



Park Plan

3 PARK PLAN



Salmon Creek Ranger Station, Source: EDAW 2003

Following the Department’s Mission and other planning mandates, the Park Plan establishes the long-range purpose and vision for the future of Sonoma Coast State Beach (Sonoma Coast SB). Specific goals and supporting guidelines further clarify this purpose and vision. These are designed to rectify the issues described in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, while providing a solid foundation for continued resource protection, preservation, and restoration, as well as development and interpretation at the Park. The goals and guidelines also serve as design and implementation parameters for required subsequent management and development plans.

While driven by current issues, the Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report is somewhat visionary in nature. It is designed as a dynamic document that provides managers with the opportunity to incorporate newly emerging technologies and improved management concepts for resolving current issues, along with the ability to provide adequate direction for resolving issues that may arise in the future.

3.1 PLANNING MANDATES

Management of Sonoma Coast SB is directed by a hierarchy of mandates. The most general mandate is the Department’s Mission. Each Unit in the State Park system defines its Purpose and Vision, which must ultimately fulfill the Department’s Mission. The Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report for each Unit further defines the Unit Purpose and Vision by providing Goals and Guidelines by which the management of the Sonoma Coast SB is guided. The Unit Classification is derived from the State Parks Classification system. Goals and guidelines must be consistent with the unit classification. Management plans and development plans “translate” the goals and guidelines into every-day management activities.

3.1.1 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION

The Department’s Mission is to:

Provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the State’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.

3.1.2 UNIT PURPOSE AND VISION

The unit purpose and vision serve as guidelines for the future management of the Sonoma Coast SB. They are related, yet distinct, planning concepts that provide a context and direction for future management and planning efforts for the Sonoma Coast SB. These concepts are described in more detail below.

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

The Declaration of Purpose describes the purpose of the state beach and is the broadest statement of management goals designed to fulfill its vision. A Declaration of Purpose is required by PRC Section 5002.2(b), "setting forth specific long-range management objectives for the Park consistent with the park's classification..." The Declaration of Purpose for the Sonoma Coast SB is as follows:

The purpose of Sonoma Coast State Beach is to make it available to the people, for their inspiration and enjoyment forever, a segment of scenic Northern California Coastline in the vicinity of Bodega Bay and the Russian River, by providing a diversity of recreation and education opportunities for the millions of visitors each year while protecting, maintaining, and restoring, in perpetuity, the State Beach's abundant and unique natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources.

The functions of the California Department of Parks and Recreation at Sonoma Coast State Beach are to prescribe and execute a program that provides facilities and opportunities for optimum enjoyment and protection of the natural, cultural, and aesthetic resources of the unit, in accordance with the declared purpose of the State Beach.



General Plan Public Meeting at Bodega Marine Library



A group of visitors at Goat Rock Beach



Kortum Trail Signage



Visitor Facility at Shell Beach

Source: EDAW 2003

PARK VISION

The park vision provides guiding images of what the Sonoma Coast SB may be like following the implementation of the General Plan. The Vision Statement for Sonoma Coast SB is as follows:

Sonoma Coast State Beach will be protected and enhanced as a natural coastal open space of spectacular beauty. Sonoma Coast State Beach will offer visitors access to open expansive views of the ocean, intermittent long sandy beaches below rugged headlands, a craggy coastline with natural arches and secluded coves, rugged sea stacks, lagoons and wetlands, coastal sand dunes, coastal plains, forested inland watershed areas, the rocky headland of Bodega Head, as well as the mouth of the Russian River.

Sonoma Coast State Beach will provide a diversity of world-class recreational and educational opportunities to millions of visitors from throughout California and elsewhere, while enhancing and maintaining the exceptional value of its outstanding scenic, cultural, biological, and geologic resources. Public access to the coast will be made available to all visitors.

Sonoma Coast State Beach will continue to be one of the most visited State Parks units by providing the public opportunities for sightseeing, hiking, biking, beachcombing, fishing, kayaking, boating, whale watching, camping, tidepooling, sunbathing, photographing, and a wide variety of other recreational activities along the scenic Sonoma Coastline and Russian River. The visitors' appreciation of the ocean, streams, beaches, sand dunes, sea stacks, bluffs, wildlife, hills, coastal plains and other resources will be facilitated by well designed and maintained trails, campgrounds, and other facilities at Sonoma Coast State Beach.

Interpretation and education will be provided through one or more visitor centers, information kiosks, and other structures, supplemented by educational programs, in order to facilitate enjoyable, meaningful, and sustainable interactions between the visitors and the resources. Visitors will come away with a greater understanding and appreciation for the natural processes at Sonoma Coast State Beach, as well as its unique wildlife, cultural importance, and aesthetic qualities.

Sonoma Coast State Beach will provide protection and interpretation of its extraordinary prehistoric resources and important historic sites, while acknowledging the established use pattern at Sonoma Coast State Beach. A variety of adaptive management techniques for the purposes of restoring, preserving, and protecting cultural resources will be utilized to avoid degradation and destruction of cultural resources to the greatest extent feasible. Sonoma Coast State Beach will encourage further investigation and research of its cultural resources.

The diverse biological communities at Sonoma Coast State Beach will continue to provide habitat for a variety of common and special-status species. The integrity of the

natural ecosystems may be protected by the control of exotic species, if necessary, and by habitat restoration where appropriate and feasible. Visitor access to sensitive habitats will be limited, if necessary. Maintenance and enhancement of environmental quality will be recognized as essential to the preservation of biological diversity. Management decisions will be guided by sound scientific knowledge and established best management practices, consistent with current policies of the Department and with all current laws and regulations.

Efficient maintenance of Sonoma Coast State Beach will be achieved through appropriately sized and equipped facilities at the optimum location, with emphasis on human and environmental safety, staff needs and convenience, and optimum use of available resources. Sharing of resources with other units in the District, as well as other State and local agencies, will be pursued to conserve available resources.

3.1.3 UNIT CLASSIFICATION

Sonoma Coast SB is classified as a type of State Recreation Unit pursuant to PRC Section 5019.56. Under this classification state beaches are defined as follows:

State beaches consist of areas with frontage on the ocean or bays designed to provide swimming, boating, fishing, and other beach-oriented recreational activities.

3.2 GOALS AND GUIDELINES

This section states management goals and guidelines, which are management approaches for achieving the Declaration of Purpose and Vision Statement described above. Goals and guidelines are defined in the California State Parks Planning Handbook (2002) as follows:

- ▶ **Goal:** General, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim or intent toward which management will direct effort. Goals are not necessarily measurable except in terms of the achievement of component objectives which attainment of the goal involves.
- ▶ **Guidelines:** General set of parameters that provide directions towards accomplishing goals.

This plan is divided into two sets of goals and guidelines. The first set consists of park-wide management goals and guidelines, which are applicable to the entire Sonoma Coast SB. The second set consists of additional goals and guidelines applicable to each of the two management zones and two overlay zones within Sonoma Coast SB. The management zones and overlay zones are shown in Exhibit 3-1. They are described in Section 3.4 below. Potential Development Areas, within which new facility sites may be selected, are shown in Exhibit 3-2. The Potential Development Areas are approximate and provide guidance regarding potentially suitable sites. As more information is gathered about site specific conditions, the suitability of specific development sites will be refined and may include property either inside or outside the Potential Development Areas.

It should be noted that management goals and guidelines would be implemented in conjunction with all laws, regulations, and plans that are applicable to Sonoma Coast SB. For example, management actions within Sonoma Coast SB must comply with this General Plan and with the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan. As laws, regulations, and plans are revised and updated, unforeseen planning or regulatory conflicts may arise. In this case, management actions should adhere to the most specific and/or most stringent laws, regulations, or plans.

Management Plans and Development Plans are developed following the adoption of the Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report to provide more detail and specific objectives for various park-wide management issues (e.g., vegetation, facilities development, roads, and trails). Guidelines in the Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report may call for the development of Management Plans to further define specific areas of management, and Development Plans to implement specific projects in the Sonoma Coast SB.

3.2.1 PARK-WIDE GOALS AND GUIDELINES

Park-wide management goals and guidelines are organized into three main categories: (1) resource management; (2) visitor use and opportunities; and (3) administration and operations. Each category is further divided into subcategories.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Sonoma Coast SB contains an abundance and diversity of resources, and wise stewardship of these resources is crucial in retaining and sustaining its biological, historic, aesthetic, educational, and recreational values. In balancing the needs of nature with those of visitors and staff, a wide range of resources and natural processes should be considered in future management decisions. For purposes of this General Plan, resource management at Sonoma Coast SB is organized into the two main themes of natural resources management and cultural resources management.

