



***GAVIOTA COAST RESOURCE STUDY***

# *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



*prepared for*

County of Santa Barbara,  
Planning and Development Department

*prepared by*

**EDAW, Inc.**

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# Gaviota Coast Resource Study

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## *Document Purpose and Intent*

The purpose of “*A Perspective on Gaviota Coast Resources*” is to serve as an informational document for the public, decision-makers and county staff as they face land use decisions for this unique coastal area, now and in the future. The document provides a general overview of the many resources located on the Gaviota Coast and describes existing land use regulations, plans and policies applicable to the area. Major land use trends and long term land conservation efforts through current public and private partnerships are also discussed as important tools for preservation.

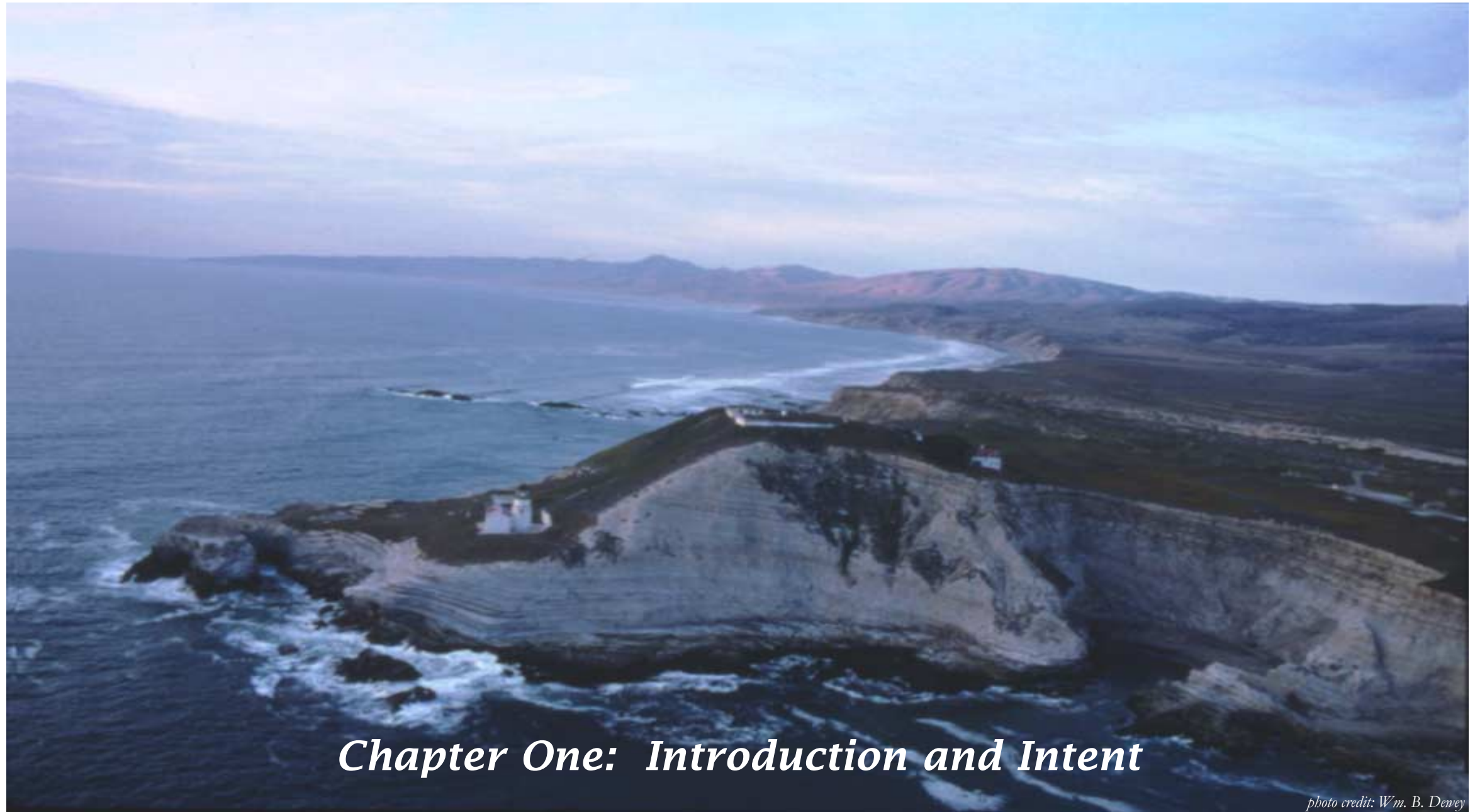


*El Capitan State Park - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model of the Gaviota Coast was created for the report as a tool to graphically depict general resource information and identify areas of potentially high resource sensitivity. Information sources include regional databases, aerial maps and some local knowledge from area resource specialists, but no field research or reconnaissance was conducted on private property. Therefore, resolution of the resource data is coarse in scale and does not reflect specific information that might be found on a specific property or parcels, nor is the data at the level of detail necessary for analysis of site-specific projects. Gaviota property owners may have documentation addressing the location and quality of resources that should be considered to further develop and refine the GIS model for any subsequent mapping efforts or land use planning.

No new land use regulations or changes to existing county policies for the Gaviota Coast are recommended in the document. Existing land stewardship, expanding conservation programs and possible updates to county land use policies and zoning are all resource protection strategies which may be considered by the community in the future. Continued dialog between property owners, community groups, county staff and decision-makers can lead to a local, cooperative effort addressing the long-term future of the Gaviota Coast.

### ***Preface***



***Chapter One: Introduction and Intent***

*photo credit: Wm. B. Dewey*

## Chapter One: Introduction and Intent

*“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value.”*

-Theodore Roosevelt

One of the largest remaining stretches of unprotected and undeveloped coastline in southern California, the Gaviota Coast is a spectacular landscape in which a number of elements combine to form a place rich in agricultural, biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources.

The coastline includes some of the most significant archaeological sites within south central California. Native peoples had resided in the area from approximately 8,000 years ago until the time of European contact in the late 1700s. Many artifacts from this time period remain intact and well preserved. The existence of large cattle ranches along this coastline is also significant, reflecting the legendary rancho system of privately owned large land grants and preserved heritage of the early Spanish/Mexican settlements in California. The Gaviota Coast is one of the last remaining historic California coastal ranching landscapes.

Specialty crops such as avocados, citrus, and other agricultural products flourish in the unique climate, soils and water resources of the area, contributing significantly to the economy and helping to make agriculture the largest industry in Santa Barbara County. The scenic vistas, rugged beaches, and panoramic coastal hill-sides and mesas that characterize the Gaviota coastline are popular venues for an array of recreational activities including hiking, camping, swimming, sunbathing, picnicking, fishing and surfing.



Jalama Beach County Park - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002



## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

Located at the junction of ecosystems for both terrestrial and marine species, the Gaviota Coast serves as a habitat transition zone and is abundant with flora and fauna. The relatively undisturbed nature of the Gaviota Coast also allows it to serve as a migration corridor between inland, mountainous and coastal habitat areas. More than 525 plant species, representing approximately one-half of the plant families found in California, live in the Gaviota coastal area. More than 40 sensitive vertebrate species inhabit the area (state/federally endangered, threatened, protected, or species of special concern).

The purpose of this report is to serve as an informational document for the public, decision-makers, and County staff as they face difficult land use decisions for this unique coastal area, now and in the future.



## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

The Gaviota Coast Resource Study is designed to inventory the diversity, quantity and quality of the many resources located on the Gaviota Coast and assist in the long-term planning effort for the area. A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model of the Gaviota Coast has been created for Santa Barbara County to graphically depict this resource information and identify areas of high resource sensitivity. The GIS model is described in more detail in Chapter 3 of this document. The report describes existing land use regulations, plans and policies applicable to the area and the major land use trends on the Gaviota Coast. Land conservation techniques under existing regulations and through current public and private partnerships are also analyzed as important protection programs for the Study Area.

The purpose of this report is to serve as an informational document and planning tool for the public, decision-makers, and County staff as they face difficult land use decisions for this unique coastal area, now and in the future.



*Jalama Beach County Park - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*



*Chapter Two: Resources of the Gaviota Coast*

*photo credit: Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## Chapter Two: Resources of the Gaviota Coast

*“The most, the biggest, the highest, the oldest - the natural environment in California has always inspired superlatives. In terms of sheer numbers, California has more naturally occurring species of plants, insects, vertebrates, and other forms of life than any comparable area north of the subtropics.”*

-Raymond Dasmann

This chapter describes the significant resources of the Gaviota Coast and the opportunities they present to the coastal region and its communities. This information is presented to elaborate on and supplement the GIS database created for Santa Barbara County as part of this study. The 38-mile long Gaviota Coast is located in western Santa Barbara County between Jalama Beach County Park and the western boundary of the unincorporated County, adjacent to the new City of Goleta, approximately 105 miles north of Los Angeles. The Study Area, like few

others in the state, exhibits the full spectrum of natural and human interactions from the shore of the Pacific Ocean to the upland conifer forest. At Point Conception, the northern and southern ecosystems of the West Coast meet and converge (Figure 2.1 - Jepson Ecoregions). It is here where the climate, topography, geology, flora, fauna and marine environment shift, mix and change. The northern and southern ranges of many plant, marine, and terrestrial animal species begin, end and merge in this region. The interaction of global weather and cold-water upwelling on the West Coast results in a unique natural habitat; only four other places in the world have this mild climate with winter rain and summer drought (Gaviota Coast Conservancy, *Preserving our Coastal Heritage*, 1999).

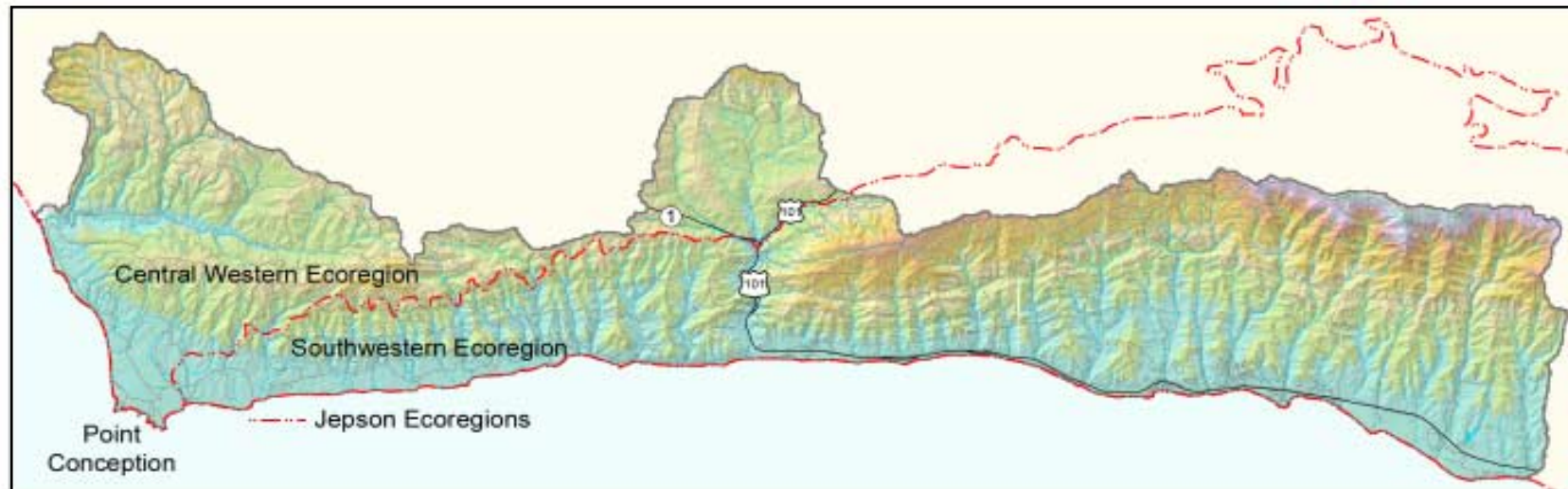


Figure 2-1: Jepson Ecoregions

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

### Regional Setting

The Gaviota Coast Study Area includes approximately 100,000 acres within Santa Barbara County and is bounded by the western urban limit line of unincorporated lands around the City of Goleta to the east, Vandenburg Air Force Base to the west, and the ridgeline of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north (Figure 2.2 – Regional Setting). Santa Barbara County encompasses 2,774 square miles and has considerable physical, historical and cultural diversity. The physical geography of the Study Area ranges from coastal bluffs where most of the flat topography is located, to very steep canyons leading to the ridgeline of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The Study Area provides a rare opportunity to link the parks of the forested mountains with those of the seashore, since it is situated between the Los Padres National Forest and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Most residential development has occurred in the low-lying areas adjacent to the ocean, however some large ranches have developed residential and agricultural facilities at higher elevations.



Figure 2-2: Regional Setting

### History of Gaviota Region

The Gaviota Coast provides an outstanding - and last remaining - example of a historic California coastal ranching landscape. The historic settlement and ranching patterns that have been preserved for over 200 years is exceptional in modern day coastal southern California.

The Gaviota Coast has had a rich history since the first European land expedition in August, 1769. The expedition's diarist, Fr. Juan Crespi, commented as follows:

*“The country along the road is extremely delightful, abounding with pasture and covered with live oaks, willows and other trees, giving signs of its being a very fruitful land, capable of producing whatever one might wish to plant.”*

The name “gaviota,” meaning gull in Spanish, comes from this expedition because a member of that party killed a gull there. Sgt. José Francisco de Ortega served as the expedition scout and that November he “discovered” the San Francisco Bay.

In 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza led 198 emigrants and their escorts 1,600 miles from Sonora, Mexico, along the Gaviota Coast on the first overland colonizing expedition to establish the city of San Francisco.

Under Spain, in 1782, a presidio (fort) was established in Santa Barbara and four years later a mission was established near the presidio. The legendary ranch system of privately owned large land grants did not fully develop in the Spanish era, when there were fewer than 20 “land concessions” issued in California. The first of such land concessions - which were actually grazing permits - was issued in 1784, near Los Angeles. Rancho Nuestra Señora del Refugio was the only such land concession in what is today Santa Barbara County and was its first private ranch. The Rancho comprised much of the Gaviota Coast, from Refugio Canyon to Cojo, east of Point Conception.

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



*Gaviota Pass - Santa Barbara Historical Society*

The family of José Francisco de Ortega originally settled at Rancho Refugio in November, 1794, near the mouth of Refugio Canyon, making it one of the earliest Spanish/Mexican settlements in Alta California. The site of the Ortega Ranch was discovered by his son, José María Ortega, while searching for timber to repair the Santa Barbara presidio. The Ortegas grew wheat, maintained a vineyard, established herds of cattle and horses and built a complex of adobe structures at Rancho Refugio. Although the adobe buildings are now gone, many artifacts still litter the farmland on the knoll where the hacienda complex once stood.

As the years went by, members of the family established additional adobe homes and gardens at Tajiguas, immediately to the west of Refugio, known as Canada del Corral. Several of these Ortega adobes exist today along the Gaviota Coast and are in good condition under private ownership. Further to the west, a structurally unaltered Ortega adobe stands in Arroyo Hondo, owned by members of the pioneer Hollister family until recent acquisition by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County

Rancho Refugio was prominent in early California history and legend; it was famous as a “smuggling” port for trading vessels along the California coast. The Ortega ranch was thought to be one of the richest smuggling bases in Alta California. In 1818, two ships commanded by Captain Hippolyte Bouchards of Argentina arrived and the privateers burned the presidio of Monterey and then headed south, instigating rebellion in favor of the New World’s independence from Spain. The Ortegas evacuated their Rancho Refugio, which was soon plundered by the privateers. The Ortegas fled over Refugio Pass to Mission Santa Inés. One of the privateers, Joseph Chapman, jumped ship and made his way to Santa Inés where he later constructed the Santa Inés Mission mills (which have recently been purchased and preserved by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation).

After independence from Spain in 1822, and through American occupation in 1846, the Mexican government issued many land grants of full title. In the 1840s, one of Ortega’s grandsons was granted Cañada del Corral. To the east lay Rancho de los Dos Pueblos, once the site of two large coastal Chumash villages. Rancho Dos Pueblos was granted in 1842 to Nicholas A. Den, an Irishman who emigrated to California and became a naturalized Mexican citizen. He married Rosa Hill, the daughter of Daniel Hill, grantee of the La Goleta land grant, whose wife was a member of the Ortega family. To the west of Rancho Refugio was Rancho Punta de la Concepción, which was granted in 1837 to Anastacio Carrillo. To the north of Gaviota Pass, Rancho Las Cruces was granted to Miguel Cordero in 1836.

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

Following California annexation to the United States, the Ortega ranches along the Gaviota Coast were subdivided and sold as ranches to members of the Dibblee, Hollister, Lobero, Cordero, Orella, Hazard, Baron and other families. The Dos Pueblos Ranch was developed into several ranches starting in the 1880s, and sold to members of the Edwards, Welch, Rutherford, Doty, Dreyfus, Bishop, Cooper, Hollister and Storke families. In the late 1880s, John H. Williams became enamored with Dos Pueblos and “envisioned” the community of Naples-by-the-Sea. Samuel Mosher later developed the Dos Pueblos Ranch into a productive orchid farm. Rancho Punta de la Concepción was divided into two ranches, the Espada, north of Jalama, and the Cojo, to the south. The Cojo was later sold and primarily consists of grazing lands. It remains basically unaltered today and is owned by the descendants of the pioneer Bixby family, which purchased it in the early 1900s.



*Cattle ranchers - Santa Barbara Historical Society*



*Threshing beans, Refugio Canyon 1931 - Eric Hvolboll*

In the late 1800s, members of the Pico, Romero, and other early Santa Barbara families took out several homesteads in the Santa Ynez Mountains near the Refugio Pass. The Pico adobe, built in the 1890s, sits atop Refugio Pass and many years later served as the “Western White House” for President Ronald Reagan.

Gaviota Pass is one of the area’s most striking natural landmarks. It is the only natural pass through the Santa Ynez Mountains for their entire length from Ojai to Point Concepcion. The Pass has served as a connection from lands north of the mountains to the coast for shipping by land and sea. Many products, such as livestock, wool, grain, and lumber have made their way through Gaviota Pass. Between 1861 and 1901 the stage traveled through the Pass. The railroad continued west along the coastal shelf in 1898 and 1899, building viaducts, filling in

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

Alcatraz, Port Orford, Sacate, Santa Anita, San Augustin, Gato and Concepcion. It was completed in 1901 and the era of the stagecoach was over. In 1875, Hollister & Dibblee constructed a wharf at Gaviota as an outlet for the coastal ranching empire as well as the entire Santa Ynez Valley. Immediately to the east, the Alcatraz area was developed in 1897 for asphaltum piped in from the Sisquoc area for refining, and a pier was built there at that time. Several early quarries operated along the coast; two remain today.

In addition to the adobe buildings already described, the Gaviota Coast also includes other late 19th century adobes at Las Cruces and La Quemada. At Point Concepcion the historic lighthouse is over 200 feet above the treacherous Pacific and its light can be seen as far as 40 miles out to sea. A

lighthouse was first erected there in the early 1850s. Following an earthquake in 1881, the lighthouse was rebuilt closer to sea level where it remains today. Other Gaviota landmarks are the historic Vista del Mar School which was constructed in 1927 just east of Gaviota Pass, as well as the Gaviota Tunnel serving northbound U.S. Highway 101, constructed in 1952.

Today the Gaviota Coast continues its historic ranching tradition with some mineral development, as well as limited public park and camping facilities. Above Santa Ynez Peak, at 4,298 feet the highest peak in the Santa Ynez range, one can overlook the many acres of private ranches, many dedicated to cattle, avocados, and lemons between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Santa Barbara Channel.



*Railroad Crossing at Beach Park - Santa Barbara Historical Society*



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*Agricultural Resources*

*artist: Chris Chapman*

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

*"[The naturalist] looks upon every species of animal and plant now living as the individual letters which go to make up one of the volumes of our earth's history: and, as a few lost letters may make a sentence unintelligible, so the extinction of the numerous forms of life which the progress of cultivation invariably entails will necessarily render obscure this invaluable record of the past. It is, therefore, an important object [to preserve them] ... if this is not done, future ages will certainly look back upon us as a people so immersed in the pursuit of wealth as to be blind to higher considerations."*

-Alfred Russel Wallace

### Agriculture

Agriculture is the largest industry in Santa Barbara County and contributes significantly to the County's economy. The climate, soils and water resources of the Study Area provide unique opportunities for many specialty crops. While the Study Area includes approximately 77,504 acres (75% of the Study Area) zoned for agricultural use, not all of the acreage can be farmed for agriculture due to the rugged topography of the Santa Ynez

Mountains (see Figure 2.3 - Agricultural-Designated Lands).

