

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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## President's Message

# An Irreplaceable Environment

The Gaviota Coast is situated within the only Mediterranean climate in America, and is an example of one of only five such environments on earth. This rare, environment is rated just below the tropical rain forest for high biodiversity, and yet it has the highest density of imperiled species in America.

The loss of biodiversity should be a concern to everyone. With genetic diversity there is stability in nature, but without it, we are vulnerable to unpredictable changes which can degrade the vitality of the biosphere. The increasing rate of species' extinctions being reported today represents a risk to the future. For the sake of the land, the animals, and our own welfare it's essential to protect biodiversity.

The rich biodiversity of the Gaviota Coast is a product of at least three factors: 1) its location at the boundary of two distinct bio-geographic regions where plant and animal assemblages overlap; 2) its connection to large, interior wildlands, allowing wildlife to move freely in and out of the area; and 3) the largely undisturbed character of the various habitats, particularly the more than 30 stream corridors with their riparian forests. These conditions provide shelter for large mammals such as black bears, mountain lions, and mule deer, as well as small fish and wildlife such as tidewater goby, steelhead trout, horned

lizards and pond turtles. Gaviota's riparian habitats harbor the highest richness of bird species of anywhere in the state.



*Egret at Naples Reef*  
Photo by Christina McGinnis

In addition, the Gaviota Coast is situated on the northern shore of the Santa Barbara Channel, where a similar ecoregion boundary exists in the marine environment. Northern, cold-water currents mix with warmer southern water, blending northern and southern marine plants and animals, and dispersing them among the many habitats of the islands and the coast. These currents blend the flow from the coastal watersheds into the marine habitats, making it clear that what we do on land affects the sea.

Happily, the historical remoteness of the Gaviota Coast and its agricultural zoning has left it largely undeveloped and its habitats less disturbed. From the coastal mountains, to the islands and beyond lies a functioning ecosystem which is internationally important and locally vulnerable. Protecting the rural, undeveloped character of the Gaviota Coast is crucial to the vitality of this ecosystem and the biodiversity it harbors.

The most eminent threat to the Gaviota Coast is habitat fragmentation caused by residential development. Contrary to existing zoning, we face a large residential development at Naples which could induce additional development, changing the character of the Gaviota Coast forever.

## Hike to Naples Reef!

The Naples Coalition invites you to hike to the Naples Reef on a low tide at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 9. They will leave from the Bacara public access parking lot. Please contact Kristen Hoye at (805) 452-5936, email [info@savenaples.org](mailto:info@savenaples.org), or visit [www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org) for more information.

# Gaviota Coast Development Update

## Naples

The development proposed for Naples is based on a historical accident that an Orange County Developer is turning into his dream project. A long-forgotten 120 year-old subdivision map is threatening to be morphed into 600,000 square feet of building on the Gaviota Coast. While this seems preposterous, it is dangerously close to becoming a reality as the developer revises his EIR that proposes massive construction on the largest remnant of our Mediterranean coastal heritage.

The history of urban sprawl involves developers “leapfrogging” into undeveloped, rural areas to further expand the urban environment. This is the exact circumstance at Naples. The County argues that Naples is a special case that cannot be replicated elsewhere on the coast. However, because this project will be highly visible from both sides of Highway 101, and because it violates the urban/rural boundary and fragments agricultural lands, it sets the stage for future developers, to say; “That ship has already sailed, how can we be denied development rights?”

There is a process for meeting the needs of the government, public and developer in a win-win-win solution. The County is mandated by its own Local Coastal Policy 2-13 to “discourage residential development” and “assist the property owner(s) in transferring development rights from the Naples Townsite” to appropriate urban areas. The policy is clear, but its implementation is complicated by economic constraints and political considerations.

The Conservancy and its affiliate, the Naples Coalition ([www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org)),

are working non-stop to defend the environmental integrity of the Naples property and insure that the County adheres to its own land use policies.

The County, however, is threatened with a lawsuit by the developer and needs to be held accountable for its future decisions.

We will not allow this lawsuit to substitute for proper planning procedures or allow the County to succumb to “subdivision by lawsuit.”

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*Aerial photo of the Naples property by Bill Dewey >*

*Below left is the architect's drawing of the largest house proposed for the Naples property.*

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## Ballantyne

The Ballantyne House is a multi-building, single-family residence proposed for the rural hilltop north of Highway 101, skirted by Farren Road and just west of Rancho Embarcadero. The proposal is enormous at 15,864 square feet and will include a barn, guest house, an attached garage, and a residence of 11,498 sq. ft. The structure is 300 feet in length, and even after changes, the house clearly breaks the skyline from Farren Road and Highway 101.

Over the staff's objections, the County Planning Commission recently allowed the development to proceed. The Conservancy made strenuous objections and has filed an appeal before the Board of Supervisors. If this violation of the Visual Resources Policy is permitted, then one of the most effective tools for protecting the rural character of the Gaviota Coast goes out the window. Let your Supervisor know how you feel.

## Tajiguas Ranch

The Conservancy successfully concluded its appeal of Bean Blossom Lot X, a County approved, two-story mansion on a 106 acre coastal parcel overlooking Highway 101. The result was a “consensus project” negotiated over a period of 18 months that was not only approved but applauded by a unanimous Board of Supervisors. It reduced the house size, moved it out of sight of public viewing places, restricted exotic landscaping, utilized a new “reverse berm” concept to allow the natural landform to hide the house, and modified the driveway to make it far less noticeable.