Natural Resources Management

The natural resources present at Sonoma Coast SB are strongly influenced by the physical and hydrological processes of the California Coast Range, the Pacific Ocean, the San Andreas Fault, and the Russian River, Salmon Creek, and other creeks and springs (i.e., wildland fire, flooding, drought, coastal erosion, earthquake). The resulting mosaic of natural communities provides important habitat for many plants, fish and wildlife species and invertebrate species. Allowing natural processes to occur uninterrupted is crucial for the perpetuation of healthy ecosystems at Sonoma Coast SB. Where natural processes have been substantially altered or interrupted by human influences, attempts should be made to restore processes to a natural condition. Restoration activities will be directed toward self-maintaining levels, where possible.

The goals and guidelines presented below are broken into separate sections for plant life, fauna, and paleontological resources, but the integration of all guidelines for the management of ecosystems and the application of adaptive management strategies are important for maintaining the ecological integrity of the natural areas and their inhabitants at Sonoma Coast SB.

Vegetation

Common and Sensitive Natural Communities

Common natural communities are those plant communities that are locally and regionally widespread and that are not of critical concern to management and regulatory agencies. Examples of common natural communities at Sonoma Coast SB include annual grassland and coastal scrub. Sensitive natural communities are plant communities that are of special concern to resource agencies, government agencies, or conservation organizations. Sensitive natural communities are considered important because they provide habitat for numerous wildlife and plant species, including special-status species. Sensitive communities also include those considered rare or uncommon locally, regionally, or statewide, and those protected by State and federal laws and regulations. Sensitive natural communities at Sonoma Coast SB include coastal dunes, coastal prairie, riparian forest and scrub, wetlands, and open water habitat associated with the streams and lagoons present throughout Sonoma Coast SB.

Special-status Plants

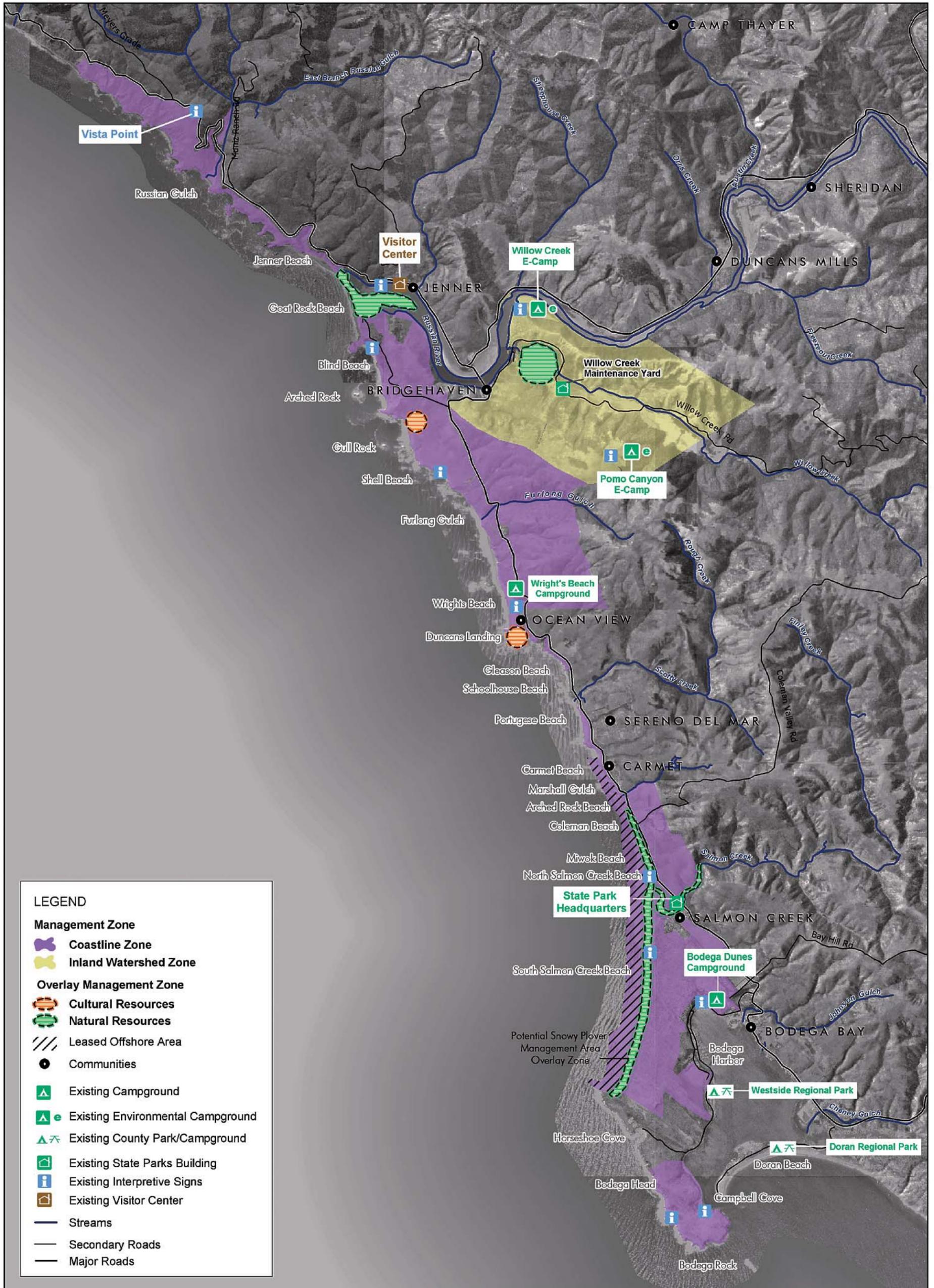
Special-status plant species are those listed by the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Native Plant Society. Locally endemic or uncommon species may also be considered special-status plants by resource management agencies. Special-status plant populations are typically dependent on the protection and perpetuation of their habitat.

Invasive Weeds

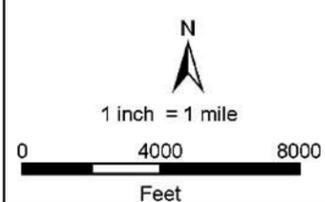
The presence of invasive weeds disrupts natural processes and vegetative conditions, including sensitive riparian and wildlife habitat that are critical to the dynamic ecosystem within Sonoma Coast SB. Proactive control of invasive weeds at Sonoma Coast SB, therefore, is an important component to natural resource management.

The following goal applies to vegetation management at Sonoma Coast SB:

Goal NAT-1: Protect, maintain, and, where appropriate, restore the diversity of natural areas within Sonoma Coast SB. Protect special-status plants within Sonoma Coast SB and manage resources for their perpetuation and enhancement in accordance with State and federal law.



