

Santa Barbara County

Ted Rhodes



CARPINTERIA BLUFFS

Santa Barbara County marks the transition from southern California to the Central Coast and offers a lively juxtaposition of the two regions. The South County, often referred to as the American Riviera, is a cosmopolitan community famous for its mission-style architecture, beautiful beaches, and excellent weather. To the north are farms and ranches in a setting dominated by rolling hills and a rugged coast. Westward—26 miles offshore—are the Channel Islands, within one of the richest marine biospheres in the world.

POPULATION: >430,000

COASTLINE: 112 miles

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS: >90

CONSERVANCY FUNDING: >\$33 million

The County's natural lands protect water quality, offer outdoor recreational opportunities for families and individuals, and provide a home for birds, fish, and other wildlife. They support the County's economy and the health of residents. They have survived because of the work and investments of many public and private organizations and foresighted individuals.

The Coastal Conservancy has worked for more than 35 years with the people of Santa Barbara County to sustain the area's quality of life and economic viability, and intends to build on that work to:

- Restore and improve the health of rivers, streams, marshes and beaches
- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for a growing and diverse population and a thriving tourism industry
- Meet the challenges posed by a rising sea and a changing climate.

Parks, Beaches, and Trails

From its earliest days the Coastal Conservancy has worked with communities in Santa Barbara County to help residents and visitors get to and enjoy the coast. Conservancy-supported projects include:

- The Trust for Public Land's purchase of the 70-acre Wilcox property above Arroyo Burro Beach in the City of Santa Barbara. Additional funding helped with its transition into a beautiful and popular City park, the **Douglas Family Preserve**.
- TPL's purchase of the 137-acre **Ellwood Mesa** property, handed on to the City of Goleta. The property is now a treasured destination for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and simply enjoying the views. Plans are underway for a 2.1-mile segment of the **California Coastal Trail** on the property that will link UC-Santa Barbara natural lands on the east with the rural lands of the Gaviota Coast to the west.
- The Land Trust of Santa Barbara County's acquisition of the 52-acre **Carpinteria Bluffs**, now held by the City of Carpinteria. The property is among the most popular and scenic of coastal natural lands in the County's urban south coast. The Conservancy is also helping with plans for the **Rincon Coastal Trail** that will lead eastward from the bluffs to Rincon Beach and close a critical gap in the California Coastal Trail.
- The County's purchase of three blufftop parcels in **Isla Vista** that offer spectacular panoramic views of the ocean, and the reconstruction of beach stairways and other accessways in the densely populated community.
- Improvements to beach accessways in the City of Santa Barbara including replacement of stairs to **Mesa Lane Beach** and **Shoreline Park** and installation of a footbridge to **East Beach**. The Conservancy also assisted the City in restoring **Stearns Wharf**.
- Improvements to heavily used trails at **Campus Lagoon** and the **West Campus Bluffs** on the campus of UC-Santa Barbara.
- A new boardwalk and other improvements designed to protect sensitive wildlife habitats at **Coal Oil Point Reserve** adjacent to U.C. Santa Barbara.

Natural and Working Lands

The Conservancy has supported the efforts of many public and private organizations to protect more than 5,800 acres of the County's natural lands and farmland and has worked to restore and improve habitats for fish, birds, and other wildlife in many parts of the coast.

- Several large properties along the **Gaviota Coast** have been permanently protected for wildlife habitat and parkland, and others will remain as working ranches instead of subdivided for development.
- For more than 20 years the Conservancy worked with the City of Carpinteria, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, and other government agencies to restore the 230-acre **Carpinteria Salt Marsh**. The work resulted in highly improved habitat for wildlife, better flood protection, and a new public trail in the marsh that links to the City's Salt Marsh Nature Park via a 90-foot pedestrian bridge.



DOUGLAS FAMILY PRESERVE



TY WARNER SEA CENTER AT STEARNS WHARF



HAULING INVASIVE PLANTS AT COAL OIL POINT RESERVE



ARROYO HONDO PRESERVE ON THE GAVIOTA COAST



PARADISE BEACH



INSTALLATION OF FOOTBRIDGE AT CARPINTERIA SALT MARSH



STAIRWAY AND TRAIL AT CAMPUS LAGOON



ELLWOOD MESA

Natural and Working Lands *continued*

- The Conservancy was a principal funder for the purchase of 315 acres of largely unspoiled rolling dunes along 1 ½ miles of **Paradise Beach** at Point Sal. The land, now held by the County, adjoins hundreds of acres of other protected lands within an area particularly rich in native plants and Native American cultural sites.
- The Conservancy has long worked to improve the water quality and wildlife habitats of many of the County's **rivers and streams** and to remove barriers to the migration of endangered steelhead trout. The dozen or so projects include community-based restoration of **Carpinteria Creek** and restoration, flood-control, and farmland-protection work along **Refugio Creek** on the Gaviota Coast.
- The **Goleta Slough** tidal demonstration project verified that restoration of tidal wetlands in Goleta Slough lowered the risk of airplane bird strikes at the Santa Barbara Airport.
- The restoration of natural habitats on **Santa Cruz Island** benefitted many rare and endangered species and led to a rebound in the population of the island's endangered fox, one of 12 species on the island found nowhere else on earth.

Visitors Centers

The Conservancy supported construction of the **Ty Warner Sea Center** on Stearns Wharf and the **Watershed Resource Center** at Arroyo Burro Beach, and the purchase and renovation of the **Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center** in Guadalupe and the **Chase Palm Park Center** in Santa Barbara.

Rising Seas and Climate Change

The Conservancy is helping to fund a study of how **Goleta Slough** might be affected by rising sea levels, which could cause widespread damage to structures and facilities along with devastation of wildlife habitat.

“Without the cooperation and support of the Coastal Conservancy, the Land Trust could not have protected and restored as much coastal open space and habitat in Santa Barbara County.”

Michael Feeney, Executive Director
The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County

“The Conservancy has been a key partner in protecting the fragile and important coastal resources of Santa Barbara County.”

Carla Frisk, Santa Barbara County Program Manager
The Trust for Public Land



ARCH ROCK AT PARADISE BEACH

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

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