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# Santa Barbara County Trails Council

April 11, 2012

Doreen Farr, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Las Varas Ranch Development and the California Coastal Trail

Dear Chair Farr and Members of the Board,

Attached please find an informational pamphlet prepared by the Santa Barbara Trails Council (SBTC) regarding the California Coastal Trail (CCT) along the eastern Gaviota Coast, including the Las Varas Ranch. The SBTC and 13 other civic groups from throughout the County look forward to strong Board leadership in assisting the community in acquiring a near shoreline location for the CCT along the eastern Gaviota Coast and across the Las Varas Ranch.

Thank you for your attention to the community's concerns regarding this matter.

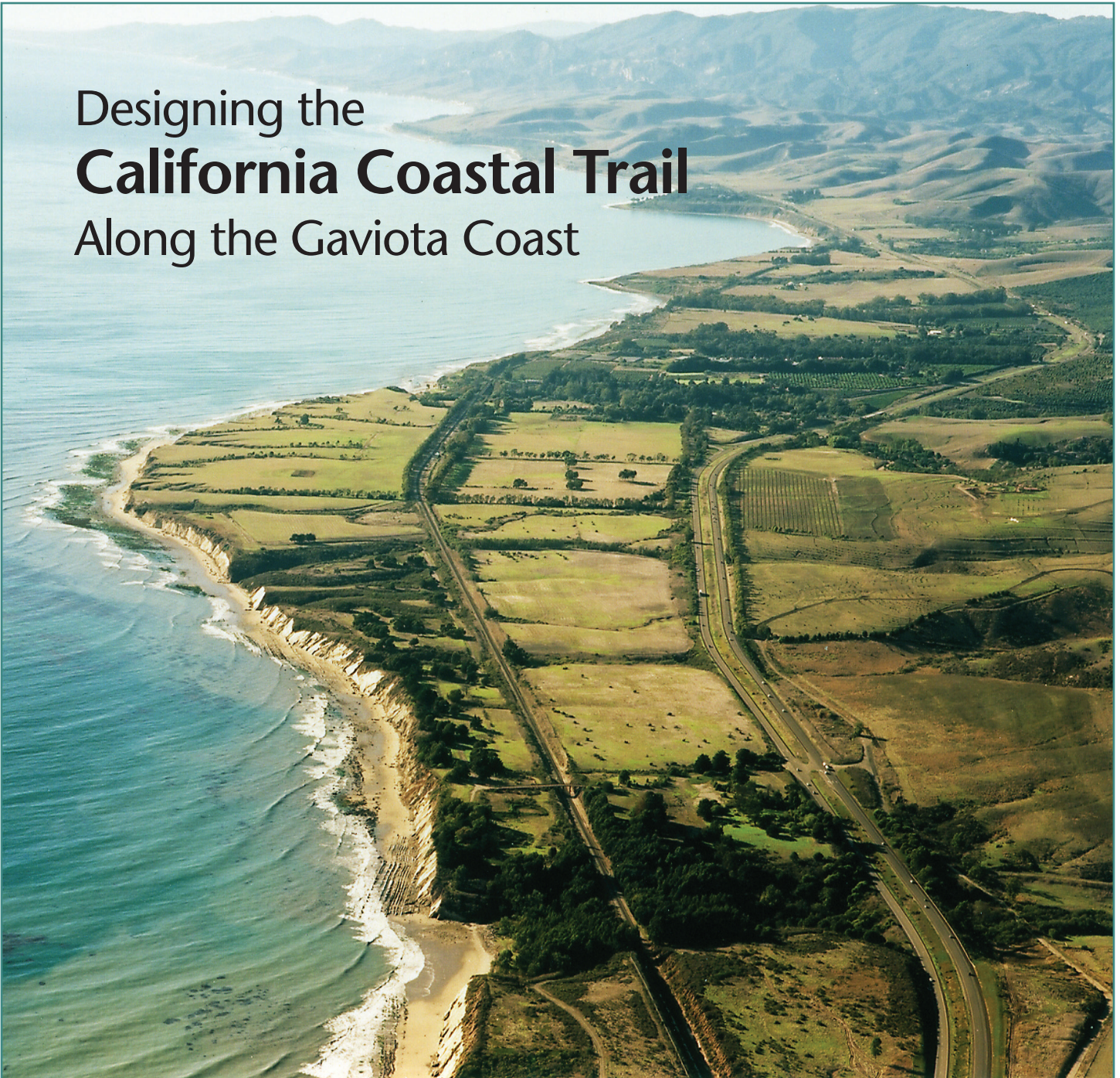
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Otis Calef", written over a large, stylized flourish.