Source: EDAW 2003

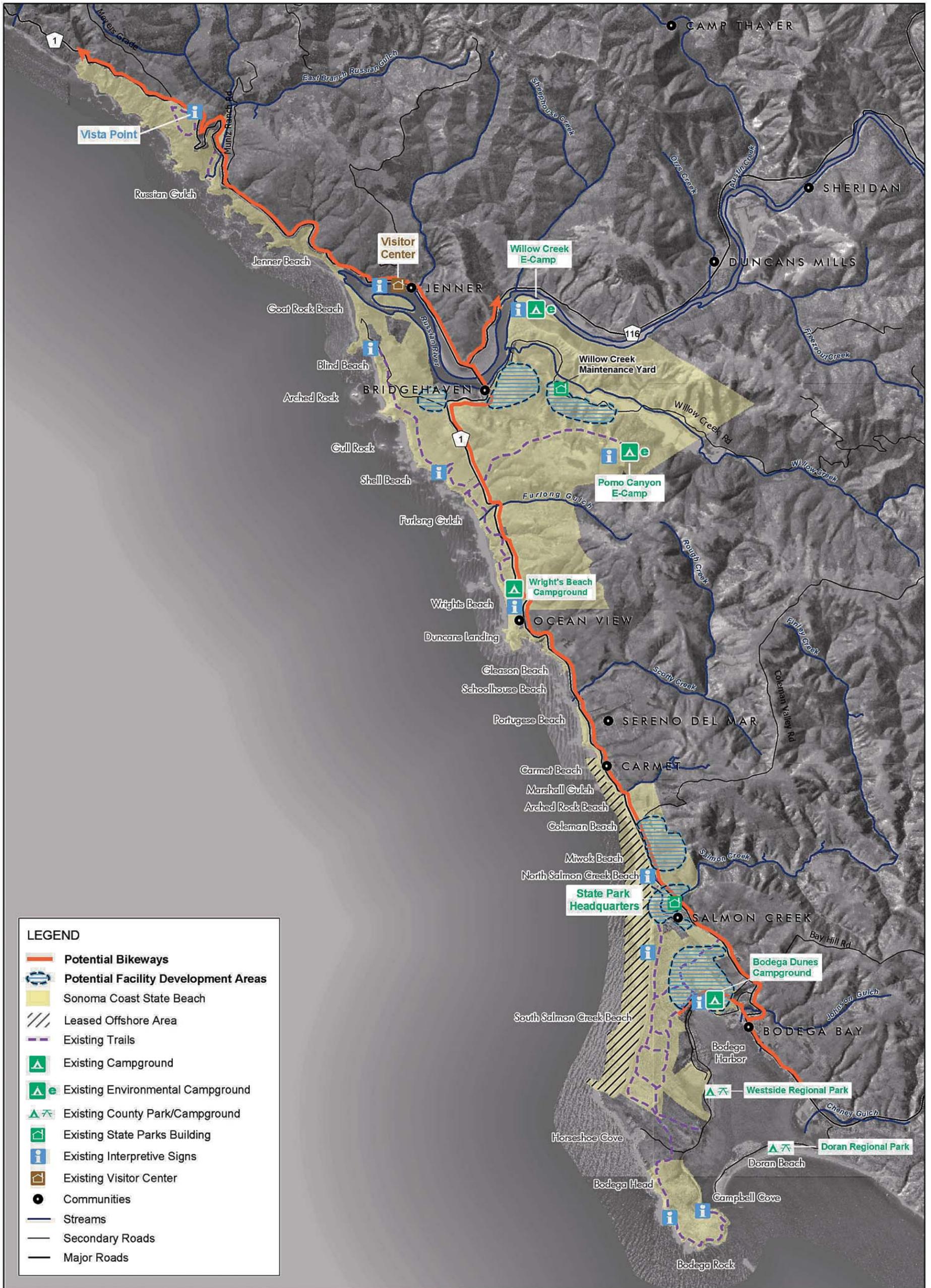


Dec. 19, 2003

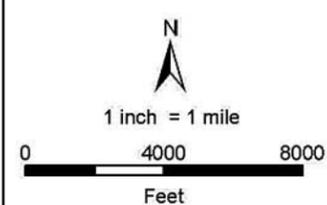
EDAW

Sonoma Coast State Beach

Exhibit 3-1 Management Zones and Overlay Areas



Source: EDAW 2003



Dec. 9, 2003

EDAW

Sonoma Coast State Beach

Exhibit 3-2 Potential Development Areas

- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1A:** Inventory and monitor Sonoma Coast SB's natural resources including natural communities and special-status plants to document their distribution and abundance.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1B:** Protect and restore natural areas in those areas where they will not recover in a reasonable timeframe if left untreated.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1C:** Control and/or eradicate non-native invasive species to prevent their establishment and spread. Priority for control efforts should be given to those species that are most invasive, ecologically detrimental, and/or conspicuous at Sonoma Coast SB. Maintain database on distribution and abundance of target populations.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1D:** When implementing habitat restoration projects and landscaping around facilities, use native species that are appropriate to the site and that are obtained from native plant species within Sonoma Coast SB boundaries or from within 5 miles of Sonoma Coast SB. This includes transplanted cuttings and rootstocks or seedlings and saplings grown from collected seed that are genetically compatible. Ensure that all mulches are free of foreign seed.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1E:** Avoid fragmentation of large intact habitat areas when constructing new facilities and siting trails.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1F:** Consider acquiring land or conservation easements from willing sources that would act as a protective buffer for critical resources or that are essential for the completion of goals in resource management programs.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1G:** Cooperate with existing regional conservation plans and policies, and participate where appropriate in the development of regional conservation plans when such programs are consistent with Sonoma Coast SB natural resources goals.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1H:** Prepare resource management plans for significant natural resources and applicable management techniques consistent with Sonoma Coast SB's natural resource protection goals to the extent necessary as determined by the Department. The plans shall include the protection of the natural ecological process occurring within Sonoma Coast SB to the extent feasible and shall address the re-establishment of natural processes for areas that have been substantially disturbed by human interference in the past.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1I:** Comply with applicable federal and State laws and regulations (e.g., federal and State Endangered Species Acts, Coastal Act Policy) that require the protection of special-status plant species when implementing projects or management programs.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-1J:** Protect all special-status plants occurring within Sonoma Coast SB. Establish a monitoring program for known special-status plant locations on a long-term basis to develop baseline data for future management, assess the health of the populations, and take corrective management actions when necessary.

Fish and Wildlife Species

Sonoma Coast State Beach supports a diversity of native fish and wildlife species. Some species are dependent on the inland forests and wetland while others depend on the coastal prairie and coastal dunes. The Russian River, several streams and the nearshore waters of the Pacific Ocean within Sonoma Coast SB provide important habitat for anadromous and resident fish species, while the beaches and offshore rocks provide essential habitat for marine mammals and shorebirds. Protection of suitable habitats is essential to the perpetuation of the species within Sonoma Coast SB.

Special-status Fish and Wildlife Species

Special-status fish and wildlife species are those classified as Species of Special Concern, or listed as threatened or endangered by the State and/or federal governments. These sensitive species often play an essential role in the functioning of ecosystems and are dependent on the protection and perpetuation of their habitat.

The following goal applies to fauna management at Sonoma Coast SB:

Goal NAT- 2: Rehabilitate, protect, and ensure the perpetuation of native fauna at Sonoma Coast SB. Protect special-status fauna within Sonoma Coast SB and manage resources for their perpetuation and enhancement in accordance with State and federal law.

- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2A:** Protect common and sensitive fauna and their habitats wherever suitable and/or required by laws and regulations. Avoid human-induced disturbance and degradation of natural areas. Protect special habitat elements such as snags and monarch roost trees.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT- 2B:** Develop specific programs to protect and rehabilitate sensitive animal populations and their habitats using sound ecological principles and professionally accepted methods. Include species that are locally important.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT- 2C:** Inventory and monitor common and special-status fauna to identify population trends to the extent feasible. To the greatest extent possible, support scientific research studies within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2D:** Reduce and, where possible, eliminate wildlife access to human food and garbage by using wildlife-proof trash containers where appropriate in Sonoma Coast SB, including administration and residence areas.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2E:** Collect baseline information for monitoring the health and function of natural areas, and special-status fauna. Address effects of human uses and impacts as well as natural processes on the integrity of Sonoma Coast SB's ecosystems in monitoring effort and mitigate these effects where necessary.

- ▶ **Guideline NAT- 2F:** Identify, maintain and protect habitat corridors within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT- 2G:** Maintain working relationships with other land owners and stakeholders in the vicinity of Sonoma Coast SB, as appropriate, to coordinate efforts to identify and preserve habitat linkages.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT- 2H:** Consider establishing cooperative agreements, conservation easements, or purchasing land from willing owners to provide buffers and habitat linkages to existing resources within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2I:** Comply with federal and State laws and regulations (e.g., federal and State Endangered Species Acts, Coastal Act Policy) that require the protection of special-status species when implementing projects or management programs.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2J:** Protect all special-status fauna occurring within Sonoma Coast SB. Establish a monitoring program for know special-status fauna locations on a long-term basis to develop baseline data for future management assess the health of the populations and take corrective actions, if necessary.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2K:** Comply with Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code to protect nesting birds at Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2L:** Consider the needs of sensitive aquatic species into the timing and implementation of any work that would result in streambed alteration, instream work, or disturbance of riparian areas, to avoid adverse impacts to these species. Conduct any instream work consistent with requirements of CDFG, NOAA Fisheries and the federal Clean Water Act. Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2M:** Ensure that culverts placed beneath roads and trails are properly sized and are designed to accommodate 50-year storm events.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2N:** Inspect buildings for sensitive species, including bat populations, and establish mitigation measures for any species identified prior to major maintenance, construction, or structure demolition.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2O:** Minimize development of facilities in areas known to support special-status fauna and their habitat to the greatest extent feasible.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-2P:** Protect marine mammal haul-outs, and special-status species from disturbance by recreational beach users, by using management options, such as establishing seasonal closures or restricting beach use as necessary.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources are remnants of life from past geological periods (e.g., fossil remains). These resources constitute a fragile and nonrenewable scientific record of the history of life on earth and represent an important and critical component of the natural heritage. The geologic formations in Sonoma Coast SB contain various types of fossils, most of which are common fossils dating to when the land within Sonoma Coast State Beach was submerged. Portions of Sonoma Coast SB contain carbonized tree remains, bones, and trace fossils dating to the late Pleistocene Epoch. Erosion and excavation, associated with site improvement and construction activities, may expose fossils and other paleontological resources. Other human activities may result in damage or destruction of these resources. Protection and preservation of paleontological resources of cultural importance are addressed by the following goal and guidelines.

Goal NAT-3: Protect and preserve significant paleontological resources within Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline NAT-3A:** Develop an inventory, mapping system, and database for paleontological resources within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline NAT-3B:** If unusual or major paleontological resources are discovered (i.e., exposed by excavation), consult with the Department's cultural resource specialists to determine significance and implement appropriate remediation, in compliance with all federal and State laws and regulations.

