

November 21, 2001

William L. Cathey, Foreperson  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY  
1100 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

**RE: Natural Resources in the Santa Maria Valley**

Dear Foreperson Cathey:

Thank you for the positive comments and commendation regarding the Natural Resources in the Santa Maria Valley. The City of Guadalupe provides the following responses regarding Grand Jury findings and recommendations relative to the above-referenced report:

Finding 1a: The Santa Maria Valley seashore and beaches have been neglected by the local governments for years.

Finding 1b: Vehicular access to these beaches is either non-existent or across private land. Hiking access to these beaches also traverses private land.

Finding 1c: Point Sal Beach State Park has been neglected for years and has no parking places or toilet facilities, and lacks even a sage footpath to the beach.

Finding 1d: An estimates 5% of coastal property has been placed into various types of government preserves, and efforts are underway to place more into dedicated use, with little input offered by the local jurisdictions in the Valley.

Finding 1e: Non-local organizations may give little consideration for beach access and benefits for local residents.

Recommendation 1: Elected officials in the Santa Maria Valley should express the needs of the citizens to Federal, State and County officials before much more of the seashore is dedicates to specific use, and becomes managed for the benefit of non-local populations.

Response: I concur with the Grand Jury Recommendation. While there are many valid uses for the coastal areas, there should be specific and deliberate concern directed toward:

- A.) Private Property rights
- B.) Public Access
- C.) Implementation of a system of Checks and Balances with sensitivity to local population bases.
- D.) Focus on economic impact of a Negative Nature on local communities with appropriate mitigations.
- E.) Facilitation of jurisdictional area encompassing the impacted areas, so as to have direct input and other into the process.
- F.) Other as determined

Finding 2b: The ancient sand dunes in the Santa Maria Valley are presently and potentially the least productive agriculturally zones lands in the Santa Maria Valley, and thus contribute the least to the revenue base of the County.

Finding 2c: Expansion of the city boundaries, by Guadalupe or Santa Maria, does not now need to be into contiguous land, most of which is devoted to a agricultural production and is designated prime agricultural land.

Recommendation 2a: Housing needs for the population growth in the Santa Maria Valley, as projected in the County's Strategic Scan 2000, should be best met by cities and the County by carefully planned development on these ancient dune lands, rather than on highly productive prime agricultural land.

I concur with Recommendation 2a. There should be a caveat which facilitates:

- A.) The ability of small communities such as Guadalupe to annex this property
- B.) The resources necessary for Guadalupe to annex this property for said purposes.
- C.) Planned development should be done by the local jurisdiction involved.
- D.) Expediting of process to facilitate this becoming a reality.
- E.) A history perspective should be drawn up to see which communities have actually done their "fair share" regarding housing for lower income populations, with appropriate incentives, inducements, and penalties for compliance and non compliance.

Recommendation 2b: Investigate promptly and thoroughly the feasibility of locating urban growth on one or more of these ancient sand dune areas in the Santa Maria Valley.

I concur with immediate investigation of location of the Urban Growth on these Ancient Dune sites, with consideration to the following:

- A.) Resource availability to the local jurisdiction to facilitate this process.
- B.) Support from legislative bodies involved.
- C.) Final responsibility should lie on the municipality involved.
- D.) Softening of environmental concerns for the feasibility process so as to allow it to get off the ground.

Finding 4a: There is a growing need for more public recreational facilities in the Santa Maria Valley as the population continues to grow.

Finding 4b: There is a significant potential to redevelop part of Betteravia Lake as a protected preserve for endangered species of water-related wildlife. This could allow the concentration of endangered species in a suitable habitat that could serve as a mitigation trade-off of other more valuable prime farmlands.

Recommendation 4: The County's Laguna Sanitation District, which already owns a significant amount of Betteravia Lake, is a potential and early direct beneficiary of a multipurpose tertiary treatment pond and water storage in the Lake, and should play a leading role in trying to get the Lake restoration project started.

I concur with this finding with the following comments:

- A.) There should be property owner consent.
- B.) Willing buyer or donor scenario.
- C.) A regional marketing approach should accompany this, including the surrounding communities.

Finding 5a: It appears that the owners of the Betteravia Lake bottom are likely to face increasing production costs in the future as well as diminished growing seasons, thus less income and profit.

