

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Trails Subcommittee Meeting Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee

Tuesday January 10, 2012
1:30 p.m.

El Capitan Canyon Campground
11560 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93117
Mesa Yurt*



Agenda

1. **Public Comment:** The Public Comment period is set aside to allow public testimony on items **not** on today's agenda.
2. Meeting Notes Review
3. Review of Interconnecting/Coastal Trail & Access Planning
4. Discussion of Report to GavPAC
5. Meeting Schedule
6. Adjourn

*An employee at the campground entrance kiosk will direct you where to park and how to find the meeting room.

Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee - Trails Subcommittee
Meeting No. 9
Tuesday December 6, 2011

Draft Meeting Notes

The GavPAC Trails Subcommittee (TS) meeting was held at El Capitan Canyon Campground in the Mesa Yurt meeting room. The meeting was convened at 2:10 p.m. by Chair Bowman.

Attendees: TS members Beverly Boise-Cossart, Terry Bowman, Michael Feeney, and Christina McGinnis. County staff members: David Lackie, Brian Tetley, and Bret McNulty of Long Range Planning and Claude Garciacelay of County Parks.

Members of the public: Dan Falat and Rich Rozzelle of State Parks, Doug Dodge of US Forest Service, Ray Ford of the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC), Mark Chaconas of the Cojo-Jalama Ranches, Paul Van Leer of Las Varas Ranch, and George Amoon.

Agenda Item 1. Public Comment for items not on Agenda: None

Agenda Item 2. Meeting Notes Review: Boise-Cossart moved to adopt the November 21, 2011 Meeting #8 notes as amended, seconded by McGinnis, and passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 3. Discussion of Coastal Access Planning

Boise-Cossart asked that the agenda item title, "Discussion of Coastal Access Planning" be revised for the next meeting to include "trails." Tetley reviewed newly revised aerials depicting the preferred and alternative routes for the Coastal Trail starting with El Capitan Campgrounds on the west. He described new text box for the El Capitan/101 interchange referencing TS direction from the previous meeting to support Caltrans and State Parks efforts to increase vehicle and pedestrian safety between the campgrounds and along either side of 101 by providing designated pedestrian and bicycle routes separated from vehicle lanes. Rozzelle noted State Parks is working with County and Caltrans on the issue. Tetley described a potential trail alignment along the north side of 101 west of El Capitan including an existing tunnel that, according to Falat, is used solely for maintenance by the rail authority. The TS discussed the tunnel and the feasibility of its use in the future. Falat described several challenges associated with the tunnel.

Motion, by Feeney, to remove the reference to the tunnel from the map. Seconded, by Bowman and passed 4-0.

Staff described the proposed Coastal Trail alignment to the west and Falat discussed the status of and lack of repair options for the collapsed section of the existing multiuse trail along the bluff between El Capitan and Refugio. Beach goers may walk the beach and may opt to use a stairway. The TS and Falat discussed existing access used by surfers through a closed area near the park and a preference for a route along the north side of 101 along Calle Real due to the issues along the bluff, including bluff retreat and proximity to 101 and the railway. Feeney recommended that narrative be included that stated in the event the Rail Authority were to reconstruct this railway segment in the future, that a trail connection should be included.

Staff reviewed parking and safety concerns at the Refugio State Park interchange. Parks staff expressed the main concern being that beach goers parking along the curve in the road under 101 pose a safety issue due to the lack of visibility for on-coming drivers. Tetley reviewed the text for this location directing the County to work with State Parks and Caltrans and public works to establish viable parking options for recreational day use in this area. Rozzelle described a previous meeting between County representatives and property owners, reiterated State Parks concerns for pedestrian safety, and summarized Caltrans' determination that due to the safety issue, parking along the east side of the road be eliminated. McGinnis expressed concerns that the solution created additional safety issues by requiring people to cross the road. State Parks staff discussed the hazards associated with pedestrians using the blind curve and the lack of visibility of the existing trail along the creek which leads to the park. McGinnis recommended adding signs to direct foot traffic to the trail.

