

Coastline

GAVIOTA COAST CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

FALL / WINTER 2023



The Future is Now

BY PHIL MCKENNA, 25-YEAR GCC BOARD MEMBER

The Gaviota Coast is not just a stretch of land and coastline; it's our shared heritage and a source of inspiration for all who call this place home. The rural character of the Coast and its mountains is the finest expression of the Southern California Mediterranean environment. A place where the past, present, and future converge. So, what is the Conservancy doing today to shape the future of the Gaviota Coast?

The Conservancy's plans include establishing a native plant nursery for large-scale restoration projects and the creation of conservation easements on private lands. These initiatives enhance the region's internationally recognized ecological diversity.

Agriculture is an essential component of the Coast's vitality. The Conservancy funded a vermiculture (worm farming) project on a local ranch to demonstrate to ranchers the productivity vermicast provides to local crops. We have underwritten large-scale compost application on rangeland of several

ranches to invigorate the soil. GCC funded a 1.13 acre demonstration coffee plantation (the first crop is this year) to evaluate the economic potential of this new local crop.

Recreation and public access are essential components of developing community awareness and appreciation of our coastal environment and we continue to develop easements for the California Coast Trail along some of the bluff-top properties.

We actively monitor land use issues on the Coast to ensure that any development is consistent with County and State regulations. Our involvement in the County's Gaviota Coast Plan, spanning a decade from inception to approval, safeguards the coast from inappropriate development and preserves the public's view of mountain and coastal landscapes.

The conservation initiatives we undertake aren't just for us; they're a legacy for our children and the generations to come. Our actions today will shape tomorrow's future. Join us ... the future is now for the making.

Gaviota Coast Conservancy is dedicated to protecting the rural character and environmental integrity of the Gaviota Coast for present and future generations.

Honoring Our Lifelines: Donor Appreciation at GCC

GREG HELMS, GCC BOARD PRESIDENT

As Board President of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, I'm profoundly grateful for our dedicated donors. Your contributions, regardless of size, drive our mission to protect and preserve the Gaviota Coast. Your support champions our vision to secure this coastal gem for future generations. Every donation matters, fueling conservation efforts, land preservation, research, and education programs that resonate with our shared vision.

Your generosity creates a ripple effect, inspiring others to join our cause and become stewards of this remarkable coastline. Donors are more than financial supporters; they are integral members of our close-knit community.

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The Enduring Benefits of Permanent Conservation on the Gaviota Coast

BY DOUG KERN

The Gaviota Coast, with its breathtaking vistas, pristine beaches, and diverse ecosystems, has long been a treasure along California's coastline. As stewards of this remarkable region, the Gaviota Coast Conservancy is dedicated to preserving it for present and future generations.

Protecting Biodiversity. One of the most significant advantages of permanent conservation is the safeguarding of biodiversity. The Gaviota Coast is home to a wide array of plant and animal species, some of which are endangered or unique to this region. By preserving their natural habitats, we ensure their survival and contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem.

Preserving Scenic Beauty. The Gaviota Coast's stunning vistas and rugged landscapes are a source of inspiration for residents and visitors alike. Permanent conservation guarantees that these scenic treasures will remain untouched by development, allowing future generations to experience the same awe and wonder that we do today.

Enhancing Quality of Life. Conservation efforts on the Gaviota Coast enhance the quality of life for local communities. Protected open spaces provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, birdwatching, and beachcombing. These activities promote physical and mental well-being and foster a strong sense of community.

Mitigating Climate Change. The Gaviota Coast plays a crucial role in mitigating climate change. Its natural



Bill Dewey

ecosystems store carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping combat global warming. Additionally, preserving coastal habitats supports resilience against sea-level rise and extreme weather events.

Educational Opportunities. Conservation efforts offer valuable educational opportunities for residents and students. The Gaviota Coast becomes an outdoor classroom, fostering a deep appreciation for nature and inspiring future environmental stewards.

Permanent conservation on the Gaviota Coast is an investment in the future. It not only safeguards the environment but also enriches our lives. We invite you to join us in this vital endeavor to ensure that this coastal paradise remains a haven for generations to come.



Rich Reid

HONORING OUR LIFELINES - *continued from page 1*

Together, we work tirelessly to protect the Gaviota Coast, fostering a deep sense of togetherness and shared purpose that resonates through our conservation endeavors. It's crucial to emphasize that your support isn't just for today; it shapes the future of the Gaviota Coast, preserving its unparalleled beauty, accessibility, and ecological significance. On behalf of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional donors. You are the driving force behind our conservation efforts. If you're already a donor, your continued support is invaluable. If you're considering joining our community of donors, you play a vital role in helping secure the Gaviota Coast's future.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment!

How Do Conservation Easements Benefit Landowners?



Conservation easements are a powerful tool for landowners seeking to protect the natural beauty and ecological integrity of their property for future generations. But what exactly is a conservation easement, and how do landowners benefit from it?

A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization or government agency. This agreement places restrictions on land use to preserve its conservation values, such as open space, wildlife habitat, scenic views, or historic landmarks.

The primary benefit for landowners is the assurance that their property will be conserved in perpetuity, aligning with their environmental values and creating a lasting legacy. Importantly, land under a conservation easement remains privately owned, allowing landowners to continue residing on and managing the property while safeguarding its natural features.

