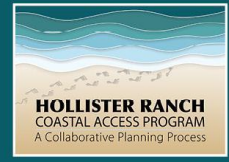


Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program



HRCAP Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Hollister Ranch? Where is it located?

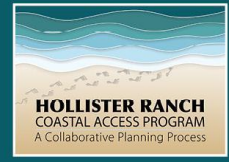
The Hollister Ranch is a 14,000 acre working cattle ranch located just west of Gaviota State Park; 30 miles west of Santa Barbara. The Ranch covers 8.5 miles of shoreline, with six beaches. In 1971 the Ranch was subdivided into 135 parcels of 100 acres each. Today, many of the parcels are developed with homes, although most of them are located inland, higher up in the coastal canyons. As the road into the Ranch is on private property, the Ranch owners have a guard gate to ensure that only residents and invited guests are allowed into the Ranch. Thus, there is no land-based access into the Hollister Ranch beaches.

2. What is the Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program (HRCAP)?

The Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program (HRCAP) is a planning effort led by State agencies that will lead to the creation of a plan for public access to the coast at Hollister Ranch. The planning process includes comprehensive stakeholder and community engagement, an opportunities-and-constraints analysis, a list of potential recommendations, and the development of essential regulatory and operational requirements to implement the plan.

The intention is to deliver a completed plan that balances the public's right to access coastal land with landowners' rights to privacy, safety, and security. More detailed information about

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the HRCAP can be found at <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/hollister-ranch/>.

3. Which agencies are overseeing the planning process?

The following four agencies are overseeing the planning process: California Coastal Commission, California State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California State Lands Commission.

4. Why is the State of California conducting a public access planning program for the Hollister Ranch beaches? (Why not for other recreational areas of the State?)

Simply put, because the law requires this Hollister Ranch plan be prepared. The State of California has required that public access be provided at Hollister Ranch for over 40 years for compliance with the California Coastal Act. For a variety of reasons, that access has never been implemented and the public has never been able to exercise their right of access to the beaches at Hollister Ranch.

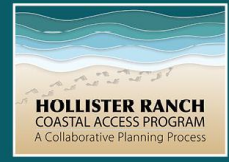
The California Legislature recently found that: “The Gaviota Coast, of which the Hollister Ranch is a significant part, is the least accessible stretch of coast in California, with fewer than two miles of publicly accessible shore in more than 60 miles of coastline”. To address this lack of public access, the Legislature passed a bill in 2019 to strengthen the existing mandates to open the Hollister Ranch shoreline to the public. This bill included a requirement for the four State Agencies to work together on a new Coastal Access Program for the Hollister Ranch coastline.

5. Why isn't there public access already?

The California Coastal Commission and Coastal Conservancy have been trying to implement public access since the 1970s. The California Coastal Act requires that any proposed development along the California coast must obtain a coastal permit and, in reviewing that permit, the Coastal Commission must determine whether that development will impact public access to and along the coast. If so, then permit conditions that mitigate these impacts must be imposed. In the 1970's when the individual Hollister Ranch owners began applying to construct homes on their parcels, the Coastal Commission approved the permits and imposed public access provisions. However, each of those approvals were litigated by the property owners and to date, the public access provisions of the Coastal Act have not been achieved.

Given the presumption that this scenario would continue to play out as many owners may want to develop their parcels and given the time and cost of these individual lawsuits for both the private landowners and the State of California, the California Legislature created a solution in 1979 that was intended to fix the problem. Rather than impose public access conditions on each property owner, the solution was to allow each property owner to instead pay fee in-lieu

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of directly providing access. At the same time, the Coastal Commission was mandated to prepare a Public Access Program which would then be implemented by the Coastal Conservancy using the collected “in-lieu” permit fees. Thus, the property owners could move forward with developing their property while the State would ensure that the required public access was provided. While the mandated Public Access Program was approved in 1982, the Coastal Conservancy has not been able to implement it as the Hollister Ranch owners have blocked the implementation through legal challenges.

In 1982, the Legislature stepped in again to resolve the situation by temporarily setting the in-lieu fee amount at \$5,000 and directed that the Program should be implemented “as expeditiously as possible” and in “a timely manner”. However, this Legislative directive never came to fruition as when Governor Deukmejian took office in 1983, this effort was deprioritized, and the result 36 years later is a Legislative mandate that has not been fulfilled.