The TS identified two main reasons for parking demand at the Refugio/101 interchange. First, there is inadequate parking to accommodate visitor demand for access to Refugio State Park during the peak summer months, and a desire by beach-goers to avoid paying the parking fee at Refugio. Feeney stated future parking should not be located on a conservation easement. The TS discussed potential locations for additional parking along the roads, on public or private land and within the Refugio State Park itself. Falat noted the park has limited infrastructure capacity to accommodate additional users.

Bowman noted that text should be added to find and develop additional parking opportunities at this location. Falat noted that there is plenty of parking at El Capitan for those who would like to use the trail to Refugio. Ford noted there is an existing PRT line and asked where people would park to ride bicycles up Refugio Road to Camino Cielo Road. The TS asked that the text box be revised to address safety and that trail route signs be added to the text.

Tetley and Falat reviewed potential routes west of Refugio State Park. Rozzelle noted that State Parks has serious concerns about using the previously identified alignment (Condor Study) west of Refugio State Park and summarized the issues associated with locating a trail along a narrow corridor between the privately held railway and the south side of 101, with informal public access already encroaching in half a dozen places. Issues he cited included: sea level rise, bluff erosion, 25 major creek crossings, 35 known archaeological sites, and 25 minor creek and numerous drainage crossings. He noted that when looking at a route to Gaviota State Park, is to ask whether is it even feasible or desirable to go down this route and what that would look like. Instead, he suggested using alignments on the beach and along Camino Cielo Road to Carpinteria. The TS discussed the route, constraints along the route and the narrow area between the bluff and roadway in which a trail could be located. Boise-Cossart noted the potential for future conflicts. Rozzelle noted the existing informal access areas and no trespassing notices posted on the railway. He noted that the State Parks general plan only shows access from the state parks.

Lackie noted that an existing Class II bicycle route runs along 101 and that Caltrans is required to plan for this continued use. He suggested that off road routes along 101 are an option. The TS reviewed the aerials and discussed options along the route and safety issues related to existing bicycle use along 101. The TS discussed a potential segment from the Refugio State Park to Tajiguas following the south side of 101 and the county frontage road near Tajiguas. The TS weighed the feasibility of various alignments, the long-term vision associated with the plan, and the implication of having a plan lacking direction in the event an opportunity should arise. The TS discussed the feasibility of a backbone trail along the ridge and having coastal access punch in where available. Ford discussed the challenges related to ownership and

easements off Camino Cielo. He noted support for the crest route, but emphasized his position that identifying a viable coastal route is very important. He noted that progress had been made on providing an at-grade crossing from Carpinteria to Rincon. He noted that beach routes are viable along the route from Refugio to Gaviota, with the exceptions of rocky stretches just west of Refugio. He noted the frontage road near Arroyo Quemada as a potential access route and that the stretch of beach from Tajiguas to the Arroyo Hondo entrance is wide open. The TS reviewed the aerials and suggested investigating further and piecing together a route along the beach and the bluff.

Garciaclay discussed locating a pedestrian path next to the K-rail and past discussions with Caltrans regarding their abandoning the old bridge at Arroyo Quemada for trail use. He suggested having the trail avoid the Arroyo Quemada community and extend the trail along the road to the vista point to the west. He and Amoon discussed Caltrans plans to expand the fill supporting the existing northbound lane and shifting the southbound lane north to provide better access. He described an existing tunnel running under the freeway and railway at Arroyo Quemada that allows the creek to pass.

The TS discussed access and potential alignments between 101 and the railway from Tajiguas to San Onofre. Boise-Cossart discussed the concept of squeezing the trail into a narrow area and it creating an urban experience and environmental impacts. Ford expressed that the TS should be looking to identify ways to improve bicycle safety along the route. The TS discussed the merits of bicycle safety and identified increasing the area alongside 101 or the installation of K-rails as potential means to increase safety.

