

Goleta Beach 2.0 Underway

Participate in Park's Planning

By Martha Rairden Lannan

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If you're interested in the future of Goleta Beach Park, you'll probably want to be at an evening meeting, February 16 in the County Administration Building, when a conceptual draft plan for Goleta Beach 2.0 will be presented and public comment heard.

The beach park, with more than 1.5 million visitors a year, has been dramatically modified and has lost a large percentage of its original turf, sand, and parking lots during severe winter storms between 1982 and the present.

Goleta Beach 2.0 entered the planning stages last July, following a 9-1 vote of the California Coastal Commission denying a county proposal to preserve what is left of the park and ameliorate ongoing erosion by installing permeable pilings adjacent to the existing pier. Several members of the state commission encouraged the county to look at "managed retreat" options for the park, essentially letting nature take its course and adapting to whatever changes result.

The Environmental Defense Center and local chapter of the Surfrider Foundation have been strong proponents of the managed retreat option, and worked hard to convince the Coastal Commission last summer that such a plan was vastly preferable to the county's nourishment plan that included permeable pilings.

Erik Axelson, South County deputy director of County Parks, is heading up research and exploration of alternatives to the proposal that was denied by the state commission. Alternative park configurations and their potential fiscal, recreational, and environmental impacts will be examined in the process. Beginning last September, extensive field surveys of existing conditions, including subsurface utilities, were undertaken. Data from this work was factored into detailed computer mapping of the entire 29-acre park. The detailed Geographic Information System mapping will give a clearer picture of possible reconfigurations than would otherwise be possible, according to the Web site of the Parks Department.

While working to put together proposed options, Axelson has met with several stakeholders over the past few months, including Goleta City Councilmember Michael Bennett.

Bennett strongly encourages Goleta Valley residents and others to come to next week's meeting and to participate in the process. "I would like very much for everyone to attend," he said. "It's really their park." Bennett stressed that the public needs to hear what could be lost because of the positions of the Coastal Commission and the EDC.

"We need to reach a compromise everyone can live with," said Bennett.

County staff has also met with representatives of utilities (high pressure natural gas, reclaimed water,

wastewater, etc.) that transit portions of the park. Second District Supervisor Janet Wolf and 3rd District Supervisor Doreen Farr are members of an ad hoc board subcommittee for Goleta Beach 2.0.

Recent storms have resulted in considerable loss of sand at the beach, leaving much of the west end only exposed rock. The county is in the process of adding 48,000 cubic tons of sand, via trucks and barges, to the beach.

4-1-1: The draft proposal of Goleta Beach 2.0 will be reviewed and public comment taken beginning at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 16, in the Planning Department's hearing room, 105 E. Anapamu St.

For additional information, go to the [Santa Barbara County Web site](#).