Agricultural production within the Study Area occurs on the hillsides and coastal mesas from Goleta to Point Conception and Jalama. Cattle grazing remains the primary agricultural use in the West Gaviota Coast area which is predominantly comprised of two ranches: Hollister Ranch and Bixby Ranch. Hollister Ranch is made up of 100-acre parcels; some of the land holdings participate in a cooperative grazing operation, while others keep low intensity agricultural uses that may or may not meet the minimum requirements for agricultural preserves. The nearly 25,000-acre Bixby Ranch has a long history of cattle grazing within the region. Agricultural operations in the East Gaviota Coast area support a wider variety of crops including avocado, citrus and cherimoya orchards, flowers, cattle grazing and an abalone aquaculture farm near Dos Pueblos Creek.

The County's agricultural preserve program allows property owners to



Figure 2.3 - Agricultural Designated Lands

voluntarily enter into a ten-year continuously renewing contract with the County which restricts their land to agricultural uses, thus creating agricultural preserves. This mechanism was created with California's Land Conservation Act (LCA), also called the Williamson Act of 1965. The incentive for property owners to establish preserves and enter into LCA contracts is the reduction of property taxes. When land is enrolled in a LCA contract, the property owner is taxed at a lower rate according to the use of the land for agricultural purposes rather than its unrestricted market value. Santa Barbara County's commitment to the preservation of agriculture is demonstrated by the success of this program. Many of the owners in the Study Area have land committed to agricultural preserve contracts, preserving 59,129 acres, or approximately 76% of the agriculturally zoned land within the Study Area.

The Farmland Security Zones program implements a 1998 amendment to the Williamson Act that allows for further reductions in property taxes and special assessments on agricultural lands when owners voluntarily enter into a contract with a longer term (at least 20 years) and extra restrictions on "compatible uses" of the land. This program is currently available countywide.

Agricultural lands offer Santa Barbara County and its citizens many benefits that are not always measurable in dollars and cents, but are still highly valuable to the economy as well as to our well-being. Open space and scenic resources, air and water quality, wildlife habitat, groundwater storage and recharge, and the preservation of the County's rural character contribute to the area's health, quality of life and natural beauty. Their impacts on property values, tourism and attraction and retention of jobs and residents to the area are extremely important.



*Agriculture fields - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

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*Recreational Resources*

*artist: John Iwerks*

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

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## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

### Recreation

There are a variety of recreational opportunities located in the Study Area, including County, State, and Federal parks as well as several private facilities (see Figure 2.4 – Recreational Resources).

**Federal Parks.** The United States Forest Service owns approximately 16,811 acres of land in the Study Area within the Los Padres National Forest. Within the Study Area, day-use recreation activities are emphasized which enhance enjoyment of the natural environment such as viewing scenery, pleasure driving, hiking, equestrian use, nature study, and water play (LPNF Forest Plan, 1988).

**State Parks.** Three major state parks exist within the Study Area: Gaviota, El Capitan, and Refugio. Approximately 11 miles of coastline, encompassing over 3,000 acres, are now in State ownership. Gaviota State Park makes up 2,513 acres of this total acreage, and offers 52 campsites, swimming, picnicking, and surf fishing. It is also wheelchair accessible in many places. Boat launching is available at the pier on the east end of the beach. Visitors can explore the upland portions of the park from a trailhead in the parking area. El Capitan State Park is 132 acres of sandy beach, rocky tide pools and stands of sycamores and oaks along El Capitan Creek. Activities include swimming, fishing, surfing, picnicking and 142 campsites, including 4 group camping facilities. Access to the beach area is provided by a stairway located along the bluffs. A connection to nearby Refugio Beach State Park is provided by a 2.5-mile multi-use trail. Refugio Beach State Park, encompassing 93 acres, offers 85 overnight camping sites, including 1 group camp facility, as well as coastal fishing, trails and picnic areas.

California State Parks also manages six other properties along the Gaviota Coast: Canada del Leon, Canada San Onofre, Canada del Molino, Canada de

Guillermo, Corral Beach and Phillips Tajiguas West. Activities at each of these beaches are predominately passive such as walking and jogging. Surfing also occurs at Canada de Guillermo. There are no improvements at these locations, so most have insufficient parking, lack restrooms and are difficult to access.



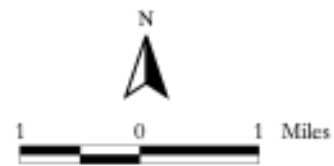
Refugio Beach State Park - Wm. B. Dewey



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

**Figure 2.4  
Recreational Resources**

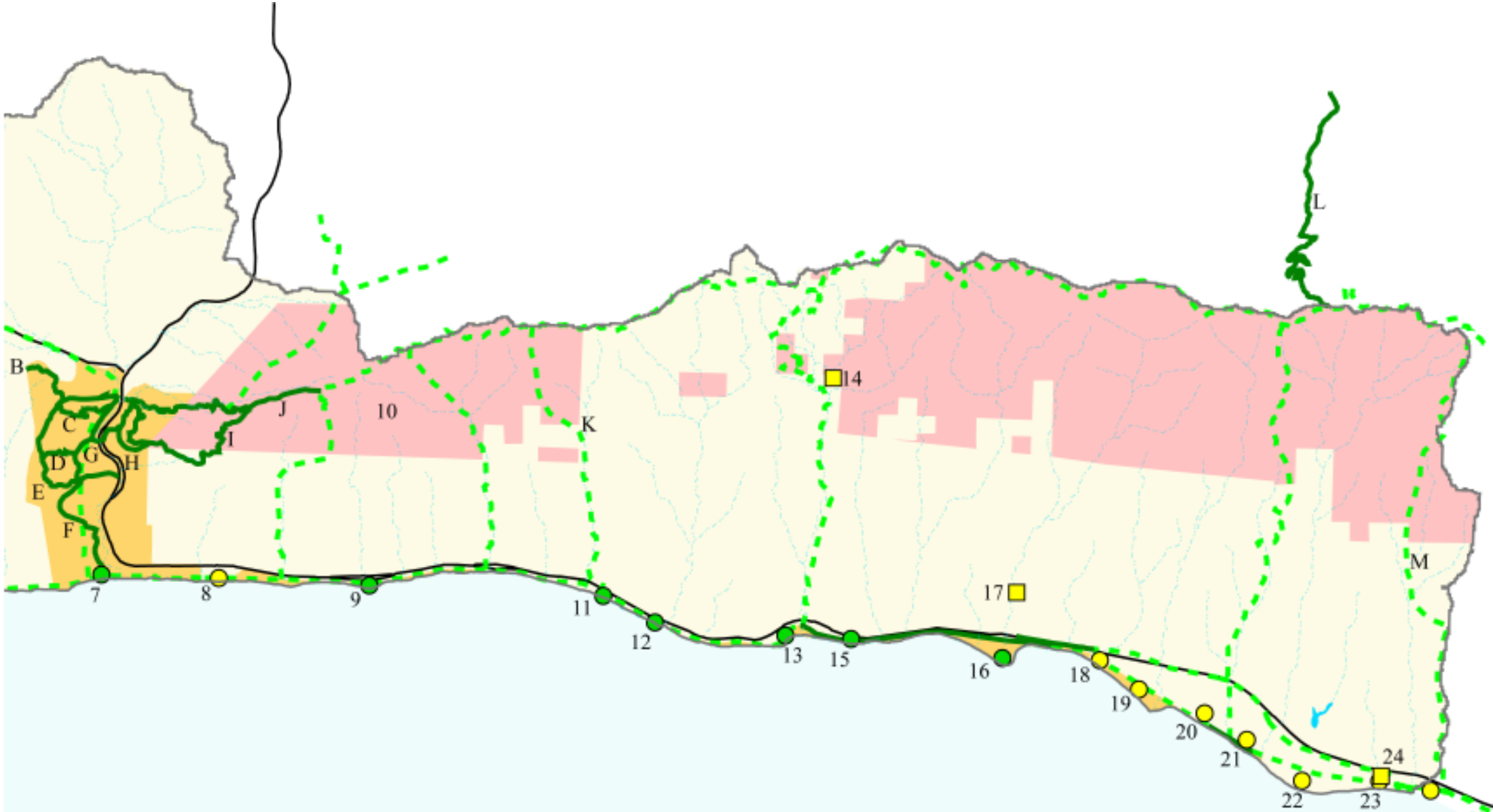
- Beaches
  - County Park
  - Private Beach
  - State Park
- Ownership
  - County
  - Federal
  - Private
  - State
- Trails
  - Existing (open to public)
  - - - Proposed (future trail)
- Other Features
  - Private Recreation
  - A Trail Label (see table on page 2-14)
  - 1 Site Label (see table on page 2-16)



Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW, Inc.,  
Teale Data Center



Gaviota Coast Resource Study



Chapter Two: Resources of the Gaviota Coast



## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

According to the Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan (1982) the existing beach parks owned by the County and State are being used to capacity, especially during summer weekends. When usage is at its highest, the existing facilities are insufficient to accommodate everyone and people are turned away. The Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan contains recommendations for implementing the Coastal Act goal of providing maximum opportunities for public access and recreation along California's coastlines.

County Parks. In 1943, 23.5 acres of privately owned land was donated to the County by Bixby Ranch Company, and became Jalama Beach County Park. This park maintains 110 campsites, all overlooking the ocean or beachfront. Activities include picnicking, fishing, bird- and whale-watching, surfing and windsurfing. Although isolated, this park is well developed, including such amenities as a restaurant, hot showers, electrical hook-ups and dump stations for trash.

The County Parks Department is currently preparing the Jalama Beach County Master Plan to respond to existing and future demand for recreational facilities. A key component of the Master Plan is the donation of approximately 78 acres of land from the Bixby Ranch Company that will increase the park size to 100 acres, and expand park boundaries to the east and south. Creation of a bluff trail to facilitate beach access is being considered in the Jalama Beach Master Plan process.

Private Recreation Areas. Much of the Gaviota Coast is privately owned, with some of the largest private land owners including Arcos Dos Pueblos, Naples, Las Varas Ranch, Edwards Ranch, Hollister Ranch and Bixby Ranch. Public access through these areas is restricted; however, the public's right of access to all beach areas below the mean high tide line is guaranteed by the California Coastal Act. Therefore, trespassing often occurs through the



*Coastal Trail between Refugio and El Capitan State Parks - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

private properties. Bixby Ranch offers some of the most spectacular surfing opportunities on the entire coast of California. Most of the private landowners have been approached to discuss the possibility of donating conservation easements in order to complete the proposed portions of a Coastal Trail.

El Capitan Canyon, a private campground, is located within the Study Area. This facility offers campsites and RV hook-ups, non-motorized RV cabins, mountain biking, hiking, volleyball, a swimming pool, playground, horse-shoes and horseback riding. Beach access is available and offers kayaking and fishing. During the summer this facility has a concert series featuring live bluegrass, jazz and blues music. The private campground is considering an expansion that would require review of existing and proposed uses with permit authority by both the County and Coastal Commission.

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

Trails. There are few existing trails open to the public within the Study Area. As discussed earlier in this section, much of the Gaviota Coast is privately owned with restricted public access through these areas. However, because the public's access below the mean high tide line, trespassing often occurs through these private properties. Most existing public trails are associated with Gaviota State Park or are located in the Los Padres National Forest near Gaviota Pass and West Camino Cielo. Similarly, the few currently available vertical coastal access trails, running from the shoreline inland, are located at Gaviota, Refugio and El Capitan State Parks, and Jalama Beach County Park.

A coastal trail exploring beaches, bluffs, headlands, bays and coves while staying as near the shore as possible has been envisioned to run the length of the California coast. The California Coastal Trail is a work in progress,

with public and private organizations cooperating to slowly fill in the gaps along the route between existing coastal trails and beaches.

The Coastal Trail through the Study Area is in varying states of planning and coastal completion (see Figure 2.5 - Coastal Trail Status). One completed portion is a multi-use trail along the coast between El Capitan and Refugio State Parks. A proposed corridor connecting the Coastal Trail to the Gaviota State Beach is now under review. This trail represents the route followed by the Anza settlers and therefore has historic significance. In 1990, Congress recognized the trail as the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (Bloom Evan, *Recreational Resources of the Gaviota Coast, 1999*). Its development is a priority of the statewide trails system.



Figure 2.5 - Coastal Trail Status

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

Gaviota Coast Trails	Existing	Proposed	County	State	Federal	Private
Coastal Trail (A)		X	X	X		X
Yucca Trail (B)	X			X		
Las Cruces Trail (C)	X			X		
Woodland Trail (D)	X			X		
Hollister Trail (E)	X			X		
Beach to Back Country Trail (F)	X			X		
Overlook Fire Trail (G)	X				X	
Tunnel View Trail (H)	X				X	
Trespass Trail Loop (I)	X				X	
West Camino Cielo Trail (J)	X				X	
Baron Ranch Trail (K)		X	X		X	
Tequepas Trail (L)	X				X	
Farren Trail (M)		X			X	X

The numbers correspond to the numbers shown on Figure 2.4 - Recreational Resources.

The main deficiencies of the current trail system in the Study Area are:

1. No existing trail connections from the beach to the Los Padres National Forest between Gaviota Pass and Goleta.
2. Limited vertical beach access trails, particularly west of Gaviota State Park.
3. No lateral coastal access linking Jalama Beach County Park with Gaviota, Refugio and El Capitan State Parks and the urban communities of the south coast.

*Trail opportunities* - Several opportunities exist for the expansion of the public trail system in the Study Area. One key opportunity for trails expansion is on publicly owned lands. Federal, State or local agencies own approximately 20,000 acres of land in the Study Area. These lands offer a variety of opportunities for extensions of existing trails, creation of new ones, and creating trailheads for linkages to one another. Another opportunity for expansion of the trail system could come through acquisition of trail easements across private property. In both instances, the trails should be sensitive to their setting and be low impact, whether crossing undisturbed native landscapes or working agricultural lands.



Sea kayakers - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

Some segments of the Coastal Trail have been constructed by the State and County Parks Departments. The majority of the trail is not yet constructed resulting in bicyclists using the freeway shoulder along these locations. To begin planning for these missing segments, the County is preparing the Gaviota Coastal Trail Planning Study. Once the study is complete, it will provide the County with specific information to pursue funding for easement acquisition and trail construction for that portion of the Coastal Trail between Goleta and Gaviota. Once the Coastal Trail is complete, bicyclists and others will be able to travel continuously for twenty miles from the community of Goleta to El Capitan, Refugio and Gaviota State Parks as well as other coastal access points.

Additional trail siting feasibility studies have been completed for the Coastal Trail segment south from Jalama Beach County Park to Coho Bay (see Figure 2.4-Recreation Resources). This study acknowledges the existence of a County trail easement across the Gerber Fee property in this area. However, private property concerns of the Bixby Ranch and Hollister Ranch Owner's Association will require negotiation for acquisition of trail easements to extend the Coastal Trail through this area. The County has also completed a feasibility study for a coast to crest trail on the County's Baron Ranch property that would connect the Coastal Trail to the Los Padres Forest. A trail opportunity in this location is subject to the future of a proposal to expand the life of the adjacent Tajiguas Landfill. County decision makers will need to weigh the benefits of this proposed coast to crest trail.

The preferred method of trail acquisition is to work cooperatively with private property owners, State Parks and United States Forest Service to acquire trail easements with the goal of providing low-impact recreational trails which can co-exist with the working agricultural landscape and unique resources of the Gaviota Coast.

The table on the following page summarizes the recreational opportunities within the Study Area.



*Surfers - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

**Gaviota Coast Resource Study**

Gaviota Coast Recreation Opportunities	Jalama County Beach Park	Bixby Ranch	Gerber Fee Beach	Western LNG Beach	Hollister Ranch Beach	Gaviota Beach State Park	Gaviota Rest Area	Gaviota Marine Terminal	Gaviota State Park	Los Padres National Forest	Phillips Tajiguas West Beach	Phillips Tajiguas East Beach	Refugio State Beach	Circle Bar B Ranch	Corral Beach	El Capitan State Beach	El Capitan Canyon Park	El Capitan Ranch Park	Edwards Ranch	Las Varas Ranch	Dos Pueblos Beach	Naples Beach	Arcos Dos Pueblos	Arcos Dos Pueblos Golf Course - Proposed
	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
County																								
State						X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X								
Federal										X														
Private		X	X	X	X			X						X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No. of Campsites	97								52				85			142	150							
Group Facilities**													X			X								
No. of RV Sites	13																150							
Developed	X								X				X			X	X							
Undeveloped																								
Day Use Sites	X								X															
Biking	X								X				X		X		X		X	X	X			X
Hiking	X								X				X				X	X	X	X				X
Fishing	X												X			X	X							
Boating	X												X			X								
Surfing	X															X	X							
No Permitted Uses																						X		
Vertical Access																	X				X			
Passive Activities																X		X						
Walking / Jogging	X										X	X			X		X							
Picnic Tables	X															X	X	X			X			
Swimming	X											X				X	X							

\* The numbers correspond to the numbers shown on Figure 2.4 - Recreational Resources.

\*\* 1-4 sites; each accommodating 50-125 persons.





***Biological Resources***

*artist: Chris Chapman*



***Gaviota Coast Resource Study***

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### Biological Resources

*“Since most species in the ocean are distributed by temperature, the marine environment is relatively uniform all the way from the Oregon coast on down to Point Conception. But at Point Conception there’s a dramatic change. A whole different set of organisms comes up on southern California waters, compared to those of northern California, which enriches the total marine fauna and flora of California markedly.”*

- Ken Norris

The juxtaposition of terrestrial and marine ecosystems within the Gaviota Coast contributes to an extraordinary biotic diversity (see Figure 2.6 - Biological Resources). The Study Area encompasses each of the watersheds that drain the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains over a thirty-eight mile distance. The Jalama Creek watershed, on the north side of Santa Ynez Ridge, is also included within the Study Area.

#### Gaviota Coast

- 40 sensitive vertebrate species known to occur in the area
- Over 525 known plant species representing one-half of the plant families found in California
- Study Area serves as a transition zone between northern and southern California for both terrestrial and marine species

The most significant geographic feature is the parallel, east-west orientation of the Santa Ynez Mountain Range and coastline. This configuration has profound influences on ocean current and climate, in turn creating biological conditions that are unique to the region. A number of plant and animal species reach the northern or southern limits of their range within the Gaviota Coast.



*California sea lions - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

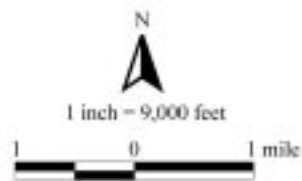
The area is characterized by steep, south-facing slopes that are incised by southward-trending canyons. The coastal slope of the Santa Ynez Mountain Range remains largely undeveloped. The pristine condition of more remote reaches of these mountains is indicated by the presence of wide-ranging carnivores such as mountain lion and black bear. The foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains give way to a broad coastal terrace. The marine interface is typified by coastal bluffs, sandy beach, and, to a more limited extent, rocky shoreline. According to the County Coastal Plan, the Naples reef has the largest number and highest diversity of intertidal organisms in the County.

Terrestrial habitats within the Study Area vary widely. They include oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, grassland, and riparian woodland. Streams of the coastal watershed function as arteries connecting the terrestrial and

**Gaviota Coast Resource Study**

**Figure 2.6  
Biological Resources**

- Biological Resources**
- Monarch Butterfly
  - Native Grassland
  - Watershed Boundaries
  - Marine Wetlands
- Special Status Species**
- Plant
  - Animal
  - Terrestrial Community
- Vegetation (GAP Analysis)**
- Annual Grassland
  - Coastal Oak Woodland
  - Closed-Cone Pine Cypress
  - Chamise-Redshank Chaparral
  - Coastal Sage Scrub
  - Mixed Chaparral
  - Montaine Hardwood
  - Montaine Riparian
  - Valley-Oak Woodland
  - Valley-Foothill Riparian



Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW Inc.,  
Teale Data Center



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

rocky shoreline, coastal dune, and estuarine habitats. These provide essential resources for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. The Santa Barbara Channel and north coastal waters support a rich marine fauna comprised of a multitude of mammal, bird, fish, and invertebrate species.

Two plant and six wildlife species listed by the state and/or federal wildlife authorities as threatened or endangered reside within the terrestrial environment of the Study Area (see table on following page). The Gaviota tarplant is found only on the coastal terrace near the center of the Study Area. Santa Ynez false lupine is known only from the upper slopes of Santa Ynez Peak. The Southern steelhead, tidewater goby, and California red-legged frog inhabit several coastal streams; and the least tern nest along the shoreline. The peregrine falcon has returned as a resident breeder to the Study Area. The western snowy plover nests on isolated beaches and concentrates in winter roosts at coastal estuaries.

