

Santa Barbara County Trails Council

2012
ANNUAL
REPORT

- ▶ California Coastal Trail
- ▶ Baron Ranch Ridge Trail
- ▶ Midland School Trails
- ▶ Ellwood Mesa Coastal Trail



Santa Barbara County Trails Council works on behalf of hikers, road and mountain bikers, equestrians, trail runners and others to support access to new trails, enhancement of existing trails and safe shared use by everyone

Community Resource + Community Responsibility



Santa Barbara County Hikers

The Santa Barbara County Hikers is a year-round recreational hiking program offered by the Santa Barbara County Trails Council. Morning hikes are planned for most Saturdays. Hike details are generally posted at <http://www.sbhikers.org/> and sent out to our members a week ahead of the hike. Please read the hike descriptions carefully including the overall distance and elevation gain. Join us on our next hike and see the incredible beauty that is accessible through the Santa Barbara County trail system.



Photo: Curt Cragg



Photo: Ray Ford



Photo: Curt Cragg



Photo: Curt Cragg

Santa Barbara Outdoor Volunteers

The Santa Barbara Outdoor Volunteers was organized by the Santa Barbara County Trails Council, Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers, and Los Padres Forest Association to provide local outdoor-oriented people an opportunity to give back to our trails through trail care projects. We coordinate trail volunteer projects and trail volunteer training throughout Santa Barbara County. Our projects include volunteer vacations in the Santa Barbara back country, trail maintenance on front country trails, trash clean up on all trails, native plant restoration projects on local preserves, and construction and maintenance of new trails. Notices to upcoming events are posted at <http://www.sbvvolunteers.org/> Join us on our next project.

Background Photo: Michael Ramsey

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Trails Council has been exceptionally successful during this past year in the promotion of our goal: The expansion and improvement of the wonderful network of hiking and riding trails in Santa Barbara County. That success is attributable to the tireless and imaginative leadership of our Executive Director these past three years, Ray Ford. He has taken the lead on our current initiatives, including the Baron Ridge Trail, Midland School, the chaparral section of Franklin Trail, the Ellwood Mesa Plan, and mapping of the California Coastal Trail.



Without Ray's total commitment, none of these dreams would have been as near realization as they are today. The Board is very grateful for his accomplishments. Ray is stepping down from the Board and as Executive Director. He will continue to manage the above projects and I hope there will be many new ones in the future.

It is a pleasure to introduce to you our new Executive Director, an avid hiker and my fellow Boy Scout leader, Mark Wilkinson. Mark has been our Secretary for the past three years and is responsible for getting our records up to the standards required by our current level of operations. He has broad experience in construction, design, marketing, and has worked with a number of non-profits. Mark is prepared to lead us in outreach to increase our base of support in the community and to get our message out. This will be crucial, for example, with the struggle to properly align the California Coastal Trail along the ocean bluffs. You will be hearing more from Mark and we will be doing our best to keep the old pine cone bouncing down the trail.

In closing I would like to answer an often asked question: "What do I get for becoming a member of the Trails Council?" At the top of the list is knowing that you are supporting the Trails Council's year round advocacy for the protection of existing trails and the creation of new ones; a benefit that is priceless. With special thanks to Ray Ford, we now also offer a set of seven pocket-sized maps covering the front country trails as our thank you gift to new members. Renewing members receive a 13" x 19" map covering a selected portion of the Santa Barbara County trail system that varies from year to year.

Our county's trail network is both a community resource and a community responsibility. Becoming a member of the Trails Council is one way to make a contribution towards joining in fulfilling that responsibility. You will be glad you did.

Sincerely,



Otis Calef
President

Santa Barbara County Trails Council Board of Directors 2013

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SERVICES

Trail Advocacy
Trail Planning
GIS Mapping
Trail Maintenance
Volunteer Recruiting
Fundraising

2013: Gaviota Coastal Access at the Crossroads

Trails Council leads community efforts to ensure that coastal development projects and the draft Gaviota Coast Plan provide high quality trails.