Cultural Resources Management

Cultural resources consist of significant and potentially significant prehistoric and ethnographic sites, historic and ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Sonoma Coast SB includes an abundance of important cultural resources, including numerous Native American sites, historic roads and trails, and historic farmhouses and other structures. Some of these resources may be identified as cultural landscapes, which are defined, in part, as landscapes that evolved through use by people whose activities or occupancy shaped them. They can be comprised of aggregates of such cultural resources as agricultural communities, homestead sites, ethnographic or ethnohistoric landscapes, trails, old roads, cemeteries, orchard remnants and homestead sites, as well as natural resources, topography, and their associated features. Particularly important cultural landscapes, as well as sites and districts, may be given the designation of Cultural Preserve by the Parks and Recreation Commission to ensure a higher level of management attention and protection. The following goal is aimed at protecting significant cultural resources in Sonoma Coast SB:

Goal CUL-1: Protect and preserve significant prehistoric and historic resources within Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1A:** Develop an inventory, mapping system, and database for those cultural resources within Sonoma Coast SB that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register of Historic Resources.
- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1B:** Consult with local Native American people and groups who have traditional ties to resources within Sonoma Coast SB to ensure productive, collaborative working relationships, especially when considering management practices, such as the Department' gathering policy, and interpretation involving Sonoma Coast SB's natural and cultural resources of interest and concern to them.
- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1C:** Prepare a park-wide cultural resources management plan that establishes an ongoing management process to record and develop findings of significance for cultural resources in Sonoma Coast SB that are historically or archaeologically important. Consistent with other management goals and guidelines, develop a long-range management strategy that includes preservation, stabilization, rehabilitation, or reconstruction for Sonoma Coast SB's significant cultural resources.
- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1D:** Identify potential cultural landscapes within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1E:** A determination of significance for cultural resources should be made prior to undertaking programs for development or rehabilitation of an area to natural conditions. Any plan for restoration, remodeling, adaptive reuse, or non-use must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and will require careful consideration to ensure the widest public benefit, until the park-wide cultural resources management plan is completed.
- ▶ **Guideline CUL-1F:** Consider acquisition of additional land or conservation easements from willing sources, if necessary, that will provide a buffer for the protection of especially significant historic, prehistoric, and archaeological sites or properties of concern to Native Americans.

VISITOR USE AND OPPORTUNITIES

Sonoma Coast SB is one of the most heavily visited park units in the State Park System and provides many opportunities for quality outdoor recreational experiences. As California's population continues to increase and diversify, the demand for coastal and inland recreational opportunities at Sonoma Coast SB is likely to increase, both in the number of visitors and in the types of recreational activities and facilities future visitors might seek. For example, overnight group facilities may be developed to provide for a variety of education opportunities, and single-use trails may be developed for different transportation modes. Visitor safety has always been an important concern at Sonoma Coast SB, as the rip-tides and undercurrents characteristic of California's north coast present dangers to unsuspecting swimmers and surfers. For purposes of this General Plan, visitor use and opportunities at Sonoma Coast SB are organized into the two major themes of recreation and interpretation and education.

Recreation

Sonoma Coast SB provides opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities, including camping, hiking, picnicking, beachcombing, wildlife viewing, and many other activities associated with the beach, riparian and upland habitats. The following goal aims to provide a variety of quality recreation activities.

Goal REC-1: Provide a variety of day-use and overnight recreational opportunities at Sonoma Coast SB to meet the existing and evolving needs of park visitors.

- ▶ **Guideline REC-1A:** Plan for recreational opportunities within a regional context and in coordination with other plans, (e.g., the Sonoma County Outdoor Recreation Plan, the Californian Coastal Trail), as required or as determined appropriate by the Department.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1B:** Provide for a variety of day-use activities at Sonoma Coast SB that take advantage of its size, varied terrain, and coastal and inland habitats.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1C:** Provide a variety of overnight camping facilities and alternative overnight accommodations that are convenient for visitors of varying abilities and for groups seeking diverse recreational and educational experiences.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1D:** Continue to maintain and enhance safe access to the beaches and other areas within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1E:** Evaluate the current capacities and diversity of day-use, camping and interpretive facilities in providing for quality visitor experiences, and determine management plans for each facility based on the scenic character of Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1F:** Balance the potential need for new public facilities, such as trails and camping areas, with their potential negative impacts to plant and wildlife species and cultural resources. In particular, avoid adverse impacts to critical resources areas where possible and follow all applicable protocols.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1G:** If recreation trends and visitor desires indicate interest in kinds of facilities that would be new to Sonoma Coast SB, such as a new and larger Visitor Center, conduct feasibility studies prior to facility development.
- ▶ **Guideline REC-1H:** Consider acquisition of additional properties from willing sellers to provide appropriate sites for future recreational facilities, including trail connections, if suitable locations are not available within Sonoma Coast SB.

Interpretation and Education

Interpretation of Sonoma Coast SB's resources enhances the visitor experience and promotes public support for the preservation, protection and restoration of sensitive resources. Education provided to park visitors and the local community can foster wise stewardship of

the resources within Sonoma Coast SB while helping visitors avoid actions that degrade resources. Interpretation and education also play an important role in informing visitors of the appropriate recreational activities and potential hazards that should be avoided. The participation of volunteers and community groups in providing education and interpretation at Sonoma Coast SB is an important component of community involvement and enhances visitor education and the overall visitor experience. The provision of a variety of interpretive and education programs (e.g., environmental living, guided walks, interpretive panels) would enhance access to interpretation and education for all visitors.

Goal EDU-1: Provide access to educational and interpretive opportunities associated with the unique natural, cultural and scenic resources of Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1A:** Provide interpretive and educational opportunities for all visitors desiring information about Sonoma Coast SB through a variety of interpretive and educational programs on topics such as sensitive ecosystems, species natural history, historic resources, and Native American use of the resources.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1B:** Develop interpretive opportunities and visitor information at strategically located sites that are compatible with the sensitive biological, cultural, water quality and scenic resources of Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1C:** Conduct a feasibility study to develop a new visitor center for Sonoma Coast SB at a location that best serves interpretive functions and visitor access. Consider the potential of using a new visitor center as a gateway to other state park units in the region, as well as other public lands.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1D:** Develop a comprehensive interpretive prospectus that addresses themes representative of Sonoma Coast SB, including those regarding natural, cultural and recreation resources. The interpretive prospectus should be based on current research and park philosophy, and it should also be consistent with the spirit of the place, the vision for Sonoma Coast SB, and all General Plan policies, particularly those related to resource protection. The interpretive prospectus should consider the diverse needs of existing and future visitors, based on demographic trends and community needs. The comprehensive interpretive prospectus shall include or update the following interpretive themes:
 - **Unifying Theme:** Sonoma Coast SB's natural, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational resources constitute a priceless legacy, one which deserves to be protected, maintained, studied, appreciated, and enjoyed.
 - **Primary Theme #1:** Sonoma Coast SB encompasses a wealth of resources, many of which are unique and outstanding in their ecological, scientific, aesthetic, and recreational values.

- **Secondary Themes:**
 - A. **The natural ecosystems along the Sonoma Coast consist of an interwoven web of intricate relationships.** Educate the visiting public on the intricate relationships between the terrestrial and marine ecosystems along the Sonoma Coast. Describe specific examples, such as interrelations between anadromous fish species, the mouth of the Russian River, and water quality in Willow Creek.
 - B. **Sonoma Coast SB presents an unrivaled array of outstanding scenic views.** Name and describe the origins and function of each of the geologic formations, plant communities, and other unique features in the viewsheds. Acquaint visitors with the different viewpoints available throughout Sonoma Coast SB and the variation that may be observed at different times of the day and year.
 - C. **Visitors come to Sonoma Coast SB all year round seeking a variety of recreational opportunities.** Describe environmental factors (e.g., mild climate, vegetation that stays green all year) that contribute to the popularity of the Sonoma Coast SB during each of the four seasons.
- **Primary Theme #2:** Sonoma Coast SB is an outstanding example of the complex relationship between human beings and the natural environment along California's northern coastline.
- **Secondary Themes:**
 - A. **Native American cultures have flourished along the Sonoma Coast for thousands of years.** Depict how some of the earliest human beings in North America might have lived along the Sonoma Coast. Describe the cultures and lifestyles, via artifacts and art work, of the Kashaya Pomo and Coast Miwok.
 - B. **The historic heritage of Sonoma Coast includes famous explorers and settlers from several nations.** Describe evidences of English, Spanish, and Russian exploration in the vicinity. Narrate the activities of (e.g., commercial logging, ranching, farming) and interactions between Russian, Mexican, and American settlers and the Native American groups. Also describe any influences these activities and interactions may have had on the natural or cultural landscape.
 - C. **Tourism, as well as logging, ranching, and fishing, constitute the most important economic activities today.** Describe the historic prominence of fishing, grazing, and logging activities. Portray the growing importance of tourism in the region and the role of Sonoma Coast SB.

