# CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219 VOICE AND TDD (415) 904-5200 FAX (415) 904-5400

# RECORD PACKET COPY



# W 10b

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

## **ON CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION**

 Consistency Determination No.
 CD-085-04

 Staff:
 LJS-SF

 File Date:
 11/17/2004

 60<sup>th</sup> Day:
 1/16/2005

 75<sup>th</sup> Day:
 1/31/2005

 Commission Meeting:
 1/12/2005

#### **FEDERAL AGENCY:**

# Bureau of Land Management

#### **DEVELOPMENT** LOCATION:

King Range National Conservation Area, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties (Exhibits 1 and 2)

#### DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

Resource Management Plan

# SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

- Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, King Range National Conservation Area, Bureau of Land Management – Arcata Field Office, November 2004.
- 2. Consistency Determination CD-024-86 (BLM, King Range NCA Transportation Plan)
- 3. Negative Determination ND-121-95 (BLM, King Range NCA Transportation Plan Amendment)
- 4. Consistency Determination CD-144-97 (BLM, King Range NCA, prohibit off-road vehicle use on Black Sands Beach)
- 5. Negative Determination ND-040-99 (BLM, King Range NCA, construction of visitor parking lot at Black Sands Beach)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has submitted a consistency determination for a Resource Management Plan for the King Range National Conservation Area (KRNCA), located on and inland of the southern Humboldt County and extreme northern Mendocino County shoreline. The RMP was developed to evaluate the original 1974 King Range Management Program and to reaffirm and reestablish guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions for the KRNCA that reflect current issues, knowledge, and conditions. The mission statement for the KRNCA states that the BLM will manage the KRNCA to conserve one of America's last wild and undeveloped coastal landscapes for use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The RMP is intended to provide overall management direction for the area, and includes only a limited number of actions that will be directly implemented without additional site-specific analysis. The BLM states that any facility expansions or other site-specific actions proposed for the coastal zone will include a more detailed environmental analysis and Coastal Consistency review prior to project implementation.

The proposed RMP provides for three management zones in the KRNCA – Backcountry, Frontcountry, and Residential. These zones represent a consolidation, revision, and simplification of the seven original zones in the 1974 King Range Management Program. All three zones allow multiple uses but each emphasizes different primary resource values to be conserved and/or allowable uses available in various parts of the planning area. The proposed RMP outlines management direction for the KRNCA by resource categories and includes for each category an analysis of goals (broad overall vision), objectives and standards (more specific direction to meet certain aspects of a goal), and management actions and allowable uses (the most specific level of direction).

The RMP examines the wide diversity of recreational opportunities currently available to the public in the KRNCA, primarily sightseeing, wildlife viewing and photography, camping, backpacking and hiking, equestrian use, mountain biking, hunting, surfing, and fishing. The RMP proposes no management changes or development in the KRNCA that would generate any adverse impacts to coastal access and recreation in the adjacent lands or waters of the coastal zone. The proposed closure of the Backcountry Zone coastline to non-emergency motorized watercraft landings and the proposed closure of the Mattole Estuary to the use of all motorized watercraft is consistent with maintaining the existing non-mechanized access and recreational character of the Lost Coast. The RMP calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique and outstanding coastal-oriented recreational activities within the KRNCA. The proposed RMP is consistent with the access and recreation policies (Sections 30210-30214, 30220, 30221, and 30223) of the Coastal Act.

The RMP proposes no management changes or development in the KRNCA that would generate any adverse impacts to marine resources or environmentally sensitive habitats in the adjacent waters and lands of the coastal zone. The RMP calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique aquatic and terrestrial habitats that currently exist within the KRNCA. With these commitments, the marine resources and environmentally sensitive habitats of the coastal zone

would not be adversely affected by KRNCA development activities or management decisions. The proposed RMP is consistent with the marine resources and environmentally sensitive habitat policies (Sections 30230, 30231, and 30240) of the Coastal Act.

The RMP proposes no development that would generate any adverse impacts to scenic views to or along the shoreline. The RMP calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique and outstanding visual resources that currently exist within and towards the KRNCA. With this commitment, the visual resources of the adjacent coastal zone – views to and along the shoreline, offshore waters, and the uplands of the KRNCA – will also be protected. The proposed RMP is consistent with the visual resource policy (Section 30251) of the Coastal Act.

