



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

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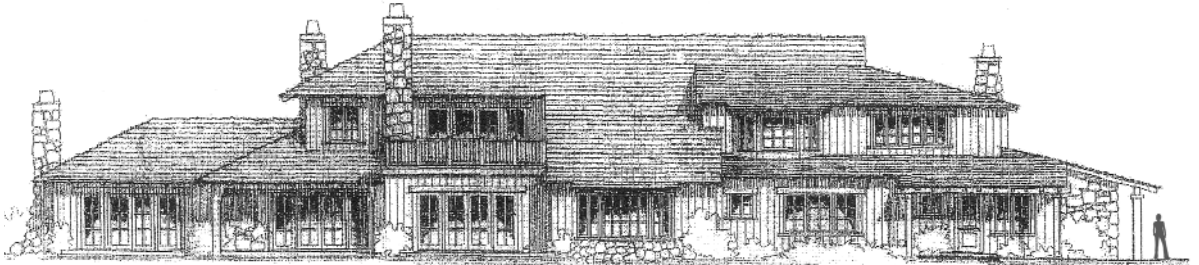
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President's Message



The individual to the right of the house illustrates the scale of a proposed development on Tajiguas Ranch.

This issue of *Coastline* describes the sudden and dramatic increase in development proposals on the Gaviota Coast. Unlike the early 1970's when Selma Rubin led a successful fight against hundreds of tract homes approved for El Capitan, now it's threatened by luxury estates. The above drawing displays the gluttonous scale of a spec house approved for a narrow ridge top at Tajiguas Ranch. The Conservancy has appealed the approval, and may find it necessary to undertake legal action to block its construction. This house is representative of others being proposed and could set an ugly precedent.

Historically, houses on the Gaviota Coast have been much smaller than what are now being proposed. The Conservancy has studied the official County records and learned that the average house size on the Gaviota Coast is presently about 2,850 sq. ft.

House size matters when it comes to compliance with the rural zoning ordinances. The County's Coastal Land Use Policies mandate that houses in rural areas "shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment." Furthermore, "structures shall be subordinate in appearance to natural landforms and shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape." Clearly, the proposal at Tajiguas Ranch flunks these tests.

Our vision statement in the left hand column clearly states our objectives. None of these objectives are met

by the development of mansions across the Gaviota Coast. The large capital cost of such structures drive up property values reducing the economic viability of agriculture, which cannot prosper on over-priced land. The world class scenic value of the rural coast will be destroyed by the visual intrusion of massive homes. The natural environment of the largest remnant of the coastal, Mediterranean ecosystem in southern California will be degraded by this kind of over-the-top development.

Yet, on the other hand, there is also the scent of opportunity in some of this. What if a landowner is willing to be satisfied with something less than maximum build-out under today's zoning rules? Suppose a landowner couples a modest development plan with a conservation easement which permanently extinguishes any further development rights. Would that level of build-out maintain the rural character and environmental values of the coast? The Conservancy respects the rights of landowners, but we will not acquiesce to coastal development that seeks to maximize economic return at the expense of our irreplaceable, vanishing, coastal landscapes.

The inside pages of this issue of *Coastline* are not pretty reading, but they do accurately reflect the intentions of major landowners who noisily argued for "local control" in lieu of a national park.

Thanks for you past support, we will continue to work vigorously in the defense of our coastal heritage.

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You can always retrieve another at our website: www.gaviotacoastconservancy.org.

Gaviota Coast Development Update

These development applications and proposals on the Gaviota Coast are recent and significant; last year at this time only two of these applications were pending. A couple of these projects provide desirable public benefits, but the scale of proposed development will forever alter the rural character of the Gaviota Coast.