Many additional “species of special concern” also occur within the Study Area. These are plants and animals that are recognized as having limited distribution and/or have shown significant downward trends in population size or range. Habitat resources within the Study Area are essential to the recovery and survival of these species. For example one special species of concern is the Brown pelican, which relies on the near-shore waters of the Santa Barbara Channel for feeding and often roost in large numbers along its shoreline. There are also documented one or more species of special concern from at least twelve of the perennial streams in the Study Area.

The coastal waters off western Santa Barbara County are inhabited by several species of marine mammals. Four species of pinnipeds (Northern elephant seal, harbor seal, California sea lion, and Northern fur seal) breed on the Channel Islands. Two additional species (Guadalupe fur seal and



*Dudleya - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

<b>Gaviota Coast Significant Plant &amp; Wildlife Resources</b>	Federally Endangered	Federally Threatened	Federally Protected	Federal Species of Concern	State Endangered	State Threatened	State Species of Concern	California Native Plant Society Listing	Locally Protected (SBC Comprehensive Plan)
<b>AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES</b>									
California Red-Legged Frog		x					x		
California Horned Lizard							x		
Silvery Legless Lizard							x		
Southwestern Pond Turtle				x			x		
<b>BIRDS</b>									
American Bittern	x								
Bald Eagle	x								
Belding's Savannah Sparrow					x				
Black Swift				x					
Brown Pelican				x					
Burrowing Owl				x					
Clapper Rail	x								
Common Loon				x					
Cooper's Hawk							x		
Elegant Tern				x					
Ferruginous Hawk				x		x			
Golden Eagle			x						
Great Blue Heron		x							
Least Tern	x				x				
Long-Billed Curlew				x					
Northern Harrier			x						
Peregrine Falcon	x				x				
Sandhill Crane	x								
Short-Eared Owl				x			x		
Tricolored Blackbird				x					
Western Snowy Plover		x					x		
White-Faced Ibis				x					
White-Tailed Kite				x					x
Xantus Murrelet				x					
Yellow Warbler				x					
<b>FISHES</b>									
Southern Steelhead	x								
Steelhead Trout	x								
Tidewater Goby	x						x		

	Federally Endangered	Federally Threatened	Federally Protected	Federal Species of Concern	State Endangered	State Threatened
<b>INVERTEBRATES</b>						
Globose Dune Beetle				x		
Sandy Beach Tiger Beetle				x		
<b>MAMMALS</b>						
American Badger						
Black-Tailed Jack Rabbit						
Mountain Lion						
Pallid Bat						
San Diego Desert Woodrat				x		
Sea Otter		x				
Townsend's Big-Eared Bat						
<b>PLANTS</b>						
Black-Flowered Figwort				x		
Coulter's Saltbush						
Crisp Monardella				x		
Gaviota Tarplant	x				x	
La Purisima Manzanita						
Late-Flowered Mariposa Lily				x		
Lompoc Yerba Santa	x					
Rayless Ragwort						
Refugio Manzanita				x		
Santa Ynez False Lupine				x		
Sonoran Maiden Fern				x		
Southern Tarplant				x		
Surf Thistle				x		
<b>HABITATS</b>						
Central Dune Scrub						
Southern California Coastal Steelhead Streams						
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest						
Southern Coastal Fore-dune						
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest						
Southern Vernal Pools						
Southern Willow Scrub						
Valley Needlegrass Grassland						

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

Steller sea lion) bred historically in this area and are still seen on an occasional basis. The largest pinniped rookery in the continental United States is at Point Bennett on San Miguel Island. Baleen whales and dolphins are commonly observed in the Santa Barbara Channel. California gray, blue, and humpback whales are regular, seasonal visitors to the Gaviota Coast. The blue whale and humpback whale are both federally listed as endangered. The Study Area was historically inhabited by the southern sea otter (federal threatened), a species that appears to be reestablishing its former range within the region.



*Arctostaphylos refugioensis* - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002



*Shooting star, Dodecatheon pulchellum* - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

**Expert Workshop.** While in the process of creating the biological resources portion of the geographic information system (GIS) database, it became apparent that only a limited amount of accurate information was available for inclusion. Many team members had personal knowledge of sensitive species and habitats located within the Study Area that were not reflected in any GIS coverages. Therefore, it was determined that supplemental information was necessary to provide a more complete resource inventory.

This supplemented information was supplied in the form of an expert workshop. In attendance were Santa Barbara County planning staff, EDAW consultants, Conception Coast Project staff, and a host of consulting and agency biologists and ecologists familiar with the Gaviota Coast. Seven experts scored the 36 watersheds based on their knowledge of the watershed. Each expert also scored his/her experience of the watershed. Scores ranged from 1 - 5. Scores were comprised of ecological values such as species and habitat values. All scores were relative to other watersheds in the Study Area, not to other watersheds of the region.

All watersheds were ranked 1st through 36th for their GIS habitat value index score. A 1 designates the highest ranked watershed, the one with the highest measured habitat value. Watersheds were also ranked 1st through 36th for their averaged expert score. This ranking system made it easy to identify where the GIS data differed significantly from expert knowledge of sensitive biological resources in the Gaviota Coast.

The maps on the following page show the results of the GIS database habitat value scores (Figure 2.7), the expert scores (Figure 2.8), and a combination of the two sources (Figure 2.9), respectively. The results showed that in general, the GIS data and the experts assessment of biologi-

cal sensitivity in the Gaviota Coast watersheds were not significantly different, as seven of the top ten ranked watershed by the experts were also ranked 10 or better by the GIS. Fifteen of the top twenty ranked watersheds by the experts were also ranked 20 or better by the GIS. There are a few noticeable differences between the two sources. Watershed #5 (Point Conception) was ranked 4th by the experts and 34th by the GIS. The experts gave this area a high rank primarily because of its unique marine and intertidal habitats, bird and marine mammal rookeries. The habitat data in the GIS was not able to account for such unique qualities. The GAP data (statewide vegetation analysis completed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and researchers at UC Santa Barbara) used in the GIS recognized the watershed as entirely grazed, with almost no riparian habitat. To account for these differences, a combination of the GIS habitat scores and the expert scores is used as the biological sensitivity values in the GIS Resource Sensitivity Model, described in Chapter Three of this report.



*Monarch butterfly - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*



**Gaviota Coast Resource Study**

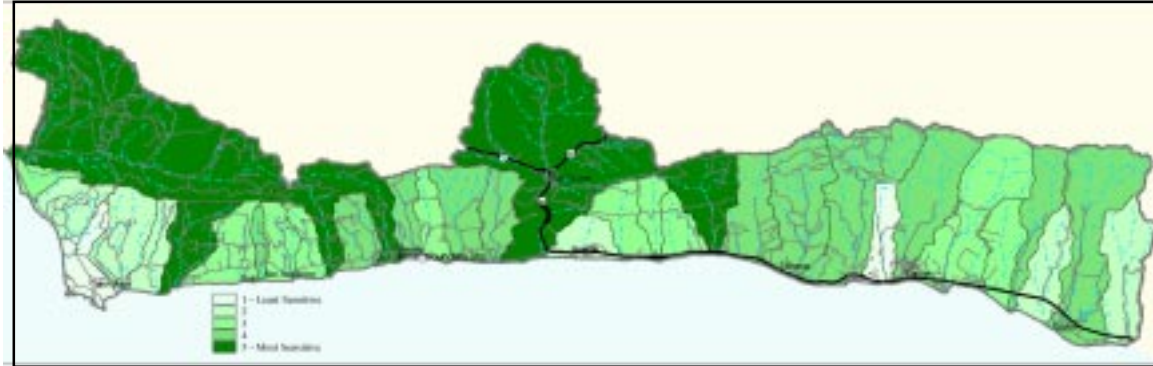


Figure 2.7 - GIS Database Watershed Habitat Values

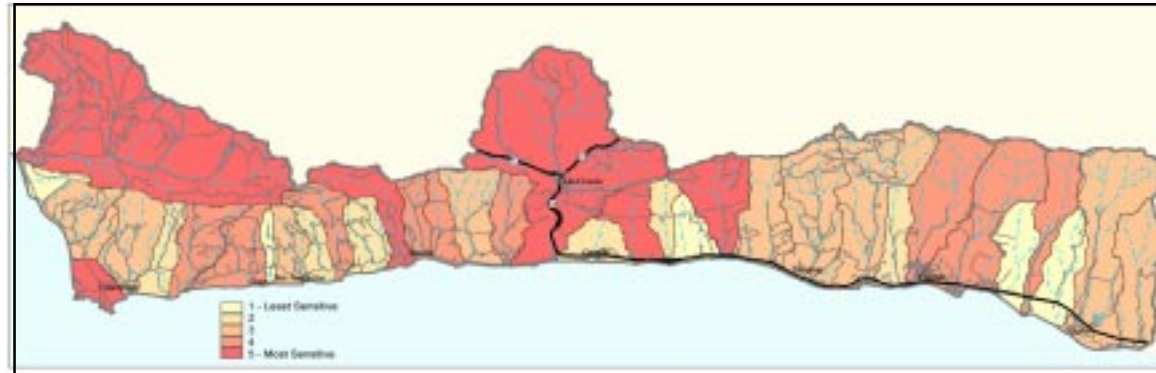


Figure 2.8 - Expert Rankings of Watershed Ecological Values

The figures provide a comparison between the watershed habitat values predicted in GIS model and the ecological value ranking by local experts. Field experience provides analysis to augment the general habitat information predicted by the GIS model with more detailed expert information collected at the watershed or parcel specific level. This illustrates future opportunities to refine and adjust the GIS model over time as more accurate and detailed information becomes available.

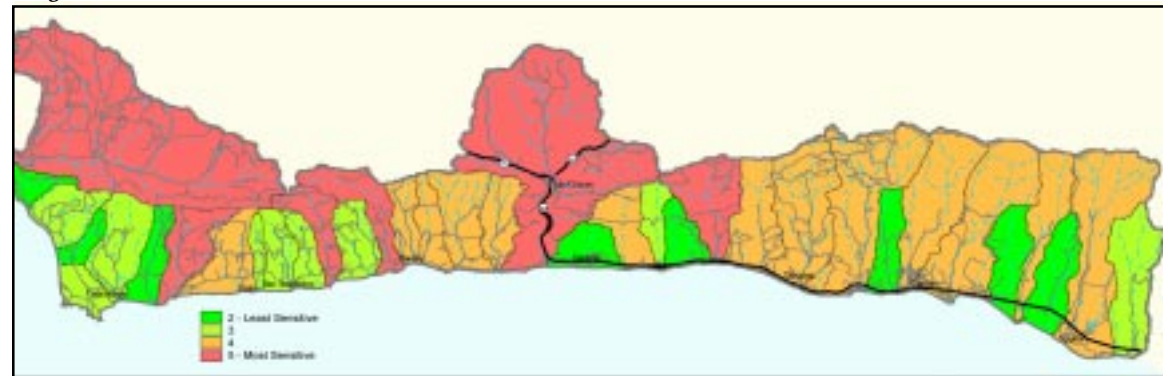
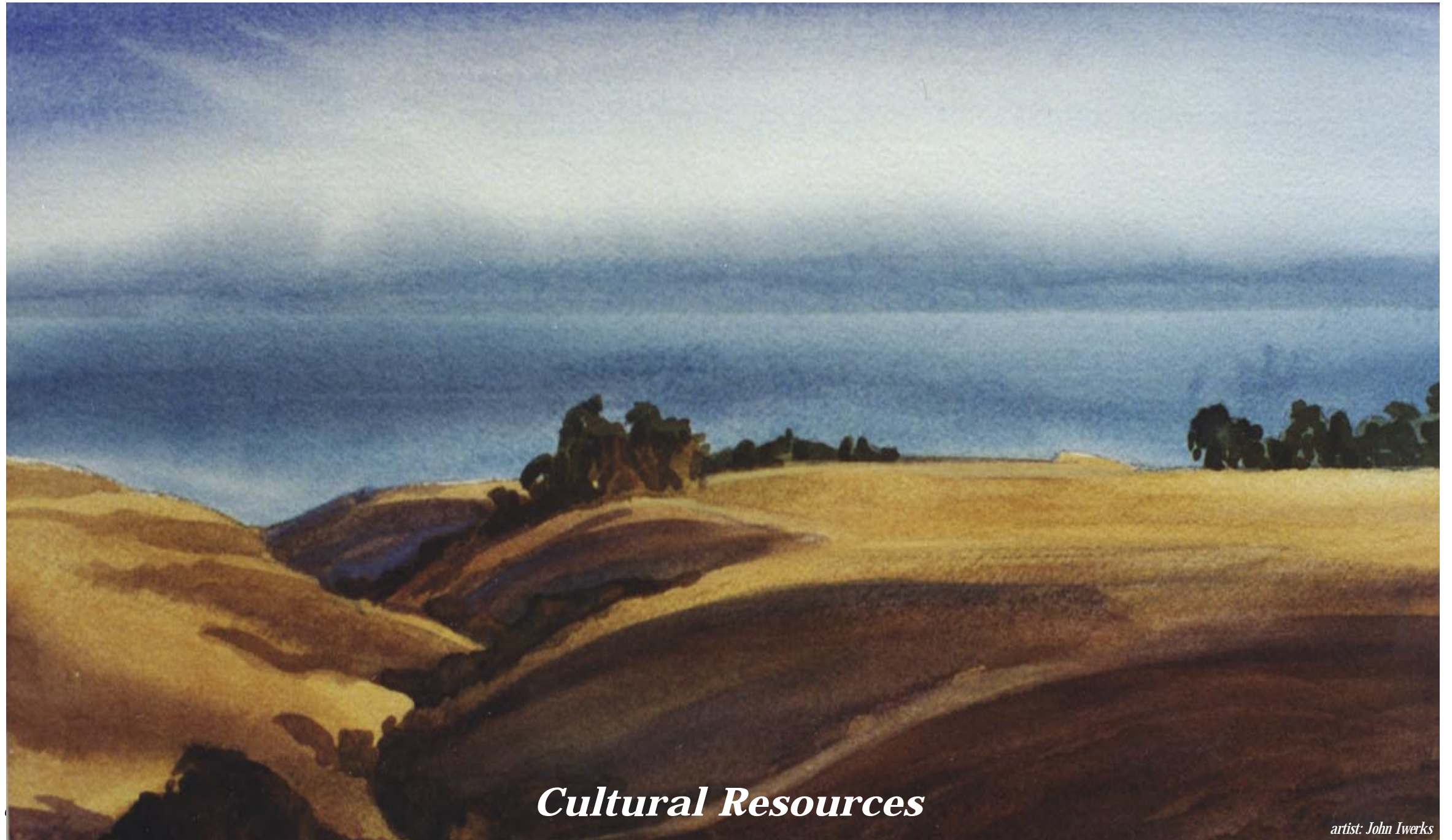


Figure 2.9 - Combined GIS and Expert Watershed Diversity Values



*Cultural Resources*

*artist: John Iwerks*

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

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***Cultural Resources***

*"We do not inherit this land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."*

- Haida Indian saying

The Gaviota Coastline includes within its expanse some of the most significant archaeological sites in California, spanning at least 9,000 years of prehistory. Because modern development within this region has been limited, the original context of archaeological sites is relatively intact when compared to the natural environment. In spite of the railroad that parallels the coast, most sites retain large portions of undisturbed archaeological deposits, preserving the integrity of association between artifacts and features within the chronological strata.

The Gaviota Coast is archaeologically distinguished because this area contains evidence that is representative of specific time periods in cultural history. Deposits within this coastal region date back as far as the Paleocoastal Period (9000 - 8500 B.P.) The Study Area contains sites of eleven Chumash Indian towns that were inhabited at the time of the establishment of the missions in the late 18th Century. Nearly all of the towns exhibit a relatively high degree of preservation. Several Chumash rock art sites also exist in the Study Area. A few are associated with shrines and many have unique representations and are exceptionally well preserved. At least one rock art site is aligned such that it is illuminated only on the evening of the Winter Solstice. Point Conception in the western project area is one of the most prominent features of the entire California coastline and has important mythological significance to the Western Coastal Chumash due to its association with the departure of souls to the Land of the Dead (see Figure 2.10 – Cultural Resource Sensitivity).

The village of *Mikiw*, the largest Chumash settlement that existed anywhere in coastal California, is within the Gaviota Coast Study Area. Explorers estimated the population of *Mikiw* at about 1,000 persons in the 18th Century. Based on the explorers' estimates, nearly 3,000 Chumash Indians lived in the eleven towns that existed along the Gaviota Coast.

Beginning with the establishment of Mission San Luis Obispo in 1772, people from native towns along the Santa Barbara Channel began to be baptized and converted to the Catholic faith. By 1803, most of the remaining inhabitants along this section of coastline were incorporated into the populations of Missions La Purisima and Santa Barbara. The introduction of European diseases into a native population that possessed no

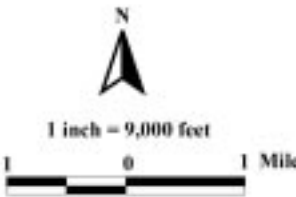


*North Gaviota Coast - Wm. B. Dewey*

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

**Figure 2.10**  
**Cultural Resource**  
**Sensitivity**

- Cultural Resource Sensitivity
-  High
  -  Low
- Basemap Features
-  Hydrology
  -  Major Roads
  -  Minor Roads
  -  Study Area



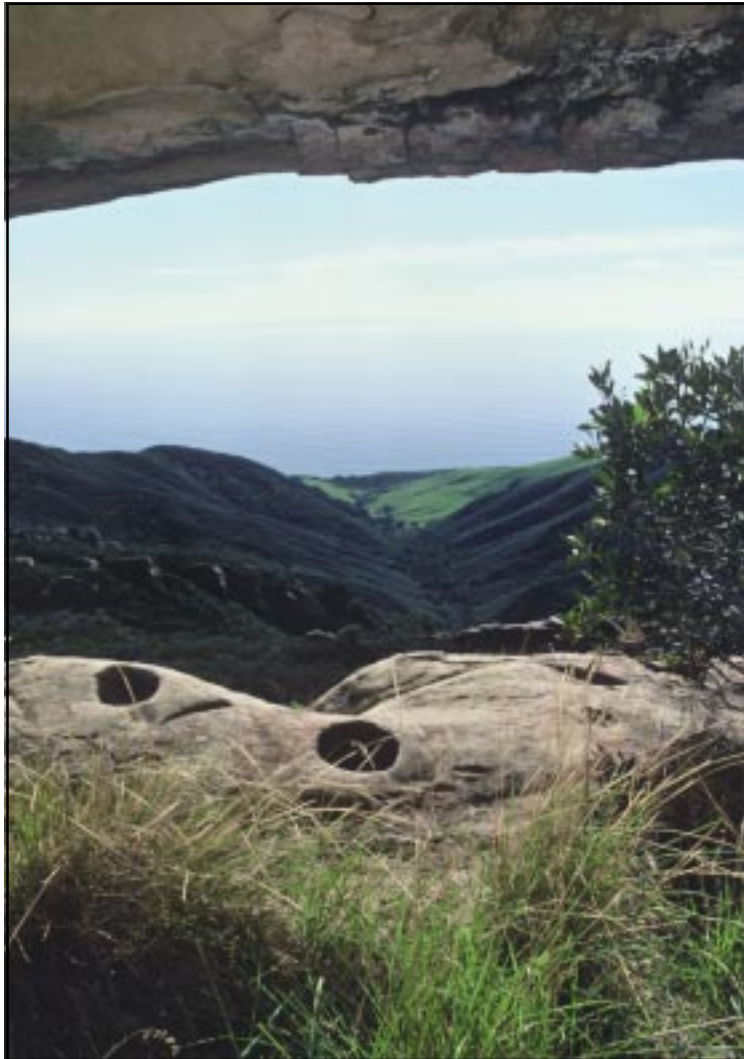
Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW, Inc.,  
Teale Data Center



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



*Bedrock mortar site, Gaviota Coast - Rick Bury, © 2002*

natural immunity resulted in high mortality. The Chumash population declined dramatically throughout the Mission Period.

Following the secularization of the missions in 1833-35, some Chumash Indians returned to the Gaviota Coast to work as vaqueros, shepherds, and laborers on the various ranchos. This pattern continued until the early twentieth century. Currently, a surprising number of Chumash families living in southern California, especially among the very young, can trace their ancestry to at least eight of the eleven towns found along the Gaviota Coast. These include members of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians and descendants of a Chumash family that retain a small Indian allotment on the summit of the Santa Ynez range just east of Refugio Pass.

