



Hollister Ranch Medley

Mike Hynson, J.J. White, Wade Koniakowsky

A few years back, Mike Hynson, co-star of the iconic *Endless Summer*, visited the museum and shared not only his experiences in and out of the water, but also a story about Hollister Ranch 1961. Local surfer John White joins Hynson in this issue, with his own memories of a visit to Hollister Ranch a decade later. Finally, San Diego artist Wade Koniakowsky, whom the museum has also had the pleasure of hosting, completes the medley with his impressions of the iconic surf spot.

Hollister Ranch was off-limits to Mike Hynson in 1961, and remains off limits thirty-five years after the California legislature wrote access to Hollister into law. The status quo is maintained, perhaps due to unwillingness to litigate with Hollister Ranch property owners. In a recent interview with *Surfer Magazine* ("The Great Divide," posted July 22, 2010), Steve Hoye, a beach access crusader from Topanga, acknowledged Hollister is still not the subject of an access fight. Even surfers are ambivalent about throwing open the gates to a hoard who could potentially spoil one of the most well-preserved stretches of California coastline. Hoye's vision is one of limited access: "If we have an environmentally sound program allowing 50 people to go onto The Ranch a day with no incidents—Ranger-led, from the parking lot at Gaviota State Park—nobody is going to complain about Hollister Ranch ever again if we can get that sort of access." But if you can't wait, you could follow up on a recent Yahoo!Real Estate post, offering (just) one person access to Hollister Ranch. No actual real estate, mind you, merely a partnership interest. Only \$349K.



Central Coast Dream - Wade Koniakowsky

Trespassing Private Property with Ron Stoner 1961

Mike Hynson

Hollister Ranch was one of the spots I surfed in North Country. The Rincon group belonged to an exclusive club called the Santa Barbara Surf Club, which had access to the privately owned Ranch. They weren't any more territorial than any other surfers I knew, but in return for its use, they made a deal with the Hollister family to hire a guard at the south entrance and turn away all non-members.

That's just the way surfing was in the old days - territorial. We ruined people's boards, cars, anything belonging to anyone we didn't like surfing our beaches.

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Wave Lengths

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Enjoy the Ride

In 2010, you contributed to building the Cocoa Beach Surf Museum into one of the preëminent surf museums in the country. What we currently lack in actual space, we make up for in substance and heart. The New Year is on us and we're excited about even more opportunities to preserve surfing history with the help of our talented volunteers.



We're offering this slightly abbreviated and unusual newsletter while we undergo extensive renovations to our bricks and mortar, thanks to Ron Jon Surf Shop. We're looking forward to reopening in February when our first exhibit of 2011 will be the all-new Kelly Slater exhibit – KS10, which Florida Today has graciously agreed to co-sponsor. Later in the year, we have another major exhibit planned: Surfing Vietnam. I know: *what?* Plus other exhibits, all the surfboards, openings, member newsletters, movies and events you've come to expect from us.

You'll find more information on our newly refashioned website and on Facebook. We have open meetings every first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the museum.

If you surf the way I do, you tell people you're the best surfer because you have the most fun, but you'll never have a photo, let alone an exhibit, in a surf museum. Even so, you can be part of our wonderful surfing heritage in 2011.

See you in the water, *Tony*

Trespassing - Continued from Page 1

Hollister, Bixby's Ranch, and Cojo Bay are actually the leading points of the California Coastline. Hollister, in general, though is never that big. It usually breaks on north and northwesterly swells in the winter, and because of the kelp beds and the mountain ridge blocking the offshore wind, the ocean is smooth, glassy, and great to photograph. During the summer, the Channel Islands get in the way of all the south swells. Barely and rarely does the southwesterly creep into the shores of Hollister. Just a couple of miles north, Cojo faces in the same direction as Malibu. Both break on the same swell anytime between April and September.

Hollister really had a mystique going in the sixties. Those guys kept it tight – no pictures, cameras, nothing. The only way non-members could get in besides walking the long trek along the railroad tracks or the beach was to launch in at Gaviota Pier. Getting caught was risky, though. No ifs, ands or buts, you were run out. I've even been shot at down at Cojo a few times. They definitely made it uncomfortable.

