



California Department of  
Parks and Recreation

February 16, 2021

Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins  
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

Honorable Pro Tem Atkins and Speaker Rendon:

On behalf of the California Coastal Commission, the State Lands Commission, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the Department of Parks and Recreation, we are contacting you pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 30610.81 (c) to notify you that the contemporary public access program for Hollister Ranch will not be completed by the deadline of April 1, 2021, as required by AB 1680 (Limón, 2019).

Despite significant progress made to date, the interagency planning team has encountered unavoidable delays as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The robust public outreach process that began in December 2019 had to be completely revised and re-organized into a virtual process, delaying the initial phase of public workshops and working group sessions. While the process has since regained its original momentum in its new format, the new virtual approach has necessitated scheduling of additional, smaller group sessions that are proving to be more time consuming. As the public outreach nears conclusion, the interagency team and its consultants require additional time to synthesize the extensive input into a cohesive draft plan.

The estimated date by which the Coastal Commission will hold its first public hearing on the draft Hollister Ranch Public Access program is October 31, 2021. A report summarizing the interagency planning team's accomplishments to date is attached.

Thank you for your consideration and support for this process. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, suggestions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

John Ainsworth  
Executive Director  
California Coastal Commission

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lucchesi  
Executive Officer  
State Lands Commission

Sincerely,

Sam Schuchat,  
Executive Officer  
State Coastal Conservancy

Sincerely,

Armando Quintaro  
Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation

cc Senator Monique Limón



California Department of  
Parks and Recreation

# HOLLISTER RANCH PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRESS REPORT

## February 1, 2021

In order to ensure public access to Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County, Public Resources Code Section 30610.81 (a)(1) requires the Coastal Commission, in consultation with the State Lands Commission, State Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Parks and Recreation, to develop a contemporary public access program for Hollister Ranch by April 1, 2021, that will replace the existing Hollister Ranch coastal access program adopted by the commission in 1982.

The Coastal Commission, in consultation with the State Lands Commission, State Coastal Conservancy and the Department of Parks and Recreation, has determined that it will be unable to meet the April 1, 2021 deadline, due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The public outreach and extensive collaboration and coordination required for this effort was necessarily disrupted by measures taken to mitigate this public health emergency. Instead of the large, extended public gatherings initially planned for, the interagency team has held a series of smaller site visits, listening sessions with interest groups, and facilitated, virtual meetings with a stakeholder Working Group. Based on the analysis of site conditions, operational requirements, and all of the input we have received to date, we are now starting to draft potential components for the coastal access program.

The interagency team anticipates that it will complete a public hearing draft of the public access program for the Commission by October 31, 2021.

Pursuant to PRC Section 30610.81(c), this report contains an overview of the steps taken and progress made to date by the interagency planning team and its consultants.

- **02/28/19 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** signed by the Executive Officers of the California Coastal Commission, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Parks and Recreation and the State Lands Commission (Interagency Team).
- **Consultant Contract Executed, July 2019** – The Interagency Team interviewed potential consultants to assist in development the access program. The Interagency Team selected KTU&A, a landscape architecture and recreational planning firm, and its partner Participation By Design, experts in facilitating challenging public processes, and executed the contract on July 30, 2019. The consultant team began immediately to collect available information on the Hollister Ranch site.
- **Public Engagement Initiated, December 2019** – The consultant team developed a multi-pronged strategy to engage a broad range of Californians in the development of the plan. The original strategy called for a series of public meetings, focus group sessions, and related online engagement using surveys and internet planning tools. This strategy

was revised once the longevity of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear. Public engagement activities to date include:

- **Public Workshop** – In February 2020, 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 people. The World Café format divides people into small groups and promotes collaborative thinking. The workshop elicited ideas on three topics: benefits of public access to the ranch coastline, concerns about that access, and potential ways to address concerns when providing access. Several of the ideas generated at this workshop will likely be included in the draft access program.
- **Working group** – The planning team created a 19-person community Working Group to collaborate more closely with the State Team on development of the access program. Applications to participate in the Working Group were solicited from the HRCAP email list. The Working Group includes people with diverse points of view on the issue of public access to the Hollister Ranch coastline. All members have committed to working with each other and with the State team collaboratively and creatively to develop workable solutions to facilitate public coastal access through Hollister Ranch. The Working Group met three times in the fall of 2020 and more meetings are slated for 2021.
- **Surveys** – To date we have sent out three surveys to help collect input from a wide range of people. Survey emails were sent to the Hollister Ranch Coastal Access Program email list, which has over 1900 people on it. The surveys were also announced to the Coastal Conservancy’s mailing list of more than 4,000 people. The first survey (602 responses) addressed people’s interests for public access. The second survey (1,415 responses) followed the first public workshop and asked for input on the same three topics. The third survey (744 responses) collected feedback on the draft evaluation criteria for assessing potential program components.
- **Focused listening sessions** – In the fall of 2020, the planning team held a series of focused listening sessions to get more input on the interests and concerns of different communities and stakeholder groups including surfers, Chumash Native American Tribal members, Northern Santa Barbara communities, representatives of environmental justice and Spanish speaking communities, nonprofit organizations and educators potentially interested in bringing groups to the Hollister coastline and Hollister Ranch owners. These listening sessions provided valuable input to start developing the program components.
- **Informational Videos** – Working with our consultant team, we developed several videos to help explain the project to the public. The following videos are available on project website:
  - An overview video providing an introduction to the Hollister Ranch coastline and the access planning process

- Existing Conditions
  - Opportunities and Constraints
  - A timeline of public access efforts at Hollister
- **Story Map** – The consultant team developed an interactive “[Story Map](#)” that included the existing conditions and opportunities and constraints videos and provided an opportunity for people to enter specific information on conditions and opportunities at the ranch. We received a total of 300 informational comments on this map.
- **Frequently Asked Questions** (in English and Spanish) – The FAQs are available on the project website posted by the Coastal Commission (<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/hollister-ranch/>).
- **Development of the Access Program** – Working together the Interagency Team, consultant team, and Working Group have done the following:
  - Adopted over-arching Program Objectives
  - Established evaluation criteria for assessing potential components of the access program.
  - Gathered data on existing biological, cultural, physical, and management conditions along the Hollister Ranch coastline.
  - Researched access programs that have addressed one or more of the access challenges found at Hollister.

Based on all of this information, the team has begun drafting a conceptual access program that identifies key components and implementation phasing. This conceptual plan will be presented for extensive community input before being revised into a draft access program.

The FAQs, informational videos, Project Objectives, Evaluation Criteria, Working Group information, and summaries of public engagement can all be found on the Coastal Commission’s Hollister Ranch website:

<https://www.coastal.ca.gov/hollister-ranch/>

***Submitted pursuant to Government Code Section 9795.***