The RMP contains provisions for surveying cultural and archaeological resources, projectspecific environmental assessments, coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and coordination with and participation by Native Americans in surveys, monitoring, protection, and interpretation of cultural and archaeological resources. The proposed RMP is consistent with the cultural and archaeological resource policies (Section 30244) of the Coastal Act.

## **STAFF SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

I. <u>Project Description</u>. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) submitted a consistency determination for its 2004 Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the King Range National Conservation Area (KRNCA), located on and inland of the southern Humboldt County and extreme northern Mendocino County shoreline (Exhibits 1 and 2). The RMP was developed to evaluate the original 1974 King Range Management Program and to reaffirm and reestablish guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions for the KRNCA that reflect current issues, knowledge, and conditions. The following is the RMP Mission Statement:

The BLM will manage the King Range National Conservation Area to conserve one of America's last wild and undeveloped coastal landscapes for use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

As a part of this larger mission, the BLM will:

- Provide recreation opportunities that complement the rugged primitive character that makes the area distinctive as California's Lost Coast.
- Provide for use of natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat with an emphasis on species dependent on oldgrowth forests.
- Provide healthy watersheds for aquatic species with emphasis on anadromous fisheries restoration.

# • Respect community values and seek opportunities for local investment in area conservation and use.

Located approximately 200 miles north of San Francisco, the KRNCA encompasses approximately 38 miles of shoreline between the mouth of the Mattole River south past Shelter Cove to the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, and extends inland from one to seven miles. By comparison, the coastal zone boundary in this area parallels the shoreline approximately 3,000 feet inland. The BLM estimates that the KRNCA is visited by approximately 150,000 people annually, most drawn by the wilderness nature of the longest stretch of undeveloped shoreline in California. The RMP describes the KRNCA as follows:

An abrupt wall of mountains thrusts 4,000 feet above the Pacific, making the area one of the most spectacular and remote stretches of coastline in the continental U.S. The elemental beauty and ever-changing mood of the Pacific Ocean meeting the wild, undeveloped coastline, old-growth forests, and rugged peaks of the King Range inspired the original NCA designation, and continues to draw people from all over the world to visit the Lost Coast of California. Visitors pursue a wide variety of activities, including hiking and backpacking eighty miles of trails, camping, beach-combing, surfing, hunting, vehicular touring and sight-seeing on a 100+ mile network of BLM and county-maintained roads, environmental education, and wildlife viewing. Additional uses involve special forest products collection (mostly wild mushrooms) and livestock grazing by several local ranchers.

The KRNCA includes roughly 58,000 acres of public and 6,000 acres of private lands. Section 304(1) of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act excludes from the coastal zone all lands held in trust by or whose uses are subject to the sole discretion of the federal government. Notwithstanding this exclusion, if proposed activities on excluded lands could affect land or water uses or natural resources of the coastal zone, those activities must be reviewed for consistency with the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP). It is in this context that the Commission is reviewing the proposed RMP for the KRNCA for consistency with the CCMP. (In two recent similar actions, in October 2004 the Commission concurred with CD-070-04 for an Interim Management Plan for the BLM's Stornetta Public Lands in Mendocino County, and in December 2002 the Commission conditionally concurred with CD-052-02 for an Interim Management Plan for lands under BLM management along the South Spit of Humboldt Bay.)

The consistency determination states that the RMP planning effort is:

... comprehensive in nature, evaluating the existing management plan and resolving or addressing issues within the KRNCA identified through agency, interagency, and public scoping efforts.

The Proposed RMP analyzes the current management situation and identifies desired future conditions to be maintained or achieved, and management actions necessary to achieve specific objectives. The plan addresses and integrates all existing management programs

and uses, including but not limited to: recreation and visitor services; fire management; livestock grazing; threatened and endangered species; wilderness characteristics; watershed management; and transportation. The plan meets the requirements of the 1970 King Range Act.

