

REPORTING FROM GOLETA

# Between Hollister and Gaviota, fighting to keep rural beaches rural — and public



Steve Lopez

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Phil McKenna, president of the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, looks out over the Gaviota Coast and Naples State Marine Conservation Area. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

Check out L.A. Times reporter [Dan Weikel's story](#) today at [latimes.com](#) on the continuing battle at Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County, where property owners have aggressively limited access to great beaches.

Last week, I met just south of there with Marc Chytilo, a lawyer for the Gaviota Coast Conservancy, which has been waging its own fight to limit development and increase public access to beaches all the way down to Goleta.



Notices of proposed development are posted on the Gaviota Coast. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

Chytilo took me to a bluff high above the Gaviota coast so I could take in a wide view of what is a stunning and miraculously undeveloped shoreline. But that pristine vista is under constant threat.

"The integrity of the Gaviota Coast is threatened by urbanization, rural McMansions and industrial development," says the nonprofit's website. "Currently, five large ranches on the eastern [portion] are proposing residential developments with massive homes adjacent to sensitive habitat, sacred sites and on top of well-used coastal access trails. The county is proposing to build Costco-sized buildings on top of a landfill... and despite the devastating Refugio oil spill... Venoco is proposing to substantially expand drilling and production."



A blue heron flies over the Naples State Marine Conservation Area. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

Although these threats are real, the continued lack of development, so far, is a testament to those who fight, up and down the California coast, to preserve the state's greatest treasures.

"We want to be able to save this stretch of coast as a wild and rural area for our children and our children's children to explore," said Chytilo. "We want it to serve as a refuge for wildlife and nature... and serve as an example of how people can protect the character of their own community."

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1:29 P.M.

**Column: Fighting for the California coast from a tiny**