It is not acceptable to precisely map cultural resource sites due to the need to keep these locations confidential to minimize the potential for illicit looting of artifacts. Figure 2.10 - Cultural Resource Sensitivity, delineates areas of high and low cultural resource sensitivities based on the likelihood of archaeological site presence, the distribution of prehistoric archaeological sites and topographic characteristics (e.g. elevated mesas, water courses, etc.) often associated with Chumash occupation. Certain objective criteria are helpful in refining the boundaries of high and low archaeological sensitivity areas. For example, archaeologists agree that most classes of prehistoric archaeological sites are not found on slopes greater than 30 percent (a notable exception is rock art sites found under bedrock outcrop overhangs). Therefore, this variable can be used to help define low archaeological sensitivity areas.



*Visual Resources*

John Iwerks  
artist: John Iwerks



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

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**Visual Resources**

*“Open land is vanishing and old landmarks are violated. Worst of all, expansion is eroding the precious and time-honored values of community with neighbors and communion with nature.”*

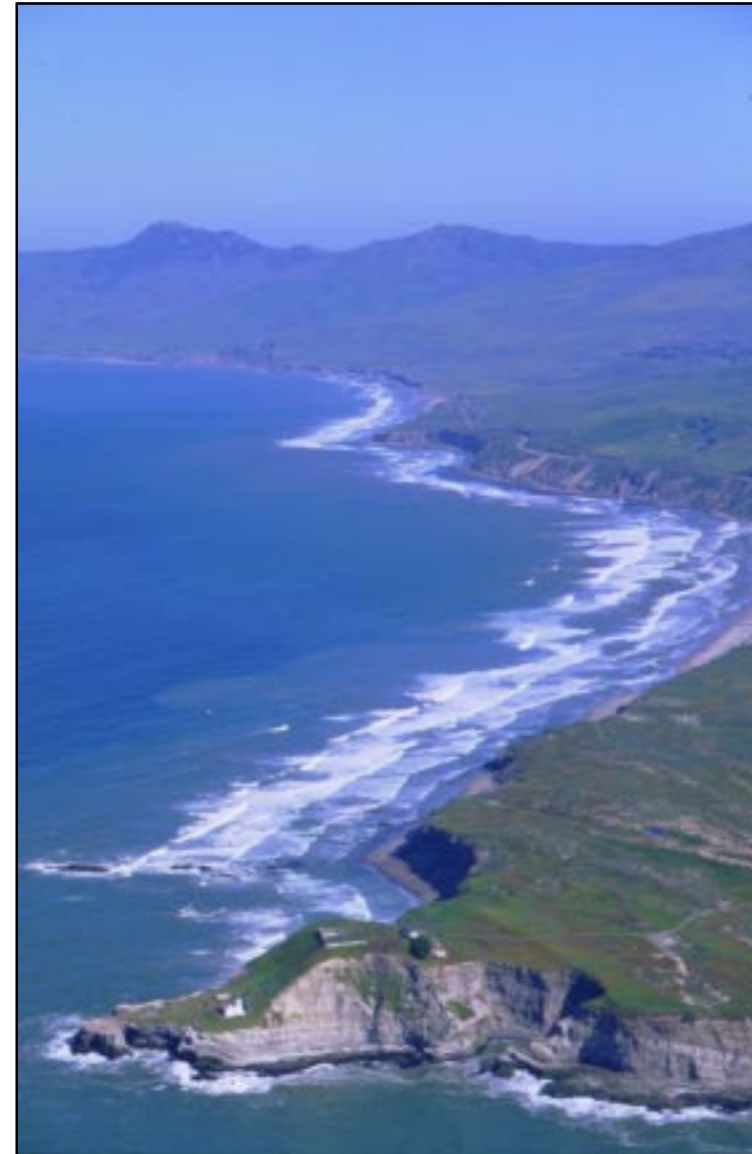
- President Lyndon B. Johnson

The Study Area is situated in a region of exceptional scenic quality on the coast of California that serves as an inspiration for landowners, artists, writers, tourists and nature lovers. The coastline features dramatic views of the Pacific Ocean backed by beaches, sand dunes, bluffs, hillsides and canyons.

The large expanses of orchards and grazing lands on the coastal plain, coastal valleys and gently rolling hillsides provide a scenic pastoral setting. State Highway 1 from U.S. Highway 101 (near Las Cruces) to Lompoc is designated a State Scenic Highway. Two scenic corridors identified in the Santa Barbara County Open Space Element (OSE) as deserving prime consideration for scenic highway designation are also located in the Study Area. These include U.S. Highway 101 from Gaviota Beach State Park to the City of Goleta; and Jalama Road from State Highway 1 to Jalama County Park. The OSE, unlike state highway scenic standards, recommends open space preservation along the most scenic corridors.

In addition to the incredible natural vistas, there are also a multitude of visually prominent man-made structures within the Study Area. These structures include the Union Pacific Railroad trestle, the Arguello/Gaviota processing facility, the Gaviota marine terminal, the Gaviota tunnel, and a portion of the Tajiguas Landfill.

The map on the following page was created in a geographic information system (see Figure 2.11 – Viewshed Analysis). Using topography, the GIS



*Point Conception - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

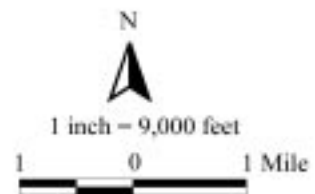
**Figure 2.11**  
**Viewshed Analysis**

Visible From State Highway 1  
or U.S. Highway 101

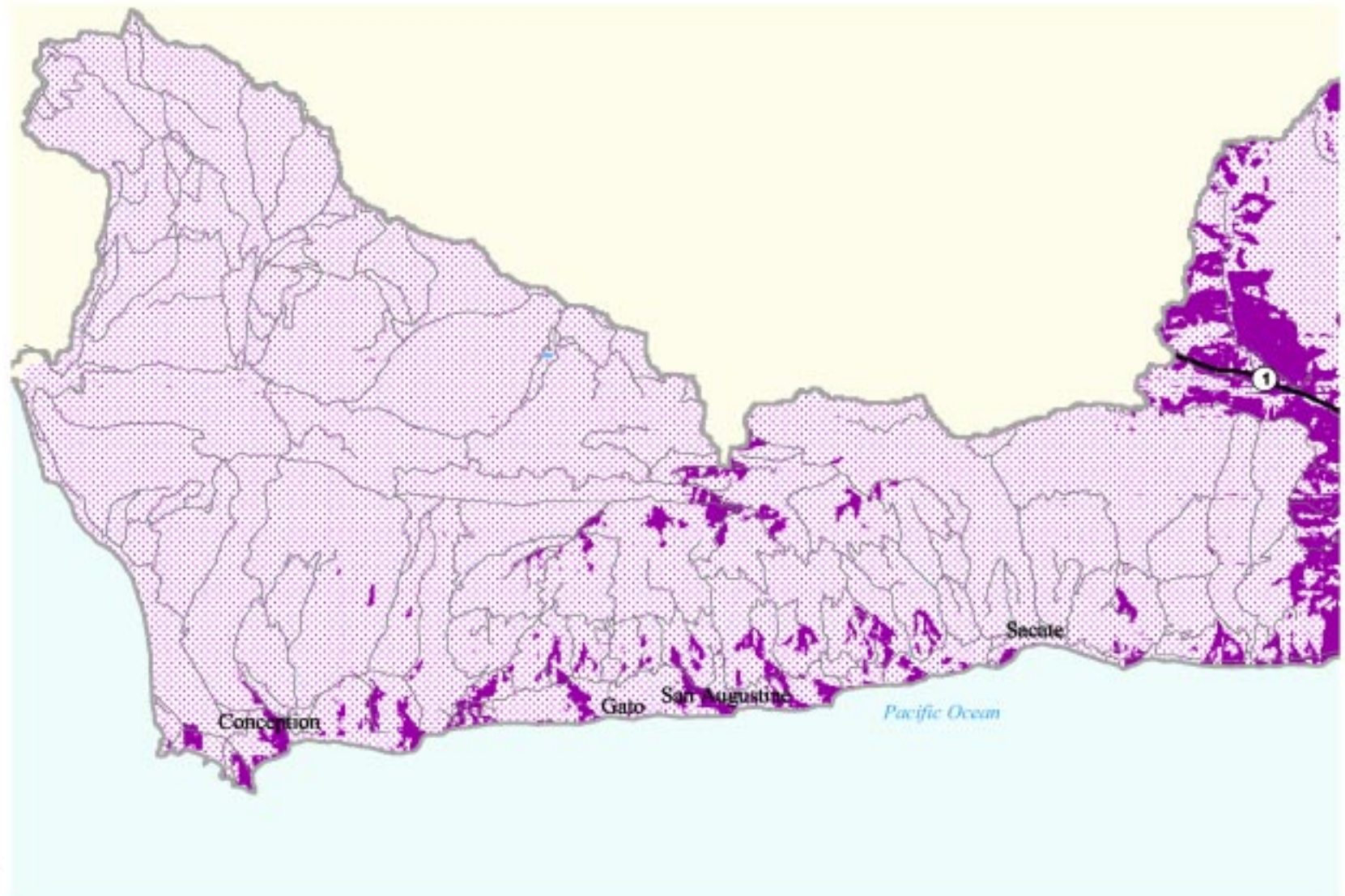
- Visible
- Not Visible

Basemap Features

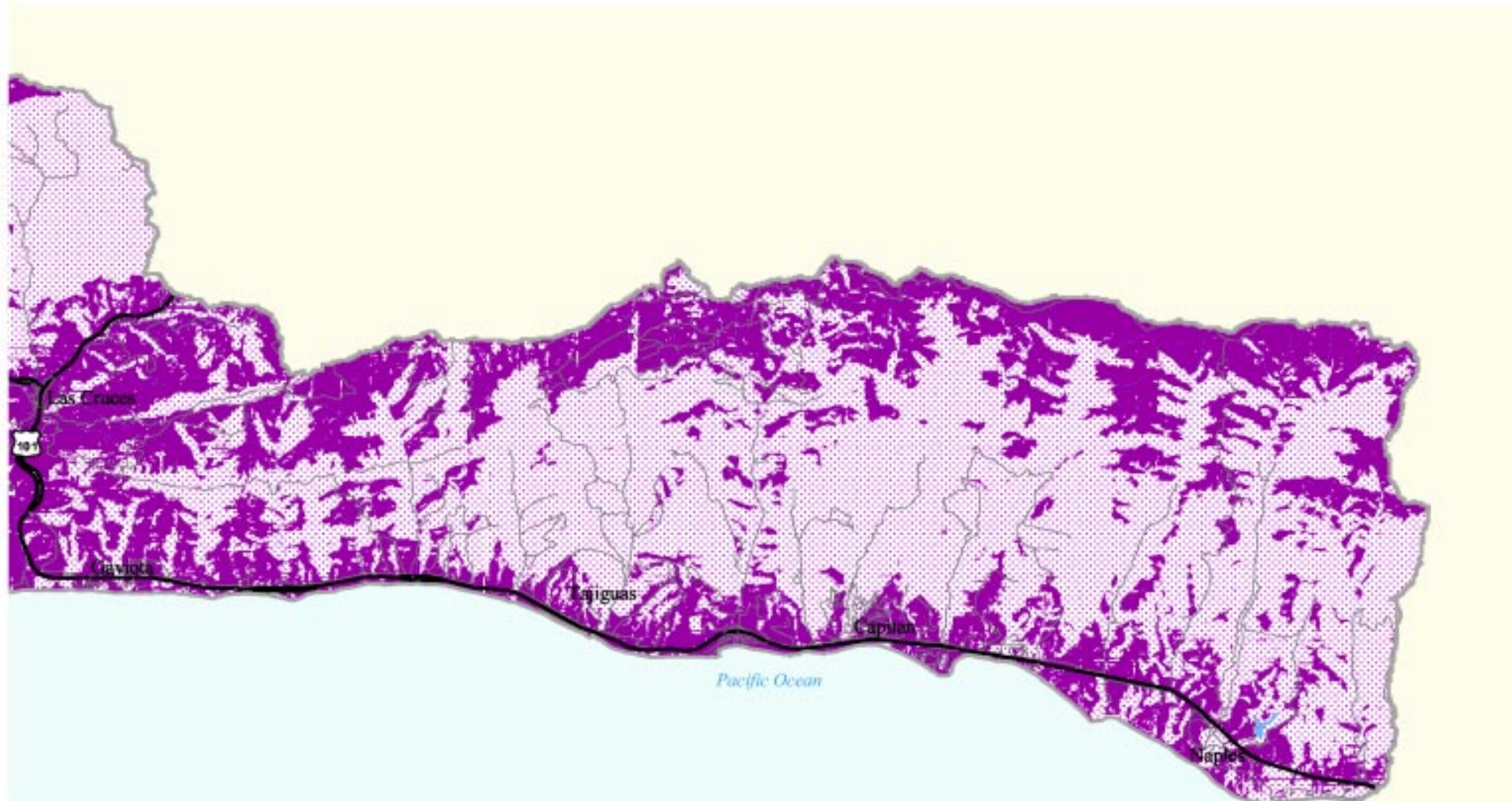
- Hydrology
- Major Roads
- Minor Roads
- Study Area



Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW, Inc.,  
Teale Data Center.



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

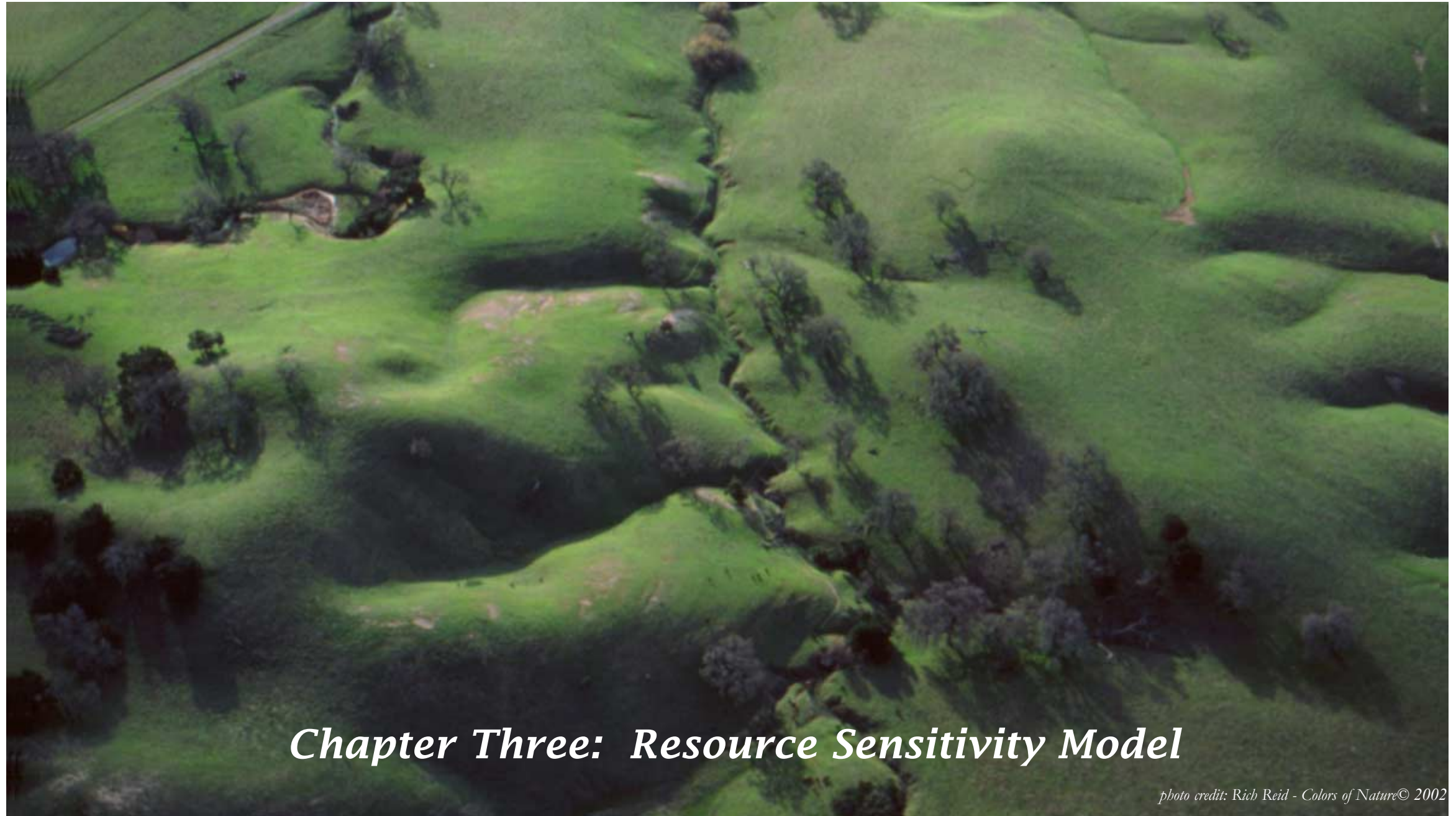
can determine which areas of land are visible from selected roads. This map shows areas visible from U.S. Highway 101 and State Highway 1, but does not take into account vegetation or existing structures which may potentially block a view.

These scenic resources are vulnerable to degradation through development. Improper location and scale of building development, alteration of natural landforms by cutting, grading and filling practices, and by poorly-placed roadside signs and utility lines can block coastal views and lessen the scenic

qualities of the Study Area. The Coastal Act requires special protection of scenic and visual resources from public areas such as highways, roads, beaches, parks, coastal trails and accessways, and vista points. The Santa Barbara County Local Coastal Program includes a View Corridor Overlay District, the purpose of which is to protect significant coastal view corridors from U.S. Highway 101 to the ocean. It sets regulations and standards for any structural development subject to approval by the County Board of Architectural Review.



*Picturesque Gaviota coastline - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*



*Chapter Three: Resource Sensitivity Model*

*photo credit: Rich Reid - Colors of Nature© 2002*

## Chapter Three: Resource Sensitivity Model

*“When you try to pick out anything by itself, you find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”*

- John Muir

This section of the Gaviota Coast Resource Study introduces a tool built for the County of Santa Barbara to assist in determining which lands within the Study Area may contain multiple sensitive resources.

### **Geographic Information System (GIS) Model**

A model was created for use in a Geographic Information System which allows users to enter information to analyze or combine to assist in planning exercises. A GIS allows many different types of information (i.e., vegetation, soils, water features, etc.) to be overlaid to create a composite map. The model stores all the information necessary to run the processes and create the output data. It also creates documentation that is saved as part of the model, which enables the model to be shared and used by others. The model is easily adapted to explore ‘what if’ scenarios and obtain different solutions.

### **Resource Sensitivity Model**

The diagram in Figure 3.1, Resource Sensitivity Model, shows a flowchart which is representative of each component of a spatial process. The layers on the left side of the graphic are combined in an arithmetic overlay, to create a new composite layer, called Resource Sensitivity (see Figure 3.2 - Resource Sensitivity), which identifies areas with the most combined resources.

The Resource Sensitivity Model combines four GIS data layers: Soils, Biology, Archaeology and Viewsheds. The soils layer contains information about which soils are considered prime, of statewide importance, of local importance, are unique to the area, are used for grazing or are considered urban areas. Resource information for the other layers was described previously in Chapter 2 of this report. As noted in that chapter, the biology layer aggregates all the available biological resource information as well as local expert opinions, to create a diversity ranking for each of the 36 watersheds in the Study Area.

