

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Acquisition of Property at Big River

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will hold a hearing to hear comments on its proposal to acquire up to $\pm 7,400$ acres of land in the Big River drainage of Mendocino County. DPR intends to add the land to the State Park System. This acquisition would place the entire 8.3-mile tidal reach of Big River and the forested area around it within public ownership. To the north the property borders on Jackson State Forest, Mendocino Woodlands State Park, and private lands, to the east by lands of Hawthorne Timber Company, to the south by private lands along Comptche-Ukiah Road, and to the west by Mendocino Headlands State Park. Second-growth redwood forest covers most of the upland property, with some wetlands and pockets of hardwoods interspersed. The 8.3-mile long estuary of Big River is scenically and biologically outstanding, and it provides recreation opportunities for hikers, mountain bikers, paddle-boaters, wildlife watchers and others. Despite heavy logging, the Big River system supports spawning runs of coho salmon and/or steelhead throughout its basin. Juvenile fish use the extensive estuary as crucial rearing habitat, and a higher-than-average return rate of spawning adult fish in the Big River system has been the result. No one resides on the property, but there is a working aggregate quarry along the river that can be seen from the Highway 1 bridge. Operators of the quarry will cease operation by close of escrow and begin reclaiming the property under conditions of their permits. Two local private land trusts, Trust for Wildland Communities and Mendocino Land Trust, have taken the lead on acquiring the property and have raised substantial funds from private sources. Public agencies including the Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, DPR, and others will also contribute major sums. The Hawthorne Timber Company, a division of Campbell Timberland Management, currently owns the property. **The hearing will be held at Crown Hall, 45285 Ukiah Street (between William and Heeser streets), Mendocino, on Thursday, November 15, 2001, from 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.** Off-street parking is available.

The purpose of the hearing is to record comments from local public officials and the general public on reasons this property should or should not be acquired by DPR for state park purposes. Staff will make a background presentation before opening the podium for comments. DPR will also accept written comments for the record if received by November 20. Please submit written comments at the hearing or send them to Warren Westrup, Chief, Office of Acquisition and Real Property Services, California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814.

As required by law, DPR will then submit a summary of the comments to the State Legislature prior to acquisition approval.

Questions about this notice may be directed to Roger Willmarth at (916) 445-9099, or by e-mail at rwillm@parks.ca.gov. Information about the proposal is available on the DPR website at www.parks.ca.gov under *News and Announcements/News Releases 2001*.

Warren E. Westrup, Chief
Office of Acquisition and Real Property Services