- **Primary Theme #3:** Protection of the resources in Sonoma Coast SB requires collaborative efforts of the Department, other agencies, public-interest organizations, and, most of all, the visiting public.
- **Secondary Themes:**
 - A. **Collaborative efforts are required to preserve open space and to establish open space corridors.** Discuss past efforts of the Department, Sonoma County, public-interest organizations, and active citizens to preserve open space in the region. Provide a map of public open spaces in the region. Describe the benefits of a regional network of open space.
 - B. **Visitors can help preserve resources in Sonoma Coast SB by following simple rules.** Describe what and why certain activities should be limited to avoid adverse effects on resources in Sonoma Coast SB (i.e., not too many people tidepooling at same time, do not disturb sea mammals, do not remove plants, do not litter, avoid straying from trails).
 - C. **Each person can do their part every day to keep the environment healthy.** Illustrate activities each person can do to keep the environment healthy (e.g., reduce, reuse & recycle, keeping wastes from storm drains, conserve water, avoid transporting exotic species). Explain how these efforts help to preserve the resources in Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1E:** When appropriate, seek input from the community, non-profit organizations, local school districts, and other interested stakeholders during the development of Sonoma Coast SB's interpretive programs.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1F:** Provide access to educational programs, in balance with the sensitive resources of Sonoma Coast SB, for the State's diverse population, including people with disabilities.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1G:** Manage the number of groups using Sonoma Coast SB for education and interpretation per year to protect the ecological integrity of sensitive resources such as tide pools.
- ▶ **Guideline EDU-1H:** Prepare a Scope of Collections Statement consistent with the Department's "Guidelines for Writing a Scope of Collections Statement (DPR 2000) for Sonoma Coast SB and maintain an interpretive collection that is consistent with the interpretive themes and the comprehensive interpretive prospectus.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

The administration and operation of Sonoma Coast SB includes visitor services and law enforcement, facility maintenance, resource management, and community interaction as

performed by the Department's maintenance staff, rangers, resource specialists, and other administrative personnel. Volunteers and participating community groups may also play an important role in the operation by providing services such as monitoring and interpretation of important resources. A well-operated park unit provides for visitor safety and enjoyment, protects resource values, optimizes the utilization of the park unit's funding and material resources, and increases the effectiveness of the staff's efforts. While this section proposes broad guidance on the administration and operation of Sonoma Coast SB, it is not intended to constitute a formal Operations Plan for Sonoma Coast SB. For the purposes of this plan, administration and operation of Sonoma Coast SB is organized into five components: (1) roadway access and safety; (2) trails; (3) public safety; (4) operational and recreational facilities; and (5) community involvement and agency cooperation.

Roadway Access and Safety

Sonoma Coast SB is accessed from two highways: SR 1 and SR 116. Both of these highways are heavily used by visitors to the region, and experience heavy traffic congestion during peak visitation periods. In addition to traffic congestion, several other factors add to the risk of traffic-related injury and damage. While the roadway conditions on portions of these highways are not conducive to safe bicycle travel (i.e., narrow shoulders, no separated bike lanes), these highways are popular with bicyclists. Also, these Highways have several intersections with local roadways and driveways, and scenic pullouts that are not controlled by signals or stop signs. Lastly, many pedestrians walk along and across the highways, increasing traffic delays and the potential for collision and injuries.

Because access to Sonoma Coast SB is primarily through these two highways, it is imperative that travel conditions (e.g., the alignment, physical condition, and traffic conditions) are conducive to visitor activities and safety. There is no single entrance point to Sonoma Coast SB and entrance signs are available at only two of the three major entrances to Sonoma Coast SB, resulting in low recognition of State Beach facilities. Because most visitors arrive at Sonoma Coast SB by private motorized vehicles, there is the need to provide sufficient parking space at each major point of interest.

Public transportation, including buses, could provide access to Sonoma Coast SB for people who choose to visit Sonoma Coast SB by public transportation. Currently, Mendocino Transit Authority provides limited bus service with stops near Sonoma Coast SB. Feasibility of increasing bus service would depend on the expected level of existing and future use. The goals below addresses vehicular circulation to and within Sonoma Coast SB:

Goal ROAD-1: Provide for a system of roadways, parking areas, and road signage that is safe and convenient for different modes of transportation, provides orientation and direction to visitors, and is consistent with the protection of resources.

- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1A:** Develop a comprehensive roadway management plan, in coordination with Caltrans and Sonoma County, where appropriate.

- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1B:** Evaluate road signage throughout Sonoma Coast SB to determine whether it is adequate to orient and direct visitors arriving at Sonoma Coast SB. Install signage to bring visitors' attention to the primary destinations and attractions, to distinguish between designated parking areas and scenic pull-outs, and to provide appropriate warnings of potential hazards. Investigate signage possibilities for increasing stronger identity or recognition of Sonoma Coast SB areas and facilities as a part of a distinctive state park.
- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1C:** Coordinate with Caltrans and Sonoma County to assure that improvement and maintenance of roadways in and around Sonoma Coast SB will result in easy and enjoyable driving experience for motorists, consistent with resource management goals and guidelines. Improvements may include the following that are identified by Caltrans:
 - Road widening where feasible;
 - Realignment to correct poor site distance and horizontal curvature;
 - Turning lanes at new or existing roads that intersect State Route 1, especially if current or future turning movements are heavy enough to reduce the level of service at the intersections;
 - Turning lanes to major parking facilities;
 - Turning restrictions where appropriate;
 - Increased parking management, development, and enforcement programs;
 - Other traffic engineering applications to maintain traffic flow and enhance safety.
- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1D:** Explore the possibility of adding a bike lane or bike path along SR 1, consistent with resource management goals and guidelines.
- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1E:** Coordinate with Mendocino Transit Authority, Sonoma County Transit, and local organizations to maintain existing public bus services and consider providing additional public transportation to the primary attractions of Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1F:** Consider removing parking areas where hazards cannot be avoided, adding off-highway parking areas where on-highway parking conditions are hazardous, and requiring the incorporation of sufficient parking capacity, serving various vehicle types, into facility development plans.
- ▶ **Guideline ROAD-1G:** Coordinate with Caltrans and Sonoma County to provide sufficient emergency vehicle access on the roadways in and around Sonoma Coast SB.

Trails

Trails within Sonoma Coast SB serve non-motorized activities, such as horseback riding, and hiking. Aside from providing access to the coast, a regional network of trails can provide visitors the option of traveling to and within Sonoma Coast SB without the use of private

motorized vehicles. As trail development in the region progresses (i.e., California Coastal Trail) and as populations grow, it is anticipated that Sonoma Coast SB will experience an increased demand for multi-use trail systems. Issues that must be considered in the development of a multi-use trail system include the types of uses allowed on each of the segments, effects on vegetation and wildlife, and the need for directional signage and maps. Determination of appropriate non-motorized activities on trails shall be part of a unit-wide trails management plan.

Goal TRAIL-1: Enhance visitor access to, and visitor experiences with, resources in and around Sonoma Coast SB by providing an interconnecting trail network within Sonoma Coast SB for various transportation modes where appropriate and linkages to regional trail systems.

- ▶ **Guideline TRAIL-1A:** Prepare a trails management plan to evaluate the entire trail system within Sonoma Coast SB and provide management recommendations for existing trails and the placement and use of any future trails. Emphasis should be placed on creating the appropriate type and amount of opportunities for visitors to enjoy the diverse topography, biotic communities, and scenic views at Sonoma Coast SB, as well as possible regional connections. To be consistent with the Department’s goal of increasing access to walking and hiking trails for people with disabilities, the trail management plan shall be consistent with the accessible trail program formulated through the Department’s ‘Transition and Trail Plans for Accessibility in State Parks’ and with other applicable ADA compliance guidelines. The trail management plan shall consider forming an interconnecting network of trails throughout Sonoma Coast SB. Multiple uses on trails (e.g., walking/hiking, biking, and horseback riding) shall be allowed where appropriate and compatible. The actual location, distance, and use of future trails should be guided by the trail management plan.
- ▶ **Guideline TRAIL-1B:** Provide amenities, such as interpretive and educational resources panels, along trails where appropriate.
- ▶ **Guideline TRAIL-1C:** Coordinate with State and local agencies and community organizations to incorporate connections to the regional bicycle trail system.
- ▶ **Guideline TRAIL-1D:** Coordinate with State and local agencies to incorporate State Beach trails into the California Coastal Trail planning process.
- ▶ **Guideline TRAIL-1E:** Explore strategies to provide access to campsites, alternative overnight accommodations, trails, vistas, overlooks, and historical resources in balance with the scenic character of Sonoma Coast SB.

Public Safety

Public safety is an important concern at Sonoma Coast SB, as the coastline experiences riptides and strong offshore currents at high frequencies. In addition, high level of erosion caused by seasonal waves, stormwater runoff, and visitor use cause some trails to become unsafe for visitors at times and may require temporary closure to the public. The

Department's objective to providing a safe visitor experience for all park users is reflected in the goal below:

Goal SAFE-1: Provide facilities and services that contribute to the safety and convenience of visitors.