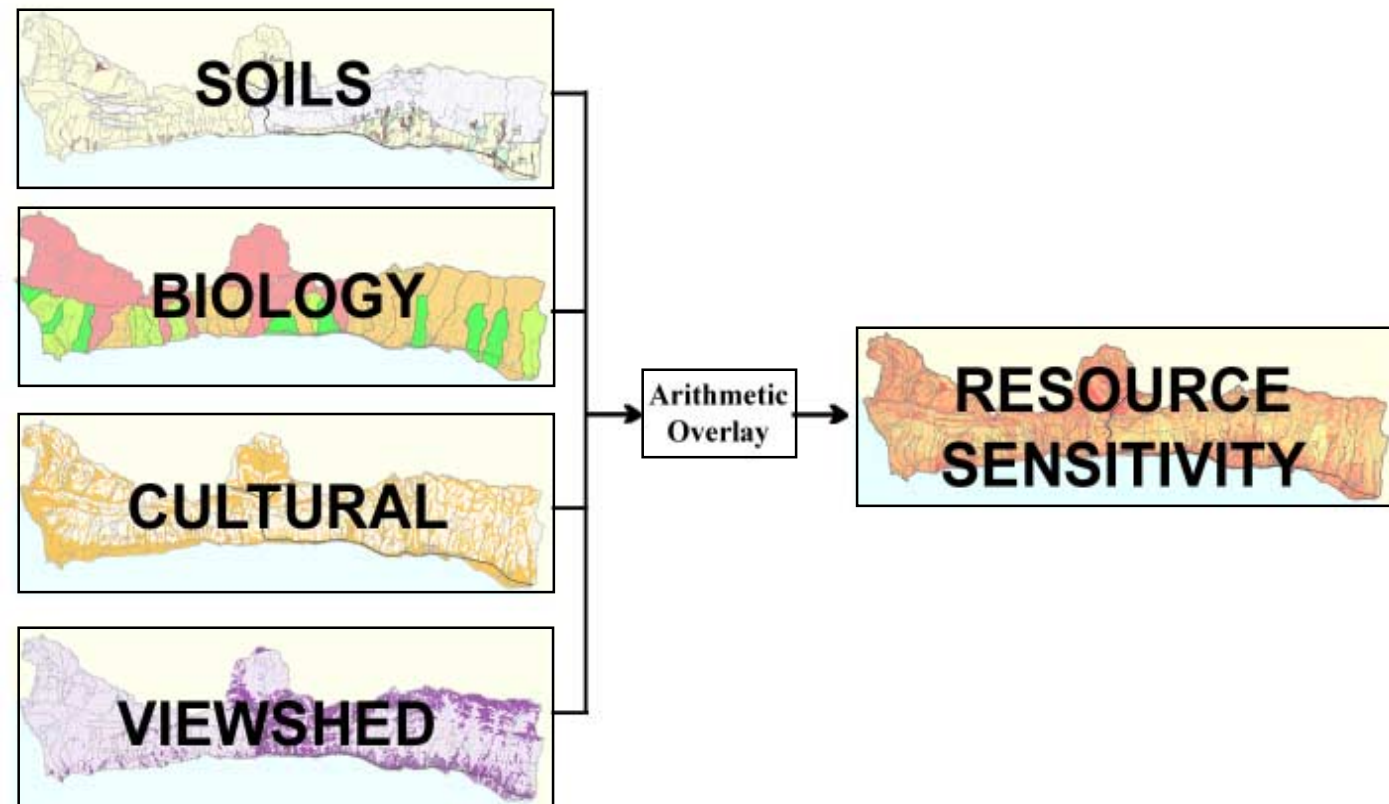
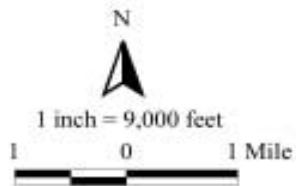
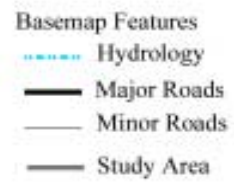
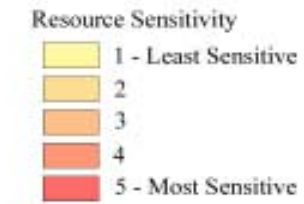


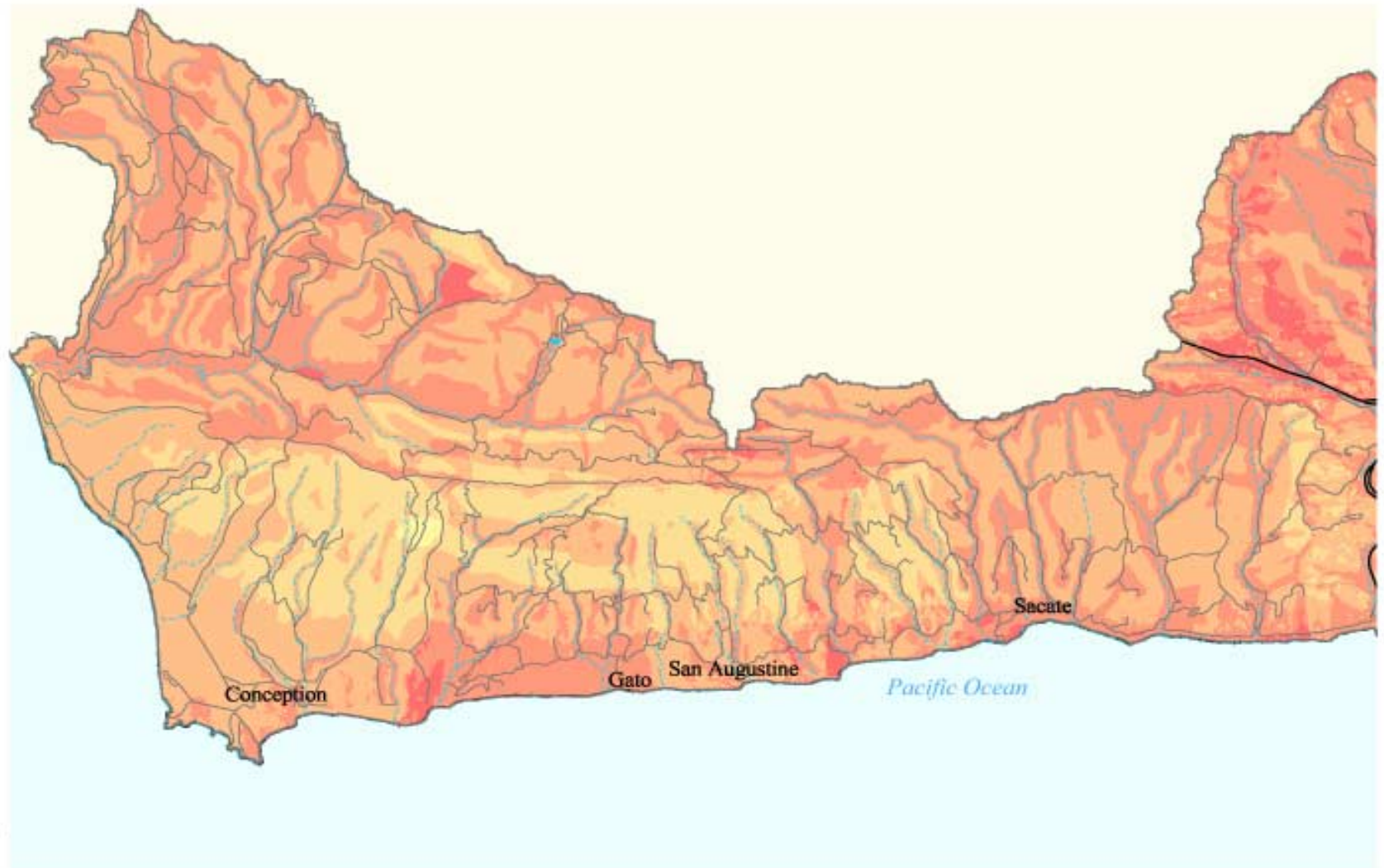
Figure 3.1 - Resource Sensitivity Model

*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

**Figure 3.2**  
**Resource**  
**Sensitivity Areas**



Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW, Inc.,  
Teale Data Center





*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

When the four data layers illustrated in the Figure 3.1 are combined in an arithmetic overlay, a resource sensitivity composite layer is created (see Figure 3.2 - Resource Sensitivity). The areas with the darkest red color contain the most resources, i.e. the area is within the viewshed of Highway 101, has a high sensitivity to containing cultural resources, may contain prime agricultural soils and also contains habitat for several sensitive species. The areas with the lightest yellow color have the least amount of resource sensitivity. County planners and decision-makers may use this layer of information when analyzing areas that may be appropriate for conservation.

It is important to note that the model results are only as good, or accurate, as the data used to create it. The existing GIS database catalogues information from larger regional databases; for example, a 1:24,000-scale coverage of soil types from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. An example of where this causes inaccuracies is the Tajiguas Landfill area which is shown with a relatively high resource sensitivity; the GIS data used in this instance did not take into account parcel level information. Specifically, the biological resource data is presented by watershed, not parcel. For this reason, there may be errors apparent to readers, that would be taken into account when refining this model as a tool for future land use policies or review of development applications.

In the mapped example, each of the four data layers has been treated equally. The model, however, is designed so that the County may vary the relative importance of the layers, or incorporate additional information at a later time. The Resource Sensitivity Model illustrates just one example of how this GIS model may be used as a planning tool. The County may build upon the model and refine it in an ongoing process to further meet their changing needs.



*Gaviota coastline - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*



*Chapter Four: Governance and Land Use*

*photo credit: Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## Chapter Four: Governance and Land Use

*“Land is the most precious resource of the metropolitan area. The present patterns of haphazard suburban development are contributing to a tragic waste in the use of a vital resource now being consumed at an alarming rate ... open space must be reserved to provide parks and recreation, conserve water and other natural resources, prevent building in undesirable locations, prevent erosion and floods, and avoid the wasteful extension of public services.”*

- President John F. Kennedy

In order to make informed land use decisions, it is important to understand the regulatory framework and existing conditions in which those decisions may be made. This chapter provides an overview of the regulatory agencies with jurisdiction in or near the Study Area, their relevant land use plans and policies, and important land use trends on the Gaviota Coast.

### **Regulatory Agencies with Jurisdiction In or Near the Study Area**

**County of Santa Barbara.** All of the Gaviota Coast Study Area is located within the County of Santa Barbara. The County controls land uses within its jurisdiction by establishing use categories in the General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan and implementing the Plans through the County Zoning Ordinances. The County Planning and Development (P&D) Department’s mission is to plan for and guide development and protect resources in the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County. P&D is responsible for planning, permitting, inspections and compliance programs which foster reasonable, productive, and safe use of property to promote the general welfare of the community while ensuring long-term resource protection. The County is also responsible for administering Williamson Act contracts for agricultural preserves. The County has jurisdiction over all private lands in the county inside and outside of the Coastal Zone, but only permit author-

ity over state lands in the Coastal Zone. For land uses within the Coastal Zone, the County has developed a Local Coastal Program in compliance with the Coastal Act and is responsible for its implementation in cooperation with the California Coastal Commission. The County provides overall municipal services within the Study Area, including sheriff and fire protection, public works and flood control, waste collection service, and parks and recreation.

**California Coastal Commission.** On January 1, 1977, the Coastal Act came into effect, establishing a permanent coastal management program for California, overseen by the California Coastal Commission. Within the Act are policies that direct future growth and development in the Coastal Zone. Each of the 15 coun-



Pier at Gaviota State Park - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

ties and 53 cities along the California coast is required by the Coastal Act to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP). The LCP consists of “a local government’s land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning district maps and implementing actions which, when taken together, meet the requirements of the Coastal Act at the local level” (California Coastal Act, section 30108.6).

After an LCP is certified, the California Coastal Commission (CCC) continues to exercise local agency jurisdiction over development in certain geographic areas, review amendments to certified LCPs, and hear appeals. Only certain kinds of developments can be appealed after a local government’s LCP has been certified; these include:

- Developments between the sea and the first public road paralleling the sea or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or of the mean high tide line of the sea where there is no beach, whichever is the greater distance.
- Developments located on tidelands, submerged lands, public trust lands, within 100

feet of any wetland, estuary, stream or within 300 feet of the top of the seaward face of any coastal bluff.

- Developments located in a sensitive coastal resource area.
- A development that is not designated as the principal permitted use under the zoning ordinance or zoning district map.
- Any development which constitutes a major public works project or a major energy facility (County of Santa Barbara Coastal Plan, 1982).

The Coastal Zone of the Gaviota Coast includes approximately 50,600 acres (see Figure 4.1 - Land Jurisdiction). In addition, the offshore islands of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa are entirely within Santa Barbara County coastal jurisdiction. The Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January of 1980. After modification, the Plan was partially certified in March of 1981. The only portion of the Study Area which has not been certified includes Haskell’s Beach at Bacara Resort.

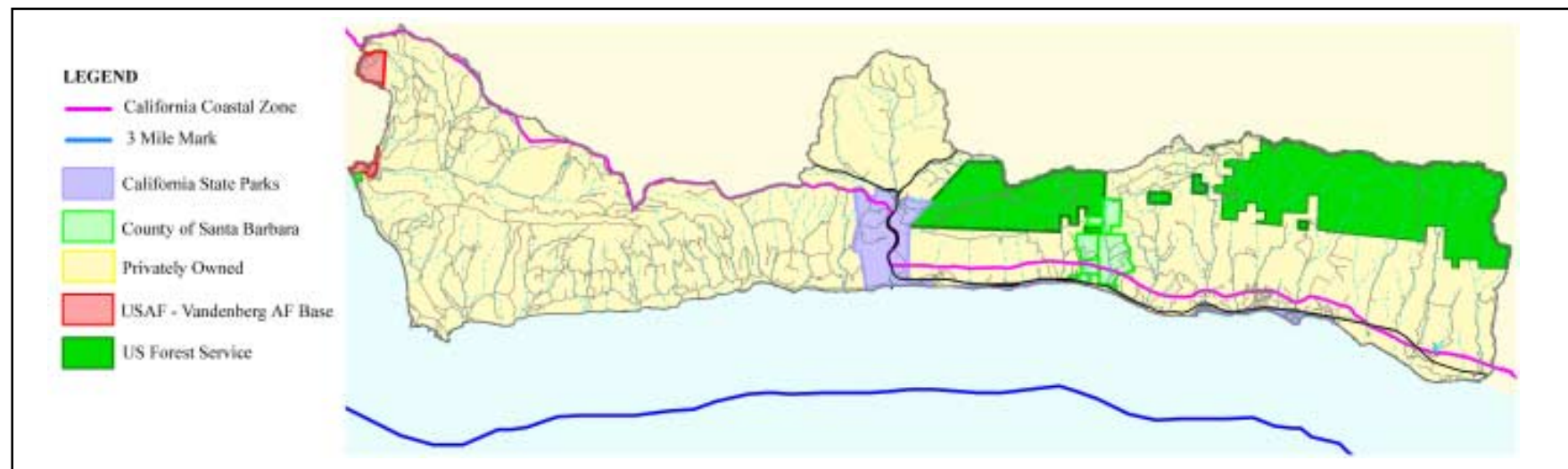


Figure 4.1 - Land Jurisdiction

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

**California Department of Conservation.** The California Land Conservation Act (LCA), passed by the 1965 Legislature, provides that local action may be taken to preserve lands in agricultural use and to provide a property tax climate in which agriculture is encouraged. This law provides for voluntary action on the part of the landowners and government, to provide certainty to the public that land to be treated as farmland remains in agricultural use, and to give direction to the assessor when assessing farmland. The California Department of Conservation oversees this Act, also called the Williamson Act. The LCA is divided into two major parts - prime and non-prime agricultural land. The first step in implementing the LCA is the designation of an “agricultural preserve”. This is done by the County Board of Supervisors after a public hearing and recommendation from the



*El Capitan State Park - Wm. B. Dewey*

### **Chapter Four: Governance and Land Use**

Board-appointed Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee. The County’s agricultural preserve program allows property owners to voluntarily enter into a ten-year continuously renewing contract with the County which restricts their land to agricultural uses and limited residential development, thus creating agricultural preserves. When land is enrolled in a LCA contract, the property owner is taxed at a lower rate according to the use of the land for agricultural purposes rather than its unrestricted market value.

**California State Parks and Recreation.** The function of the California State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is to “acquire, protect, develop and interpret for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the people of the state a balanced system of areas with outstanding natural and cultural resource values and recreation opportunities. These areas shall be held in trust as irreplaceable portions of California’s natural, cultural and historic heritage” (DPR Website, <http://www.parks.ca.gov>).

The Channel Coast District of DPR is responsible for managing Gaviota State Park, located 33 miles west of Santa Barbara on US Highway 101 in the Study Area. The District has established rules and regulations to protect the park for future generations as well as for the convenience and safety of the park visitors. The District also manages El Capitan and Refugio State campgrounds, as well as land south of U.S. Highway 101 between El Capitan and Gaviota.

**United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service.** The mission of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) is “to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations” (USFS Website, [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)). Their commitment to land stewardship and public service is the framework within which natural resources are managed. Los Padres National Forest (LPNF) stretches almost 220 miles throughout central California, with 16,811 acres located in the Gaviota Coast Study Area.

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

Activities within the LPNF are managed according to the “Land and Resource Management Plan” (Forest Plan). The goal of the Forest Plan is to provide a management program reflecting a mix of activities which allow use and protection of forest resources, and to fulfill legislative requirements while addressing local, regional and national issues (LPNF Forest Plan, 1988). Forest Management Area 38 comprises the scenic viewshed along the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains from Gaviota Peak east to beyond the Santa Barbara/Ventura County line. The management emphasis for this area is based upon maintaining the rugged, natural appearing character of the landscape. Other resource activities including wildlife habitat enhancement, range management, fuel management, cultural resource management, and forest recreation, are managed to be consistent with the primary visual emphasis.

**State Lands Commission.** State Tidelands consist of ocean waters from the mean high tide line to three miles offshore. The principal agency responsible for managing these waters and underwater mineral resources is the State Lands Commission. Many areas within the State Tidelands offshore of Santa Barbara County are included in the State Oil and Gas Sanctuary. The State Lands Commission has prohibited oil and gas leasing and development in these areas due to their resource sensitivities.

**United States Department of the Interior.** Under the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act of 1954, the U.S. Department of the Interior is charged with managing the exploration and development of mineral resources on the Federal Outer Continental Shelf. The Secretary of the Interior vested this responsibility in the Minerals Management Service (MMS), which has two core responsibilities: safe offshore operations and environmental protection.

The OCS is beyond the State Tidelands three mile-seaward boundary. The MMS leases mineral rights to these submerged lands, in which a company has the right to apply for permits to explore and develop the mineral resources in that area. Before approving the permits, MMS reviews all applications to ensure the activities will be conducted in a safe and environmentally sound manner. The permitting of an OCS Project, including its state water and onshore components, typically requires the approval of federal, state and local authorities.



Platform Holly - County P&D

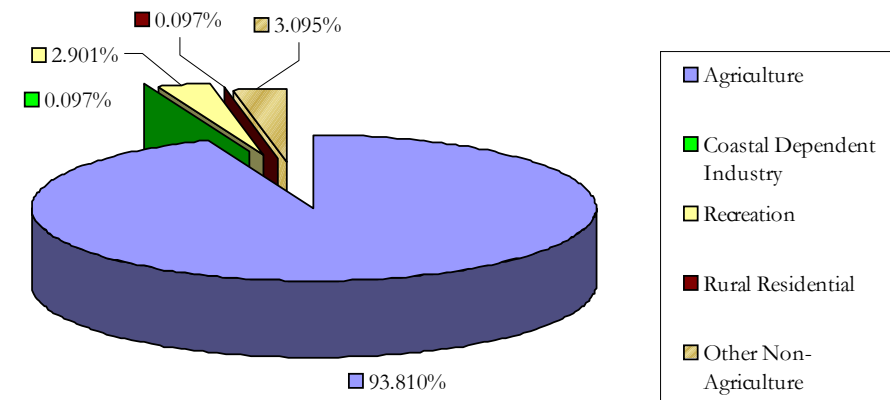
## Land Use Trends on the Gaviota Coast

Based upon current trends, development, land use intensification and conservation efforts on the Gaviota Coast are anticipated to increase. The undeveloped pristine beauty of the Gaviota Coast is an attraction to local recreation users and statewide visitors. There are applications for agricultural subdivision by property owners desiring residential development in the Study Area. Existing oil and gas production is also a significant feature along portions of this coastline. Intensification of each land use has the potential to significantly change the predominantly agricultural and rural coastline into a suburban area, more typical of the Southern California coastline, stretching from the Mexican border to Ventura County. Local interest in land use planning on the Gaviota Coast is increasing in the community. Deciding the appropriate balance of uses and conservation on the Gaviota Coast will be an important land use decision for the community, property owners and decision-makers.

### ***Agriculture Subdivision and Residential-Ranchette Development***

The trend of dividing agricultural parcels into smaller parcel sizes threatens the future of agriculture on the Gaviota Coast. Subdividing farmland brings with it the potential to create parcels of a size too small to support their current agricultural use. The likely result is rural residential use and the discontinuation of farming or ranching. This is most likely to happen first on non-prime lands or on land adjacent to urban centers. Land speculation and subdivision can be self-perpetuating. As subdivisions on nearby lands are approved by the County, speculation and adjacent land values increase. These pressures widen the gap between the land's agricultural value and its market value. Rising land prices and real estate speculation can be an incentive to sell or subdivide a ranch, especially when owners are faced

Land Use Designations Within the Study Area



with high inheritance taxes which can make passing on of family farmland difficult.

