

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SOUTH CENTRAL COAST AREA
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 RECORD PACKET COPY


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Staff: MHC
Staff Report: 5/20/96
Hearing Date: 6/11-14/96
Commission Action:

STAFF REPORT: PERMIT AMENDMENT

APPLICATION NO.: 4-95-188-A

APPLICANT: County of Santa Barbara/California Department of Parks and Recreation

AGENT: Charles Elbert/Virginia Gardiner-Johnson

PROJECT LOCATION: Gaviota State Beach, Santa Barbara County

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT PREVIOUSLY APPROVED: Removal of concrete fair-weather crossing and construction of clear-span vehicular bridge over Gaviota Creek and Estuary

DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENT: Modification of Special Condition 2.(a) to delete requirement to modify rock slope protection to preserve specimen Willow in place on the downstream side of bridge crossing, and provide for relocation of the Willow and replanting with additional riparian species.

LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED: None required for portion of project within the Commission's area of original permit jurisdiction.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Application No. 4-95-188; No. 4-95-188-A; General Plan: Gaviota State Park, 1979.

PROCEDURAL NOTE: The Commission's regulations provide for referral of permit amendment requests to the Commission if:

- 1) The Executive Director determines that the proposed amendment is a material change,
- 2) Objection is made to the Executive Director's determination of immateriality, or
- 3) the proposed amendment affects conditions required for the purpose of protecting a coastal resource or coastal access.

If the applicant or objector so requests, the Commission shall make an independent determination as to whether the proposed amendment is material. 14 Cal. Admin. Code 13166.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission determine that the proposed development with the proposed amendment, subject to the conditions below, is consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

1. Approval with Conditions.

The Commission hereby approves the amendment to the Coastal Development Permit, on the grounds that the development will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

NOTE: Unless specifically altered by the amendment, all conditions attached to the previous approved permit, including Special Conditions 1 through 5, shall remain in effect.

II. Special Conditions.2. Revised Construction Plans (as amended)

Prior to the issuance of a Coastal Development Permit, the applicants shall provide to the Executive Director, for review and approval, revised construction plans which (a) relocate the salvageable portions of the specimen Willow on the downstream side of the crossing to a location as close to its original location as possible, provide additional planting of native riparian species, including tree species, along the north bank of Gaviota Creek in the vicinity of the rock slope protection, and preserve the Coast live oak and White alter specimens on the upstream side of the crossing; (b) specify the guard rail design for the new bridge; (c) reduce the width of the temporary downstream cofferdam/pedestrian crossing to a maximum of 12 feet at the base; (d) limit the areal extent of sediment removal to the area within the middle of the channel and no further than 100 feet upstream, and no further than 60 feet downstream of the existing crossing; (d) depict all areas to be used for operation or storage of equipment and/or materials.

III. Findings and Declarations.1. Background

The project was originally proposed by the California Department of Fish and Game for funding under the County of Santa Barbara's Coastal Resources Enhancement Fund (CREF). The project has also received funding from the County of Santa Barbara Public Works Department, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Hollister Ranch Home Owners Association, and the Chevron/Point Arguello Partners. The project has been designed with a dual purpose, to improve fish passage in Gaviota Creek and to improve access to public and private facilities and developments on the south side of Gaviota Creek.

2. Project Description

The applicants propose to replace the existing fair-weather road crossing over Gaviota Creek at Gaviota State Beach with a clear-span bridge crossing. The existing fair-weather crossing consists of reinforced concrete and steel sheet pile laid across the upper end of the Gaviota Creek estuary. The current crossing is 26 feet in width and approximately 80 feet in length and approximately 4 feet thick. The crossing passes summer low flows through two 24 inch reinforced concrete culverts running through the concrete crossing; winter high flows pass over the road surface of the crossing. (See Exhibits 1 through 3)

The proposed replacement bridge will be 34 feet in width and 81 feet in length. The clear span of the bridge will be 62 feet in length. The replacement bridge will utilize a deck composed of four converted railroad flat cars welded together, with an asphalt concrete surface, and two sets of 4 precast concrete piles for its foundations. The concrete piles will be driven down approximately 45 feet to bedrock. Concrete bridge abutments will be poured in place around the bridge piles. The bridge will be fitted with metal side rails.