Otis Calef  
President, SBTC

cc: Chandra Wallar  
Chris Henson  
Mary O' Gorman  
Jeremy Tuttle  
Brian Roney  
Glen Russell  
Dianne Black  
Jeff Hunt  
Alice McCurdy

Designing the  
**California Coastal Trail**  
Along the Gaviota Coast



**Santa Barbara Trails Council**

April 11, 2012

# California Coastal Trail Along the Bluff

Stretching for over 30 miles of Santa Barbara County's South Coast, the Gaviota Coast is one of the most pristine segments of coastline in Southern California. The Gaviota Coast supports three State Park Beach Campgrounds: El Capitan, Refugio and Gaviota, thousands of acres of state park wilderness and over 15,000 acres of Los Padres National Forest. Tens of thousands of acres of privately owned land zoned for agricultural use surround and separate these state and federal lands. Because of its natural beauty and variety of coastal recreational opportunities, Santa Barbara County's **Local Coastal Plan (LCP)** identifies the Gaviota Coast as a recreational resource of statewide importance. A key proposal contained in this local coastal plan is the completion of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) along 36 miles of shoreline.

Pending development proposals for large areas of the east end of the coastal terrace between the City of Goleta and El Capitan State Beach present a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire a scenic world class coastal bluff-top location for the CCT. The County is also preparing an updated Gaviota Plan to guide future use and development of the Gaviota Coast, including a trail system. The convergence of pending developments and long-range planning offers an unprecedented opportunity for the development of one of the most scenic segments of the CCT in the state and improved vertical coastal access points. However, missteps and a lack of leadership from the County along with resistance from some developers threaten some of the most important segments of the CCT and may lead to inadequate or inappropriate coastal access.

Pending development projects such as Paradiso del Mare, Santa Barbara Ranch

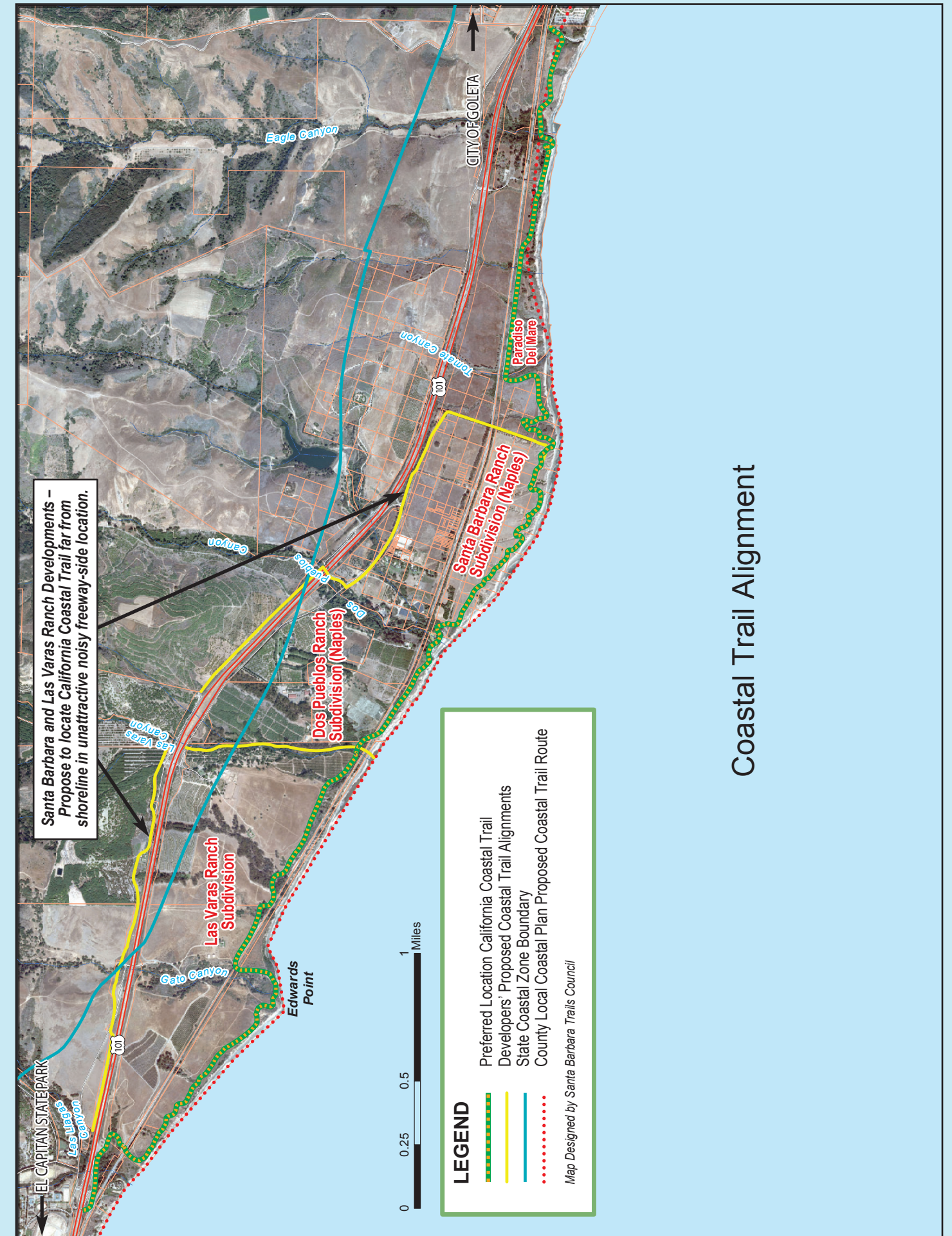
(i.e., Naples) and Las Varas Ranch offer the opportunity to acquire easements for construction of almost 80% (4 miles) of a coastal trail from the City of Goleta to El Capitan State Beach. This bluff-top trail, which would provide stunning ocean views and access to beautiful pocket beaches, would be the embodiment of the state's policy vision for the CCT as being located "as close to the coast as aesthetically and physically feasible" and "within the sights and sounds of the Pacific Ocean". Unfortunately, some pending development proposals and preliminary County planning efforts could undermine this vision by proposing a location for the CCT far removed from the coast adjacent to the noise and fumes of Highway 101.