Billy Caster and I and Phil Castaneda used to travel the coast in Phil's car. We would come to a beach and group attack a surf spot. I used to love to get right in the middle of a surf town and call out the best, and either become friends or take it over. It was just my nature. Sometimes we were even chased out of town, but we were never forgotten.

One summer day a strong south swell was showing itself at WindanSea. But I was hungry for a point break at Malibu or, better yet, Cojo. Between Bill Bahne, Skip, Billy Hamilton, Caster and the Red Fin crew, we'd mess with Rincon every chance we got.



Ranch House - Wade Koniakowsky

So later that night I started organizing a crew and planning an attack for the assault up north. The Santa Barbara surfing community was mostly stuck-up brats, especially the Hollister Ranch surfers. They thought their oily tar-all-over-your-feet beach, thick smelly kelp beds, bites from swarming flies and endless glassy offshore waves were only for themselves and their honored guests. To tell you the truth, that drove me nuts. Unfortunately, my shining personality and aggressive approach never influenced one of them to welcome any of us for a day.

Skip, Denny Tompkins, and I, and Ron Stoner, Surf Magazine's photographer, entered the Bixby north gate just before sunrise. I drove. Everyone else was sleeping. I revved the motor, went straight through the chains and headed for our favorite spot. We took the first road toward the coast, then off onto a couple of dirt roads until we reached the cliffs surrounding Cojo Bay. I drove on a trail that dipped just under a cliff and blocked the car from sight. We grabbed our boards, Stoner reached for his camera, and we sneaked up to the edge of the cliffs to check out the surf. It was three-to five-foot, slightly offshore surf, low tide, coming in. Stoner hid in the bushes up on the cliff while Skip and Denny and I started down a canyon trail toward the sandy, swamp kelp beach. We hung out in a cave-like hiding place along the cliff, hidden from view, and watched a few sets come through.

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The tide was coming in and only getting better. The closing sets on the point would hold up with the tide and be rideable into the cove later on. We were on the south side of the cove, though, and had to paddle across the channel to where the waves were breaking in twenty-yard un-makeable sections walled up from the point. At low tide, the waves wall up and close out from the point to the channel. But as the tide comes in, the waves start breaking outside the point and you can ride until the shore break closes out.

I don't know what I was thinking at the time or not thinking, but I forgot to tell Skip, Ron and Denny that this sacred spot was private property. What could be more perfect though? Stoner was in the bushes waiting, so we all agreed it was worth going out – or at least getting wet – especially after driving six hours in the middle of the night.

We were about two hundred yards from the point when we entered the water to paddle across the channel. Ten minutes in, we looked up at the cliffs and beach around the point and saw two cowboys riding horseback. I immediately told Skip and Denny to lie down and paddle. It didn't appear to me that we were spotted because the cowboys were just moseying on. But if they kept going, we were sitting ducks out there. A couple of minutes later they spotted us, stopped and tried to wave us in. No way! We ignored them, hoping they'd go away. When we heard a few rifle shots, then felt the bullets splash outside, Skip and Denny got worried. I did my best to explain that it was just a scare tactic to get us to leave, but that didn't stop them from hiding underwater until the cowboys rode off.

