Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program: Planning Process

The Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program (HRCAP) is a multi-agency effort to develop a shared vision for future 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 regulatory and operational requirements to implement the access program.

Phase 1 Outreach Summary

The first phase of stakeholder and community engagement consisted of stakeholder interviews, two surveys, and a public workshop. This phase was focused on understanding the public’s interest for increasing public access to public beaches along the coast of Hollister Ranch, as well as their perceived benefits, concerns, and possible opportunities for an access program.

Phase 1 Outreach Timeline

Stakeholder Interviews
Dec. 3-5, 2019
Survey 1
January 31 - March 31, 2020
Public Workshop #1
“World Cafe”
Feb. 20, 2020
Survey 2
April 29 - May 22, 2020

Stakeholder Interviews

Prior to general public stakeholder engagement, interviews were conducted in December of 2019 with representatives, residents, and operations managers of Hollister Ranch, concerned non-profit organizations representing coastal access, social equity, and environmental concerns, the Native American Chumash community, and local government. These interviews were conducted by a facilitator, are considered confidential, and are not summarized in this document.

Survey 1

Survey 1 asked about 1) desired coastal experiences, 2) the importance of program objectives such as addressing environmental, cultural, and private property concerns, and 3) the importance of stakeholder consensus for the final program.

Survey 1 was distributed via an opt-in listserv that included members of the public who had previously contacted California Coastal Commission or the State Coastal Conservancy regarding Hollister Ranch, identified stakeholders from special stakeholder groups, and Santa Barbara County officials. Survey 1 was also distributed to the State Coastal
Conservancy’s email contact list. Survey 1 resulted in 602 responses. Full survey results are provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

**Public Workshop #1**

The first public workshop was an in-person “World Café” event held at the Goleta Valley Community Center in Santa Barbara County and was attended by approximately 175 stakeholders. The World Café format - which is designed to look and feel like a social event with small groups of 6 - 8 people seated at tables - benefits collaborative decision-making in that it gives guidance and control of conversation to stakeholder attendees. Individuals were asked to switch tables and groups between each of 3 prompting questions asked by the event facilitator, so that a different mixture of viewpoints was present for each question at each table.

The 3 prompting questions were asked as follows:

1. Thinking about the potential benefits of increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch, what is the first benefit that comes to mind?
2. Thinking about the potential concerns of increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch, what is a concern that comes to mind for you?
3. Based on both the potential benefits and concerns you have heard so far, can you think of an activity or opportunity that would work well for increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch?

After the last question, attendees were asked to participate in a visualization exercise with their table groups. This visualization exercise involved sketching or writing on a large piece of paper their answers to Question 3. Table groups were given the chance to present their sketches to all in attendance.

Recordkeeping for World Cafe Workshop was conducted in three ways. First, attendees were asked to write their short answers to each question on an index card, which were used in the discussion then collected by consultant staff, categorized, and displayed by category on a wall in the venue during the event. Secondly, an assigned table scribe notated the
conversations while also helping to clarify the prompting question if needed. Thirdly, the final sketches from the visualization exercise were collected and categorized by theme after the event.

Survey 2

Ideas about benefits, concerns, and opportunities that were generated at the World Café workshop were carried into Survey 2, which opened on April 29, 2020 and closed on May 22, 2020. Survey 2 was distributed via the same method as Survey 1, via an opt-in listserv and to the Coastal Conservancy’s full email list. Full survey results are provided in Appendix 2 of this document.

Survey 2 also judged beach user sentiment by asking a two-part question: What is your favorite beach along the California coast? What are the reasons that make that beach one you like to visit? The responses are summarized in the figures below and highlight the familiarity of Survey 2 respondents with Santa Barbara County beaches as well as their inclination for passive beach uses. Note: As presented in this section, these results are out of sequence and so will also be included in sequence as part of Appendix 2.
HRCAP Survey 2, Question 7: What is your favorite beach along the California coast?

Larger text indicates beaches that are more popular among Survey 2 respondents. The top ten most popular beaches identified are in Santa Barbara County.
**HRCAP Survey 2, Question 8: What are the reasons that make that beach one you like to visit?**

The top 3 reasons identified are scenic resources (53.2%), opportunities for passive beach recreation (47.0%), and peace and quiet based on low use levels (45.0%).
Data Summary Process

Full results from Survey 1 are reported in Appendix 1 of this document, and results from Survey 2 are reported in Appendix 2.