[The RMP] represents the results of a two year planning process which began with a series of public scoping meetings in the fall of 2002. Issues raised in these meetings were addressed in a Draft RMP published in January 2004. The Draft RMP included four alternatives (including a no action alternative). The alternatives were fully analyzed in the draft document . . . A second series of public meetings and a 90 day comment period were held to obtain input on the draft. The Proposed RMP represents the preferred alternative from the Draft RMP with changes made to reflect public comments and agency input.

The consistency determination also notes that the proposed RMP is intended to:

... provide overall management direction for the area, and includes only a limited number of actions that will be directly implemented without additional site-specific analysis. <u>Any</u> facility expansions or other site-specific actions proposed for the coastal zone will include a more detailed environmental analysis and Coastal Consistency review prior to project implementation. [emphasis added]

The proposed RMP provides for three management zones in the KRNCA (Exhibit 3). These zones represent a consolidation, revision, and simplification of the seven original zones in the 1974 King Range Management Program. All three zones allow multiple uses but each emphasizes different primary resource values to be conserved and/or allowable uses available in various parts of the planning area. The proposed zones are described as follows:

#### BACKCOUNTRY ZONE

The Backcountry Zone is the largest of the zones and includes the western coastal slope of the King Range, the Chemise Mountain area, and portions of the Honeydew and Squaw Creek watersheds. This zone covers 38,833 acres. It is essentially roadless, with a primary management goal focused on recognizing and managing this unique and primitive undeveloped coastal area and its wilderness characteristics. This zone is the core of the KRNCA and Lost Coast, providing a primary use of wildland recreation while protecting resources such as old-growth forests, old-growth forest dependent species, and open coastal grasslands. This environmental setting offers the greatest opportunity for solitude and challenge. Any lands within the planning area designated by Congress as wilderness would be incorporated into this zone. Management activities would follow the "minimal-tool" concept to maintain and restore the area to a natural functioning ecosystem. Under this approach, the BLM would achieve resource management objectives with hand tools, except in emergency situations or where motorized equipment is determined through careful analysis to be the minimum necessary tool (e.g. for fire suppression where communities are threatened, or maintenance of the historic Punta Gorda Lighthouse). Appropriate public use would include non-motorized activities with no facilities other than trails and a few primitive facilities (e.g., signs, sanitary facilities) for resource protection.

## FRONTCOUNTRY ZONE

The Frontcountry Zone covers 25,661 acres and forms an interface between the Backcountry Zone and surrounding private lands. It represents a broad mix of uses and tools for management. This is the zone where the most active resource restoration actions would occur, with key goals of developing a more natural vegetation mosaic in previously harvested forest stands, and improving watershed and fisheries health. Protection of private lands adjoining the KRNCA from wildfire risk would also be a primary focus. On-theground management activities would include forest stand improvement, fuels reduction work, fire break construction, or use of heavy equipment for watershed restoration. Public uses in the Frontcountry Zone would include an extensive array of activities, including special forest products harvesting, fuelwood cutting (in specific locations), mountain biking, and camping in existing developed facilities.

Most BLM roads and facilities are located in the southern and central parts of the Frontcountry Zone, many functioning as "staging areas" to provide access for visitors into the backcountry. Despite the concentration of roads and facilities in the southern part of this zone, many parts of the Frontcountry Zone are remote and contain minimal roads and facility developments. Examples are the areas near Cooskie Peak and Fourmile Creek in the northern part of the KRNCA. These lands were incorporated into this zone primarily because of their level of historic use and interface with surrounding private lands, and the need to allow for more intensive fuels management and forest restoration. No additional major public use facility developments (except trails) are proposed for these northern parts of the Frontcountry Zone under this plan.

Much of the Backcountry Zone and a small area in the northern part of the Frontcountry Zone (nonbeach lands from Fourmile Creek north to the Mattole Estuary) are within the King Range Wilderness Study Area. These areas would be managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review until Congress determines whether or not to designate them as Wilderness. If Congress releases all or a portion of these lands from further Wilderness consideration, they would be managed under the objectives of the respective management zones.