Photo: Irina Tolpygo

The public's right to access to and along the Gaviota Coast is at a crossroads in 2013. Pending private development projects which could either block or enhance public coastal access between Goleta and El Capitan State Park will face key County decisions this year. In addition, the County's long awaited Gaviota Coast Plan is inching forward

with proposals that could adversely impact the public's right to access to and along the coast as guaranteed under the State Coastal Act, including completion of the California Coastal Trail (CCT). The draft plan's policies and trails proposals fail to recognize existing public use patterns and could severely limit public access over the long-term. The County has

the opportunity to either protect and improve public access at this key juncture or allow development interest to wall off the coast. The major risk is that County actions could forever foreclose improving or even maintaining existing levels of public access along the Gaviota Coast. Important pending public and private developments include:

Paradiso del Mare: The site of the Naples surf break access trail is currently proposed for development that would close one of the most heavily used informal accessways along the Gaviota Coast. While the developer is praised for including a bluff top alignment of the CCT south of the railroad, the County and developer's resistance to identifying a viable replacement coastal access point is an imminent blow to public recreation. The Trails Council will urge the County to mandate provisions of replacement access on property owned by the same developer next door. This same potential access point has been acknowledge by the developer in previous development schemes and was accepted by the Board of Supervisors as part of the Arco Dos Pueblos Golf Course and its inclusion in any approval of this pending development is essential.

Santa Barbara Ranch (aka Naples): The saga of this long running development proposal and its unfavorable coastal access

proposals will reach a key juncture this year as the County, the bank (current owner) and possible future developers wrestle with how to resolve existing litigation. Sadly, the County approved development project provides no coastal access and generally locates the CCT next to busy US Hwy 101 far removed from the coast. As part of any County approval of revised development plans or resolution of existing litigation, the Trails Council will advocate for inclusion of a near shoreline bluff top location for the CCT and provision of coastal access.

Las Varas Ranch Development:

This proposed subdivision would permit development of new residential estate mansions that would begin to displace historic agricultural uses. Although a coastal access trail and parking lot would be provided one mile from the beach at the Ranch's east end, the proposed CCT would be located adjacent to the noise and fumes of Hwy 101 over ½ mile from the coast. Under the leadership of 3rd District

Trails Council Gaviota Coastal Trail Plan

In response private development proposals and the draft Gaviota Coast Plan, the Trails Council in conjunction with other community organizations is preparing a detailed study for the alignment of the CCT and identification of coastal access points. The Trails Council has raised substantial grant funds and private donations to prepare a detailed plan for the alignment of the CCT along the Gaviota Coast as well as options for improved and sensitively designed beach access.



Photo: Ray Ford

Supervisor Doreen Farr, the County sent the developer back to the drawing board for several issues including orders to more closely review the CCT location and design in a near shore location. However, overcoming resistance from the developer to a well-planned CCT location near the coast will require support of the County Planning & Development Department and active community input in the coming months.

Gaviota Coast Plan:

The County's recently released draft of the Gaviota Coast Plan provides a detailed blueprint for trails and recreation on the coast for the next 30 years. While providing some useful trail proposals, the draft plan unfortunately completely ignores the vast network of locally used informal roadside parking areas and web of informal coastal access trails and their critical importance to local residents and recommends ill considered proposals to locate key elements of the CCT far from the coast. Under the guise of protecting agricultural and the environment, the draft plan would wall off key sections of the coast by creating private residential estates that limit or preclude public access to and along the coast. The Trails Council and a consortium of 12 community organizations will work to ensure that the draft plan is revised to provide a near shore coastal location for CCT, appropriate coastal access points and an improved foothill trail system.

Become a Member, Join the Trails Council Today!

Protecting trail access, advocating for new trails and maintaining existing trails is a community responsibility. Joining the Santa Barbara County Trails Council is one way you can help to insure that the local trail system we value is here for generations to come. We work, on our members' behalf, with Federal, State, County and City agencies to protect existing trails and create of new ones year round.