The bridge will be set at an elevation of 13.0 feet which is nine feet higher than the top of the existing fair-weather crossing. Approximately 200 feet of Gaviota Beach Road on either side of the bridge will be raised to accommodate the new bridge height. The replacement bridge is calculated to pass a 25 year frequency storm (rated at 5,000 cubic feet per second).

In addition to the removal of the existing crossing and installation of the replacement bridge, the project will also entail (a) placing rock slope protection (consisting of 1/2 ton rocks) around each of the bridge abutments and road approaches; (b) removal of approximately 175 cubic yards of materials from approximately 160 feet of the Gaviota Creek channel to reestablish the natural stream gradient and prevent the sudden release of this material into the Gaviota Creek estuary; and (c) temporarily de-watering the work site through the installation of coffer-dams on the upstream and downstream sides of the existing fair-weather crossing site.

The project is expected to take approximately 4 weeks to complete.

3. Amendment Description

The applicants propose to amend Special Condition 2.(a) to delete the requirement to modify the rock slope protection to preserve the specimen Willow on the downstream side of the proposed bridge crossing in place, and instead to relocate the salvageable portions of the Willow to a site immediately adjacent to the proposed rock slope protection and replant the area with additional riparian species.(See Exhibit 3.)

3. Coastal Issues

a. Environmentally Sensitive Habitats

PRC Section 30236 provides that:

Channelizations, dams, or other substantial alterations of rivers and streams shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible, and be limited to (1) necessary water supply projects, (2) flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the floodplain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development, or (3) developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

PRC Section 30240 provides, that:

(a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

As noted above, the project will entail placing ungrouted rock slope protection (consisting of 1/2 ton rocks) around each of the bridge abutments and road approaches. This rock slope protection will extend below grade in most areas, and would displace a specimen Willow tree on the downstream side of the existing crossing; access to the site for construction purposes could also potentially damage a Live oak and White alder on the upstream side of the existing crossing.

The Commission previously found that protection of this specimen Willow in place was necessary to ensure full compliance with PRC Section 30240, and required as part of Special Condition 2.(a) that the rock slope protection be modified to avoid this Willow. Additional design work for the project revealed that because of the proximity of the specimen Willow to the rock slope protection, protection of the Willow in place would require extensive shoring of the tree during construction, and likely due damage to the root system. The applicants therefore retained an arborist to evaluate the alternative of relocating the specimen Willow. The report prepared by the applicant's arborist concludes that the several of the multiple trunks of which the specimen Willow is comprised are not in good condition, but that the Willow could be successfully transplanted if the trunk cluster was reduced to the three healthy trunks; also, that cuttings from the specimen Willow could be used to revegetate the rock slope protection.

The applicants therefore propose to relocate the specimen Willow to the base of the proposed rock slope protection, use cuttings from the Willow to revegetate the rock slope protection, and additionally, to revegetate the area in the vicinity of the east rock slope protection with a variety of native riparian species, including tree species. (A revised supplemental replanting scheme is shown in Exhibit 3.)

The over-all long term effect of the proposed modification of the treatment of the Willow (including the placement of additional riparian plantings) would be to increase the extent and diversity of the riparian habitat on the project site, and thus off-set the temporary impacts of trimming and relocating the specimen Willow.

The Commission therefore finds that the proposed project, as amended and conditioned, is consistent with and is adequate to carry out the provisions of PRC Section 30240.