#### RESIDENTIAL ZONE

This 2,944 acre zone represents the town of Shelter Cove, which is mostly private land except for approximately 180 acres of beachfront lots and coastal greenspace managed by the BLM. The KRNCA's most highly developed recreation sites are in this zone, and the primary uses and management goals focus on developed recreation and resource protection. The Residential Zone also represents a place to direct visitors who want to experience the grandeur and rugged nature of the Lost Coast without the challenge of experiencing more remote locations in the Frontcountry and Backcountry Zones.

The proposed RMP outlines management direction for the KRNCA by resource categories and includes for each category an analysis of goals (broad overall vision), objectives and standards (more specific direction to meet certain aspects of a goal), and management actions and

allowable uses (the most specific level of direction). More detailed information on RMP goals, objectives, and management actions that hold the potential to affect the coastal zone, and their consistency with the relevant policies of the CCMP, are examined below in Section V of this report.

**II.** <u>Status of Local Coastal Program</u>. The standard of review for federal consistency determinations is the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and not the Local Coastal Program (LCP) of the affected area. If the LCP has been certified by the Commission and incorporated into the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP), it can provide guidance in applying Chapter 3 policies in light of local circumstances. If the LCP has not been incorporated into the CCMP, it cannot be used to guide the Commission's decision, but it can be used as background information. The County of Humboldt's LCP and the County of Mendocino's LCP have been certified by the Commission and incorporated into the CCMP.

**III.** <u>Federal Agency's Consistency Determination</u>. The Bureau of Land Management has determined the project consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the California Coastal Management Program.

## IV. Staff Recommendation.

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

**MOTION:** I move that the Commission <u>concur</u> with consistency determination CD-085-04 that the project described therein is fully consistent, and thus is consistent to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the CCMP.

## **Staff Recommendation:**

The staff recommends a <u>YES</u> vote on the motion. Passage of this motion will result in a concurrence with the determination and adoption of the following resolution and findings. An affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present is required to pass the motion.

## **Resolution to Concur with Consistency Determination:**

The Commission hereby <u>concurs</u> with the consistency determination by the Bureau of Land Management, on the grounds that the project described therein is fully consistent, and thus is consistent to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the CCMP.

# V. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

## A. <u>Public Access and Recreation</u>. The Coastal Act provides the following:

<u>Section 30210</u>. In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

<u>Section 30211</u>. Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

<u>Section 30212(a)</u>. Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where:

(1) It is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources . . .

(2) Adequate access exists nearby ....

<u>Section 30213</u>. Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

<u>Section 30214(a)</u>. The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Topographic and geologic site characteristics.

(2) The capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity.

(3) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses . . . .

<u>Section 30220</u>. Coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities that cannot readily be provided at inland water areas shall be protected for such uses.

<u>Section 30221</u>. Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.

<u>Section 30223</u>. Upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible.

The RMP examines a wide diversity of recreational opportunities available to the public in the KRNCA, primarily sightseeing, wildlife viewing and photography, camping, backpacking and hiking, equestrian use, mountain biking, hunting, surfing, and fishing (**Exhibit 4**). The RMP summarizes the unique coastal access and recreation setting in the KRNCA:

The King Range offers recreation opportunities unique to the region and the entire West Coast, particularly the coastal backcountry experience available on the Lost Coast Trail. For the purposes of this discussion, the recreation region can be defined as the general area along the coast from the Oregon border south to Mendocino, plus a wide inland arc reaching the Mendocino National Forest in the south and the Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests in the north (see Figure 3-18). This area contains numerous state parks as well as national forests, parks, and recreation areas.

With the exception of adjoining Sinkyone Wilderness State Park and a small section of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, all of the region's coastal recreation opportunities at major recreation sites are oriented towards front country (developed, easily accessed) use, mainly beach access and camping, with no backcountry or primitive opportunities. There are several inland wilderness areas where backpacking is a common activity, such as the Yolla Bolly Middle Eel Wilderness and the Trinity Alps, but these offer much different settings and experiences. Other inland sites focus on more developed recreation; for example, the Ruth Lake area is geared towards lake-oriented recreation such as shoreline camping and watercraft use and Benbow Lake State Recreation Area is suited to nonmotorized watercraft, swimming, and picnicking.