Finding 5b: There may be significant incentive for some of the landowners to sell their land and use the proceeds to make more profitable investments.

Finding 5c: At least one Betteravia Lake landowner is in bankruptcy and may need to sell much if not all, of his land around the Lake.

Finding 5d: The public is unaware of the recreational and conservation potential of Betteravia Lake.

Finding 5e: There is insufficient local funding available for the restoration of Betteravia Lake.

Recommendation 5a: The leadership of Santa Maria, Orcutt, Guadalupe, and Santa Barbara County should form a coalition of experts to study the potential benefits and feasibility of restoring some or all of Betteravia Lake.

I concur with the recommendation. The following comments should be taken into consideration:

- A.) Should the experts mentioned require some fiduciary return for their involvement, the resource must be made available to the City of Guadalupe.
- B.) The study should include a marketing component geared to get the message out.
- C.) Property owner and adjacent property owner involvement should be part of the process.

Recommendation 5b: After a reasonable amount of preliminary research has been completed, participating entities should schedule a series of public meetings at locations in Santa Maria, Orcutt, and Guadalupe, including ample visual aid material, to ensure that the public is well informed about this long-hidden natural lake in Santa Maria Valley.

I concur with this recommendation as well with emphasis focused on the previous responses. Property owner and adjacent property owner involvement and consent should be included. Resources to facilitate this should be made available.

Recommendation 5c: Participating government entities should collaborate in identifying, and preparing applications for, both public and private grants for which this project qualifies.

I concur with this recommendation as well. This should also include:

- A.) Resource availability for professional grant procurement.
- B.) Resource donated by "Enviro Groups" for this purpose.
- C.) Property owner and adjacent property owner consent.

Finding 8: In 1999, the Regional Water Quality Control Board notified all water quality control districts that management and measurement of ground water quality were being mandated by Federal law, and that each district would have two years to draft a plan that would create voluntary guidelines for the district. Failure to meet the deadline by 2002 would result in a systematic loss of local control over groundwater management in that district.

Recommendation 9: The District should revise its divisional boundaries in the near future to comply with the new Special District election laws.

I concur all current and pertinent laws should be adhered to. Also for consideration include:

- A.) A possible 18 month transition period.
- B.) An extension of the 2002 deadline.
- C.) Mandatory collaborative meetings geared toward a focus on a Ground Water management plan with a drop dead Sunset Date.

Finding 12: Guadalupe's Mayor, City Council and staff are determined to increase the City's municipal income and resources to improve city services.

Recommendation 12: Guadalupe officials should increase efforts to improve City finances and thus the City's ability to develop local and needed natural resources to benefit residents, by expanding efforts to obtain more grant financing.

While I concur with the recommendation, it should be noted some of us are working "24-7", to make this a reality. The very nature of our financial ability as a Municipality to enact or embark on projects of this nature are somewhat prohibitive. It is only through volunteer efforts extended by some that we are able to accomplish what we have been able to accomplish to date.

Finding 13: It is legally possible for Guadalupe to annex currently non-contiguous land for urban growth needs. This would allow the City to plan its future growth on marginal farmland instead of converting adjacent highly profitable prime agricultural farmland to housing tracts.

Recommendation 13: Guadalupe officials should continue plans and programs to obtain LAFCO approvals for expanding the City's Sphere of Influence and City limits to meet City population growth needs as projected by the County through 2030. They should access corridor across prime agricultural land for needed upscale housing in the Santa Maria Valley. This development of "Guadalupe South" could increase the future real estate tax base and support local businesses.

I concur with this recommendation. I would add the following:

A.) Resource availability to support this facilitation are required. This should be made available.

Finding 14: The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) provided a large grant and technical advice so that the water supply and sewer treatment facilities of Guadalupe were upgraded to comply with all governmental regulations.

Recommendation 14: Guadalupe officials should continue to work with RWQCB to farther improve the quality of water and of sewage effluent treated by the City of Guadalupe sewer farm.