The TS discussed how Coastwalk provides instruction on their websites as to how to plan when the best days and times of low tides to travel on the sections of the Coastal Trail along the beach. Garciaclay noted that the County's policy is to plan for multi-use trails, but effective management can result in use restrictions, such as those in place at Baron Ranch. The TS discussed planning for Coastal Trail extension beyond Gaviota State Park. It was suggested that bicycle planning could be left to Caltrans. Lackie noted the importance of planning this segment, since in the future the issue of access will be pushed forward. He identified a potential access point off 101 and noted that the County was currently negotiating at-grade access across the railroad at Santa Claus Lane. The TS discussed a range of issues related to the provision of access. The TS discussed ownership, access issues and the importance at recognizing the challenges and addressing access in alternative places. Lackie suggested the TS could provide formalized access and parking as a means of eliminating undesirable access locations. The TS discussed various potential access locations and how existing informal access has been increasing over time.

The TS discussed reviewing existing state policies to address circumstances where the road is constrained and relying on references to state requirements for bicycle lanes along both sides of the road and beach access. Lackie noted that if Caltrans is removing at grade interchanges and are required to provide alternatives access as part of the state mandate. Feeney noted that this should be a policy statement.

Lackie summarized the direction from the TS for the segment from Refugio State Park to Tajiguas as follows:

Look at how Caltrans and state law accommodates long term planning of bicycle access as the basis for crafting a policy statement which could include bicycle lanes along the Caltrans right-of-way separated from the roadway by barriers or a K-rail. The text will

include a statement that supports exploring opportunities to work with private land owners along this segment for the potential to acquire coastal and trail access. Add a statement for Caltrans to consider long term coastal access through small day use access points, and the provision of a Coastal Trail Route along the beach.

Amoon suggested locating the trail route north of the railway, since the Rail Authority would protect and maintain its route and the trail. The TS discussed the feasibility of two-lane off highway bike path and Amoon cited the new bicycle route on Ortega Hill next to 101 in Summerland as an example. The TS discussed the merits of locating bicycle routes off the highway through Refugio State Park or keeping them along 101. Falat recommended identifying long range options for off-101 routes in collaboration with the affected agencies, without delineating a specific route in the plan. He discussed the optimal route for bikes to enter the park. The TS discussed routing the coastal trail into El Capitan through the entry gate kiosk.

Bowman summarized the TS direction on the maps as follows: designate 101 as the bike trail, the coast as the walking trail, including a narrative about opportunities to acquire private and publically held land. Staff will comeback with the narrative framework for the TS to review.

After a break, the TS reviewed the aeriels and potential alignments from Tajiguas on the east and Gaviota State Park on the west. The TS considered an alignment from Tajiguas down the county road through a gate and over the at-grade crossing used by Arroyo Quemada residents. The alignment continued north of Arroyo Quemada along the road and across the at-grade crossing to the Caltrans right-of-way, then on to the Caltrans scenic rest area and the existing bridge at Arroyo Hondo. The TS discussed the status of the bridge at Arroyo Hondo and whether it still belonged to Caltrans or the County. Staff will investigate the status of the bridge.

The TS discussed challenges to locating an alignment in the narrow area between 101 and the beach west of Arroyo Hondo. The TS reviewed San Onofre (east of Mariposa Reina) and discussed a past State Parks plan for a trail segment on this site. Falat described how State Parks had designed a trail from San Onofre to Gaviota State Park, but noted sensitive resources, limited access, and potential future maintenance and management problems have left the future of the route in question. Garciacelay discussed past funding for a trail from Gaviota to San Onofre and Vista del Mar. He noted that in the past, there was a designated coastal access site and signs just off the roadway east of the Mariposa Reina southbound ingress ramp. State Parks will advise the TS regarding the status of the alignment at a future meeting.

Tetley briefly summarized the status of the tank farm retirement, potential trail loops at Gaviota Village properties and redesignation of the Gaviota Terminal site to Recreation land use.

Agenda Item 4. Subcommittee Meeting Schedule

Lackie noted that at their next meeting, the TS would consider potential Coastal Trail alignments and access where they left off today beginning at Tajiguas and moving west to Gaviota State Park and beyond.

The TS will next meet on Monday, December 12 at 1:30 P.M. at the El Capitan Canyon Campground. The meeting adjourned at 4:43p.m.

The Meeting Notes were prepared by Bret McNulty, Planner.