With special thanks to Ray Ford, we now also offer a set of seven pocket-sized maps covering the front country trails as our thank you gift to new members. Renewing members receive a 13" x 19" map covering a selected portion of the Santa Barbara County trail system that varies from year to year.

What does it cost to join?

Individual annual memberships start at \$25. To join online (and see other membership options) go to: <https://sbtrails.org/become-a-member/>

Payment options also include mailing a check to:

Santa Barbara County Trails Council
PO Box 22352,
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

Memberships and donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

SUPPORTERS

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

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

Donate to the Trail Fund

Our Trail Fund was established to support trail planning, maintenance and construction projects. These projects help expand the trail system and offset the effects of nature on trails throughout Santa Barbara County. Donations may be earmarked for specific projects, as matching funds for grants awarded to Santa Barbara County Trails Council, or unencumbered for trail maintenance and construction. To help protect and maintain our community trails, please make a tax deductible donation to:

**Santa Barbara County Trails Council,
PO Box 22352, Santa Barbara, CA 93121**

Contact Mark Wilkinson to learn how you can participate in this special effort. Call 805.708.6173 or by email at mwilkinson@sbtrails.org

Baron Ranch Trail to Camino Cielo



Construction of new trail enabling coastal access to mountain-top vistas along the Gaviota Coast hinges on successful fund raising campaign – Ray Ford

In 2002, when Santa Barbara County Trails Council founder Vie Obern hiked up to the top of a saddle at Baron Ranch for a view out over the Gaviota coastline, no one knew then that the work she and others were doing then would lead to the creation of an important new trail, in the Los Padres Forest, that would create the potential for a wide-ranging trail network on the Gaviota portion of the Santa Ynez Mountains.

At that time the goal was to open up a loop trail in the lower part of Baron Ranch, but one of those who was there, Kalon Kelly (who would later be honored by the Trails Council for his work on the Baron trails) envisioned something much larger: a trail that would lead to the crest and open up a connection along the crest to the Gaviota Hot Springs.

Steadfast in his desire to see both the lower trail and the much more extensive crest connection completed, Kalon convinced me to join him both in endless meetings with Santa Barbara County Public Works, which owns the Baron Ranch, and on many adventures exploring possible routes to the crest. Although this effort took many years, by 2010 we had succeeded in getting the lower trail open and at that point we turned our efforts towards finding

a workable route to the crest.

The undertaking was not without difficulties. Cutting our way through thick brush and almost impenetrable vegetation, several times we hit dead ends—either terrain that was too difficult for trail building or private property that we couldn't find a detour around. Eventually we were able to receive Forest Service approval for a route on the west side of the property up a ridge where we believed we could build a trail. With funding provided by the Goleta Valley Land Trust, first for the preliminary trail locating and later for environmental review, in 2011 we achieved a route to the top of the Santa Ynez Mountains!

We had the path laid out. Now all we had to do was to convince the Forest Service of the value of adding a new trail to their already overburdened system. That turned out to be almost as difficult as the route finding. But with the help of letters supporting the project from Lois Capps, Doreen Farr and Salud Carbajal we have been able to get our Baron Ranch Trail project on the Forest Service plan of work and to begin developing the Environmental Assessment (EA) needed to get final approval. We received additional pre-construction

Photos:

1. Kalon Kelly looking out over Baron Ranch Trail.

Photo: Ray Ford

2-3. Views of the Baron Ranch Trail

Photos: Steve Faulstich



funding from Goleta Valley Land Trust, the Coastal Fund at UCSB and the WWW Foundation.

At this point we can predict success. We've completed the environmental review and are on-track to completing a memo of understanding (MOU) with the Santa Barbara Ranger District for the engineering and design work. With luck we could be looking at starting construction of the first new trail in Los Padres Forest in 30 years by the end of 2013.