I concur with this recommendation and would add the City of Guadalupe as not only moved in this direction, we have also identified and are implementing a treatment system which is predicated on "Anaerobic" action, thus reducing energy consumption by some @ 30%, as well as reducing by some @ 75%, the amount of sludge generated over time. While the name of this relatively newer technology escapes me at the moment, it also contributes to cleaner smelling facilities and an enhanced "final product". This was achieved through research and discussion with experts in the field, and a desire to bring about significant impact with the resource available.

Finding 15: City leaders are working on plans and negotiating with adjacent property owners to develop the Guadalupe City Slough into an attractive multi-purpose City Park with numerous amenities.

Recommendation 15: Guadalupe officials should continue these efforts with the respect to the City Slough and apply for funding grants.

I concur with the recommendation. The City of Guadalupe has indeed followed up in this regard and I have identified further grant resource from which we may apply for in regards to this project. Further, at the time of this recommendation and to the time of this response, the City has also been able to take in another @ 190,000.00 \$ in grant resource through my efforts. We will continue to seek alternative resources to enhance this project and make it a true jewel of the Central Coast.

Finding 16: The Nature Conservancy, manager of the Guadalupe Dunes, has improved Oso Flaco Lakes just north of the County border with amenities, but it has done nothing to provide similar recreational facilities at the Santa Maria river mouth estuary.

Recommendation 16: Guadalupe should continue with its request to the County and the Nature Conservancy to expedite the improvement of public recreational facilities at Guadalupe Beach Park as the Conservancy has done at its facility at Oso Flaco.

I concur with this recommendation as well. It should also be noted there are myriad "Enviro" concerns and these have played part and parcel in the restrictive historical nature of development of recreational facilities at the site. I am currently exploring joint concerns with Center for Natural Lands Management in potentially implementing projects which will also enhance the safety and security of beach goers, not to mention bringing the beach to the inaccessible vis a vis telecommunications.

Finding 17: The City has done a commendable job to redevelop a blighted area (the City Slough) into a multi-purpose park.

Recommendation 17: Guadalupe officials should continue plans to develop the Guadalupe City Slough into an attractive multi-purpose park featuring a general cleanup, conservation of nature species, children's educational facilities, boating, fishing, picnicking , etc.

I concur with the recommendation. This was and remains the reasoning and rationale behind my personal efforts in identifying resources and following through, to make this same recommendation a reality here.

Finding 18: Paradise Beach has the potential to be improved to become a multi-purpose County/City recreational and conservation park.

Recommendation 18: Paradise Beach (though efforts of the City of Santa Maria, Orcutt, and the County) should be developed into a County park similar to the beach at the base of the cliff at Summerland on the South Coast. Additionally, the County, the City of Santa Maria, and Orcutt in combination with the input from the City of Guadalupe should encourage the State legislature and the local representatives to bring Point Sal Beach State Park up to a reasonable standard (regarding access, parking, and sanitation facilities) for safer and enhanced public use.

While I concur Paradise Beach should be developed, I would add the caveat it should be included in the City Limits or at least the Sphere of Influence of the City Of Guadalupe, with input and support from the other entities.

Finding 19: Restoration of Betteravia Lake could provide recreational and educational benefits for Guadalupe, its residents, and visitors.

Recommendation 19: Guadalupe officials should participate in planning and promoting restoration of Betteravia Lake, or portions thereof, into a multipurpose park.

I concur, provided there is adherence and emphasis placed on previous commentary relative to the site.

Finding 20: LeRoy Park, currently Guadalupe's only park, and its valuable community buildings, may sustain flood damage in the future.

Recommendation 20: In combination with County Flood Control, Guadalupe should seek to protect LeRoy Park and consider extending the Santa Maria River levee west of Highway 1, and create an earth berm around the unprotected three-acre site as an affordable first step in solving Guadalupe's flooding issues.

While I concur all efforts should be made to avoid loss of property and/or potentially loss of life, it is critically imperative to understand the following:

- A.) There are currently 4 other park sites in Guadalupe.
- B.) The berm itself is in County Area.
- C.) A viable first step would be to encourage and enact path clearings in the riverbed. Not Channelization, which would require an almost Act of Congress in regards to processing and the like.
- D.) Long term planning for identification and procurement of resources to facilitate this process, (Berm Extension)
- E.) Property owner and adjacent property owner consent.

This concludes my responses to the recommendations. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely;

Sam Arca, Mayor  
City of Guadalupe