Results from Survey 1, the World Café Workshop, and Survey 2 were aggregated and categorized based on consultant and State staff input.

Data categorization helps:

1. Identify and quantify common themes across Phase 1 outreach efforts.
2. Understand the sketches from the visualization exercise (World Café Workshop).
3. Match answers with their intended question. For example, responses of “Impact to the environment” to Question 1 at the Work Café Workshop (potential benefits) would be categorized as an answer for Question 2 (concerns).
4. Prevent data omission. Every response is counted.

Data categorization is an interpretation of multiple-choice survey questions, open-ended survey responses, and sketches in order to make it easier to analyze thousands of pieces of input. Below are examples of sketches that were categorized.
Responses from the following outreach steps were categorized for the following analysis of major themes.

1. Survey 1, Question 4, “Which of the following types of experiences and activities are you hoping to participate in with new coastal access?” Categorization included open-end responses under “Other”.
2. World Café Workshop (index cards, scribe notes, group sketches)

Responses were placed into one of the following categories and subcategories.

1. Interests and benefits
2. Concerns
3. Opportunities
4. Subcategories for interests and benefits, concerns, and opportunities, such as (*lists are not exhaustive*):
   a. Access related to:
      i. A coastal hike and/or bike trail
      ii. Cultural uses for Native American Chumash community
      iii. Social and environmental equity
      iv. Programs like docent-led tours
   b. Education related to:
      i. Cultural history
      ii. Environmental impact
      iii. Coastal safety
      iv. Research opportunities
   c. Experience & Recreation related to:
      i. Biking, hiking, and walking
      ii. Surfing and windsurfing
      iii. Kayaking and boating
      iv. Natural setting and solitude
      v. SCUBA diving & snorkeling
   d. Safety related to:
      i. Coastal threats like tide, waves, wind, steep bluff, and bluff erosion
      ii. Access to and response of emergency services
      iii. Flame sources and wildfire
      iv. Road conditions on Hollister Ranch Road
      v. Railroad crossings
Open-ended responses under “Other” were placed in the appropriate category and subcategory.

**Phase 1 Outreach Results: Overview**

Phase 1 Outreach – not including the initial interviews – resulted in 10,348 unique data points. A data point is a response recorded in a survey (one answer to one question), an index note, a scribe note from Questions 1 - 3 at World Café Workshop, or a sketch (or part of a sketch) from the visualization exercise in World Cafe Workshop. All data points were categorized for summary in this section.

After categorization, these responses were split evenly between Interests and Benefits (47.8%) and Concerns (46.9%). Responses categorized as Opportunities were 5.3% of the total.

Categorization of Phase 1 Outreach Responses

![Categorization Chart]

Results for Phase 1 Outreach will be reported in the following sections for the most common interests and benefits, as well as the most common concerns for increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch, as determined by the percentage share of total responses. Details will be provided for the top responses in these categories. Opportunities will be quantified by general theme. Opportunities reported here are not to be construed as final or feasible solutions for providing increased public access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch.
Phase 1 Outreach Results: Interests and Benefits

The three most common interests and benefits about increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch were related to:

- Experiences and recreation (57.2%)
- General support for increased coastal access (22.5%),
- Educational opportunities (14.4%).

The three most common interests and benefits comprise 94.0% of interests- and benefits-related responses and are provided in more detail on Pages 10 to 12.

Summary of Interests and Benefits
Interests and Benefits – Experiences and Recreational Opportunities Detail

Experiences and recreational opportunities at beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch received the most responses in Phase 1 Outreach events (2,827 responses, 57.2% of total). The ranking of desired experiences and recreational opportunities is shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as “Interests and Benefits” (4,948 responses).
Interests and Benefits – Increased Coastal Access Detail

Coastal access was the second-most common benefit and interest identified in Phase 1 Outreach. Equity was identified in 83.4% of access-related responses. The identified benefits of increased coastal access are shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as “Interests and Benefits” (4,948 responses). Most of these responses were in Survey 2, Question 4, which reads: “Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree.”

- Benefit 1: Enable everyone to experience the scenic and natural resources found along this portion of the coast.
- Benefit 6: Improve social and environmental equity by providing access to public coastal resources.