Gaviota Coast Planning Advisory Committee - Trails Subcommittee
Meeting No. 10
Monday, December 12, 2011

Draft Meeting Notes

The GavPAC Trails Subcommittee (TS) meeting was held at El Capitan Canyon Campground in the Mesa Yurt meeting room. The meeting was convened at 1:40 p.m. by Chair Bowman.

Attendees: TS members Beverly Boise-Cossart, Terry Bowman, Michael Feeney, and Christina McGinnis. County staff members: Brian Tetley and Bret McNulty of Long Range Planning and Claude Garciacelay of County Parks.

Members of the public: Dan Falat and Rich Rozzelle of State Parks, Doug Dodge of US Forest Service, Ray Ford of the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC), Mark Chaconas of the Cojo-Jalama Ranches, and George Amoon.

Agenda Item 1. Public Comment for items not on Agenda: None

Agenda Item 2. Meeting Notes Review: The draft notes for the December 6, 2011 meeting were not yet available and will be reviewed, together with the minutes from this meeting, at the January 10, 2012 Trails Subcommittee meeting.

Agenda Item 3. Discussion of Coastal Access and Trails Planning

Tetley reviewed the previous TS meeting discussion and identified coastal access and trails route options from El Capitan Campground to Tajiguas. He reviewed the potential for land acquisitions and primary access along the beach. The TS discussed the merits of loop trails, constraints in certain areas, and safety related to route locations. Rozzelle summarized issues State Parks had identified related to trails, including trail safety and the potential for impacts to cultural and biological resources. He stated he did not want to put lines on a map, because from his perspective the constraints are too great. He suggested waiting for State Parks to update their general plan for the three parks and conduct environmental review before identifying routes.

The TS discussed including *de facto* beach access and keeping the status quo bicycle access along 101. Garciacelay recommended having the policy narrative identify a range of options and scenarios to avoid not being able to take advantage of opportunities that arise. Roselle and the TS discussed the potential for policy direction in the Gaviota Plan to result in having Caltrans close existing informal access to the beach when improving the bicycle lanes along 101. Garciacelay suggested that the plan acknowledge existing informal access sites to ensure they are acknowledged in future planning and during environmental review. The TS discussed the merits of including the informal access sites in the plan and previous discussions by the full GavPAC to the contrary. The TS considered adding a policy statement that any future trail/bicycle lane improvements by Caltrans along 101 not eliminate or preclude development of any formal, planned or existing informal vertical access sites along the coast.

Rozzelle noted how State Parks currently struggles with maintaining the existing informal access areas even though their plans identify development of day use at San Onofre and Vista del Mar. He cited carrying capacity constraints (water, infrastructure) and problems with looting of sensitive sites on state land. Feeney noted the need to prioritize the protection of existing

facilities and not expanding them. Bowman expressed support for including the policy language suggested by Garciacelay that the plan acknowledge formal and existing informal access sites and potential improvements and/or expansion as opportunities or funding becomes available. Feeney noted agreement, but did not support developing stairways at all existing informal access sites.

The TS discussed vehicle code restrictions, the legality of parking, at-grade rail crossings and trespass issues. Rozzelle noted to improve access at San Onofre, as an example, the site would require acceleration and deceleration lanes, chemical toilets, trash cans, at-grade improvement agreements with Union Pacific, ADA access and beach access agreements with existing property owners. He asked the TS if this was something they wanted added to the plan. Boise-Cossart noted the existing coastal plan restrictions on improvements at the mouth of San Onofre and El Molino Creeks and suggested that adding trails in these areas may not be suitable. The TS discussed the loop concept and placing the trail line on the beach. They also discussed the feasibility of a continuous bluff trail.

The TS discussed having the plan defer to the State Parks planning process for public access and having a general policy supporting update to their access plans. The TS discussed the potential addition of high-speed trains along the coast and outreach to the Chumash. Staff noted the County follows the consultation requirements in SB 18. The TS discussed tribal standing in the planning process. Chaconas recommended conducting outreach to property owners and the Chumash about trails recommendations when the GavPAC resumes discussions.