The King Range is unique as a place where visitors can take an extended, backcountry camping trip in a coastal setting. Combined with Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, the trail system on the Lost Coast is the largest coastal backcountry trail network in the nation. Although the U.S. has numerous sizable areas of mountain and desert ecosystems that offer backcountry recreation opportunities, primitive coastal settings are extremely limited. In addition to the King Range/Sinkyone coast, only a handful of areas are sizable enough to offer a coastal wilderness experience; the only comparable area on the west coast is Olympic National Park. Point Reyes National Seashore and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park offer some backcountry opportunities, but on a smaller scale.

• • •

The Lost Coast Trail is particularly distinctive as one of the longest stretches of backcountry coastal trail remaining in the western United States. Only Olympic National Park in Washington has a similarly long stretch of backcountry coastline. The Lost Coast Trail follows approximately 56 miles of coastline; the King Range segment is 37 miles long, and the trail then continues south for another 19 miles through the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park.

In addition to the primitive backcountry experience available along the most of the KRNCA shoreline, there are coastal day use areas as well:

The BLM maintains three day-use areas in the community of Shelter Cove. Mal Coombs Park lies in the heart of Shelter Cove, and includes the newly relocated Cape Mendocino Lighthouse (see description below). A stairwell perched on the rocky cliffs of Mal Coombs Park allows access to frequently visited tidepools and sea lion resting areas. BLM maintains a restroom, an information kiosk, interpretive panels, and a picnic area with barbeque facilities at Mal Coombs Park. In addition, Seal Rock and Abalone Point day-use areas have pull-outs off Lower Pacific Drive that offer sightseers a place to picnic with unobstructed views of the ocean. Other than picnic tables and interpretive panels, Seal Rock and Abalone Point day-use areas are undeveloped. Mal Coombs Park has become a popular location for special events such as weddings, memorials, non-profit fundraisers, etc., that require a permit. The BLM processes each request through the Special Recreation Permit process.

Black Sands Beach, known for its distinctive geological composition of greywacke stone, is located just to the north of Shelter Cove, and is a popular day-use area among both visitors and local residents. To keep up with visitor demand, a recently constructed parking lot with restrooms, kiosk, overlooks with interpretive displays, and drinking water resides on a bluff overlooking Black Sands Beach. An emergency telephone with 911 access is located at a smaller universal access parking lot closer to the beach. Black Sands Beach is the most heavily used trailhead to access the King Range portion of the Lost Coast Trail. This causes crowding problems on popular summer weekends when the parking area is filled beyond capacity.

The mouth of the Mattole River is also heavily used for easy beach access by visitors and local residents. The Mattole Beach trailhead is the northern terminus of the Lost Coast Trail and the primary access route for day hikes to Punta Gorda Lighthouse.

The RMP contains two sections that are particularly relevant to the aforementioned Coastal Act policies – Travel Management and Recreation.

<u>Travel Management</u>. The RMP states that the purpose of the travel management program is to provide a transportation network for public and administrative access while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources. In the King Range, all public vehicle routes are in the Frontcountry and Residential Zones, and vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails. The RMP also notes that the KRNCA has a long history of travel management planning, and that the RMP proposes minimal changes to the existing program. The RMP Travel Management goal is as follows:

Provide and maintain a transportation network for public and administrative access that complements the rural character of the KRNCA and surrounding Lost Coast region, provides quality scenic recreational driving opportunities, and has minimal impacts on area resources.

To meet this goal, the RMP includes numerous objectives regarding vehicle use, road use designations, and seasonal use restrictions. In particular, there is an objective to manage the western coastal slope (the Backcountry Zone) of the King Range as a non-mechanized use area, and there is a specific management action regarding the Mattole River Estuary:

<u>TRV 1.8.1.4 (Mattole Estuary Road and Spur)</u>: Approximately 1/2 mile. Limited: Designated Routes Only (route to be marked each spring after high water subsides). Season length would vary based upon water levels. Route would be closed for the season when flooded by winter flows, and reopened when water levels subside in spring.

