

Letter to the Editor

Goleta Beach decision a victory for area's beaches

The California Coastal Commission's (CCC) recent 9-1 vote to deny a massive erosion control structure proposed for Goleta Beach County Park was a victory for beaches and people who love the coast.

The Environmental Defense Center (EDC) represented the Surfrider Foundation during 9 years leading up to this monumental victory for local beaches.

With funding from the Coastal Fund and Fund for Santa Barbara, EDC and Surfrider consulted with coastal engineers, scientists and biologists who determined that the planned pile groin structure would trap sand thereby causing down-coast beaches and bluffs to erode. The groin would have damaged bird, fish and wildlife habitats and limited public access and recreation. Ongoing maintenance of the groin would have also caused periodic beach and pier closures and air and water pollution.

The CCC waded through thousands of pages of technical documents and public comments, thoroughly considered input from project proponents and opponents, and then upheld the 35-year old voter-approved Coastal Act by denying the ecologically-harmful groin structure.

Denial of the groin project sent a clear message for protection of beaches throughout the state. EDC and Surfrider support environmentally-benign approaches such as the Park Reconfiguration Alternative which would protect Goleta Beach Park without damaging beaches and bluffs.

EDC applauds the CCC for protecting our local beaches. We also wish to thank the more than 580 people who wrote in support of our position, our client the Surfrider Foundation, our coalition partners including More Mesa Preservation Coalition, Urban Creeks Council and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, and the many coastal scientists on our team.

EDC and Surfrider remain committed to working with Santa Barbara County on an environmentally-progressive plan to protect and enhance our beautiful Goleta Beach Park.

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