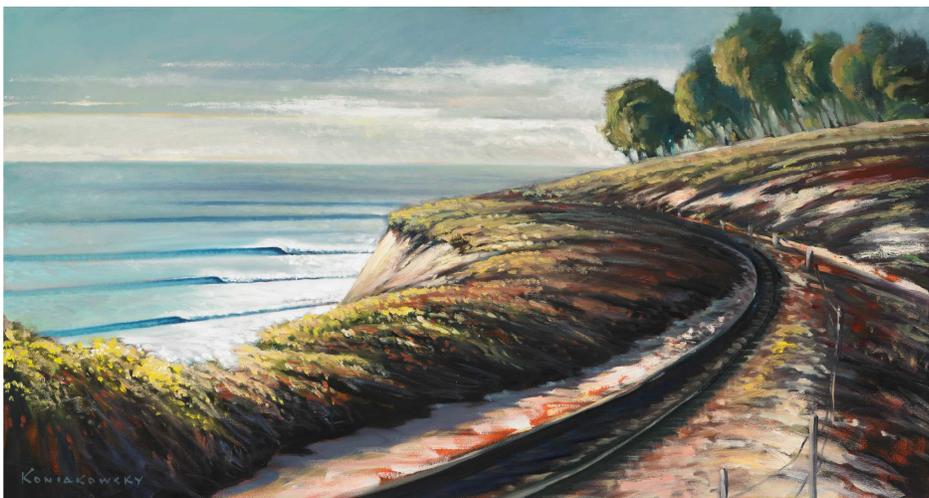
While we drifted far outside until we felt safe enough to enter the line up, the tide had moved in and the waves were much more rideable from the point. Cojo on a southwest swell, like all southern-facing breaks, is lined up. All are mostly walls of breaking waves that close out with little time to even stand up. But the reefs and point breaks are perfect for long rides, exceptional tube rides and riding the tunnel. The swell wrapped around the point and broke in twenty-yard sections. Our only take off was staying close to the deep channel where the wave would back off and hold an edge to a shore break. Skip and Denny were riding the square-tail Red Fin model, somewhere in the 9'6" length. I was riding the 10'6" point tail gun I had made for Hawaii's big surf at Sunset, Waimea and Makaha. So I was able to paddle farther out to the point, catch the wave early and get a longer ride.

God forbid we lose our boards and have to face the cowboys. Lucky for us there was a deep riptide channel along the shore where the wave backed off, making our boards drift with the current.

The three of us caught some beautiful waves that day with four- and five-wave sets. We performed maneuvers that looked choreographed. The average board couldn't rip Cojo up, but my gun was superior. One of us was always paddling out in perfect view of the others.

I have to admit I was scared that this trip could end up the worst bummer of all time. We looked for Ron and never saw him. The car was hidden, but not invisible. We worried that the cowboys had found him or the car, which meant no pictures. Plus, we had been so surf conscious when we got there that we had left the keys in the ignition and our clothes, wallets, etc., in the open car. A squirrel could have made off with everything. The thought of doom was the only thing happening. It was short and sweet, and before we knew it the party was over.

God, where were those cowboys? Did they disappear or were they hiding and waiting to catch us in the act? Did they know about the busted gate? And where was Stoner? We paddled toward the beach and ran across the sand and into the canyon, the shortest and fastest distance to the car. There, lying on the hood sunbathing, relaxing and having a good old time, was Stoner. He'd already shot a bunch of pictures from the bushes on the cliff. He told us, though, that when the cowboys headed north, he was so scared he buried his head in the brush and prayed until they rode on.



Razor Blades - Wade Koniakowsky

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As soon as the coast was clear, this band of nomads went south to Lefts and Rights, about a mile into the Ranch. We were on the very north end of Hollister and had to break another locked gate just to enter. We figured we were already in trouble. What could they do to us anyway, tell us to leave?

Along the waterline through the Ranch there wasn't a soul around for miles. Maybe we could catch some virgin waves. The surf was there, but nothing worth stopping for. It just wasn't happening anymore. We started thinking maybe Malibu, six to eight feet, a perfect evening trip. That's probably why we hadn't bumped into any surfers. But the swell at Left and Rights seemed to be getting bigger every hour. When we pulled up and saw that it was surfable and nobody was there except a couple of boat surfers, Ron said, "Let's get shots of you guys. The forbidden fruit must be picked."

We were out there in a flash and surfed our brains out. Ron shot more pictures. And at the end of the day, when we passed through the gate to leave, the guards waved us through like we owned the place. They weren't that far off. The Red Fin crew did own it for one day.

Hollister Ranch 1971

J.J. White

Reading Mike Hynson's story of the Hollister Ranch break of the early 60s brought back memories of my quest to the sacred surf spot in 1971. Motivated by photos in Surfer Magazine and home movies at the Cocoa Beach Theatre, my friend Drew Skinner and I drove cross-country in a '66 VW to experience the same Ranch tubes our surf heroes had ridden.