- ▶ **Guideline SAFE-1A:** Work with local communities, local districts and agencies, and State agencies to provide a unified delivery of services in response to structural and public safety emergencies, training and utilizing the expertise of all personnel.
- ▶ **Guideline SAFE-1B:** Evaluate signage informing visitor of riptides, undercurrent hazards, and other known hazards. Install or improve signage where appropriate and necessary.
- ▶ **Guideline SAFE-1C:** Continue to provide lifeguard services as feasible.
- ▶ **Guideline SAFE-1D:** Maintain trails in safe conditions where feasible and monitor for hazards. Close trails with unsafe conditions until improvements are completed.

Operational and Recreational Facilities

Adequate facilities, including vehicle service yards, ranger and lifeguard offices, maintenance yard and operations offices, and visitor center, are critical for the administration and operations of Sonoma Coast SB and the District. Where existing facilities are inadequate or are located in environmentally incompatible areas, facility relocations and/or a more appropriate use of the site should be considered once a new, more compatible location is identified and Department resources are available.

Planning for the development of new facilities within Sonoma Coast SB involves consideration of a number of physical factors (e.g., flooding, scenic quality, availability of water, compatibility of wastewater systems with site soils, sensitivity of nearby natural and cultural resources) and logistic factors (e.g., response time, nearness to park entrances, accessibility from highways, and proximity to other park units within the District). For example, new facilities and improvements should not be located adjacent to sensitive resources unless the particular locations are key to the purpose of the facility (i.e., interpretive panels of the sensitive resources, environmental campground in primitive setting). The facility types considered for locations adjacent to sensitive uses should have minimal building footprint or otherwise result in minimal adverse impacts (i.e., new administrative buildings or a new visitor center, which experience heavy use, should not be located adjacent to sensitive resources). The following goal addresses both existing facilities and the planning and development process for new facilities.

Goal FAC-1: Develop and maintain environmentally compatible and logistically convenient facilities in order to meet visitor, staff, and park management needs and to support efficient operations.

- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1A:** Develop a comprehensive facilities master plan if necessary. The plan should consider appropriate locations for parking and staging areas, ranger station, visitor center, maintenance yard, other interpretive facilities, camping facilities, and other recreational facilities.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1B:** Major facilities should be located in the Potential Development Areas identified in Exhibit 3-2 or on new properties acquired for the purpose of facility development. New development of facilities should consider the site selection criteria in Table 3-1 in Section 3.2.2 to determine site suitability. Potential environmental effects will be mitigated to the extent feasible.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1C:** Maintain and upgrade existing facilities as needed.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1D:** Acquire additional lands from willing sellers when available and suitable to support the management goals.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1E:** When planning new facility development or property acquisitions, consider the needs for public safety personnel, equipment, and communication systems.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1F:** When reviewing potential new facility development or property acquisitions, assess the ability to provide for adequate public safety as part of the environmental review.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1G:** Consult with other state agencies, such as the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, prior to initiating construction activities.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1H:** Conduct project-specific geotechnical evaluations prior to preparation of final plans for development on sites that would subject property or persons to significant risks from geologic hazards. Site mitigation, if necessary, shall conform to the recommendations in the geotechnical evaluations.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1I:** Conduct noise studies if required, for development or improvements that may cause State noise standard exceedances at nearby sensitive use sites. Implement recommendations from the noise studies to reduce generated sounds to within acceptable noise levels.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1J:** Where new utility infrastructure or facilities associated with public services are needed to serve Sonoma Coast SB, mitigation measures shall be implemented to the extent feasible in order to minimize degradation of the environmental quality of Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline FAC-1K:** Design all facility development projects consistently with the local coastal program, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all other applicable laws, regulations, and plans.

Sustainability

A widely used definition of sustainable development is a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainability is integrated as a basic tenet of this Preliminary General Plan, as illustrated in the management guidelines and recommendations for facility locations based on a natural and cultural resource–based opportunity and constraints analysis. This Preliminary General Plan also encourages adaptive management techniques to monitor and adjust approaches to resource and visitor management with long-term benefits for each. Sustainable design practices can also be incorporated into future area-specific projects during the planning and design phases. The benefits of sustainable design concepts and practices include:

- ▶ Increasing environmental benefits (conservation of natural resources and reduced waste)
- ▶ Reducing operating costs through less energy consumption
- ▶ Promoting better health for park visitors (for example, through use of fewer toxic and low-emitting materials and interior climate control)
- ▶ Increasing operations and maintenance efficiency (more durable products, less maintenance of toxic substances, lower maintenance costs from resource and energy conservation)
- ▶ Using adaptive management techniques to monitor and adjust approaches to resource and visitor management for long-term benefits to each

Goal SUST-1: Incorporate principles and practices of sustainability into the park’s design, improvements, and maintenance and operations, and utilize adaptive management principles.

- ▶ **Guideline SUST-1:** To the extent feasible, consider sustainable practices in site design, construction, maintenance, and operations. Sustainable principles used in design and management emphasize environmental sensitivity in construction, the use of non-toxic materials and renewable resources, resource conservation, recycling, and energy efficiency.
- ▶ **Guideline SUST-2:** Programs such as LEEDs (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) should be consulted for development of facilities and site-related construction.

Community Involvement and Agency Cooperation

The local communities of Jenner, Bodega Bay, and others are an important resource in planning and program implementation. Fostering the relationship between Sonoma Coast SB and the local communities promotes public support and involvement in the protection of unique natural, cultural and scenic resources. Community groups and individuals can also assist staff in day-to-day operations, as well as providing information to staff (i.e., alerting rangers to unusual occurrences). Private companies can also provide concessionary services that facilitate desired and appropriate recreational activities within Sonoma Coast SB.

Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with Sonoma County, the California Coastal Commission and other government agencies, particularly during the Local Coastal Plan update process, would minimize planning and regulatory conflicts and increase mutual cooperation in achieving the mission of each agency. The following goal aims to promote community involvement and agency cooperation.

Goal COMM-1: Maintain open communication and cooperation with local communities, local Native American tribes, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders in the planning and management of Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline COMM-1A:** Conduct surveys to determine additional services that would be supported by park visitors. Based on survey analysis and trend identification, and if appropriate and economically feasible, encourage appropriate concessions and work with nearby communities and other stakeholders to provide visitor services.
- ▶ **Guideline COMM-1B:** When appropriate, involve community groups and provide public participation opportunities during the planning phases of major facility development projects.
- ▶ **Guideline COMM-1C:** Continues to encourage community groups to participate in the protection, interpretation and restoration of natural and cultural resources within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline COMM-1D:** Comply with the goals and policies in the Local Coastal Plan. Where LCP policies and General Plan guidelines are in conflict, the more specific and/or stricter of the two shall apply. When LCP permits are required, LCP policies and standards prevail. When LCP permits are not required, GP policies prevail.
- ▶ **Guideline COMM-1E:** Participate in the Local Coastal Plan update process. Coordinate with Sonoma County to ensure the Local Coastal Plan and the General Plan are mutually compatible.

3.2.2 SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

Recreational and administrative facilities may be developed within Sonoma Coast SB in the future in order to meet visitor and operational needs. Development sites would be required to be evaluated for their appropriateness for development according to site-selection criteria (Table 3-1). Evaluation would take place prior to the Department's approval for use of any particular site for any development or improvement projects. The site selection criteria vary based on the type of facility or improvement. Criteria have been established for the following facility types: campgrounds, alternative overnight facilities, day-use areas, visitor center, administrative center, trails, bikeways, boat launches, scenic viewpoints, and parking areas.

**Table 3-1
Site Selection Criteria**

Facility or Improvement	Siting Criteria
Visitor Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Easy and safe access to major highway ▶ Availability of utilities (e.g., water, sewer or septic, electricity) ▶ Large enough area to accommodate parking lot and buildings ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources, or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Outside 100-year floodplain ▶ Without significant effect on scenic resources and coastal views, as seen from roadways, trails, and scenic viewpoints ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks
Environmental Campgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Connection to trails ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks ▶ Close proximity to recreational resources
Campgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Outside 100-year floodplain ▶ Large enough area to accommodate parking lot and buildings ▶ Availability of utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electricity) ▶ Connection to roadway ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks ▶ Close to recreational resources.
Alternative Overnight Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Outside 100-year floodplain ▶ Large enough area to accommodate parking area and buildings ▶ Availability of utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electricity) ▶ Connection to roadway ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks ▶ Close to recreational resources

**Table 3-1
Site Selection Criteria**

Facility or Improvement	Siting Criteria
Day-use Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Large enough area to accommodate parking lot and buildings ▶ Availability of utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electricity) ▶ Connection to roadway ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks
Administrative and Operational Center (Maintenance Facility, Ranger Station, Employee Housing, Lifeguard Station)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Large enough area to accommodate parking lot and buildings ▶ Availability of utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electricity) ▶ Connection to roadway ▶ Central/convenient location within Unit and District ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Average slope of less than 10% ▶ Outside 100-year floodplain ▶ Without visual obstruction of scenic resources as viewed from roadways, trails, and scenic viewpoints ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks
Multi-use Trails and Coastal Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Connection to roadway and parking areas ▶ ADA accessible ▶ Connection to regional trail network ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks
Bike Ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sufficient roadway shoulder width, if on roadway ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Connection to regional network ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks
Boat Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ ADA accessible
Scenic Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks ▶ ADA accessible ▶ Easy and safe access to major highway

Table 3-1 Site Selection Criteria	
Facility or Improvement	Siting Criteria
Parking Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sufficient roadway shoulder width, if on roadway ▶ Site without sensitive and special status natural resources and sensitive cultural resources or where effects can be minimized and mitigated ▶ Outside areas demonstrated to be prone to landsliding and falling rocks ▶ ADA accessible ▶ Close to recreational resources or trails ▶ Easy and safe access to major highway

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF VISITOR USE IMPACTS—CARRYING CAPACITY

PRC §§5001.96 and 5019.5 require that the land carrying capacity be determined before any park development plan is adopted, and that attendance at State Park System units be held within the limits established by this capacity. A definition of carrying capacity by the code, however, is not provided.