1. Tajiguas Ranch: This large 3600 acre ranch is zoned for agriculture, but is withdrawing from the agricultural preserve program. The foreign corporate owner has applied for permission to build the speculative house rendered on the first page of this newsletter. This ridge-line house will be 10,366 sq. ft. and will be accompanied by over 5,000 sq. ft. of additional structures (guest house, pool cabana, barn, etc.) making it impossible to conform to the restrictive conditions in the zoning ordinance. The Conservancy opposed the project at the County Planning Commission, but on a 3-2 vote the project was approved. The Conservancy is appealing this decision to the Board of Supervisors on numerous grounds. First, the project does not comply with several Coastal Land Use Policies as it intrudes into the skyline, it requires extensive grading (5200 cu ft of cut and fill), and it does not fit the site topography. Secondly, it does not comply with the Coastal Zoning Ordinance intent to preserve prime and non-prime soils for agricultural use. Lastly, the project should be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report under CEQA, California Environmental Quality Act, to account for the anticipated cumulative impacts of the owner's development intentions. These intentions include a similar scale speculative house on the opposing canyon ridge-line and the processing of a lot line adjustment to secure other development rights.

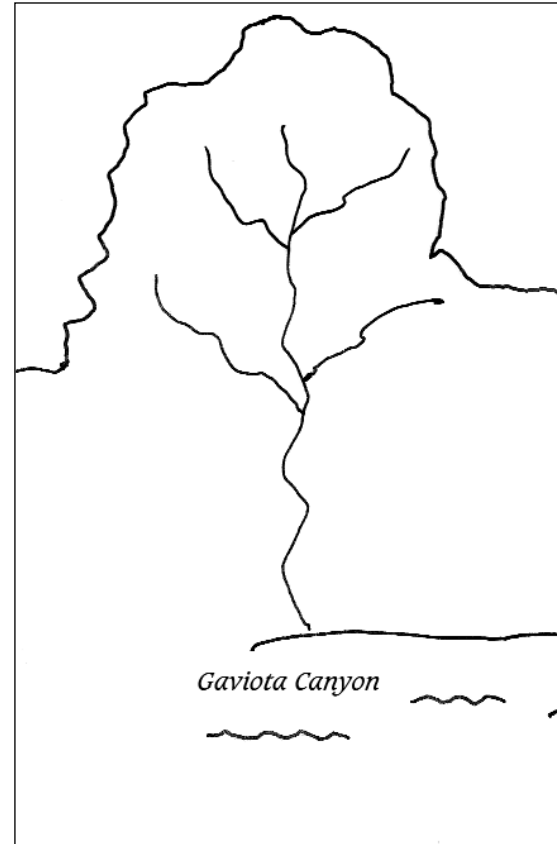
2. Las Varas Ranch: This ranch is located between Dos Pueblos Ranch and El Capitan. Of the 1800 acres, 500 are south of Highway 101. The ranch is zoned for agriculture but is not included in the agricultural preserve program. The owner,

Doheny, seeks to reduce the number of historical parcels from 8 to 7 and create building envelopes of 4 to 5 acres on each lot. Unfortunately, five of the building envelopes will be located south of Highway 101, on the sensitive coastal bluffs. Easements will be offered for the Coastal Trail and vertical access to the beach. No conservation easements are proposed in the application. The scale of the housing is unknown (although assumed to be large) and the majority of the Ranch is contained in the largest 1100 acre parcel where future development potential is reserved by the owner.

3 and 5. Dos Pueblos Ranch and Naples:

The previous owners of Naples, the Moreharts, successfully sued the County to recognize development rights on the property arising from a 19th century development scheme. The development process at Naples is proceeding under a Memorandum of Understanding between the new owner of Naples, Vintage Properties of Newport Beach, and Santa Barbara County. Vintage Properties and the Schulte family of Dos Pueblos Ranch have combined forces to propose building 66 houses on their two properties. Nine of these houses (the largest at 13000+ sq. ft.) are proposed for the coastal bluffs on the Naples property. Significant conservation and agricultural easements, as well as restoration efforts, have been offered by the owners. See issues #5, 8, and 9 of Coastlines on the GCC website for more information.