For example, development of Hollister Ranch resulted in the largest agricultural land parcelization on the Gaviota Coast. In the early 1970s, a 14,358 acre parcel along 8.5 miles of coast line north of Gaviota State Park was subdivided into 135 parcels. Since this subdivision predates the Coastal Act of 1976 including provisions for public access to coastal resources,

Agricultural production in the Study Area includes cattle grazing and specialty crops, such as avocado, citrus and cherimoya orchards, and flowers. Almost 94% of the land within the study area is currently designated agricultural (see Figure 4.2 - Existing Land Uses). The minimum lot sizes for agriculture use in the Study Area range from 10 to 320 acres, with the majority zoned at 100 acres. Less than 1% of the land is considered rural residential.

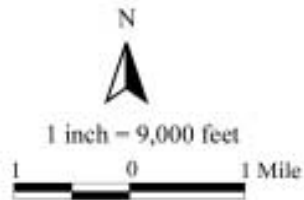


*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

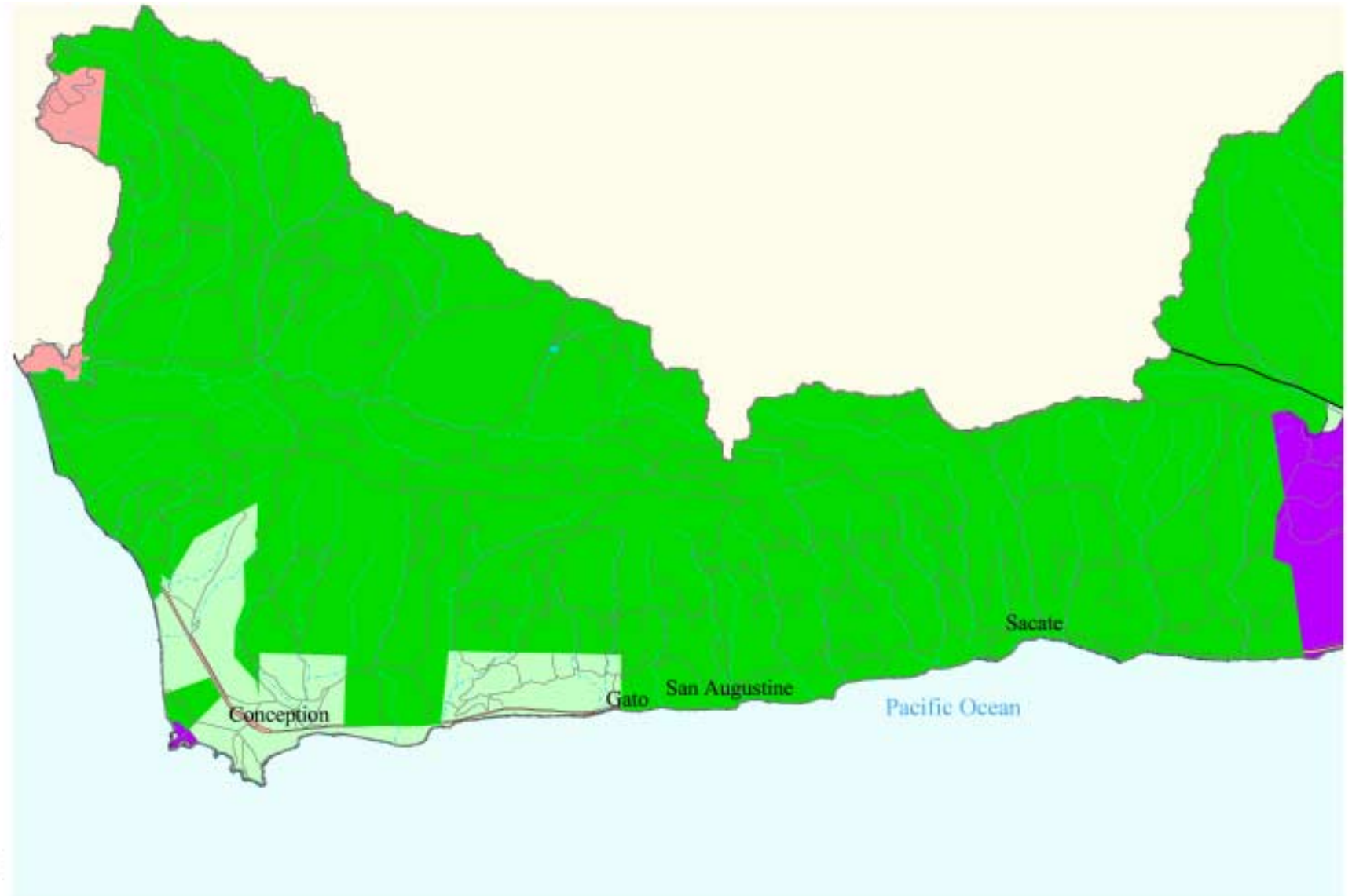
**Figure 4.2  
Existing Land Uses**

- Land Use Categories**
- Coastal Dependent Industry
  - Lands in Agricultural Preserve
  - Other Agricultural Designations
  - Other Non-Agricultural Designations
  - Recreation
  - Rural Residential

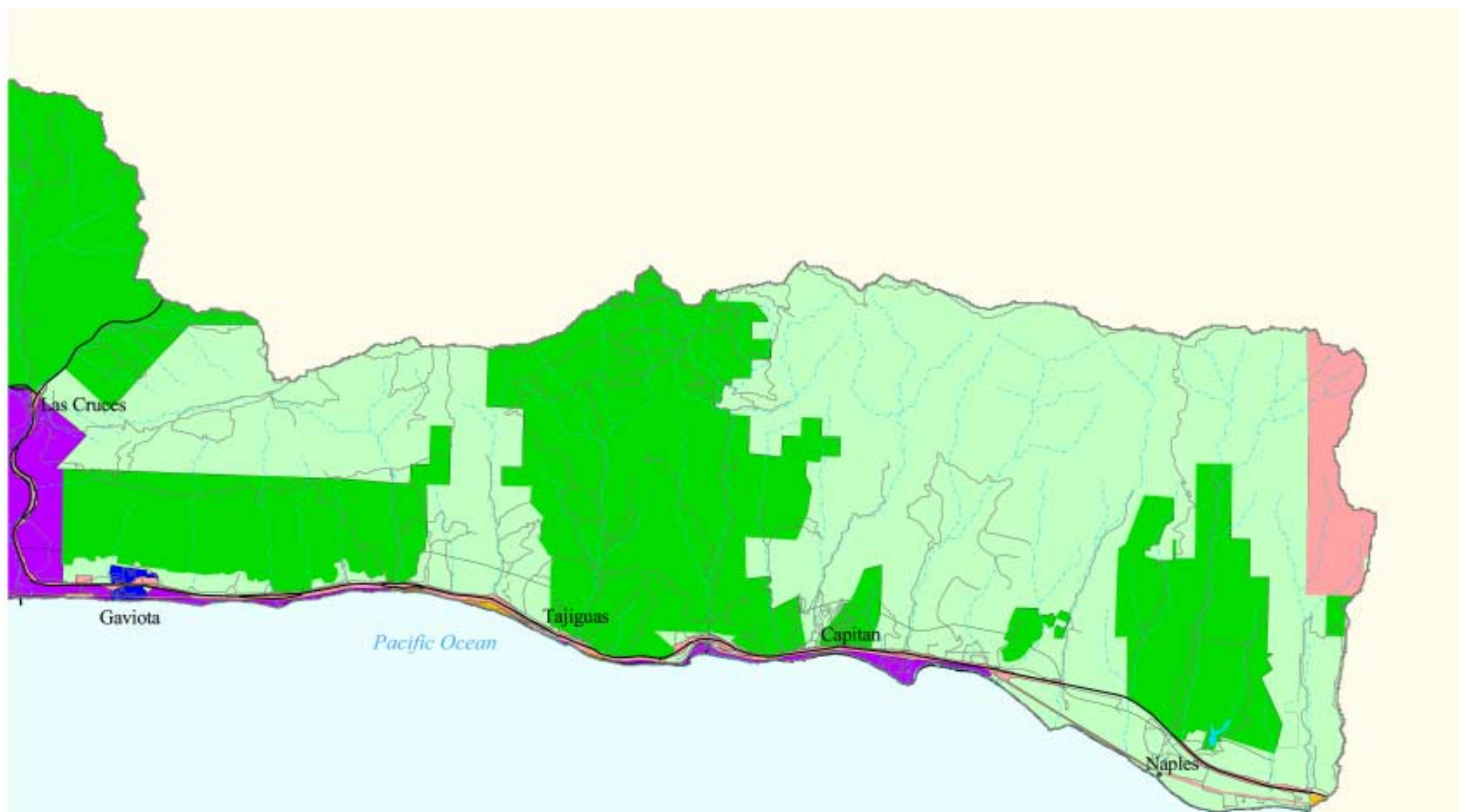
- Basemap Features**
- Hydrology
  - Major Roads
  - Minor Roads
  - Study Area



Source: Conception Coast Project,  
County of Santa Barbara, EDAW, Inc.,  
Teale Data Center



*Gaviota Coast Resource Study*



## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

Hollister Ranch contains no public access. With the majority of these parcels just over 100 acres in size, agricultural land parcelization reduces the likelihood that agriculture viability will be preserved on these lands. Typical standard for minimum parcel sizes for viable grazing operations range from parcel sizes of 300-400 acres on good grazing lands to 650-1000+ acres on poor grazing lands.

One recent regulatory program intended to protect agricultural resources in rural lands is the County's Lot Size Compliance & Lot Line Adjustment Program adopted in 2000 (2001 adoption for Coastal Zone). Effective countywide, the Program defines and regulates fraction lots, a lot created as a result of an instrument of conveyance, in which the lot is not separately conveyed as a distinctly described parcel, and sets forth minimum lot size requirements governing their development. The Program also revises the County's lot line adjustment rules to prevent the adjustment of property lines to increase the residential development potential of substandard size parcels that do not meet applicable minimum parcel size requirement. Since Program adoption, several property owners with a combined total of over 10,000 acres in the eastern portion of the Study Area have sued the County.

Of all the development pressures on the Gaviota Coast, probably the most controversial and well known is the potential development of the *Naples townsite*. For over 20 years, the County has been embroiled in planning issues and litigation regarding development of the "Plan of Naples", an antiquated subdivision map filed in 1888 showing lots and streets, predating state land division laws. In recent years, County effort to resolve development issues at Naples has centered around an approach to comprehensively plan for the land as a whole, rather than regulating lot by lot, where fragmentation of development could be more harmful to the rural, agricultural and visual resources of the Gaviota Coast. In April 2002, the County entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the property

owner(s) at Naples. Under this agreement, development applications would be filed for a total of 55 residential lots on both sides of Highway 101, reducing the development potential from 233 lots recognized by the County under the Official Map of Naples or the 400+ lots that the property owners contend exist under the Naples antiquated map.

Approximately 250 acres within the Coastal Zone would be restricted to open space and common agricultural uses. Public beach access and parking, bicycle and hiking trails, bicycle campground and public improvements would be included within the 250 acres. Under the Coastal Plan – Policy 2-13, before development within the Coastal Zone of Naples can be approved, the County must study the feasibility of transferring development rights from the site to another site in the urban area. Analysis of the transferring development rights will occur through the permit process outlined in the MOU.



Naples - County P&D

**Gaviota Coast Resource Study**

**Energy-Related Uses & Trends**

The Gaviota Coast has a rather long history of oil and gas production. All four onshore oil and gas production fields have been or soon will be, abandoned and their surface areas restored. No other onshore recoverable oil and gas reserves have been discovered within the Gaviota Coast at this time.

**Gaviota & Santa Barbara County Area Oil & Gas Fields Map**

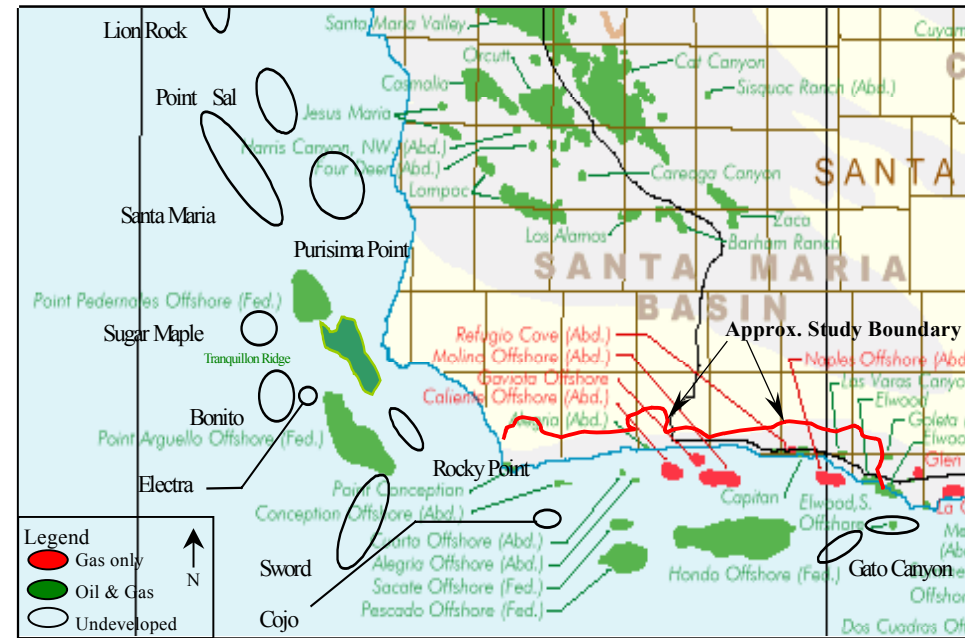


Figure 4.3

Gaviota Coast Onshore Oil & Gas Fields		
Field	First Produced	Abandoned
Alegria (onshore)	1958	1974
Capitan (onshore)	1929	1984
Point Conception (onshore)	1965	1998
Refugio Cove (gas)	1946	1964

by Area abuts offshore state waters (tidelands) within three miles of the coast. Sanctuary where oil and gas extraction is prohibited by law except under specific circumstances. None of these state tideland leases is currently producing. All previous producing facilities have been decommissioned or are undergoing decommissioning. However, three fields situated offshore – the Gaviota, Molino, and Caliente fields – may be reactivated for gas production from an upland drill-site approximately 1.3 miles east of Gaviota, pending exploratory drilling by Benton Oil Company. Another two untapped oil and gas fields in state tidelands – Cojo and Gato Canyon – are also situated offshore. No development plans have been submitted to date.

Offshore Oil & Gas Fields in Satate Waters Landed on Gaviota Coast		
Field	First Produced	Abandoned
Alegria (offshore)	1962	1998
Caliente Gas	1962	1998 may be reactivated
Capitan (offshore)	1930	1963
Conception	1961	1988
Cuarta	1959	1985
Gaviota	1960	currently for water disposal only
Molino	1962	1998 may be reactivated
Naples	1960	1998
Pt. Conception (offshore)	1965	1998

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

### Federal Waters

Eight oil and gas fields situated in federal waters (three or more miles offshore) off the Gaviota Coast have been leased for oil and gas development. Four of these fields are currently producing oil and gas which is sent to the Gaviota and Las Flores Canyon supportive facilities onshore for additional handling, storage, and shipment via the *All American Pipeline*. The Gaviota Oil and Gas Facility has been partially idled since 1998. The operator has announced plans to decommission part of the facility, retaining some equipment to heat and temporarily store oil, and to generate (co-generation) electricity. The remaining Las Flores Canyon processing and storage facility – operated by ExxonMobil – is likely to remain active for several more years. All other processing and storage facilities have been decommissioned, pursuant to County policies that consolidated these operations to the Gaviota and Las Flores Canyon locations in 1988. All marine terminals previously operating on the Gaviota Coast have also been decommissioned in favor of transporting oil via overland pipeline.



*Las Flores Canyon Facility - County P&D*



*Gaviota Oil and Gas Processing Facility - Wm. B. Dewey*

Plans for developing the other four oil and gas fields underlying federal leases (the Electra, Rocky Point, Sword and Gato Canyon fields, see Figure 4.3) are on-hold due to a 2001 court decision and subsequent appeals. The leases which contain these fields are also subject to proposed legislation under consideration by the U.S. Congress that would eliminate them. However, should development of these leases occur in the future, it is expected that no new infrastructure would be required except for a drill-site in the general vicinity of Point Conception and a new offshore Platform on the Gato Canyon Field.

### ***Increasing Recreational Uses***

Recreational lands make up 3% of the Study Area and include public and private parks, campgrounds, beach access, and trails from the Los Padres National Forest and golf course. Recent development activity has been for visitor serving uses in the region. These types of uses, approved through conditional use permits, have resulted in significant public debate as to the number and intensity of visitor-serving uses, if any, that should be allowed along the Gaviota Coast. For example, the Bacara Resort was completed in 2000 at the edge of the eastern Study Area, introducing an upscale visitor-serving hotel, spa and conference facility to the region. Five miles west of Goleta along the coastal bluff, the proposed Dos Pueblos Golf Links project is in the final permit stages with the California Coastal Commission to convert 208 acres of the old ARCO oil and gas facility into golf courses (18-hole and 9-hole), driving range, clubhouse, restaurant and meeting room. An application for expansion of the private El Capitan Ranch campground is proposed that would expand the facility from 51 to 163 acres for a



*Surfers and egrets sharing natural spaces - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

mix of accommodations, from bicycle campsites and tent-platform “yurts” to more upscale RV cabins (self-contained, non-motorized recreation vehicles). While providing a range of recreational opportunities on the Gaviota Coast, including opportunities for different economic levels, is desirable, the capacity of the region to accommodate increased recreational uses without impacting the coastal resources of the Study Area should be considered carefully.

## ***Gaviota Coast Resource Study***

### ***Traffic Increase from the County Jobs/Housing Imbalance***

A significant county issue is the continued jobs/housing imbalance between North and South County and the potential effects on the Gaviota Coast. As the regional commute between jobs on the South Coast and more affordable housing in Buellton, Lompoc and the Santa Maria Valley increases, the major transportation corridor between North and South County will likely require roadway capacity and safety improvements. Widening of U.S. Highway 101 would have significant impacts on the rural character of the Gaviota Coast that makes this area of the county so unique.

### ***Community Interest in Conservation on the Gaviota Coast***

Several organizations with interest on the Gaviota Coast are actively pursuing a locally driven vision for long-term conservation. The Gaviota Coast Conservancy, Common Ground, Gaviota Coast Study Group, Sierra Club and the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County are pursuing opportunities with property owners to preserve the unique coastal resources and maintain agriculture of the Gaviota Coast as discussed in the next chapter. Each of these groups provides an important perspective on preserving the Gaviota Coast that regulatory agencies and decision-makers should consider. Active participation by these organizations and the larger community is necessary to successfully develop long-term planning approaches for conservation efforts in the Study Area.



*Public participation in the planning process - County P&D*



*Chapter Five: Conservation Techniques*

*photo credit: Wm. B. Devey*



## Chapter Five: Conservation Techniques

*“As a society we can no longer indulge in the luxury of assuming that open space is the exclusive property of the middle and upper income groups who find easy escape from the indecencies of so much of our urban life - if, in fact, the assumption ever was a luxury. It is important to preserve and expand open space opportunities where travel requirements are minimal.”*

-Dr. Leslie E. Carbert

This section of the Gaviota Coast Resource Study is designed to assist in the planning and decision-making processes by describing existing and proposed land use regulations that can preserve the resources of the Gaviota Coast as well as other conservation techniques and programs.

### ***Land Conservation through Local Regulations***

#### ***Land Use Goals and Policies***

Land use decisions in the unincorporated areas of California are guided by county governments through the adoption of general plans. The general plan is made up of elements that contain goals and policies that serve as the blueprint for physical development of the land. In Santa Barbara County, the Comprehensive Plan consists of the general plan elements that guide existing and future development. In addition, the Coastal Zone portion of the County is regulated by the County Local Coastal Program. The most important goals, policies and development standards for the Gaviota Coast are contained within the Land Use Element, Coastal Land Use Plan, and the Agricultural Element.

#### **Land Use Element**

The Land Use Element (LUE) contains specific land use policies that respect environmental constraints on development, sustaining healthy urbanized areas growing within its resources and services, and the preservation of agriculture and open space in the rural areas. An important land use policy established in 1980 is the limitation of urban development within the urban/rural boundary and the requirement that adequate public or private services are available to serve the proposed development. The urban/rural boundary line along the western portion of the Goleta Valley has been an effective tool containing urban growth from encroaching into the Gaviota Coast. Incorporation of the City of Goleta in February 2002 has changed the dynamics for land use planning and development decisions in the Goleta Valley. Depending on the direction of both the city and county



*Riparian Habitat - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

to address development, particularly the pressure to address housing needs, the current urban/rural boundary line could expand westward along the Gaviota Coast in the future.