We are continuing our discussions with the owner's representatives concerning another large house on the ranch. The success of our past discussions have revealed the possibility of mutually beneficial outcomes and transformed the adversarial appeal process into a negotiated collaboration.

We hope to achieve a reduction in the residential build-out and to gain permanent conservation, agricultural and open space easements.



## Naples Environmental Impact Report Hearing

The release of the revised Naples EIR is tentatively scheduled for June; please visit the Naples Coalition website, [www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org), for more information. The first hearing on the EIR was standing room only and extremely productive. The amount and quality of public comment caused the entire document to be revised. A strong showing of public involvement always influences public decisions, so please consider attending this meeting; it will be a great opportunity to learn more about the Naples project, the threats it poses to the Gaviota Coast, and comment if you desire.

The Naples Coalition, an association of Citizens Planning Association, Gaviota Coast Conservancy, League of Women Voters, Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club, SB Audubon, SB Surfrider, and SBCAN, has been meeting for over 4 years to develop a strategy and build community support to preserve the rural character of the Naples Property.

Visit the Coalition's website at [www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org) for current information and to verify the date of the public hearing (it has "slipped" before).



*Hiking to Naples. Photo by Phil McKenna.*

## Gaviota Oil Terminal

Operations permanently ended in the fall of 2004 at this former oil storage and marine terminal facility. The owner, Gaviota Terminal Company, is preparing an application for demolition and reclamation of this industrial site; it will not be missed. The property includes two small creeks, a variety of habitat types, and access to a small cove at the beach.

This Gaviota cove is very attractive and funding is being sought by the Trust for Public Land to acquire this property for permanent protection. With its excellent highway access at the Mariposa Reina overpass, and more suitable setting for camping, it could replace the current campground at Gaviota Creek that is subject to periodic flooding.

## Makar Properties

Between Eagle Creek and Naples lies the former Arco Oil Company property, once destined to be another golf course. The Coastal Commission denied that project after years of strong advocacy by Santa Barbara Surfrider Foundation. The owner, Makar Properties LLC, a Newport Beach development company, has recently submitted a pre-application to the County for permits to build two houses there, one on each of the two largest parcels between Highway 101 and the ocean. Makar is also interested in building 10 additional houses on lots it owns on a portion of the antiquated Naples Townsite. The Makar properties do not have the necessary water rights to support the proposed development and annexation to existing sources such as the Goleta Water District would be growth inducing in the surrounding Gaviota Coast area.

## Bixby Ranch

One of the largest ranches in Santa Barbara County has sold to the Boston investment firm Baupost Group for \$135,000,000. The Bixby Ranch, long owned by the Bixby family, is comprised of both the Jalama and Cojo ranches, amounting to 24,247 acres. Baupost's plans are not known but an article in the Santa Barbara Independent quoted sources as saying Baupost may be interested in a combination of slant drilling into State tideland oil reserves, as well as the breakup of the ranch and selling its component parcels. The ranch is accessed by the long, narrow, twisting, and accident prone Jalama Rd. The Air Force purchased development rights from Bixby for safety reasons, reducing the number of buildable lots to about 70. However, no residential development rights remain within a coastal strip about a mile wide, extending from Jalama Road to Government Point. The Conservancy is very interested in monitoring any land use changes on this large, coastal property at the "cape" of California.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Attend the hearing on the Naples revised EIR. Please visit [www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org) for date, time, and location.
- Volunteer to build community support around the issues affecting the Gaviota Coast by Calling Naples Outreach Coordinator, Kristen Hoye at (805) 452-5936 or email [info@savenaples.org](mailto:info@savenaples.org).

- **Join the GCC and help us maintain our efforts to preserve our beautiful coastline and watersheds. Please use our reply envelope and Thank You!**
- **Make a donation to the Gaviota Coast Conservancy. We are a volunteer organization that relies upon public support to continue our work. We cannot defend our coastal heritage without broad based community involvement; please be generous. Many Thanks!**

*"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his father, but borrowed from his children."*

— John James Audubon

## Links

### Gaviota Coast Conservancy:

[www.gaviotacoastconservancy.org](http://www.gaviotacoastconservancy.org)

### Naples Coalition:

[www.savenaples.org](http://www.savenaples.org)

### Santa Barbara Surfrider:

[www.surfrider.org/santabarbara](http://www.surfrider.org/santabarbara)

### Environmental Defense Center:

[www.edcnet.org/](http://www.edcnet.org/)

### Santa Barbara County:

#### Gaviota Projects:

[www.sbcountyplanning.org](http://www.sbcountyplanning.org)

*from the left navigation, choose*

*Current Projects & Programs >*

*go to Cumulative Project Lists >*

*Gaviota Coast Current Projects List*

### Santa Barbara County:

#### Naples Project (Santa Barbara Ranch):

[www.sbcountyplanning.org](http://www.sbcountyplanning.org)

*from the left navigation, choose*


*Current Projects & Programs >*

*go to Land Development Under Review >*

*Santa Barbara Ranch*

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