

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

A-17

From: Mark Wilkinson <mwilkinson@sbtrails.org>
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2022 7:27 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Restrictive Covenant on a 31-Acre Portion of the Baron Ranch
Attachments: Baron-Ranch-Restrictive-Covenant-Letter.pdf



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Dear Clerk of the Board,

We are submitting the attached letter to the Board of Supervisors in response to Item A15 on the March 1st Meeting Agenda that was postponed for two weeks.

We appreciate the additional time to review the proposed recordation of a Restrictive Covenant on a 31-Acre Portion of the Baron Ranch.

Regards,



Mark Wilkinson
Executive Director

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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
Trails Council



March 11, 2022

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Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street, 4th Floor
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

By email to sbcob@countyofsb.org

Re: Restrictive Covenant on County-Owned Baron Ranch

Dear Chair Hartmann and Supervisors,

As community advocates for the protection of open spaces along the Gaviota Coast and across the county, the Santa Barbara County Trails Council appreciates receiving the extra time provided by the Supervisors on March 1, 2022 to review the Baron Ranch Restrictive Covenant.

As you are aware, the County of Santa Barbara has an extraordinarily diverse collection of natural resources. However, there is minimal access to coastal mountain habitats in a time when the demand for spending time in nature is increasing exponentially. Therefore, we are grateful that the Board of Supervisors fully supports the **Countywide Recreation Master Plan** program.

Baron Ranch is the leading and most likely the only contender to be the County's next 1000-acre park and open space for recreation. Providing protected habitats is an integral part of open space planning. Currently, both the **Baron Ranch Master Plan** and the **Countywide Recreation Master Plan** are in progress. Furthermore, Baron Ranch has been closed to the public since the Alisal Fire. Another cause for concern is that the fire stripped the upslope land surrounding the watershed of its vegetation. The impact of winter/spring rains on the area within the 32-Acre Restrictive Covenant is unknown. Still, a 4-inch rainfall earlier this year released nature's wrath on the watershed corridor. We believe there is no urgency to sign off on the Baron Ranch Restrictive Covenant.



We favor the conceptual plans put forth by Public Works that include the 32-Acre Restrictive Covenant, a 110-acre conservation easement, and a 50-acre habitat restoration area at Baron Ranch. However, the prudent course of action would be first to finish the **Baron Ranch Master Plan**, allow the canyon's hillside vegetation to recover from the first fire in 66 years, and assess Baron Ranch for recreation potential as part of the **Countywide Recreation Master Plan**. Then, a year from now, deciding on the details of the Restrictive Covenant will allow all stakeholders to consider the big picture and avoid piecemeal actions.

To ensure a bright outcome for Baron Ranch, we urge the Board to take a holistic approach.

Sincerely,


Mark Wilkinson
Executive Director