III. CEQA/LCP

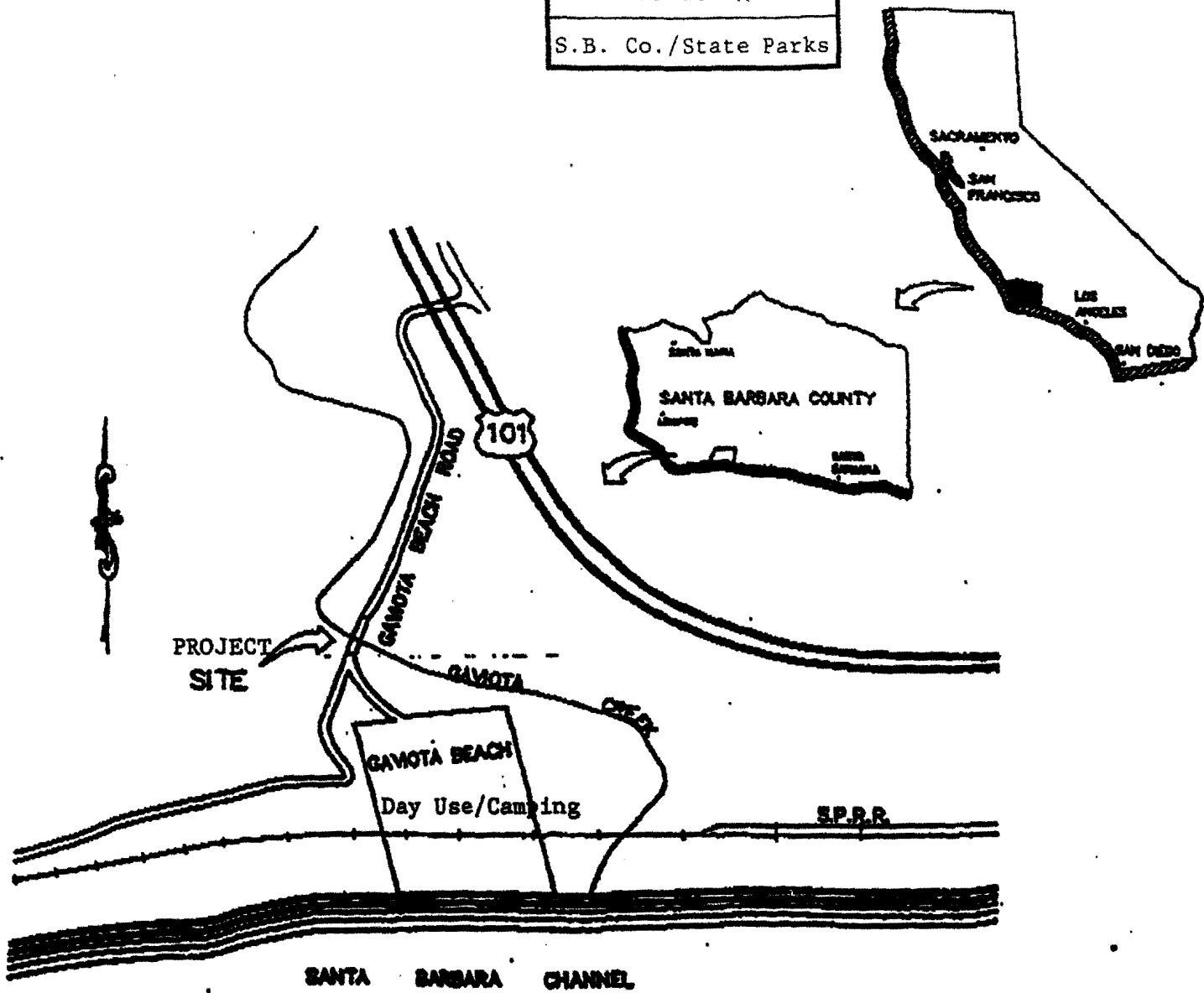
The proposed project is located within the County of Santa Barbara, but falls within the Commission's area of retained original permit jurisdiction because it is located on historic public trust lands. The Commission has certified a Local Coastal Program for the County of Santa Barbara which contains policies regarding hazards, coastal recreation, and wastewater treatment. The project, as conditioned, is consistent with the provisions of the County's certified Local Coastal Program, as well as the applicable policies of the Coastal Act.

Section 13096(a) of the Commission's Administrative Regulations requires that Commission approval of a Coastal Development Permit be supported by a finding that the project, as modified by any conditions of approval, be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(5)(2)(i) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment. As discussed above the proposed project, as conditioned, minimizes any adverse impacts to a less than significant level, and there are no other feasible alternatives which would lessen any adverse effects of the project.

The Commission therefore finds that the proposed project, as conditioned, is consistent with CEQA and the policies of the California Coastal Act.

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EXHIBIT NO.	2
APPLICATION NO.	
	4-95-188-A
S.B. Co./State Parks	