DONATE TO THE TRAILS FUND

You can celebrate with us by providing a donation for the trail construction, and help us complete what Trails Council Founder Vie Obern initiated and Kalon Kelly's vision helped put into motion. Donations tagged Baron Ranch Trail will be used for the construction and maintenance of the trail. Our goal is to raise \$75,000 with a portion reserved for future trail maintenance.

Midland School Trails Now Open

New trail system provides access for equestrians, hikers and trail runners to a Blue Oak woodland. Trail work funded by Brett and Natalie Hodges through the WWW Foundation.

By Ben Munger, Midland School Ranch Manager

Since Midland School's founding in 1932 there have been trails that faculty, students, and guests have used to reach the far corners of the school's property. These trails were primarily cattle trails improved by pruning encroaching Chaparral and overhanging Oaks and Pines. When cattle are responsible for trail construction you end up with trails that have steep grades, erosion problems, and multiple branches of small trails. In some cases trails appeared to stop then begin again as cattle contoured across the slopes of Blue Oak Woodland or Chaparral.

Working with the Santa Barbara County Trails Council we have improved the trails on Midland School's property



Photo: Michael Ramsey

relaxing hikes we have available - primarily, because of the time spent in the Blue Oak Woodland on grassy slopes that look to the north.

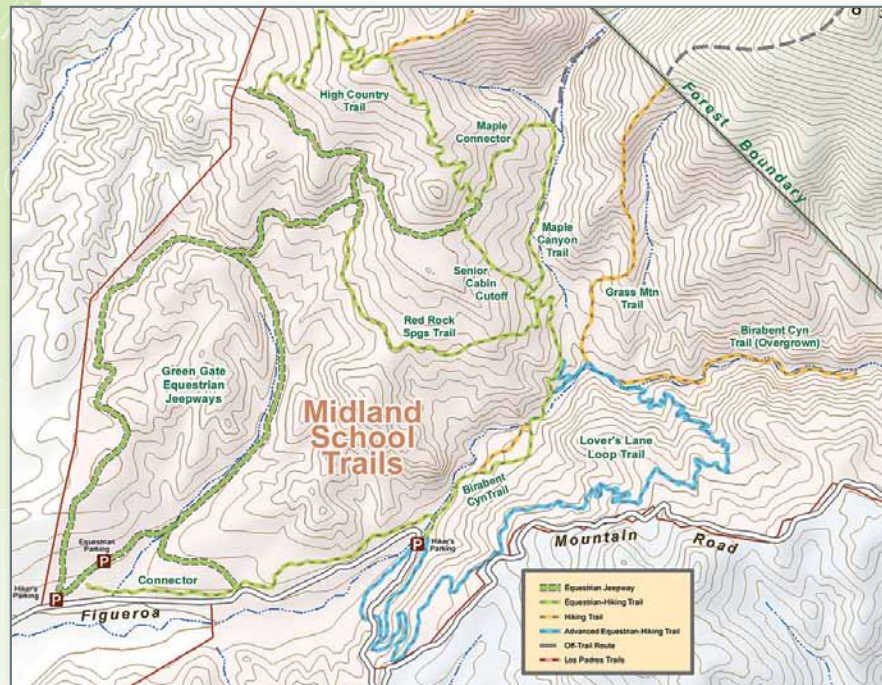
The Midland Cross Country Team has another favorite loop, the High Country Loop, that they have renamed (for themselves) "Delta's Warmup." The Cross Country Team is highly competitive in the Condor League and the Delta runners are the elite of the team. Their idea of a good workout is to link together several of the trails to get a 12 mile run in about two hours. The trails are now easier on the runners because there are no steep down hills or uneven sections of trail to damage knees or ankles. Midland School has several faculty that run long distance and they are appreciative of the new trails.

The Midland School Horse Program has also benefited from the trail system. The faculty, in the beginning of the year, all rode horseback to Sedgewick Reserve on the new section of the Lover's Lane Trail. Previously that section of trail was dangerous because there were several steep

up hills and bad crossing of Figueroa Mountain Road. Having an access to Sedgewick Reserve via a nice trail is a big improvement for our Outdoor Program and Horse Program.

