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Goleta Beach 2.0

The County of Santa Barbara will hold a public meeting on Goleta Beach 2.0 tonight, Tuesday, February 16, at 6:30 PM at the Planning Commission Hearing Room, County Administration Building, 105 East Anapamu Street.

As you may recall, Goleta Beach 2.0 was established because on July 8, 2009, the California Coastal Commission voted 9-1 to deny the county's proposal for a permeable pile pier addition to Goleta Pier and other measures designed to ameliorate ongoing beach erosion at the park. During the July public hearing, several Coastal Commissioners encouraged Santa Barbara County to examine potential **managed retreat options** for the park. This meeting, and others to follow, will outline alternative park configurations. Read more on the County's site [here](#).

Background from July 2009

Message from the President & CEO:

Coastal Commission Denies Plan for Goleta Beach

The Coastal Commission denied our plan to save Goleta Beach. Here is yet another example of a State entity, overruling the will of the people, disregarding local experts, and ignoring the recommendation of local governments.

Several years ago, the 2nd District Supervisor's Office set up a working group of local businesses, citizens and other informed, interested parties to develop a plan to address the erosion problem at Goleta Beach that was destroying our park. We did

that.

Then the professionals at the County Parks Department studied all of the information and made their recommendation which we endorsed

Then the County hired a professional consulting firm to further study and recommend a plan which we endorsed. Finally the elected officials of the County and the City of Goleta, the people elected by us to represent us, voted to endorse the plan.

So we, the people, of the Goleta Valley have made our choice very clear: we want an environmentally safe way to protect the beach and preserve our park so that more than 1 million visitors a year can continue to park their cars, enjoy the grassy picnic and play area, use the recreational facilities and have access to the beach.

But once again, a state agency, not elected by anyone has said, "no, we know better than you locals" and has denied our plans.

They made it clear at their hearing that Goleta Beach Park is their standard-bearer for a new, experimental coastal technique called "managed retreat" whereby man-made objects like parks, are moved out of the way of the shore and erosion is allowed to take over whatever stands in its way. In the case of Goleta Beach Park, that includes the grassy park, the parking lot, the restroom facilities, the restaurant and underground utility lines that provide pipes for recycled water and natural gas. To the Coastal Commission, this is not a local issue. It's the State's choice location to promote their agenda for managed retreat and use us as an example of how it can be done - regardless of whether it's the right spot to try it and regardless of our wishes.

Here is an excerpt from my column about Goleta Beach Park from 1995:

"We are being caught up in a statewide movement to decrease the use of hard structures in places of erosion, and I understand that. I also understand that the case at Goleta Beach can be used as an example for the State - and that we are being used as a lightning rod and example for the larger issue of what to do along the entire coast of California.

But we are not somebody's example, we are a community of families who use this tiny strip of land to have fun on the beach. One and a half million people use this beach park each year. That changes everything."

Santa Barbara and Goleta earned the reputation as the birthplace of environmentalism for good reason. And the good people here have been leaders in protecting our environment and finding the newest and best practices to achieve an advanced environmental agenda while balancing quality of life. Why would the State tell us, of all communities, that we're not

smart enough to do it right?

This is all too similar to the situation with the Tranquillon Ridge proposal, just a few months ago, where the citizens, government and the environmental community came to a compromise agreement to allow selective, short-term off shore oil drilling in exchange for preservation of land and removal of oil platforms. The State said "no" to that too, and for the same reason: a statewide example of their political agendas.

Yes, there is local opposition to the Community/County/City/Parks Department plan. The opposition comes from those who are linked into the statewide movement against "coastal armoring". I am against coastal armoring, too. I grew up in Florida, where there are numerous examples of this dreadful practice of seawalls. But we do not have coastal armoring at Goleta Beach and we are not proposing it. The permeable pier system was the compromise that came from folks who wanted to keep the current buried rock revetment and the folks who wanted managed retreat.

I do not understand how this minimal opposition to the plan outweigh the opinions of our elected representatives? I don't know what will happen next. I believe that the next time people are asked to sit on a community panel to help solve a problem, many will balk. We've been burned too many times. And the next time we are asked to vote for our elected officials, some will wonder, "What for?"

I've been increasingly concerned about the growing disconnect between citizens and government officials elected to represent us. There is less and less trust, less and less communication, and this is especially disconcerting in our passionate community. I don't blame either the voters, or those elected - all are good people - but something is terribly wrong with the relationship.

Kristen Amyx
President & CEO

Read the [Noozhawk article - Commission Denies County's Pilings Plan for Goleta Beach](#)