The TS discussed potentially locating a Coastal Trail alignment along the existing road at Arroyo Quemada, the bridge at Arroyo Hondo and along the south side of 101. Garciacelay and Amoon discussed Caltrans planned improvements in the area. The TS discussed the bridge and its status, the rail trestle, and constraints to the west that could lead to environmental impacts. The TS discussed the potential need to relocate or abandon the railway in the future. The TS discussed having a policy to acquire the right-of-way for trails and existing groups that acquire land adjacent to railways for trails purposes, and safety. The TS discussed the merits of trails or bicycle routes along 101. Falat noted the bluff failures that are affecting the existing bicycle route. The TS discussed using a broad policy approach in this constrained corridor east of Arroyo Hondo Bridge and adding a narrative regarding priorities similar to the previous discussion. The TS discussed the approach identified for the stretch of coast from Refugio to Tajiguas and the desired number of access points. Feeney expressed support for drawing a line along the bluff as it would legitimize acquiring land for development of a trail.

Boise-Cossart cited her December 6, 2011 TS meeting notes that include placing a line on the beach, adding a list of opportunities, purchase private properties south of the rail at Tajiguas, address environmental concerns, enhance and encourage bicycle safety along 101 fulfilling the state mandate, not providing a line for pedestrian access, and provide for safe crossings at Refugio and Tajiguas. Her notes only put a line on the beach. The TS also noted they had agreed to a general corridor approach to identifying opportunities along this stretch of coast. Rozzelle noted his support for a beach front line and a wide swath from El Capitan to Gaviota that identifies opportunities to provide connectivity or loop trails without significant environmental impacts, but that trail decisions would only be made as part of the State Parks general plan process. Tetley noted that at the December 6th meeting the TS additionally agreed to draw a second line and include a narrative about the options related to the line.

The TS discussed trail building responsibilities which depend on the agency involved, ownership and funding. Rozzelle noted that State Parks would be planning for the entire stretch of coast.

He noted that Public Resources Code requires planning for parks separate from the County. State Parks participates in the Coastal Land Use Plan update process. Tetley noted that the County process is already occurring and it is mandatory for the County to plan for future coastal access as well as appropriate to identify trails priorities for funding purposes. He noted that conditions do change over time and the plan is the opportunity to identify priorities should opportunities arise in the future. Chaconas noted that the County plan could provide tools to help inform the State Parks process. Rozzelle noted agreement and acknowledged the importance of having existing policy vetted through a public process available to inform the process. Staff noted the purpose of trails policy to develop guidance and then inform environmental review in the plan. Rozzelle discussed State Parks project level approach to environmental review and answered questions about their planning process.

The TS discussed adding a trail line along the beach from El Capitan to Gaviota and delineating a corridor from the bluff line to the north side of 101. The policy narrative describing the corridor will identify opportunities to locate vertical access routes from 101, prioritizing bluff trails, then loop trails, locating trail and bicycle routes separated from the roadway along either side of 101 with priority for routes along south side of 101, and include a policy statement that any future trail/bicycle lane improvements by Caltrans along 101 should not eliminate or preclude development any formal, planned or existing informal vertical access sites along the coast. The policy text will include language that beach access, trails, and bicycle routes shall be included and existing access protected and enhanced during Caltrans and Union Pacific's planning to reconfigure or relocate their facilities in the plan area.

Bowman noted the policy language should acknowledge State Parks efforts to update their General Plan for El Capitan, Refugio and Gaviota State Parks and cite the role the Gaviota Coast Plan has in informing the process to identify opportunities to provide beach access and trails and bicycle routes.

The TS discussed Rozzelle's suggestion that a managed access ridge trail could be an alternative to a coastal bluff aligned segment trail from Arroyo Hondo through Brinkman to Gaviota Village.

Dodge announced that the Forest Service Supervisor gave direction to staff to work with CRAHTAC in developing the Baron Ranch Trail to Camino Cielo Road, as CRAHTAC has obtained funding to develop and maintain the trail. The Forest Service Supervisor was acting in response to a letter request for coordination from Third District Supervisor Doreen Farr.