Benefits of Increased Coastal Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General - uncategorized</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Access</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Access</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Coastal Trail</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Uses</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not responsive</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interests and Benefits – Educational Benefits Detail

Education was the third-most common benefit and interest identified in Phase 1 Outreach. The identified benefits of and interest in education as part of increased coastal access are shown below as a percentage of total responses categorized as “Interests and Benefits” (4,948 responses). Most responses that identified equity as a benefit were in Survey 2, Question 4, which reads: “Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree.”

- Benefit 3: Increase opportunities for coastal recreation and environmental education experiences for school groups, non-profit and community-based organizations, or other organized groups.

Educational Benefits of Increased Coastal Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>11.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1 Outreach Results: Concerns

The five most common concerns about increased access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch were:

- Environmental impact (28.6%)
- Safety (19.0%)
- Legal and property rights (13.7%)
- Operational feasibility of an access program (13.1%)
- Loss of remoteness and solitude (12.2%).

These five most common concerns comprise 86.6% of total concerns-related responses. For brevity, only the three most common concerns are provided on Pages 13 to 15.

Summary of Concerns

Environmental concerns: The 28.6% of responses related to environmental impacts involve: coastal resources like tide pools and the intertidal zone; endangered and sensitive species like the snowy plover and monarch butterfly; general ecosystem health; impact of dogs, leashed and unleashed; damage to native flora and fauna; and decreased air quality and greenhouse gas emissions from increased vehicle traffic.
Safety concerns: The 19.0% of responses were primarily related to Survey 2, Question 5, which reads: “Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree.”

- Personal safety of visitors and Ranch residents.

Other safety concerns involve: cattle and agriculture, fire, vehicles on and the condition of Hollister Ranch Road, coastal dangers like tides and waves, emergency services, the train and railroad, and homeowners.

Legal and property rights were the third-most identified concern in Phase 1 Outreach, with 13.7% of concern-related responses.

Most responses that identified legal and property rights as a concern were in Survey 2, Question 5, which reads: “Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree.”

- Respecting property owner rights and privacy.

Other comments categorized under legal and property rights concerns constitute less than 2% of total responses and involve: trespassing, easements over private land, and private roads.
Phase 1 Outreach Results: Opportunities

Opportunities reported here are not to be construed as final or feasible solutions for providing increased public access to public beaches adjacent to Hollister Ranch.

Opportunities for a coastal access program emerged in Phase 1 outreach responses in the form of suggestions for access through:

- Guided tours and docents, 18.9% of responses
- General support for managed access to limit impacts to private property and the environment, 16.0%
- Programmatic features like school trips, clubs, and non-profits, 12.7%
- A permit or reservation system to limit the capacity and timing of access, 10.1%
- A trail supporting bicycle and pedestrian uses, 8.1%
- Limiting time, access area, or amenities, 7.0%
- Shuttle system, 5.7%
- An orientation process, including a video, 2.6%

Other responses categorized as opportunities that constitute less than 1% of total responses were: environmental education, boat-in access, improvements to Gaviota State Park, a lottery system, access through the train, fees and fee structure, and interpretive trails.
Appendix 1: Survey 1 Results

Appendix 1 reports results from Survey 1 as a standalone questionnaire, not summarized with all of Phase 1 Outreach results as in the sections above.

Survey 1 was open from January 31 to March 31, 2020 and received 602 responses.

Question 1: How would you best describe your status in Santa Barbara County?
Question 2: What is your home zip code?

Other countries and U.S. states with Survey 1 respondents (52 of 602 total respondents): Arizona, Australia, Austria, Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New Zealand, Ohio, U.S. Virgin Islands, Wisconsin.
Question 3: Which of the following groups includes your age?
Question 4: Which of the following types of experiences and activities are you hoping to participate in with new coastal access?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beach walking or jogging</td>
<td>60.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General beach play / relaxation</td>
<td>49.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tide pooling</td>
<td>42.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>39.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnicking</td>
<td>35.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>35.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biking on a trail along the coast</td>
<td>30.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking, inc. launch</td>
<td>18.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scuba diving / snorkeling</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>21.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog walking</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School trips for outdoor education</td>
<td>12.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird watching</td>
<td>30.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skim boarding / Boogie boarding</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature painting &amp; sketching</td>
<td>9.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized group tours</td>
<td>15.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoreline fishing</td>
<td>10.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorboat, inc. launch</td>
<td>6.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian use</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsurfing</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 5: The HRCAP seeks to achieve public access that considers a diversity of stakeholders’ interests, private landowner rights, environmental and cultural resources, equitability, and feasibility. Please choose the three objectives that are most important to you.
Question 6: How important is reaching consensus among stakeholders for a public access program?