The Conservancy formed the Naples Coalition with Surfrider, Audubon, Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, and Citizen's Planning Association. The Coalition has submitted two alternatives for evaluation in the Environmental Impact Report to limit building to the north of Highway 101; off the coastal bluffs, and out of public view. The Coalition's alternatives limit structures on each lot to 5000 sq. ft. The Coalition has retained the Environmental Defense Center and

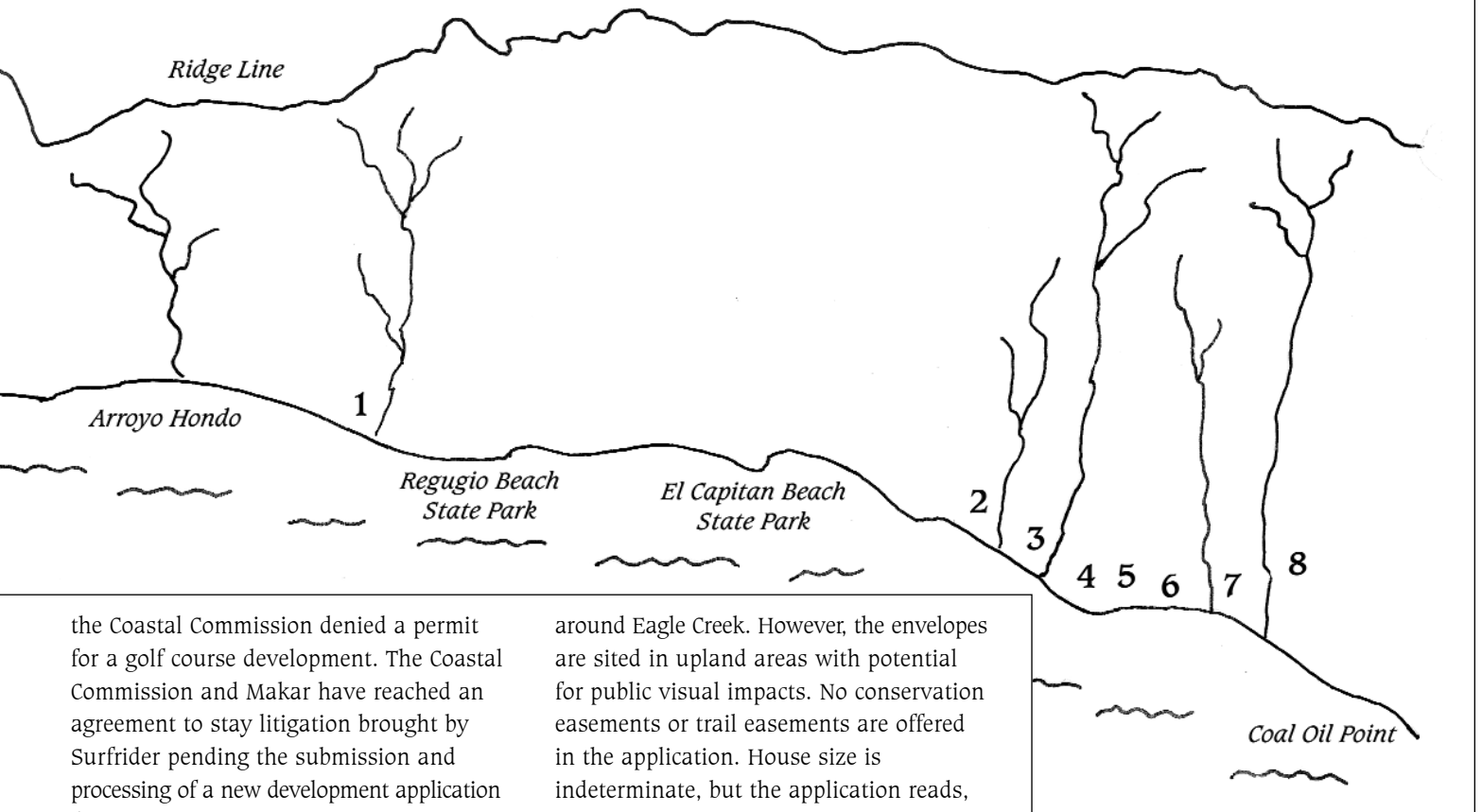


Bioregional Planning Associates to provide it with expert assistance in dealing with this complex issue.