Tetley inquired regarding the TS desire for enhancing or improving the existing vista point near Arroyo Hondo. Feeney noted that the coast is very rocky in that location, not optimal for beach access, and the proximity to an important steelhead migration point, although he noted there is informal access already occurring at that location. The TS did not identify a need to change the existing facilities at the vista point. The TS discussed the potential access sites and trails along the coast west of Arroyo Hondo. The constraints along the coast include steep, rocky coastline, private ownership, and steep terrain along the north side of 101.

The TS next reviewed the aerial depicting the coast to Gaviota State Park on the west and discussed the status of the Gaviota Terminal Company Site. Falat noted that State Parks has determined a previously identified trail segment from Gaviota State Park toward Mariposa Reina near the tank farm is also infeasible due to environmental factors. Amoon clarified the route may be feasible, but would require mitigation. State Parks staff discussed constraints and lack of open beach areas near the GTC site. Rozzelle discussed the option of designating the trail

alignment that runs near Gaviota Village, up Gaviota Peak then down through a tunnel under 101 on the other side of the Gaviota Tunnel, then down to Gaviota State Park. He also discussed Caltrans work on the Gaviota Curve and the potential for relocating existing at-grade crossing, restoration and alternatives. Rozzelle clarified State Parks could support some type trail on the south side of 101 if the environmental issues and designated access could be resolved. Garciacelay noted that Parks is acquiring an easement through the GTC site using mitigation funds dedicated to that site that cannot be allocated elsewhere. He discussed other issues related to future use of the site. The TS discussed various options for use and constraints at the site. The site lacks adequate beach, needs additional remediation, two creeks onsite are impacted and require restoration. Chaconas suggested focusing on certain properties and identifying opportunities to provide connectivity east and west as an alternative to a corridor approach in this area.

The TS discussed the importance of providing coastal access at the GTC. Sandy beach is located near the location. The TS agreed to draw a line from the 101 bridge at Mariposa Reina to the beach, continuing the line along the beach and include a need for parking near the off ramp and beach. The line would then cross the existing bridge at the Mariposa Reina interchange and continue north, then turn northwest along the old road to the fire station and the Gaviota Village site, then on to a crossing at Gaviota State Park.

After a break, Chaconas suggested that the TS take some time to consider the area west of the Gaviota Curve. He noted that a two-part approach could be to acknowledge the sandy beach trail alignment and status quo bicycle routes west along 101 then along both sides of Highway 1 across the remainder of the plan area. Garciacelay noted that 101 and 1 are already designated bike routes and mentioned the existence of easements along bluff tops near Jalama Beach. Garciacelay noted a study of the Gerber Fee Parcels that are now part of the Cojo-Jalama Ranch. He would provide the study for TS reference. The TS discussed Jalama Beach Road, Vandenberg, bicycle routes and beach access in North County. Garciacelay noted that Coastwalk has hosted controlled hikes on Vandenberg in the Past. Boise-Cossart noted the county facility at Las Cruces and inquired about potential opportunities for a trail at that location.

The TS discussed the feasibility of using the corridor approach west of Gaviota State Park. Amoon described surfers accessing Cojo Beach. The TS discussed using a managed access program to avoid impacts to the land. Feeney suggested applying a policy for all discretionary project proposals on Hollister and Cojo-Jalama Ranches that would require project applicants to include managed access for education and conservation purposes. The purpose of the managed access plan is to protect unique coastal resources from use impacts as part of permit approval.

The TS discussed existing access at Cojo Beach by boats lowered into the ocean at Gaviota State Park and the option to not allow recreation use at all. Garciacelay noted that public access and parking at Jalama Beach is already managed. Garciacelay suggested a loop from Jalama to Point Conception. The TS reviewed parking management at the State Parks. The TS agreed to provide both pedestrian and bicycle routes along highway 1.

Agenda Item 4. Subcommittee Meeting Schedule

At their next meeting on Tuesday, January 10 at 1:30 P.M. at the El Capitan Canyon Campground, the TS will review the entire set of maps and policy direction. The meeting adjourned at 4:33p.m. The Meeting Notes were prepared by Bret McNulty, Planner.