- Very important: 34.44%
- Important: 28.29%
- Neutral: 19.30%
- Slightly important: 8.65%
- Not important at all: 9.32%
Appendix 2: Survey 2 Results

Appendix 2 reports results from Survey 2 as a standalone questionnaire, not summarized with all of Phase 1 Outreach results as in the sections above.

Survey 2 was open from April 29 to May 22, 2020 and received 1,415 responses.

Question 1: How would you best describe your status in Santa Barbara County?

- Resident for most of the year
- Resident for part of the year
- Residential property owner
- Business owner
- Employed in the County of Santa Barbara
- Student in the County of Santa Barbara
- Visitor only, I do not live or work in Santa Barbara County
- Hollister Ranch property owner, reside on the ranch
- Hollister Ranch property owner, reside elsewhere
- Reside on Hollister Ranch, but not a property owner (I rent or lease)
- Visit the Ranch as a guest of another owner
- Visit the Ranch coastline by boating-in or walking-in
- Other (please specify)
Question 2: What is your home zip code?

Question 3: Which of the following groups includes your age?
Question 4:

The following list of potential benefits from increased coastal access to the Hollister Ranch coastline is derived from the stakeholder input from HRCAP Survey 1 and the workshop held in Goleta on February 20th.

Please select up to three (3) benefits with which you most agree. You may also list any number of additional benefits under “Other.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for the general public for passive coastal recreation such as beach walking, nature-viewing, and contemplative time.</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve social and environmental equity by providing access to public coastal resources.</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable everyone to experience the scenic and natural resources found along this portion of the coast.</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for coastal recreation and environmental education experiences for school groups, non-profit and community-based organizations, or other organized groups.</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No benefit</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase opportunities for the general public for active coastal recreation such as surfing, kayaking, paddle boarding, diving, and fishing.</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide safer access to the public coastal resources along the Hollister coastline.</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide easier access to the high-quality surf breaks found along the Hollister Ranch coastline.</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4, open-ended "Other" responses to:

What are some potential benefits with which you most agree?

Note: Open-ended responses about “benefits” were grouped into the categories below. The “No benefit” categories were counted as Concerns in the overall Phase 1 outreach summary. The “No benefit - general concern” category represents responses with many concerns, or a concern that did not fit the other primary categories.
Question 5:

The following list of concerns related to increased coastal access to the Hollister Ranch coastline is derived from the stakeholder input from HRCAP Survey 1 and the workshop held in Goleta on February 20th.

Please select up to three (3) concerns with which you most agree. You may also list any number of additional concerns under “Other.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental degradation of natural resources including wildlife</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sense of remoteness and solitude through increased public access to the coastal resources</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of operation and maintenance of future access program</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting property owner rights and privacy</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety of visitors and Ranch residents</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety of Ranch livestock and impacts on cattle grazing operations</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 5, open-ended "Other" responses to:

What are some potential concerns with which you most agree?

Note: Open-ended responses about “concerns” were grouped into the categories below. The “No concern” categories were counted as Benefits in the overall Phase 1 outreach summary. The “General concern” category represents responses with many concerns, or a concern that did not fit the other primary categories.
Question 6: Given the benefits and challenges identified above, please select up to five (5) opportunities that you believe would work well for increased coastal access through Hollister Ranch. This list is derived from the most frequent answers provided by participants during the February 20th stakeholder workshop in Goleta.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Support (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement efforts to manage and improve environmental resources through active enhancements and protections</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit the daily number of people through a permit program, advanced registration, lottery, or other mechanism</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access for educational programs such as school programs or docent led walks/hikes</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access by providing easier beach, boat, and/or pier launching from Gaviota State Beach or other nearby public facility</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce environmental impacts by requiring viewing of educational video or other material, followed by quiz, in order to get access permit (similar to USFS campfire permit)</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access for vehicles on existing private roadways to park at existing improved beach parking areas on the Ranch</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a firm surface trail for bikes and pedestrians that would provide access to one or more beaches with a management system to limit the total daily number of users</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow bicycle access to Ranch roads that lead to several beaches with a management system to limit the total daily number of users</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow vehicular access but limit the number of vehicles and parking permits</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit vehicular access to shuttles or guided tours/ adventures</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 7: What is your favorite beach along the California coast?
Question 8: Think of the beach you just mentioned. Select up to five (5) reasons that make that beach one you like to visit.