3.3.1 CHARACTERIZATION OF CARRYING CAPACITY

The carrying capacity of land is developed by evaluating the interaction between land uses and natural systems and determining how these interactions will affect, over time, the land’s integrity and sustainability. Maximum capacity is the point at which land regeneration is just exceeded by demands made on natural systems and at which degradation or destruction of the systems occurs. Carrying capacity not only relates to the area’s environmental resources but also the quality of the visitor experience.

In terms of park and recreation planning, carrying capacity may be extended in meaning to suggest that no cumulative net losses will be permitted to occur in any of the unit’s resource values (natural, cultural, aesthetic, or recreational) because of human use (activities or facility development). However, seemingly insignificant effects can have a permanent impact on resource values. Therefore, the intent of the Public Resource Code is to avoid degradation of resource-based park systems. The large variety of factors involved in damage to natural resources and the complexity of the interactions among the factors makes establishing a carrying capacity number difficult. Visitation, individual or group usage, time, and types and patterns of recreational use all contribute to the impact on resource systems. To aid in impact minimization, management can regulate capacity limits and land use, enact mitigation measures, educate and interpret for the public, and ensure proper design. Determination of resource location and significance allows management to create future guidelines for public use of a park and access to it.

3.3.2 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management is a tool to address carrying capacity (or allowable use intensity) issues and is included in the guidelines within this General Plan. Adaptive management is an ongoing, iterative process of determining desired conditions, selecting and monitoring qualitative indicators and quantitative standards that are reflective of these desired conditions, and then taking additional management actions if adequate progress toward the desired conditions is not being made.

The desired conditions for Sonoma Coast SB are reflected in the management goals above in Section 3.2, particularly those pertaining to visitor experience and resource protection. If the Department determines that the entire State Beach or a specific area of Sonoma Coast SB is not meeting the goals and that desired conditions would not have been realized, then management action would be initiated. Management action could determine that the violation was caused by natural variation (e.g., seismic activity) or by human-induced variables (e.g., trampling associated with increasing hiking activities). Actions to manage or limit visitor use would be implemented when the desired condition was not met because of impacts associated with visitor use. Management actions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Site management: Implement measures affecting facility design, barriers, surface treatments, area or facility closure, change in access locations, or redirection of visitors to other areas.
- ▶ Regulations: Limit number of people, location or time of use, permitted activities, and allowable equipment (i.e., seasonal restrictions on use, such as trail or area closures during wet or extreme conditions).
- ▶ Enforcement of regulations: Institute or increase patrols, notifications of infractions, and citations for violations.
- ▶ Education: Provide informative signs and exhibits, interpretive programs or activities, brochures and fliers to be handed out at park entrance, meetings with user groups.

Following the implementation of the management action, monitoring should be conducted to determine if the desired outcome is being achieved. This would include annual updates of the Natural Resources Baseline Condition Assessment. When the desired outcomes are achieved, then Sonoma Coast SB is being operated within its carrying capacity. If the desired outcomes are not being achieved, then alternative management actions would be carried out until the desired outcome is achieved.

3.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INDICATORS

Desired conditions, which are reflected in the management goals in this General Plan, and their associated risk of non-attainment, include the following:

- ▶ Maintenance of sustainable populations of special-status plant, fish and wildlife species;
- ▶ Retention of the integrity and value of cultural resources;
- ▶ Maintenance of a quality visitor experience;
- ▶ Preservation of the water quality within Sonoma Coast SB; and
- ▶ Protection of the scenic resources within the viewsheds.

Desired conditions may be measured by assessing whether environmental quality indicators have been achieved. Potential mechanisms for monitoring these environmental indicators may include, but are not limited to the following:

- ▶ Long-term monitoring of special-status species populations;
- ▶ Ongoing inventories of biological resources in Sonoma Coast SB;
- ▶ Monitoring of invasive species populations;
- ▶ Conducting visitor surveys regarding satisfaction and overall experience;
- ▶ Monitoring water quality at selected sites; and
- ▶ Develop screening criteria for future development aimed at protection scenic resources.

Successful results would be attained if the monitoring process is feasible to accomplish as a part of regular operations. For example, if the environmental quality indicators are physical conditions that are observable during the day-to-day operational activities, then the monitoring process would occur continuously with minimum additional effort. Qualitative measurements are preferred, if detailed quantitative monitoring and analyses render the monitoring process infeasible. In all cases, however, the environmental quality indicators should be good predictors of the desired outcome. Thus, for some desired outcomes (e.g., sustainable populations of special-status species), the indicator monitoring processes may require field surveys undertaken by staff with special qualifications. Table 3-2 contains a sampling of environmental quality indicators that are developed based on some of the management goals in this General Plan and their associated desired outcomes. It should be noted that environmental quality indicators may be modified on a regular basis, based on site-specific knowledge, recent observations in the field, and updates in scientific understandings.

3.4 MANAGEMENT ZONES

Management zones were developed to address the distinct natural, aesthetic, and recreational values found in Sonoma Coast SB. Each of the management zones encompass parts of Sonoma Coast SB that have similar characteristics and would be managed similarly. For the purpose of this General Plan, Sonoma Coast SB was divided into two management zones, as illustrated in Exhibit 3-1. The primary distinction between these two management zones is their relationship to the watershed. In addition to these two management zones, there are two overlay zones that include lands within the management zones. The overlay zones are based on special natural and cultural resources within Sonoma Coast SB.

Table 3-2 Sample of Desired Outcomes and Environmental Quality Indicators			
Goal	Desired Outcome	Environmental Quality Indicators ¹	Potential Monitoring Activities
<p>Goal NAT-2: Protect special-status plants within Sonoma Coast SB to manage for their perpetuation and enhancement in accordance with State and federal law.</p> <p>Goal NAT-4: Protect special-status fish and wildlife species within Sonoma Coast SB to manage for their perpetuation and enhancement in accordance with State and federal law.</p>	Sustainable populations of special-status plant and wildlife species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased occurrence of special-status plants species. ▶ Active nest sites. ▶ Presence of suitable habitat. ▶ Abundance of prey species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Periodic field surveys. ▶ Checks for active nest sites prior to construction activities.
Goal CUL-1: Protect and preserve significant prehistoric and historic resources within Sonoma Coast SB	Retention of the integrity and value of cultural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lack of disturbance to known archaeological sites. ▶ Retention of historic building facades. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Staff observations during day-to-day operations.
<p>¹ Environmental Quality Indicators may be updated by park staff based on field observations, new scientific knowledge, etc.</p>			

3.4.1 MANAGEMENT ZONE GOALS AND GUIDELINES

In addition to the park-wide goals and guidelines that are applicable to the entire State Beach, specific goals and guidelines were developed for each management zone, as described below.

COASTLINE MANAGEMENT ZONE

Statement of Management Intent

The 4,597-acre Coastline zone includes areas of Sonoma Coast SB that are along the coastline and on the west side of the Coast Range crest. Watersheds within this zone drain directly into the Pacific Ocean. The primary purpose of this zone is to protect coastal resources and to support recreation associated with the coast.

Coastal Access

Coastal access is a primary concern within this management zone because it is key to many of the recreational activities enjoyed by visitors. For instance, the beaches are a main attraction of Sonoma Coast SB. Some of the beaches are located adjacent to parking areas and therefore easy to access. The rugged nature of the coastline at other beach locations, however, makes beach access extremely difficult for people with limited mobility. Maintaining coastal access and providing visitors of varying abilities with the opportunity to enjoy the coast is a goal of Sonoma Coast SB.

Goal COAST-1: Provide and maintain coastal access for visitors of varying abilities.

- ▶ **Guideline COAST-1A:** Comply with requirements established by the California Coastal Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other applicable laws and regulations to the extent feasible and required.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-1B:** Maintain existing facilities at Sonoma Coast SB, including fully accessible trails, such as the Vista Trail and the boardwalk at Bodega Dunes.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-1C:** When planning new coastal access point, consider the feasibility of accommodating visitors of all abilities.