The County will be considering the Paradiso del Mare and Las Varas development proposals in 2012. The Paradiso del Mare development includes a generally well-sited proposed easement for a bluff-top location for the CCT; however, the Las Varas Ranch development proposes a freeway-side CCT far removed from the coast, with much of it outside of the Coastal Zone. Similarly, the approved Santa Barbara Ranch Development, currently subject to litigation and potential appeal to the Coastal Commission, includes a similar unacceptable non-coastal location for the CCT opposed by the community.

Over 14 community organizations have banded together to ensure that local and state residents secure a coastal bluff-top location for the CCT and appropriate coastal access system along the Gaviota Coast. Over the coming years, these organizations will be working with the County, California Coastal Commission and the courts if needed to ensure that the state's vision for a near shoreline CCT is accomplished along the Gaviota Coast.

## Civic Groups in Support of Proper Alignment of the California Coastal Trail

- Back Country Horsemen
- County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee
- Coastwalk
- Gaviota Coast Conservancy
- Los Padres Trail Riders
- Montecito Trails Foundation
- Naples Preservation Coalition
- Orcutt Trails Commission
- Santa Barbara County Action Network
- Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers
- Santa Barbara County Outdoor Foundation
- Santa Barbara Trails Council
- Sierra Club
- Surfrider Foundation



Coastal Trail Alignment

# Gaviota Coast Key Upcoming 2012 Issues and Events

**Las Varas Ranch Development:** Community organizations contend that the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is wholly inadequate and that it must be revised and recirculated for public review and that the CCT must be located along the shoreline, not inland of the freeway outside of the Coastal Zone. The County Board of Supervisors will consider this matter on April 17, 2012. Community organizations are tracking this project and will contest any project that does not site the CCT on or near the shoreline.

**Paradiso del Mare Development:** A revised EIR will likely be issued by the County in spring/summer of 2012. Although the project contains a well-planned bluff-top segment of the CCT, project approval may result in closure of a major long-standing informal coastal access point. How to maintain historic access at an appropriate location in the vicinity of this project will be a key issue for this development proposal.

**Santa Barbara Ranch:** The project approved by a past pro-development Board of Supervisors fails to maintain historic coastal access and locates the CCT in an unacceptable location as a freeway side trail generally north of US Hwy 101 outside of the Coastal Zone. However, potential resolution of litigation filed against the County offers an opportunity for the Board of Supervisors to reconsider this unfortunate decision, relocate that CCT to a near shoreline location and to provide coastal access.

**Gaviota Planning Process:** The County is currently preparing a new Gaviota area land use plan, with this effort expected to continue over the next 2-3 years. A Trails Subcommittee of the County's Gaviota Advisory Committee has shown a disappointing inclination to favor developer proposed alignment for the Coastal Trail next to US Hwy 101, far from the shoreline, and often outside of the State's Coastal Zone. This Trails Subcommittee unfortunately lacks trail-user group members. Community organizations are tracking this process and will contest any project that does not site the CCT on or near the shoreline.

## **Santa Barbara Trails Council**

PO Box 22352  
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

**Ray Ford**, Executive Director

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For questions regarding planning for the California Coastal Trail along the Gaviota Coast, contact:

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Kevin Snow, *President*  
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Kalon Kelley, *First District Representative*  
**Santa Barbara County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee**  
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**Cover Photo:** Looking west up Gaviota Coast with Paradise del Mare site in foreground, Naples and Las Varas Ranch in background.