The LUE also contains land use development policies, hillside and watershed protection and visual resource policies for the rural areas that require development to be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, subordinate to natural landforms, and designed to follow natural contours. Particularly along the Gaviota Coast where the coastal terrace is adjacent to the steep terrain of the Santa Ynez Mountains, the LUE hillside and watershed protection policies provide strong regulations, development must “fit” the natural features of the land, minimize grading and protect against degradation of the visual and water quality of the area.



*Las Flores Canyon Facility - Wm. B. Dewey*



With offshore oil and gas reserves and the need to transport and process the energy resources at regional processing facilities, strong countywide oil and gas development and consolidation policies have been developed in the LUE. Generally, these policies require that impacts from oil and gas pipelines be minimized by requiring multiple-user pipelines to limit the need for numerous pipelines. New pipelines are to be constructed in approved corridors for safe transport and to minimize environmental impacts.

### **Coastal Land Use Plan**

The Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) serves as the LUE within the Coastal Zone portion of the Study Area, regulating land use development, protection of resources and public access to the coast. The CLUP contains strong policies for the preservation of agriculture, a priority use in the Coastal Zone. Agriculture contiguous with the urban/rural boundary line can only be converted to a non-agricultural use if the site is severely impaired by physical constraints, provides a logical completion of an existing urban neighborhood and no other areas for in-fill development that would preserve agriculture are available. Agriculture in the rural area not adjacent to the urban/rural boundary line can only be converted to another coastal-priority use, such as resource protection, recreation and access or coastal dependent industry. Strong policies are also contained in the CLUP identifying the protection of cultural resource protection and environmentally sensitive habitats in the Study Area, including but not limited to, wetlands and intertidal areas, monarch butterfly habitat, streams and riparian corridors, native grasslands and other native plant communities. Additionally, the CLUP recognizes the unique and scenic coastal resource of the Gaviota Coast, designating portions of the coastal terrace with a View Corridor Overlay with height restrictions and design standards to protect the public viewshed.

### **Agricultural Element**

The Agricultural Element establishes the County's recognition of agriculture as an important resource and the land use goal to maintain and enhance continued agricultural viability countywide. The Agricultural Element contains policies to promote long-term agricultural practices that also protect important resources. The Agricultural Element policies protect agricultural lands from adverse urban influences by discouraging expansion of urban spheres of influence and the conversion of productive agricultural lands to other uses. The Agricultural Element, along with the County zoning ordinances, establishes minimum parcel sizes that reflect the soil classifications of the land, prime and non-prime agricultural land, tied to a large enough acreage to encourage and sustain long-term viable agriculture.



*A rocky beach - Wm. B. Dewey*

### **Zoning**

The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan are implemented through the Santa Barbara County Zoning Ordinance, which consists of Article II in the Coastal Zone and Article III and Ordinance 661 in the inland areas. Chapter 4 - Figure 4.2 identifies general land use categories for the Gaviota Coast, however the zoning ordinances contain specific zone districts corresponding to the County zoning maps. For each zone, the text in the zoning code specifies the permitted uses as well as building height, bulk, side yards, and parking requirements. While the zoning ordinance is a useful tool for development site design and permitted uses, it doesn't necessarily address the intensity of development that might be allowed under a conditional use permit.

*Overlay restrictions* are additional restrictions on land for the purpose of resource protection, with a clear relationship between the regulation and the resource to be protected. Overlay restrictions typically seek to control development in areas such as steep hillsides and bluffs, prime agricultural soils, floodplains, scenic view corridors, and sensitive environmental habitats. They are most successful where hazards to be avoided are plainly evident, and can be considered relatively inexpensive land use policies to administer. When combined with development standards and conditions of permit approval, overlay restrictions can be used for permanent protection of environmental resources.

## Gaviota Coast Resource Study

*Growth management techniques* are designed to match the amount, location, and timing of growth with the capacity of an area's infrastructure and resources. For example, a community could regulate the timing of new development based on the availability of public facilities, or it could limit the number of building permits issued in an area to ensure that growth does not outpace the installation of infrastructure. The County Zoning Ordinance for unincorporated Goleta and Montecito planning areas contain a Growth Management Overlay provision which allows the amount of development to be regulated by a Growth Management Ordinance until the County determines that additional development can be accommodated by available resources, services, and infrastructure.



Las Varas Ranch Irrigation Pond - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002



*Managing sprawl.* Urban sprawl can be generally characterized as haphazard outward development away from a city or urban core area and into rural, agricultural or otherwise undeveloped land. This type of poorly managed or uncontrolled growth can result in several adverse conditions ranging from inadequate infrastructure such as overburdened transportation, freshwater, and wastewater treatment systems, to the degradation of a area's overall form and character by allowing development in visually, culturally or biologically sensitive areas. The following provides a brief overview of some systems designed to manage urban sprawl:

- a) Urban growth boundaries – Urban growth boundaries are officially adopted and mapped lines dividing land to be developed from land designated for rural or open space uses, and to provide separation between existing towns and cities. Urban growth boundaries are regulatory tools, often defined for long periods of time (20 or more years). The establishment of an urban growth boundary is a complex task, for it is important that the boundary be big enough to absorb a reasonable amount of growth for a significant period of time, yet should prevent development in inappropriate areas. Along the Gaviota Coast, strong county regulations have maintained urban land uses within the urban boundary line. However, given the competing pressure to resolve the housing needs as the County updates the Housing Element, the effectiveness of the urban boundary may be tested in the near future.
- b) Urban service area – The urban service area is the area in which urban services will be provided and outside of which such services will not be extended. These areas are bounded by an urban service area boundary, which defines the respective areas. These areas are formed by cities and must be approved by a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

Unlike urban growth boundaries, urban service boundaries do not directly protect undeveloped land, and instead limit the amount of development that can occur in outlying areas because of a lack of necessary public infrastructure.

- c) Reuse of urban land – One method to protect undeveloped land, while meeting the growth needs of a community is to “reuse” or redevelop sites located within a city or urban area that are currently underutilized, vacant, or dilapidated. Cities and urban areas may identify “in-fill” opportunity sites where this sort of development could likely occur, and adopt Specific or other Plans which outline recommended densities and design solutions. In some instances, local agencies may wish to encourage relatively intense development on these sites, potentially increasing opportunities for affordable housing and to provide an incentive for private developers to carry the cost of potential site demolition and remediation.
- d) High density urban development – Increasing development densities in urban areas allows a greater number of homes or amount of commercial square footage to be developed on smaller sites than those with lower development densities, thereby reducing the amount of total land needed to meet development goals. Depending on the character of the

existing setting, a wide variety of development types could be pursued in an effort to raise development densities, ranging from small lot detached housing, townhouses, mixed commercial-residential developments, to high density stacked apartments, flats and condominiums. Each of these development types work to use land more efficiently than lower-density types, can be designed with a high degree of character, and can increase the variety of housing provided in a community. Some changes to local zoning codes or development standards may be needed in order to achieve increased development densities, such as reduced parking standards, reduced building setbacks, increased building heights, and other special considerations.



*Eastern Gaviota Coast - Wm. B. Dewey*

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

### **Updating Regulations**

The County's land use and zoning tools have generally been successful at limiting the intensity of development along the Gaviota Coast. However, recent history has shown that large visitor-serving uses and residential ranchette development are a strong possibility given the high land values and the probability that property owners have the time and money to withstand a lengthy permit approval process and potential legal challenges. Since the County's general plan and CLUP for the Gaviota Coast have not been comprehensively updated since the early 1980's, now may be the time to update regulations on the Gaviota Coast. Amendments to the land use designation and zoning maybe appropriate given the significant resources documented in the GIS model.

For example, while most of the Gaviota Coast is designated for Agriculture with a 100 acre minimum parcel size (AG-100), larger parcel sizes, such as 320, 640, or larger acreages, may better reflect the existing limitations of the land. Other land limitations such as high fire hazards, steep slopes and remote access, limited public services, and watershed and viewshed protection, could be designated under the Mountainous Area designation to better reflect these constraints in the Study Area. Additionally, amending the general plan and LCP is another option to update regulations for the Gaviota Coast. Possible amendments could include adjustments to the Coastal Zone boundary, updating the land use and zoning designations for minimum parcel sizes, and reevaluating whether conditionally permitted uses, such as golf courses and resort destinations, are appropriate along the Gaviota Coast.

There is no single resource protection mechanism for the Gaviota Coast. Updating the regulations in the County LUE and LCP is only one part of the picture to be considered by decision-makers. The remaining portion of this chapter focuses on public/private partnership land conservation programs which is another important resource protection mechanism.



*Dos Pueblos Ranch - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## ***Land Conservation through Public/Private Partnerships***

In addition to the regulatory tools discussed in this chapter, land conservation can be accomplished by using land acquisition tools that create permanent preservation through ownership of parcels or easements. Land acquisition tools include fee acquisition; purchase of development rights and conservation easements; transfer of development rights; agricultural clustered development; or possible National Seashore designation. Land conservation may also be accomplished on a less permanent basis using resource enhancement techniques. Working cooperatively with interested property owners, public agencies and non-profits is an essential part of implementing these conservation tools. It is important to balance the rights and interests of private property owners with the common interest of protecting important resource sensitive land.

The conservation tools described below are voluntary actions undertaken by each party to satisfy mutual goals. If a particular piece of environmentally sensitive land or farmland is being threatened by development, land owners may voluntarily sell or donate their land or development rights to the land to a government agency or a nonprofit conservancy or land trust to be protected from development in perpetuity. Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that work to conserve land primarily by purchasing or accepting the donation of conservation easements and identifying conservation-minded individuals who are willing to invest in property in anticipation of its permanent protection as farmland or open space. All parties involved would work together to define what level of development or protection is appropriate for a particular property.



Figure 5.1 - Conservation Case Study Locations

### ***Fee Acquisition***

1) *Fee simple acquisition* is the outright purchase of all the rights to parcels of land for the purpose of permanently dedicating that land to agriculture or open space conservation. This is the most expensive approach to land acquisition since buyers obtain the right to use the land for non-development as well as development purposes. Fee simple acquisition is commonly used to protect land that is intended for public purposes, such as parkland, or land that has little economic value for non-development purposes. It is less common for communities to buy and keep productive agricultural land, for example, because the community must then arrange for the land to be farmed under their ownership.

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

### **Gaviota Coast Example**

#### ***Arroyo Hondo Preserve***

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County purchased the 782-acre Arroyo Hondo Ranch which is one of the few Gaviota Coast properties that extends from the Los Padres National Forest in the Santa Ynez Mountains down to the ocean (see Figure 5.1 - Conservation Case Study Locations). The total project cost for this acquisition was \$7.3 million. The Land Trust, in cooperation with UC Santa Barbara Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, is developing a comprehensive management plan for the site, including recommendations about public access and recreation, educational programs, resource management, and the appropriate long-term owner of the preserve. The Land Trust's long term vision for the ranch is that it is managed in perpetuity as a public preserve.

Some of the highlights of this acquisition include the following:

- An entire coastal watershed will be preserved providing trail and wild-life corridor linkages between the Los Padres National Forest and the coast.
- The canyon is home to a wide diversity of plant, animal and bird species, including at least three that are endangered and a dozen more that are listed as threatened.
- The Arroyo Hondo watershed is ranked as one of the top three in terms of habitat quality and species diversity.
- The 1842 ranch house is said to be the best preserved adobe in central California. The ranch was part of the original Rancho Nuestra Senora del Refugio granted to the Ortega family in 1827.
- An archaeologically significant 5,000 year old Barabeno-Chumash village is buried in the canyon.

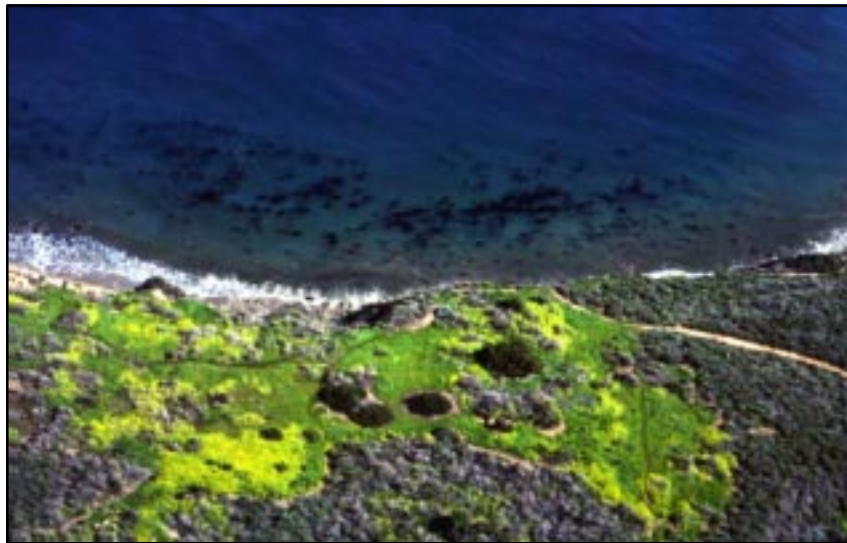


*Arroyo Hondo Preserve - Wm. B. Dewey*



Due to its extraordinary scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resources, the Land Trust acquired full title to the ranch as opposed to purchasing a conservation easement. Negotiation for the agreement to purchase the property was arduous since the multiple, undivided ownership interests, which includes relatives and unrelated individuals, had very different goals and expectations regarding the property. Without the Land Trust's involvement, a pending partition action initiated by 15 of the owners in Superior Court would have placed the property in receivership, and required the sale or subdivision of the ranch in order to liquidate this asset for distribution to the owners. The purchase of this land by the Land Trust ensures that this unique parcel is preserved in perpetuity.

2) *Purchase and sellback or leaseback* arrangements can take place after a fee simple acquisition has occurred, allowing the purchaser to recover a portion of the acquisition costs. Under a leaseback arrangement, the owner leases the land to another party for an approved use, such as farming. Under a



*Coastal blufftop - Wm. B. Dewey*

**Chapter Five: Conservation Techniques**

sellback arrangement, the owner may subdivide the property to separate the portion with important resources from the rest of the land and then retain only the portion with the important resources. The owner may deed-restrict the property for appropriate uses and then sell it to another party with these easements in place to ensure that only approved uses, such as farming or conservation, will occur there. This approach has the same initial cost as fee simple acquisition but the buyer is eventually compensated for a portion of the initial expense.

***Purchase of Development Rights/Conservation Easements***

Purchase of development rights and purchase of conservation easements are two sides of the same coin when the development rights are purchased for conservation purposes. Property owners have a variety of different rights, including the right to use land, lease, sell or bequeath it, or protect it from development, subject to reasonable local land use regulations. Some or all of these rights can be transferred or sold to another person. When a landowner sells property, generally all the rights are transferred to the buyer. Landowners may however choose to separate and sell their right to develop land from their other property rights. After selling the development rights, the landowner retains all other rights of ownership, including the right to farm the land, prevent trespass, sell, bequeath or otherwise transfer the land.

1) *Purchase of development rights* involve the acquisition of the right to develop land and deed restrictions are placed on the property. In this approach, the deed restrictions are executed and recorded by the original property owner. In these deed restrictions, the owner of the property and a government and/or nonprofit conservancy specify the amount of development that may occur on the property and the approved use of the property

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

in perpetuity. Property owners may sell these rights or donate them in order to achieve tax benefits. Jurisdictions or nonprofit organizations may acquire these development rights by purchasing them outright or accepting them as gifts.

2) *Conservation Easements* can compensate or provide tax credits to property owners for restricting the future use of their land where deed restrictions are placed on the property. Easements may be set up to allow for only certain types of activities to occur on the land for a certain amount of time. These easements may include agricultural, conservation, open space or recreational activities. The buyer does not acquire the right to build anything on the land, but only the right and responsibility to prevent development.

Landowners may voluntarily sell easements to a government agency or private conservation organization. The agency or organization usually pays them the difference between the value of the land as restricted and the value of the land for its “highest and best use”, which is generally residential or commercial development. The easement price is established by appraisals or a local easement valuation point system. Easements give qualified public agencies and private organizations the right to prohibit land uses and activities that could interfere with present or future agricultural use.

### **Gaviota Coast Examples**

#### ***Freeman Ranch Agricultural Conservation Easement***

The Freeman Ranch is located directly inland from Refugio State Beach, eight miles north of Goleta (see Figure 5.1 - Conservation Case Study Locations). The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County purchased an agricul-



*Cattle - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

tural conservation easement from the Freeman brothers that co-own the 660 acre Ranch for a project cost of \$1.1 million. Existing zoning would have allowed a portion of the property to be subdivided into two additional 100 acre lots. The conservation easement on the Freeman Ranch removed the subdivision potential in favor of maintaining viable agriculture. As stated in the property appraisal, holding onto the property for future development opportunities is the highest and best use of the property. This however does not preserve the agricultural productivity nor the natural character of the property.

Crafting the Freeman Ranch Agricultural Conservation Easement took long term commitment and the combined effort of the property owners and a number of agencies. After years of outreach from the Land Trust to the ranching community, the Freeman brothers offered to sell the conservation easement. Because of their commitment to agricultural and resource values they offered to sell at well below market value to prevent development. Finally, the list of contributors and funding mechanisms that have participated in the preservation effort has grown to include: Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, the California Coastal Conservancy, the California Resources Agency, Santa Barbara County - Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund, and private foundations and agricultural stewardship programs.

The Freeman brothers may reap certain tax benefits to partially offset their efforts, plus they will be able to continue practicing agriculture on their land. The public will benefit by continuing to have scenic open space in perpetuity forming the backdrop for Refugio State Beach, and the environment benefits by the specific provisions in the easement that protect the property's natural resource values including the oak woodlands, a vernal pond, riparian corridor, and scenic views.

***Proposed La Paloma Ranch Agricultural Conservation Easement***

The La Paloma Ranch is also adjacent to the Freeman Ranch located in upper Venadito Canyon (see Figure 5.1 - Conservation Case Study Locations). Its 750 acres contain approximately 50% of the length of Venadito Creek. The ranch is a subdivision of the Orella Ranch, which dates from the 1860's, and is one of several ranches still owned by the Orellas' descendants. The family grazes limited cattle on the ranch and has planted approximately 50 acres in avocado groves, while the rest of the ranch is watershed and open space. In the past other agricultural uses have included



*Dolphins at play - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

sheep and cattle grazing, walnut orchards, lima beans, tomatoes and garbanzo beans.

The owners have proposed to the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County that an Agricultural Conservation Easement be purchased at a mutually acceptable price. The easement would limit the use of the La Paloma Ranch in perpetuity to agriculture, and restrict residential, accessory and employee dwellings of the ranch to less than 7 acres. Its two historic farmsteads, established in 1902 and 1909, would be preserved.

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

### *Acquisition and Easement Successes*

These recent conservation easement purchases have been a successful form of land conservation on the Gaviota Coast. Models for future conservation easement programs should be explored but also studied within the context of available funding sources since the cost to purchase easements is substantial. Recent economic times may limit availability of large pools of monies at the state and federal level in the future, requiring that the purchase of easements be more selective of areas on the Gaviota Coast truly threatened by development. For example, the Freeman Ranch did not pose an imminent development threat or agricultural subdivision as does potential development near the urban boundary of Goleta. State and federal agencies, local land conservancies and decision-makers should study more closely *how and where* dollars are spent to achieve the most beneficial land conservation. Future acquisition of development rights and conservation easements should be based upon a set of criteria to rank the importance of acquiring a specific property. Some criteria could include: immediate and real threat of development, quality of the resource values of the land (such as identified in GIS model for this study), and where a property provides multiple public benefits (such as where recreational use, trails and open space are also feasible and desirable in a particular location).



*Eastern Gaviota Coast - Wm. B. Dewey*

## ***Land Conservation Opportunities***

### ***Transfer of Development Rights/Credits***

Transfer of development credits (TDC) is a market-based technique that allows the use of optional zoning to encourage the voluntary transfer of growth from places that a community wants to save, called sending areas, to places where a community can accommodate development, called receiving areas. TDCs are also commonly referred to as transfer of development rights, or TDRs.

For the sending areas, the TDC process is essentially the same as the



*Doheny Property - Wm. B. Dewey*

outright purchase of development rights. The sending area landowners voluntarily choose to record permanent deed restrictions that forever regulate the amount of additional development that can be built on their land. These owners are compensated through the sale of the transferable development credits (TDCs) that are created when these deed restrictions are recorded. Instead of being purchased by government agencies or conservation organizations, TDCs are generally purchased by developers.