<u>Rationale</u>: This road and a number of unmaintained spurs provide access into the gravel bars in the Mattole Estuary area. The main road also fords the river to private property on the north side (landowner has an easement). The gravel bars are currently accessed for a variety of uses, including fishing (drift boat takeout), hunting, hiking, overnight camping, and wildlife viewing. Parts of the estuary contain riparian vegetation and woody debris critical to the anadromous fishery and other wildlife values. Local fishery restoration groups have focused considerable attention on monitoring and improving habitat in the area and are concerned about impacts from unmanaged vehicle use, as well as firewood cutting, escaped campfires, etc. The portion of the estuary below mean high water line was outside of BLM's management jurisdiction. However, the BLM recently obtained a permit from the State Lands Commission to manage vehicle use on these lands. Allowing use on designated routes would provide for managed vehicle access and use of two routes that do not impact the riparian vegetation.

There is also an objective regarding boating use and boat landings in the Backcountry Zone and at the Mattole River Estuary:

<u>Objective TRV 1.10</u>: Protect the non-mechanized recreation experience and wilderness characteristics of the Backcountry Zone and minimize impacts to the sensitive resources of the Mattole River Estuary including salmon fry, birds, and other wildlife.

<u>Management Action TRV 1.10.1</u>: In coordination with the California Coastal Commission and California State Land Board, close the Backcountry Zone coastline to non-emergency motorized watercraft landings, and close the Mattole Estuary to the use of all motorized watercraft.

<u>Rationale</u>: Motorized Zodiacs, jet-skis and other watercraft traverse the KRNCA coastline for surfing, fishing, abalone diving, and other activities. The intent of this plan is not to limit these offshore activities. However, boats are increasingly landing at Big Flat and other locations within the Backcountry Zone and offloading overnight visitors with large amounts of equipment and materials. This motorized access into the Backcountry Zone is considered to be incompatible with area management goals, and has also led to an increase in litter. Although motorized watercraft use in the Mattole Estuary has been low, this resource is already highly stressed and is critical to the survival of salmon fry. Therefore, the closure is warranted to prevent further impacts. See Appendix B for proposed supplemental rules regarding boating use.

<u>Recreation</u>. The BLM notes that recreation management represents one of the major challenges in the King Range National Conservation Area. The RMP states that:

There is a strong consensus among user groups that protecting the KRNCA's unique primitive character is a priority, yet increasing numbers of people are visiting the area seeking a wide variety of activities and experiences. The proposed plan includes comprehensive recreation management goals that balance accommodation of a broad array of uses while providing opportunities for visitors to find solitude and the wilderness-type recreation experience for which the King Range is best known. As a result, the three management zones are planned for different types and levels of recreation use, so as to direct users to the parts of the KRNCA most appropriate for their interests and activities.

The Proposed RMP calls for managing each zone to provide complementary recreation opportunities and activities so that visitors with varying interests and abilities can experience the dramatic outdoor setting of the KRNCA. The Backcountry Zone is managed as a primitive setting, and associated recreation opportunities are at the primitive nonmechanized/non-motorized end of the spectrum. The Frontcountry Zone offers a mix of motorized and non-motorized activities in a rustic setting. The Residential Zone, including public lands within the Shelter Cove subdivision, although urban by Lost Coast standards, offers visitors a chance to access the rugged coast while enjoying more developed tourism amenities. The Shelter Cove area can accommodate more visitors than other parts of the King Range due to less difficult road access and ample public and private visitor facilities and services.

The RMP recreation goals are as follows:

#### Area-Wide Goal:

1. Provide quality recreation opportunities that complement and continue the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S., while protecting the quality of the recreation opportunities, resources, and community character.

#### Backcountry Zone Goals:

- 2. Provide high quality non-mechanized recreational opportunities consistent with managing the Backcountry Zone to protect wilderness characteristics.
- 3. Preserve the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S.
- 4. Allow for levels of predominately self-directing recreational use that provide for high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and freedom of access while protecting the diverse scenic and natural resources in the area.