Water Quality

Land uses in this management zone and the surrounding areas results in runoff that may contain pollutants and sediments that could degrade water quality of the streams and their estuaries, as well as Bodega Bay. Because visitors enter the water in these areas, poor water quality poses public health risks. Sound planning decisions and best management practices can help improve water quality, which is crucial in sustaining healthy aquatic habitats, maintaining safe conditions for visitors, and providing water supplies to the local community.

Goal COAST-2: Provide for water quality within the springs, streams, estuaries, and coastal waters at Sonoma Coast SB that is safe for visitors and keeps water bodies inhabitable for wildlife and plant species.

- ▶ **Guideline COAST-2A:** Coordinate with Sonoma County Division of Environmental Health and the State Water Resources Control Board to identify any potential sources and

management strategies for the control of pollutants in any waterbodies that originate from Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline COAST-2B:** Restore native vegetation bordering the streams and springs, where feasible, to filter sediments and other pollutants from runoff that enter these water bodies.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-2C:** Prepare and implement erosion control plans, in accordance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), for development involving excavation or other ground surface disturbances that have the potential for increasing the generation of sediment-carrying runoff.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-2D:** Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the day-to-day operations of Sonoma Coast SB.

Aesthetics

The scenic quality of Sonoma Coast SB is primarily based on Sonoma Coast SB's location along the coastline and the presence of its myriad hydrological, geological, and biological resources. Because many of these scenic features are visible from SR 1, Sonoma Coast SB presents a coastal landscape that can be appreciated by both park visitors and casual "passers-by." In managing for the aesthetic quality of Sonoma Coast SB, three key elements must be considered: the scenic resource within the viewshed, public viewpoints that provide access to these views, and management proposals that would introduce new facilities in the existing landscape.

Public viewpoints are locations that allow unobstructed views of unique scenic features or perspectives of scenic resources, such as Arched Rocks, Goat Rock, and the mouth of the Russian River. Public access to these view points, through trails or roadways, enhances the visitor's appreciation of Sonoma Coast SB and the coastal environment.

Goal COAST-3: Preserve the natural beauty of the coastal viewshed in and around Sonoma Coast SB for the enjoyment of visitors.

- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3A:** Designate public viewpoints along trails and roadways where views of the coastline, the Coast Range, or other visual resources are not obstructed by existing vegetation or other natural and man-made features.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3B:** Coordinate with Caltrans to develop pull-outs or other parking areas for designated viewpoints along SR 1.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3C:** Provide signage at designated viewpoints to facilitate public viewing and interpretation of resources.

- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3D:** Establish appropriate visual screening of existing and new facility developments that are visible from the State routes or the designated scenic viewpoints.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3E:** Avoid new development that would decrease the scenic quality of resources within or near Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3F:** Provide input to Sonoma County and California Coastal Commission regarding visual impacts of private development within the coastal viewshed that are visible from points within Sonoma Coast SB, particularly if the private development would be visible from designated viewpoints.
- ▶ **Guideline COAST-3G:** Shield light sources to reduce light pollution that can degrade night-time views of the coast and the sky.

INLAND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT ZONE

Statement of Management Intent

This 1,627-acre management zone encompasses portions of Sonoma Coast SB that are both east of the Coast Range Crest and located within the watersheds of the Russian River and of its tributary, Willow Creek. The Willow Creek watershed is located to the east of the crest line of the hills. Natural resources located within this zone include stands of redwood and fir, riparian forests and scrub, and wetlands. It contains formerly logged land in need of rehabilitation.

Water Quality

The stretch of Russian River near this management zone is a “water quality limited segment” as listed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) on its Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List (RWQCB 2003) for exceedance of water quality standards for temperature and sedimentation/siltation. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Board is charged with developing action plans, called as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL), to improve water quality (SWRCB 2003).

The Willow Creek watershed has historically been used for agricultural and logging activities that have contributed to the sedimentation of Willow Creek. Management of the natural resources within this watershed (i.e., restoration of the native habitat) was the primary reason for the acquisition of the Willow Creek property. Without adequate water quality control, further development in this management zone and the surrounding areas may contribute runoff with pollutants and sediments that can degrade water quality. Thus, future uses within this management zone should be designed to avoid adverse water quality effects.

Goal INLAND-1: Improve the water quality in Russian River, Willow Creek, and other inland waterways.

- ▶ **Guideline INLAND-1A:** Coordinate with Sonoma County to treat sediment-carrying runoff from roadways, where appropriate.
- ▶ **Guideline INLAND -1B:** Explore desirability and feasibility of restoration in Willow Creek, including stream, watershed, and logging roads for the purposes of maintaining and improving water quality. Prepare and implement a Willow Creek restoration management plan, if necessary. The plan may include erosion control plans, in accordance with water quality requirements, for development involving excavation or other ground surface disturbances that would increase the potential for generating sediment-carrying runoff. The plan may also include conversion or improvement of logging roads, with consideration of their potential historic significance. Storm-proofing of roads and establishment of vegetative buffers shall also be considered to minimize stormwater runoff that can degrade water quality.

Aesthetics

The primary visual resources in the Willow Creek watershed are the Coast Range and the meadow, and the primary visual characteristic is of a meadow within a forested valley with little visible development. The portion of the Russian River watershed near Sonoma Coast SB exhibit more development but retains much of the forest and riparian scenery that has resulted in the designated of SR 116 as a State Scenic Highway. Preservation of the natural scenery would be crucial in maintaining the visual and recreational value within this management zone.

Goal INLAND-2: Preserve the natural beauty of the inland viewshed in and around Sonoma Coast SB for the enjoyment of visitors.

- ▶ **Guideline INLAND-2A:** Establish appropriate visual screening of existing and new facility developments that are visible from the roadways and trails.
- ▶ **Guideline INLAND-2B:** Restore the native vegetation within the Willow Creek watershed in order to present primitive scenery of the valley.
- ▶ **Guideline INLAND-2C:** Provide input to Sonoma County regarding visual impacts of private developments within the viewsheds that are visible from points within Sonoma Coast SB.
- ▶ **Guideline INLAND-2D** Shield light sources to reduce light pollution that can degrade night-time views of the sky.

OVERLAY ZONES

Overlay zones are intended for smaller areas within each management zone that have special resource values. In addition to the goals and guidelines of the management zones, the overlay zones impose additional goals and guidelines with which actions within the overlay zones must comply. The overlay zones are centered on the known locations of unique or

sensitive resources. The boundaries of the overlay zones are approximate. Applicability of the guidelines, including the management actions they require, would be determined by qualified staff in order to achieve the management goals.

NATURAL RESOURCE OVERLAY ZONE

Statement of Management Intent

The Natural Resource Overlay Zone is intended for sensitive biological communities, habitat for special-status species, and other areas with special biological resources that must be afforded special protection because of degradation of habitat or its value from existing uses. Within this General Plan, four Natural Resource Overlay Zones are identified including the Russian River and Salmon Creek estuaries, the lower Willow Creek wetlands and Salmon Beach. Additional areas may be included within the Natural Resource Overlay Zone in the future.

Goal NR-1: Ensure the protection of special-status species or designated sensitive biotic communities that are of particular concern in Sonoma Coast SB.

- ▶ **Guideline NR-1A:** Coordinate with Sonoma County Water Agency, State Lands Commission, and other state and federal agencies in the management of the Russian River, Willow Creek, and Salmon Creek Estuaries. Management issues include the closing and opening of the Russian River’s mouth, as well as effects on fish populations, marine mammals, and other aquatic life.
- ▶ **Guideline NR-1B:** Participate in the preparation of management plans for the Salmon Creek Estuary and the Russian River and its estuary, in coordination with other State agencies. The management plans should address water quality, special-status wildlife species (e.g., steelhead, coho salmon, tidewater goby, freshwater shrimp) and other aquatic life.
- ▶ **Guideline NR-1C:** Consider designating areas within the Natural Resource Overlay Zone as Natural Preserve. Implement protective measures appropriate for Natural Resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCE OVERLAY ZONE

Statement of Management Intent

The Cultural Resource Overlay Zone is intended for significant prehistoric and historic resources that should be afforded special protection because of degradation of cultural resources and paleontological resources or their value from existing uses.

Goal CR-1: Ensure the protection of cultural resources and paleontological resources determined to be of special historic or archaeological significance within the zone.

- ▶ **Guideline CR-1A:** Include consideration of unique and highly significant cultural and paleontological resources identified by the Cultural Resource Overlay Zone in the park-wide cultural resource management plan. The plan shall consider the use of the Cultural Preserve classification to protect those resources. Implement actions in the management plan, such as limiting recreational uses and habitat restoration activities associated with these resources, and monitor their effectiveness.
- ▶ **Guideline CR-1B:** Consider designating areas within the Cultural Resource Overlay Zone as Cultural Preserves. Implement protective measures appropriate for Cultural Preserves.