4. Morehart Land Company: The Moreharts brought us Naples and now they bring us more Naples. This 14 acre property sits on the coastal bluffs adjacent to the Naples property and contains 12 lots arising from the 19th century Naples subdivision. They propose merging and subdividing 12 lots into 9 lots. The Morehart's seek to develop these lots in compliance with the standards of the new Naples Zone District, i.e. more mega homes. The homes would be serviced by septic systems which could be problematic due to the proximity of the ocean and Dos Pueblos Creek. An unbuildable steep ravine of 3.2 acres is offered as a conservation easement.

6. Makar Property (the old Arco, Dos Pueblos Links property): The 208 acre Makar property is situated between Highway 101 and the ocean, running from Eagle Creek to the Naples property. In 2002

Gaviota Coast Development Applications and Proposals 2005



the Coastal Commission denied a permit for a golf course development. The Coastal Commission and Makar have reached an agreement to stay litigation brought by Surfrider pending the submission and processing of a new development application for a housing project. Makar has proposed building on 10 of the Naples antiquated lots plus two non-Naples lots. Makar has indicated that if Surfrider can raise enough money to buy the property, Makar would be a willing seller. The conservation purchase of this property will not only protect habitats for endangered and threatened species such as the monarch butterfly, the white-tailed kite, the red-legged frog, and the southern tar plant, but it will also result in protection of a seal rookery.

7. Eagle Canyon: 1060 acres are involved in this development proposal. Seven lots will be merged and adjusted into 4 lots, each lot meeting the 100 acre minimum. The building envelopes are positioned away from sensitive ESHA

around Eagle Creek. However, the envelopes are sited in upland areas with potential for public visual impacts. No conservation easements or trail easements are offered in the application. House size is indeterminate, but the application reads, "...improvements include, but are not limited to, primary residences, guest houses, cabanas, tennis courts, pools and other incidental structures and improvements." The application does not cover all of the Eagle Canyon property as the valuable coastal portion and the northern mountain holdings are omitted, potentially awaiting a future development application.

8. Wallover Subdivision: This development is proposed in a pre-application by the developer of the Bacara Resort and Spa, Alvin Dworman. The 1050 acres will be subdivided from 10 parcels to 27 parcels. A private preserve of dubious value controlled by the homeowners association is offered. House size, assumed to be large and larger, is unknown at this time. Dworman has no

legal entitlement to this subdivision, it is contrary to existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element, is inconsistent with the Goleta Community Plan, and does not comply with current zoning ordinances.

Others:

- 62 unit time-share proposal by the Bacara.
- A ministerial application to construct the Ballantyne residence of 10,034 sq. ft. plus garage, guest house, barn, etc on 17 acres located on Farren Road overlooking Eagle Canyon.
- Others to follow...

CAN YOU HELP?

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

\$10 for students, seniors, low income

\$25 for other individuals or families

\$40 for businesses

The Conservancy has historically performed almost all of its conservation efforts in house with volunteers. This has kept our expenses for experts such as attorneys and consultants to a minimum.

However, the vast scale of proposed development projects will require us to retain professionals to appeal applications and mount legal challenges. Furthermore, we anticipate promoting a new initiative to establish a Gaviota Rural Planning Area and will be organizing the community to respond to the drastic policy changes of the new pro-growth Supervisor majority.

This will take a lot of money. Anything you can return to us in the reply envelope will be appreciated and used very efficiently.

Thanks!


Urban Sprawl; “What, me worry?”

“Anything like this that helps Bacara become more profitable is good for the city. People who have heartburn over this are the ones who didn’t want development there at all. Since that ship has sailed, we ought to do it in the best way we can.”

— *Kristen Amyx, CEO of the Goleta Chamber of Commerce commenting on the 62 two and three bedroom unit additions proposed for the hotel.*

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