife then forced Arco to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan, which has been circulated and comments submitted. The next step for the proposed Dos Pueblos Golf Links will be a hearing before the California Coastal Commission, perhaps as soon as April 2002. The April Commission meeting will be held in Santa Barbara so consider attending and commenting on this example of urban sprawl.

Tajiguas Landfill All Wet

The County has made public the Draft Environmental Report on the proposed expansion of the Tajiguas Landfill on the Gaviota Coast. This expansion is to allow for continued waste disposal until at least the year 2020 and would double the area of the canyon affected by landfilling. A coalition of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, Santa Barbara Chapter of Surfrider, Heal The Ocean, and the Environmental Defense Center have been collaborating on efforts to determine if the expansion is appropriate.

Since 1998, when the beach testing program was initiated, it became apparent that significant bacterial pollution of the ocean was occurring near the landfill. Further testing in the creek downstream from the landfill determined that significant bacterial pollution was in the water there. Given that this landfill is unlined there was a good chance that this bacteria came from the landfill and could be migrating downstream in the surface and ground water eventually reaching the ocean only one half mile away.

The groups paid a consulting firm, GeoSolv LLT, to prepare a study to determine the status of the landfill with regard to groundwater impacts. The Study was released in December and shows conclusively that the landfill is saturated with ground water in the lower 100 feet of buried trash. This saturation is prohibited by the landfill permit issued by the California Regional Quality Control Board, which requires that buried trash never be closer than five feet from the highest point of groundwater beneath the landfill. The water impounded behind the retaining berms of the landfill is called leachate as it has mixed with and absorbed many of the chemicals and biological constituents of the landfill. The landfill relies in part on a natural shale formation to keep the leachate from migrating to the ocean. The GeoSolv report shows that this formation cannot be relied on as a containment feature as it is porous and is in fact an aquifer providing domestic water to residents near the landfill.

Until the flooded condition of the landfill can be remedied the groups believe no expansion can or should be allowed. They will be discussing this volatile issue with Water Board staff in the near future. Meanwhile, the County is processing comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Report and will have a Final EIR out sometime this summer. It is clearly evident that the County needs to develop viable alternatives to the Tajiguas Landfill. Toward that end, the County has hired a consultant to review recycling and disposal alternatives. We strongly support such an effort.

Become a Member

Join the GCC and help us maintain our efforts to preserve our beautiful coast-line and watersheds. Membership is:

\$10 for students, seniors, low income

\$25 for other individuals or families

\$40 for businesses

Other donations are greatly appreciated.

We are a non-profit organization so your contribution is tax-deductible under the terms of the law.

Contact us at: P.O. Box 1099
Goleta, CA 93116
(805) 563-7976

You can also download our membership form from our website:

www.gaviotacoast.org

These organizations support the completion of the Gaviota Coast NPS Feasibility Study

Audubon Society- SB Chapter, Blue Dolphin Alliance, CALPIRG, Carpinteria Creek Committee, Channel Keeper, Citizens for Goleta Valley, Citizens Planning Association, Coastwalk, Coastal Resources Information Center, Conception Coast Project, Environmental Defense Center, Foothill Preservation League, Friends of Ellwood Coast, Gaviota Coast Conservancy, Green Party, Growing Solutions, Isla Vista Recreation and Parks Department, League of Women Voters- S.B. Chapter, Local Ocean Network- Channel Islands, National Coast Trails Association, The Ocean Conservancy, Pearl Chase Society, San Luis Obispo Coast Alliance, San Marcos Foothills Coalition, Santa Barbara City Council, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, Santa Barbara County League of Conservation Voters, Santa Barbara Trails Council, Sierra Club- Los Padres Chapter, Small Wilderness Area Preserve, Surfrider Foundation- S.B. and Isla Vista Chapters, UCSB Environmental Affairs Board, Urban Creeks Council.

What You Can Do

Contact any or all of the below to express your support for the preservation of the coast and/or the NPS feasibility study:

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