Developers buy TDCs in order to use the “TDC option” allowed under the zoning code for the receiving area. In some receiving areas, the TDC option may allow a parcel to achieve a higher density than the level of urban development allowed before the TDCs were purchased. In other cases, the purchase of TDCs may allow developers to convert land from rural uses to relatively low-density residential uses. The amount of development allowed under a TDC option depends on the specific characteristics of the receiving area. In a well-designed TDC program, the receiving areas are designated because of their proximity to jobs, shopping, schools, transportation and other public services as well as their ability to integrate compatible new and existing developments.

While Santa Barbara County currently does not have a countywide TDC program in place, the County is not precluded from implementing a TDC on specific parcel(s). In fact, the County CLUP contains a specific policy requiring that a transfer of development option at the Naples townsite be studied prior to approval of any development of the property. Examples of TDC programs being used in other jurisdictions in California are described below:

### **Environmental Resource TDR/TDC Examples**

*Malibu Coastal Program, California* – This program preserved 924 lots in

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

coastal mountain areas that were inappropriate for development due to inadequate infrastructure, wildlife habitat, and potential for wildfires, floods, and landslides. New lots in receiving areas could not be created without retiring undeveloped lots in the sending areas. In one case, the California Coastal Conservancy bought a sending site and allowed a land trust to sell the resulting development credits to receiving site developers. The land trust kept the price of these credits low by accepting easement donations from sending site owners able to take advantage of the tax consequences of making a charitable donation.

*San Luis Obispo County, California* – The City of Cambria, in San Luis Obispo County established a TDC program in the 1980s to reduce development on steep, erosion-prone slopes that serve as habitat for the Cambria Pine. A development formula limits homes on lots with a slope of more than 25 percent to a maximum of 400 square feet of floor area. Property owners can choose to sell their lots to a land trust established for this program. In turn, the land trust can then sell the right to build more floor area, up to set limits, to property owners who wish to build homes on designated receiving lands despite the development constraints. Two hundred and thirty lots have been acquired in this manner since the program was founded. A second County-wide program, adopted in 1996, allocates the number of development rights to a sending site following an appraisal.

### ***Agricultural Clustered Development***

*Agricultural clustered development (ACD)*, is an incentive-based land use program that may be applied on specific large agricultural parcels to preserve land for continued and enhanced agricultural production. An ACD program would allow the clustering of development on a small portion of a large agricultural parcel with the intent of preserving the agricultural potential of the remainder parcel. This program can be one alternative to traditional



*Threshing barley at Eagle Canyon - Eric Hvolboll*

large parcel subdivisions that are often denied due to impacts to agricultural production, inconsistencies with the County's Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan and/or with the intent of the Williamson Act. ACD is intended to benefit both the property owner (by providing a mechanism to maintain agricultural production through development of non-agricultural uses), the County's agricultural industry (by preserving resources necessary to sustain this important business sector), and the community at large through preservation of agriculture and open space while still allowing some development growth. ACD allows land owners to maximize the value of their parcels while also directing development to land that is the most suitable for construction. The County of Santa Barbara twice developed a draft ACD program (most recently in 1996), however, these programs were never implemented by County decision-makers, due in part to concerns of growth inducement related to introducing urban densities and residential

development into rural lands.

### ***Gaviota Coast National Seashore Feasibility Study***

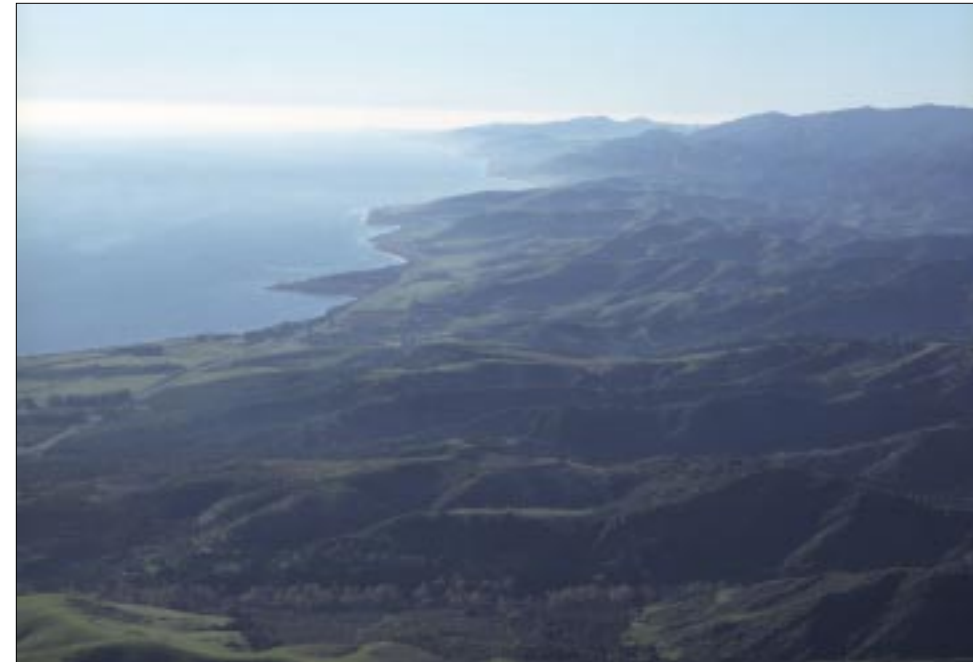
In January 2000, the National Park Service (NPS) began a study to determine the feasibility of adding the Gaviota Coast to the National Park System. Adding the Gaviota Coast into the National Park system could preserve natural and cultural values along the coast, and provide compatible opportunities for recreation, visitor enjoyment and education. Different areas within a National Park Unit can be managed for different desired levels of resource protection, facility development and visitor use, ranging from concentrated visitor uses to undisturbed areas.

The Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study area includes 76 miles of coastline and 200,000 acres of land extending from Coal Oil Point to Point Sal, all entirely within Santa Barbara County. The NPS Feasibility Study Area encompasses all of the Gaviota Coast Study Area as well as Vandenburg Air Force Base. According to the National Park Service the study will:

- Evaluate the significance of the area's resources
- Determine the suitability of adding the area, or portions of it, to the National Park system
- Evaluate a broad range of strategies for the protection of the Gaviota Coast's resources, including options that do not involve the National Park Service.

In March 2000, three scoping meetings were held and a summary of comments received by the NPS is posted on their web site: [www.nps.gov/pwro/gaviota](http://www.nps.gov/pwro/gaviota). The issues discussed included economic impacts; resource protection; public use; property rights; agricultural viability; and potential threats. In the Feasibility Study, the NPS will consider a range of protection strategies for the Gaviota Coast. Alternatives to be analyzed include: no NPS action; enhanced state and local conservation efforts with limited NPS

education efforts (no NPS land acquisition or management); or a range of NPS land acquisition and/or land management programs under a National Seashore, National Preserve or National Reserve.



*Gaviota Coastline - Wm. B. Dewey*

In Winter 2002, the NPS solicited additional public comment on the preparation of the Feasibility Study by providing the public an opportunity to indicate (through written & drawn diagrams) their preferences for the types and locations for land management on the Gaviota Coast. The Feasibility Study and environmental impact statement (EIS) is anticipated to be published in January 2003, followed by a public review period and local public workshops. The final Feasibility Study will result in recommendations from the National Park Service to Congress on the Gaviota Coast's

## ***Gaviota Coast Resource Study***

suitability and feasibility as a unit of the National Park System.

### ***Resource Enhancement Programs***

Jurisdictions wishing to improve the agricultural and natural areas within their authority can also create special programs to offer grants and other incentives that encourage private landowners to enhance their property. Such programs could target highway and scenic corridor beautification, tree planting efforts, agricultural buffer strips (between agricultural parcels or agricultural and urban lands), stream restoration and enhancement projects, and many other things. Resource enhancement projects can be equally



*Solanum*- Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002

effective on public lands.

### ***Conservation Costs and Funding Implications***

Each of the land conservation techniques discussed in this chapter has different cost implications. Resource enhancement is generally the least expensive option but it provides the least control over the permanent fate of the land because ownership is not transferred. Purchasing deed restrictions, conservation easements, and development rights is generally less expensive than fee acquisition of property. However, the higher price tag of an outright purchase can bring with it a greater degree of flexibility and open space preservation.

While the nation and state economies continue with budget shortfalls, the availability of large funding sources to implement conservation programs is uncertain in the next few years. Even with recent passage of State Proposition 40, high land values along the Gaviota Coast could require vast sums of money quickly using up allocated monies for this region of the state. However, planning for the Gaviota Coast is a long-term process and changed economic circumstances in the future could again provide additional funding sources. Therefore, this section concludes with a description of typical funding sources and programs applicable to conservation efforts on the Gaviota Coast.

### ***Potential Revenue Sources***

There are a variety of ways to raise money for land and conservation easement purchases. Some fundraising options include: tax revenues from new or existing taxes, bond measures, regulation-based funding, grants and charitable donations from outside sources, and outright purchases from a jurisdiction's general fund or other internal source.

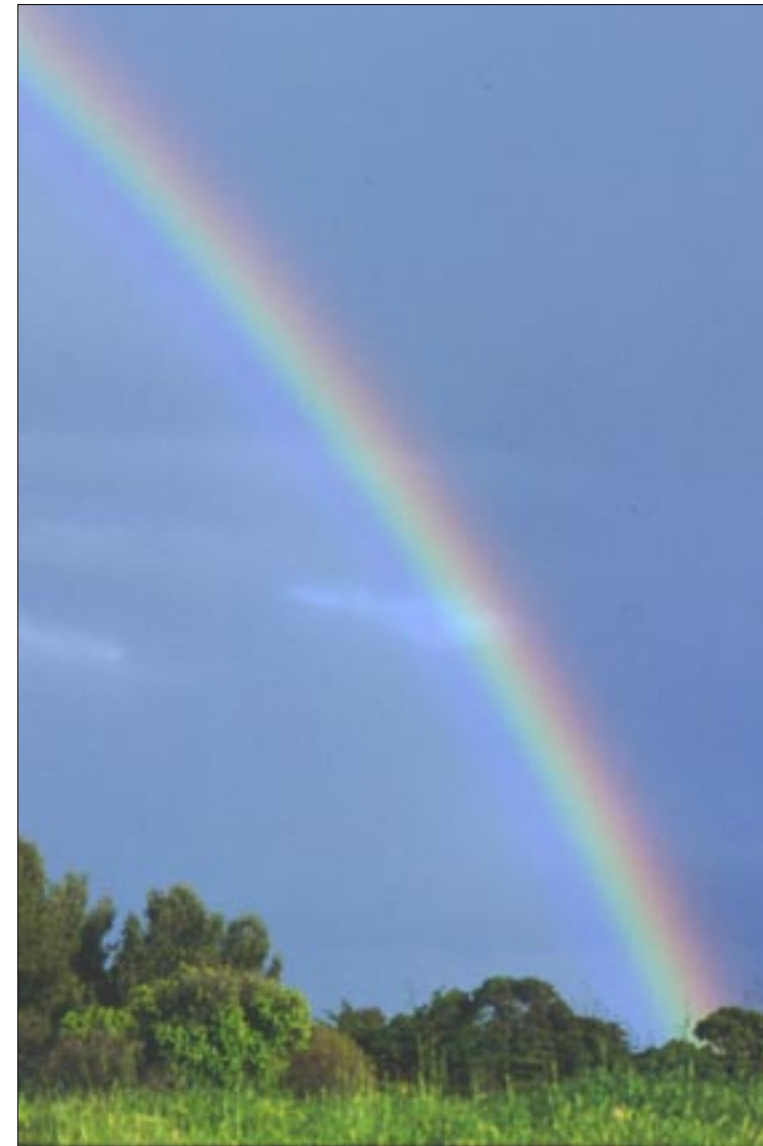


**New tax revenues**, including real estate transfer taxes, targeted sales taxes, statewide or local bond measures could be explored if polls indicate voter support. For example, voters in Sonoma County, California approved a 0.25 cent sales tax for a twenty-year period. This tax generates \$10 million per year which the County uses to buy conservation easements. To date, 25,000 acres have been preserved using revenues from this sales tax increase.

**Existing tax revenues** can also be used to fund land preservation. Some potential sources include property tax, sales tax, transient occupancy (hotel) tax, and utility taxes. Under some of these options, elected officials could create or expand a program for land acquisition without increasing the tax burden on local taxpayers. This approach may require a corresponding reduction in funding for some other community program, a reduction in the community's reserve funds, or an overall increase in one or more of the taxes that are levied. Funding could be leveraged if the County elects to create a TDR bank that can use the proceeds of TDR sales to finance TDR purchases. The County however would still need to find funding for the initial setup and administrative costs of the program.

**Regulation-based funding** can direct development fees in a community to fund local resource preservation efforts. Recreational development fees can be used to preserve natural resources with a potential for recreational uses such as riparian corridors, beaches, bluffs, and bicycling and hiking trail routes. As discussed above, environmental mitigation fees can also provide a source of funding for the acquisition of land or deed restrictions.

**Outside funding** is possible from grants, charitable donations, foundations, and private land trusts. Some grant funding might be available from federal and state government sources. For example, the Federal Transportation Equity Act of 21st Century creates a fund for transportation enhancements. Such enhancements include the acquisition of conservation easements



*Rainbow on the Gaviota Coast - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

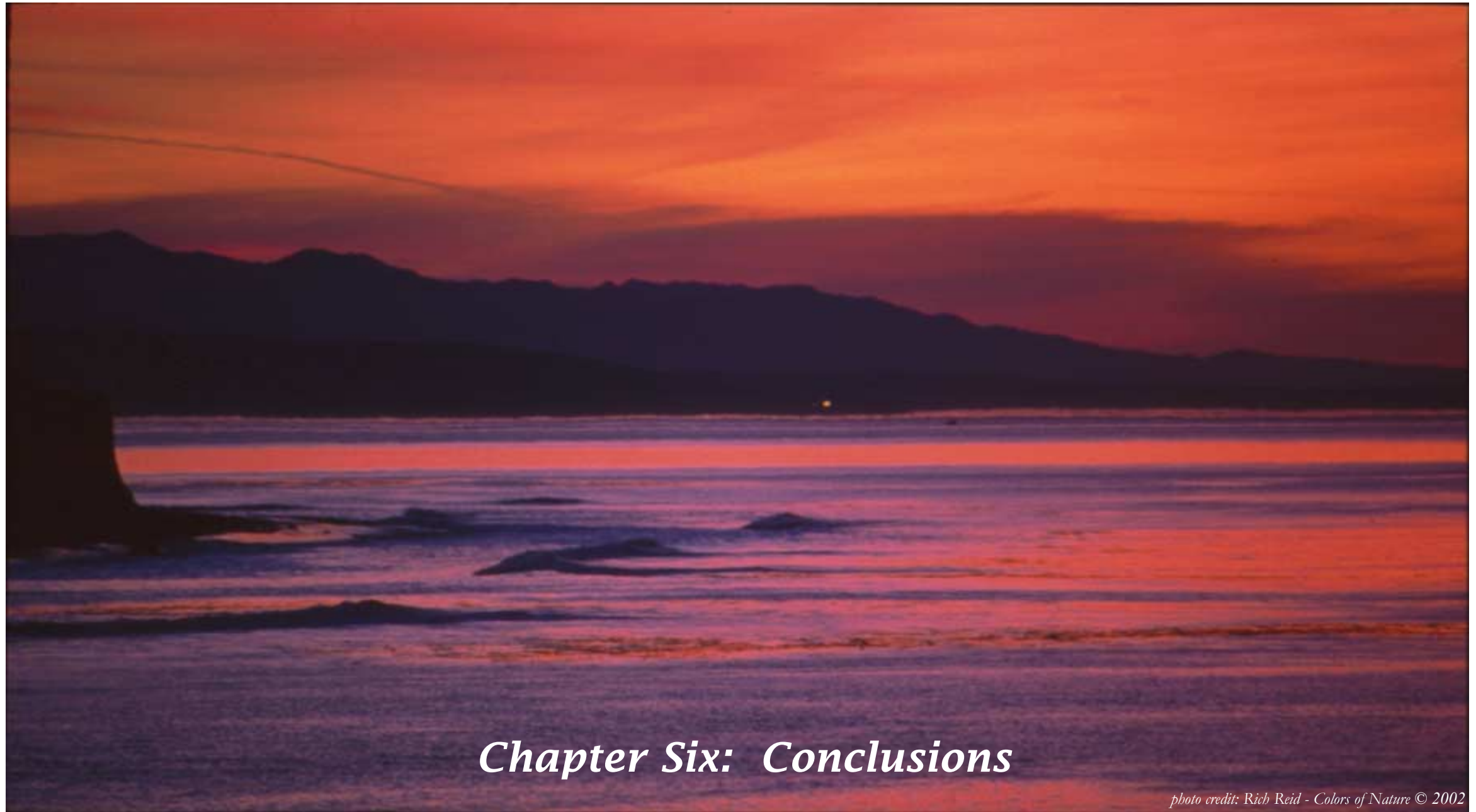
## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

along scenic transportation corridors as well as the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Money for agricultural preservation can be specified in state bond measures such as Proposition 12. Funding can also come from charitable donations from individuals and from foundations, some of which have a known interest in funding agricultural or environmental land preservation. Land trusts, another option, accept donations of land and development rights from property owners who can use the tax advantages of charitable donations. According to the Land Trust Alliance's 1998 Directory, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County has protected 3,328 acres to date. The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County has found that Santa Barbara County landowners generally prefer to sell rather than donate their development rights. In addition, any community interested in preservation should remain in close contact with the major national organizations such as the Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and the American Farmland Trust.

Jurisdictions may also choose to purchase important parcels of land using money from their general fund, or other internal sources. Such funds are usually in high demand, and their use frequently requires broad political support.



*Coastal cliff face - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*



*Chapter Six: Conclusions*

*photo credit: Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## Chapter Six: Conclusions

*“The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: ‘what good is it?’ If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.”*

- Aldo Leopold

This Study explored the vast diversity of natural resources located within the Gaviota Coast Study Area. Through the compilation of existing GIS resource data, an inventory database was created to give baseline resource information about the Gaviota Coast. To supplement this existing quantitative GIS data, a workshop was held with a group of biologists with direct local knowledge and expertise in the Study Area to provide qualitative analysis of the bio-diversity and sensitivity of each watershed within the Study Area. This combination of quantitative and qualitative data illustrates the richness of habitat and variety of species located within the Gaviota Coast.

This resource diversity is enabled by the relatively undisturbed nature of the area and the lack of existing development. The undeveloped pristine beauty of the Gaviota Coast is attracting developers to propose new resorts and housing units here. Southern California is now almost completely developed along the coastline, from the Mexican border to Ventura County. Pressures exist to develop several areas within the eastern portion of the Study Area, adjacent to the new city of Goleta Goleta and the proposed Naples subdivision.

With the potential for increased urbanization spreading west along the Gaviota Coast, County decision-makers are faced with tough decisions regarding new development proposals. The information provided in this report and the GIS model developed for this study provide an overview of existing resource conditions in the Gaviota Coast and can be used as an indicator of potential sensitive areas for planning purposes. However, because the existing GIS database catalogues information from larger regional databases, its application to site-specific parcels is limited.



*Shore birds - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

## *Gaviota Coast Resource Study*

In order to make informed decisions about specific parcels for both development and conservation issues, it is recommended that the County pursue more site specific information regarding sensitive habitats and species in the Study Area through field surveys. The benefits of site specific field surveys would be twofold: 1) they would assist decision makers in the County when evaluating new development proposals; and 2) they would identify the most valuable natural resource areas which could then be targeted for conservation efforts.

The County, working cooperatively with interested parties, other public agencies and non profits, may consider implementing some of the conservation tools outlined in this report and/or updating zoning and planning policies to take into account today's development pressures and biological concerns. Armed with the knowledge of existing natural resources, the County may form policies to guide development to less sensitive areas. The County may use the GIS model to inform the decision-makers, agencies and the public of stronger protection policies to address a proactive conservation component for the Gaviota Coast.

Protecting the Gaviota Coast will most likely not be found in only new regulations, a single conservation program or relying solely on land stewardship, as existing property owners sell land in the future or land is passed down to heirs resulting in multiple ownerships. A combination of all the above, in a cooperative working relationship, should improve protection efforts on the Gaviota Coast. The Study is intended to inform the community of the vast diversity of resources, their importance, and the real development pressures facing the Gaviota Coast. The Study does not provide all the answers, but can be used by the community as a reference document to solicit discussion and future direction for land use on the Gaviota Coast.



*Sea gull - Rich Reid - Colors of Nature © 2002*

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