Conservation easements can offer financial advantages. They may qualify for tax incentives, including federal

income tax deductions and potential property tax reductions. By limiting development on the land, the property's value may decrease, leading to lower property taxes and reducing the financial burden on landowners.

Additionally, conservation easements contribute to the broader community by preserving natural landscapes and enhancing the quality of life for everyone. It's a win-win situation: landowners get to protect their cherished properties while enjoying potential financial benefits, and the broader community benefits from the preservation of natural landscapes and a higher quality of life. This symbiotic relationship between landowners and the community ensures the long-term protection of our natural treasures.

Safeguarding Our Coast: GCC and Partners Defeat Exxon's Valve Upgrade Project

In a pivotal battle to protect the Gaviota Coast, GCC and its partners triumphed over Exxon's Valve Upgrade Project. For now, this remarkable victory safeguards the County's environment and its residents from the dire consequences of another oil spill.

Background and Overview:

Plains Lines 901 and 903 extend along the Gaviota Coast and were the sites of a catastrophic oil spill in 2015. Line 901 ruptured, spilling an estimated 451,500 gallons of heavy crude oil into the Pacific Ocean, devastating the coastline and harming marine life.

The spill's cause was corrosion of the pipeline, which led to Plains being held criminally liable and facing substantial penalties and fines. These pipelines were subsequently purchased by Exxon, who sought approval for the Valve Upgrade Project to resume oil operations.

A Hard-Fought Battle:

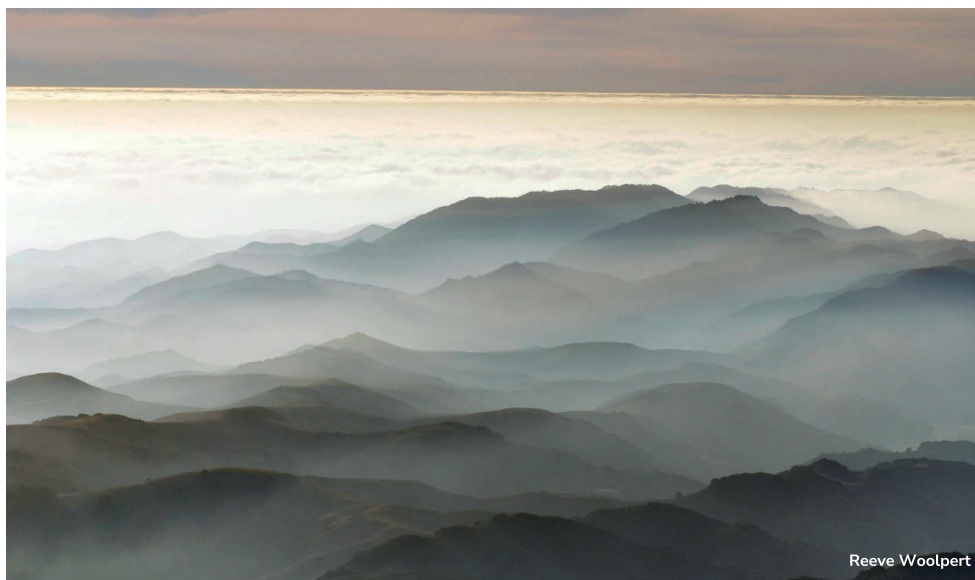
GCC appealed the approval of the Valve Upgrade Project, along with Gaviota Coast landowners directly affected by the project. After rigorous public hearings, the Planning Commission voted to deny the project, citing its



detrimental impact on the environment and community. Exxon appealed this denial to the County Board of Supervisors, and in August the Board voted 2-2 on the appeal, resulting in no action, effectively a defeat for Exxon.

Your Voices Mattered:

This victory is a testament to the dedication and tenacity of GCC, its partners and your community voices in safeguarding the Gaviota Coast, its unique ecosystems, and the well-being of the community. Thank you!



Embracing the Biodiversity of the Gaviota Coast

BY DOUG KERN

Biodiversity thrives on the Gaviota Coast, sheltering species like the elusive California tiger salamander and the threatened Western snowy plover. Abundant marine life can be found beneath the Pacific's surface, in a vibrant marine ecosystem home to kelp forests, sea otters, and blue whales. The Gaviota Coast is a migratory haven along the Pacific Flyway, offering nesting grounds for seabirds like the Western gull and the Black Oystercatcher. The unique flora of coastal chaparral and oak woodlands features rare and endemic plants, such as the Gaviota tarplant, found nowhere else.

In the face of climate change, the coast serves as a buffer, with its wetlands absorbing water and providing

resilience against sea-level rise. Beyond beauty, the Gaviota Coast supplies clean water, supports pollinators, and combats climate change through carbon sequestration.

Our human connection with this Coast is profound as long as we protect the biodiversity. The Coast has been a source of inspiration, recreation, and livelihood for generations, reinforcing its importance. Stewardship and education are part of our mission, extending beyond protection to engage with the community, fostering a sense of responsibility for its well-being.

Let's draw inspiration from its beauty and ecological significance to ensure it remains a thriving, protected ecosystem.

Coming Events

Sunday, November 26

2:00pm – 4:30pm
Low Tide Beach Hike from El Capitan State Beach South (actually east)

Sunday, December 10

1:00pm – 3:30pm
Low Tide Beach Hike from Haskell's toward Naples

Saturday, January 13

3:30pm – 5:30pm
Low Tide Beach Hike from Gaviota State Beach toward Hollister Ranch

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