We parked under a trestle in Gaviota and walked along a beach strewn with rotting kelp and half-eaten seal carcasses. Where the beach ended, we paddled in the frigid water around the rocky coast until we saw small boats anchored just outside the break. We thought it was flat until the boats emptied of surfers who paddled into a set of two-foot swells that suddenly pumped up to about six feet. The perfect waves broke right to left, the kelp grabbing at the boards as the tubes covered the surfers.

The thrill of the day was tempered somewhat by the armed ranch hands lining the cliffs. Not much had changed since Hynson had first visited the Ranch. Drew and I surfed all day, which left us exhausted for the long walk back. Fortunately, we found the VW unmolested and, like Hynson, left with minds full of pleasant memories.

Artist's Comments

Wade Koniakowsky

"Razor Blades" is the first spot on the Ranch entering from the South. "Ranch House" is not really a surf scene but the view of the beach and lawn in front of the Hollister main ranch house. There's a surf spot in front called Ranch House, although the painting doesn't show it. "Central Coast Dream" is a surf scape made up from an amalgamation of scenes on the Ranch, kind of what some of those spots would look like from the water.

■

CBSM appreciates Wade sharing his art for this story. You can see more of his art at <http://www.koniakowsky.com> and on Facebook (Wade Koniakowsky).

Join the Cocoa Beach Surf Museum and help preserve surfing history.
 Members receive a quarterly newsletter and special invitations to museum events.
 New memberships include a museum T-shirt.

(Check One)

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- SURFER** **30.00** _____
- STOKED** **50.00** _____
- OHANA (FAMILY)** **60.00** _____
- KAHUNA** **100.00** _____
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T-Shirt size (Circle One): S M L XL XXL (new memberships only)

Please mail your membership form and check/credit card information to:

The Cocoa Beach Surf Museum
 P.O. BOX 321453
 COCOA BEACH, FL 32932-1453

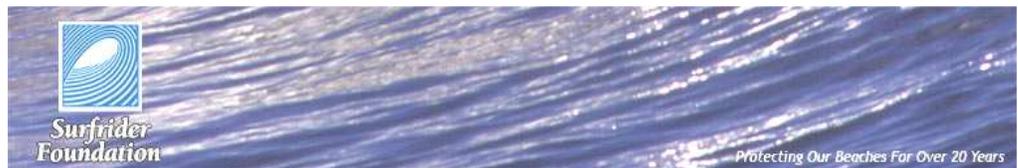
Visa _____ Mastercard _____



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Would you like to join Surfrider Foundation at a discount?



Check One:

- Regular (\$15.00) _____
- Student (\$10.00) _____
- Family (\$35.00) _____

Unless you indicate otherwise, you will be a member of the Cocoa Beach Chapter

EVENTS

First Wednesdays, 7 pm

Cocoa Beach Surf Museum Volunteer Meetings

Note: Important meeting on January 12 – please bring your own chair. We'll be planning the move-back-in and new exhibit.



Third Tuesdays, 6 pm

Surfrider Foundation Meetings

Due to renovation in progress, watch your email for alternate meeting arrangements for the Cocoa Beach Chapter of Surfrider Foundation.



Date TBA

Opening of New Exhibit: KS10

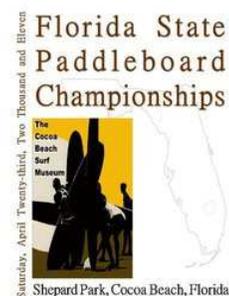
Kelly Slater Exhibit will be the first of 2011 and the first in our renovated space. Details forthcoming on Facebook.



Saturday, April 23, 2011, 8 am

Florida State Paddleboard Championship

RSPV to event on Facebook and stay tuned for pre-registration and registration information.



See more information on Facebook and www.cocoa beachesurfmuseum.org.

CBSM in the Cocoa Beach Christmas Parade

Photos: Athena Sasso



Biff, Melody, Debbie and her mom, Bill, Marie, John and Tony braved balmy 70s temps to represent CBSM in the parade.