In the last ten years there has been an increase in the use of Midland School's property for recreation by the general public. We have embraced this change and feel that as a community member we offer opportunities that are unique. Access to private land in Blue Oak Woodland in the

dramatically. The greatest improvement is in establishing a reasonable grade in the trails that gain elevation then loop back down to the starting elevation. The Lover's Lane Loop is most popular with faculty and students that run at Midland School. The 6% grade allows for relatively easy running, fantastic views of Grass Mountain and according to Don Redl the Cross Country Coach, "you are able to carry on a conversation while running the trail." The Lover's Lane Loop as a walk takes about 1.2 hours and I find it one of the most



Top Photo: Michael Ramsey, Inset Photo: Maureen Wallace, Runner Photo: Ray Ford, Ribbon Cutting Photo: Curt Cragg

Santa Ynez Valley is rare. The rolling foothills of the San Rafael Range are unique geologically and floristically and folks who like to hike and ride horses don't often get to experience Chocolate Lilies and majestic Blue Oaks mixed with outcrops of Serpentine and Chert.

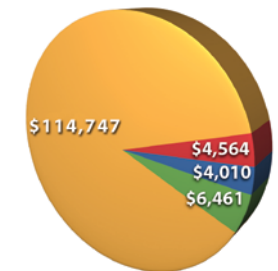
We appreciate the opportunity to partner with the Santa Barbara County Trails Council in developing a trail system that is a superb attribute of Midland School and community asset that is appreciated by many.

Annual Meeting in March

The focus for year's annual meeting is on the public's right to access to and along the coast as guaranteed under the State Coastal Act, including completion of the California Coastal Trail along the Gaviota coastline. The evening begins with a casual wine and cheese reception at 6:30pm, followed at 7pm by recognition of a leading Santa Barbara County trail advocate. Rounding out the evening is a presentation highlighting the challenges and opportunities for the California Coastal Trail. Join us on Wednesday, March 20th at the Faulkner Gallery in the Santa Barbara Public Library.

FINANCIALS

2012 Income

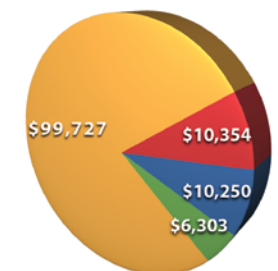


- Membership
- Grants*
- Donations
- Events

Total Income: \$129,792

*An additional \$100,000 was awarded in 2012 by the Coastal Conservancy with funds provided in 2013

2012 Expenses



- Administration
- Grant Projects
- Outreach/Fundraising
- Grant Commitments

Total Expenses: \$126,634

Ellwood Mesa: The California Coastal Trail and Juan Bautista de Anza Trail

Community members take an active role in planning and design for the rehabilitation of existing trails and the surrounding coastal bluff habit.

In 2004, the newly-formed City of Goleta joined with the County of Santa Barbara and UC Santa Barbara to develop the Ellwood-Devereux Coast Open Space and Habitat Management Plan designed to protect and enhance the 652 acre coastal area located on the lower Devereux Creek watershed. Later in 2004 the City adopted the Open Space Plan and uses the plan to guide management of public access and natural resource protection on the 230-acre City-owned Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve.

In 2008 the Trails Council approached the City of Goleta with the intent of supporting trail access at Ellwood Mesa and protecting its vital natural resources that had been deteriorating due to years of neglect. That year, thanks to a \$6,000 grant from the UCSB Coastal Fund, Trails Council entered into an agreement with the City to make immediate repairs to several eroded gullies and two beach access areas that were becoming safety concerns. The work was completed in 2009 but it was clear that more needed to be done to improve access and minimize future erosion.