Determined to comply with this 36 year old Legislative mandate and to address the continued lack of public access to the Hollister Ranch beaches, Santa Barbara Assemblymember Limón introduced a bill in 2018 to address this 36 year delay and open the Hollister Ranch beaches to the public. Her first bill was vetoed by Governor Brown, who stated that the 1982 Program should be updated prior to implementing it. In 2019 Assemblymember Limón introduced a revised bill (AB 1680) which addressed Governor Brown’s concerns and it was subsequently signed into law by Governor Newsom. It is the 2019 law that requires the planning process now underway by the four State agencies.

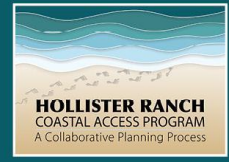
6. Does the general public have an opportunity to participate in the planning process?

Yes, the public has several opportunities to participate in the planning process through a series of public workshops and surveys. The planning process is how we work through the many questions of how to open public access to the Hollister Ranch coastline, so members of the public, as well as Hollister landowners and other stakeholders, are encouraged to participate and make their views heard.

7. When will the public be able to access the beaches by going through the Hollister Ranch?

Land access to the beaches along Hollister Ranch is currently prohibited for the general public as the road into the Ranch is private property. The HRCAP will provide guidance to the type of access through the Ranch to publicly owned beaches that is most feasible and responsive to all stakeholders’ interests. It will also consider options for access amenities like public restrooms. Per the 2019 law, the first phase of public access is required to begin by April 2022. If this deadline is not met, then the State agencies must submit a letter of explanation to the California State Legislature along with an anticipated completion date.

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8. What technical studies will the HRCAP conduct?

The HRCAP agency team will use all available data to evaluate the site's physical constraints and opportunities regarding such things as biological and cultural resources, public safety, potential recreation experiences, infrastructure requirements, and other factors of interest. The studies will help the team and stakeholders make informed decisions throughout the planning process.

9. Will the HRCAP comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines?

Yes. It is a goal and requirement of the HRCAP to protect the coastal resources while still providing access to the coastline. All proposed recommendations will undergo an evaluation so that the participating agencies can determine what level of CEQA review will be needed.

10. How does ongoing litigation affect the HRCAP?

Ongoing litigation between the Hollister Ranch Owners Association (HROA) and various State agencies should not affect the collaborative stakeholder process planned for the HRCAP. The HROA is committed to participating in this process.

11. When will the planning process be completed?

The HRCAP planning process is required to be completed by April 1, 2021. If this deadline is not met, then the State agencies must submit a letter of explanation to the California State Legislature along with an anticipated completion date. Given the various constraints associated with COVID-19, the planning team anticipates that there will be some delay in completing the HRCAP.

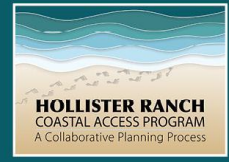
12. What happens after the HRCAP plan is completed?

The completed plan will be presented to the Coastal Commission for consideration. Once approved, the plan will be implemented with an intention of opening a form of public access by April 2022.

13. How will the HRCAP implementation be funded?

In part, the HRCAP will be funded with the in-lieu fees that are paid by Hollister Ranch owners when development on their property requires a Coastal Development Permit (see also #5 above). To date, the Conservancy has received \$310,000 of in-lieu fee payments. In addition to these funds, the 2019 law recognizes that the Legislature will need to provide funding to implement the Program.

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14. What is the impact of COVID-19 on the HRCAP?

In response to COVID-19, the planning process has moved from in-person meetings to online sessions. Working in this way while trying to solicit input from a wide range of stakeholders has pushed the original timeline back; we now anticipate there may be some delay in delivering the plan (originally due in April 2021). If COVID-19 remains a concern once the HRCAP is complete, the program would be implemented in full compliance with state and local public health guidelines. This could result in delays or temporary modifications to implementation of the program.

15. Whom can I contact if I have any questions?

You can email the planning team at the following email address. Your questions will be directed to the appropriate person.

HRCAP.Stakeholders@gmail.com