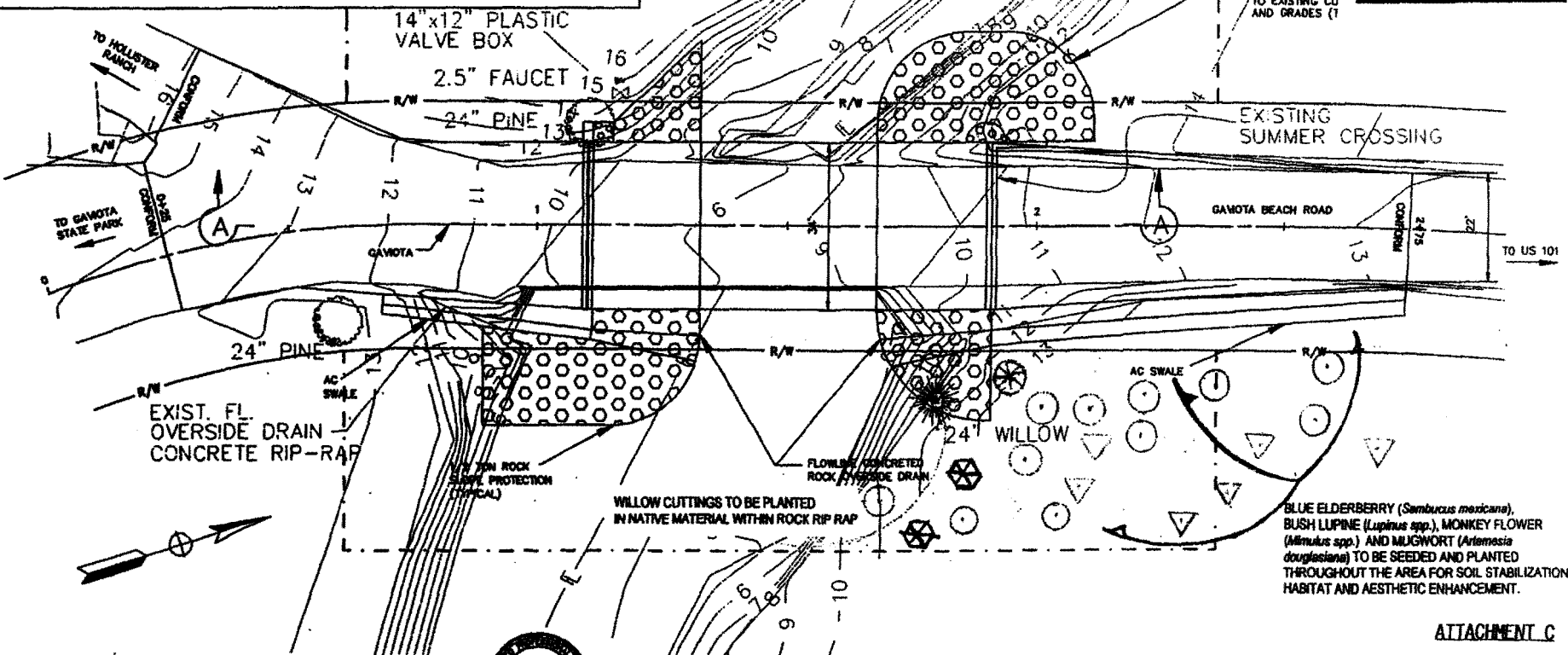
VICINITY MAP

NO SCALE

**WILLOW RELOCATION AND MITIGATION PLAN
KEY TO SYMBOLS**

- RELOCATED WILLOW (*Salix* sp.) 
- WILLOW CUTTINGS (*Salix* spp.) 
- WESTERN SYCAMORE (*Platanus racemosa*) 
- WHITE ALDER (*Alnus rhombifolia*) 
- CALIFORNIA WALNUT (*Juglens californica*) 

S.B. Co./State Parks	APPLICATION NO. A-95-188-A	EXHIBIT NO. 3
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BLUE ELDERBERRY (*Sambucus mexicana*),
BUSH LUPINE (*Lupinus* spp.), MONKEY FLOWER
(*Mimulus* spp.) AND MUGWORT (*Artemisia douglasiana*)
TO BE SEED AND PLANTED THROUGHOUT THE AREA FOR SOIL STABILIZATION,
HABITAT AND AESTHETIC ENHANCEMENT.

ATTACHMENT C

DESIGNER L. TANAKA No. 2778 Exp. 2/28/81 CIVIL	PROJECT ENGINEER	COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TRANSPORTATION DIVISION	DESIGN BY	CHECKED BY	SCALE 1"=20'	PROJECT NO. 630324	GAWOTA BEACH ROAD FLATCAR BRIDGE STRUCTURE	SHEET NO. 2 OF 2 FILE NO.
CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER	DATE	<small>FOR REDUCED PLANS ORIGINAL SCALE IN INCHES</small>	DESIGN BY	CONSTRUCTION REVIEW BY	REVISIONS	REVISIONS	REVISIONS	