Photo: Ray Ford



Thanks to the help of Trails Council Board member Dan Gira, we were able to initiate discussions with the Coastal Conservancy with the goal of seeking funding to make long-term improvements to two major trails that pass through Ellwood Mesa: the CA Coastal Trail and Juan Bautista de Anza Trail. At the same time we turned to the Goleta Valley Land Trust for additional funding. In 2011, GVLТ provided a \$50,000 grant for the purpose of improving the Coast and De Anza trails. With that funding in hand we then turned back to the Coastal Conservancy for the remaining funds we'd need for the project. In early spring, 2012 the Conservancy informed us that they would approve an additional \$100,000 grant that could be used for the necessary permitting and environmental studies required to obtain a development permit.

As it turns out, funding alone wasn't enough to ensure that the project was a "go" because of the unique relationship we were developing with the City of Goleta. Because we would be serving as the contractor for the project (typically the City would act in that capacity but were unable to do so due to the lack of staff time to handle it) we would need to develop a formal MOU with the City to cover this. On August 7, 2012, the Goleta City Council, authorized staff to enter into the MOU — with the scope of the work to include the design, engineering, environmental review, and permitting associated with possible future development of the Coastal and Anza trails on the Ellwood Mesa-Sperling Preserve.

A few days after the Council's vote, the Trails Council project team met for the first time to plan out a course of work. Thus far we've held two community meetings, conducted several site visits, gotten lots of feedback and have incorporated what we've heard into the project description. On February 5, 2013, a presentation to the Goleta City Council, won approval to move ahead with the permit and application phase of the project.

With luck, we expect to be successful in obtaining a development permit in Fall, 2013.



2012: Year in Review

By Ray Ford, Executive Director

In early February I drove up to Midland School to haul out my small excavator, which remained on site after six months of work building an incredible set of trails there. I stopped at a high point that overlooks Grass Mountain to reflect back on the year. Over this period I've had the opportunity to watch the grass grow a thick rich green at Midland, turn a golden yellow, then spring up once more during the fall months. Thanks to several generous grants from Brett & Natalie Hodges, the Trails Council has been able to build a network of trails at Midland that will last a lifetime.

Last year as I began working on a series of projects that we'd just gotten started the year before I thought of 2012 as our commitment to the future. As it turns out, it ended up being one of unparalleled success, thanks to community-wide support and particularly the efforts of so many Trails Council members.

One project, our proposed route from Baron Ranch Trail to the mountain crest, went from pipe dream to being part of Los Padres National Forests' Plan of Work this past year — no easy feat given that LPNF hasn't built a new trail here in almost 30 years. See page 4 for details.

During 2012, the Trails Council has continued to reach out to and collaborate with other organizations. One of those is the Santa Maria Valley Open Space group (SMVOS). We've worked closely with SMVOS President Jon Blanchard and trails enthusiast Luis Escobar to help them open new trails at Rice Ranch.



Left and Lower Right: Photo: Curt Cragg, Middle Photo Dave Williams

We'll continue to work with them to establish additional new trails in the north county.

In early May, 2012, Trails Council established an MOU with the City of Goleta for the design and permitting of major improvements to the California Coastal Trail at Ellwood Mesa. This was an important step forward as it enabled us to formalize our relationship with the City, obtain a major \$100,000 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy and begin work on the project. See page 10 for details.

Perhaps no more important work was accomplished this past year than our work towards establishing future sections of the California Coastal Trail. The public's right to access to and along the coast as guaranteed under the State Coastal Act, including completion of the California Coastal Trail. Working with

a coalition of over a dozen trail-related organizations, Trails Council has led the effort to prevail upon the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department and the ranch owners the importance of evaluating bluff top routes as a component of environmental impact reports (EIR).

Getting to this point was not easy: it required numerous meetings with County Planning Commission members, gathering letters of support, and eventually gaining the support of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. We are starting to see movement in the right direction; however community-wide support for a California Coastal Trail along the bluff tops in Gaviota is essential in the months ahead.

Here's a toast an even more productive 2013!

**Santa Barbara County
Trails Council**

P.O. Box 22352
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

805.708.6173



www.sbtrails.org

Report Design

OTT DESIGN

Editor

Pat Fish

Cover Photo

Seth Smigelski

Maps

Ray Ford