#### Frontcountry Zone Goals:

- 5. Provide high quality motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences in the Frontcountry Zone that complement the adventurous nature and rustic character of the Lost Coast.
- 6. Manage the Frontcountry Zone for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

## Residential Zone Goals:

- 7. Manage public lands within the Shelter Cove subdivision to serve as major coastal access points and coastal green space in the community and by offering recreation and environmental education opportunities to visitors who visit the Lost Coast without camping, or spending extended time in the backcountry.
- 8. Focus management on interpreting the significant natural and cultural resources of the area through community partnerships.
- 9. Provide more developed opportunities for group gatherings and individual use while still maintaining open space and scenic quality, and affording protection of area resources (e.g. tidepools).

To meet these goals, the RMP includes numerous and detailed objectives and management actions organized by the three management zones. A general summary is provided below:

Actions proposed to achieve Backcountry Zone management objectives include permit systems, developing minimal facilities only if necessary for resource protection, maintaining a trail system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and resource monitoring, and identification of special management areas. Actions proposed to achieve Frontcountry Zone management objectives include developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, maintaining a road and trail system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and resource monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Actions proposed to achieve Residential Zone objectives include permit systems, developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance.

The RMP proposes no management changes or development in the KRNCA that would generate any adverse impacts to coastal access and recreation in the adjacent lands or waters of the coastal zone. However, the BLM does propose in the RMP to formally close the Backcountry Zone coastline to non-emergency motorized watercraft landings and to close the Mattole Estuary to all motorized watercraft. As noted above on Page 11 (Management Action TRV 1.10.1), this proposed action is necessary to protect the existing wilderness character of the Lost Coast. The RMP further calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique and outstanding coastal-oriented recreational resources that currently exist within the KRNCA. The BLM has also committed in the subject consistency determination to submit additional consistency and/or negative determinations to the Commission for any future projects or management decisions in the KRNCA that hold the potential to affect public access or recreational resources of the adjacent lands and waters of the coastal zone. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed RMP will not adversely affect the public access and recreation resources of the coastal zone, and that

the RMP is consistent with the access and recreation policies (Sections 30210-30214, 30220, 30221, and 30223) of the Coastal Act.

**B.** <u>Marine Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat</u>. The Coastal Act provides the following:

<u>Section 30230</u>. Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

<u>Section 30231</u>. The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

#### Section 30240.

(a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

The RMP provides detailed analyses of aquatic and terrestrial habitats present in the KRNCA, and which also are present in the adjacent lands and waters of the coastal zone:

<u>Surface Water</u>. In general, watersheds within the King Range have experienced relatively little development compared to surrounding watersheds. For this reason, creeks, streams, and rivers in the King Range offer quality habitat for numerous aquatic species. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires each state to identify streams, rivers and lakes that do not meet water quality standards even after the implementation of technology based controls. The Mattole River is the only major water body in or adjacent to the King Range that has been listed as impaired on the State of California's Clean Water Act 303(d) list. The SWRCB and RWQCB identified excessive sedimentation and elevated temperature as causes for the impairment. As such, the BLM is required to minimize any action in the Mattole watershed that would threaten to further exacerbate temperature or sediment problems in . . .

the Mattole River or its tributaries. As a major landowner in the Mattole River watershed, some of the BLM's activities will likely be regulated under the prescribed Total Maximum Daily Load for the watershed.

<u>Water Pollution</u>. The BLM does not have and does not envision any operations in the King Range that would involve permitted point-source discharges under the Clean Water Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The only potentially regulated non-point source discharge in the King Range results from operations at the King Range office in Whitethorn, CA. Although existing laws and regulations do not require this facility to operate under the State of California's general NPDES permit for stormwater discharges, the facility has a stormwater pollution prevention plan that specifies management practices intended to minimize water quality impacts resulting from operations at the facility. In the unlikely event that new construction will result in more than one acre of ground disturbance, the BLM will file a Notice of Intent to the RWQCB indicating that discharges resulting from the construction project will be managed in accordance with the requirements in the applicable general NPDES permit.

Waste generation and disposal practices can also result in water pollution. The BLM currently disposes of all waste in a proper manner, as required by state and federal laws. All wastewater generated in the King Range is considered domestic sewage and, except for the King Range Administrative Facility, is either discharged to the Shelter Cove wastewater collection system or is pumped from pit toilets and properly disposed by a licensed hauler. The King Range Administrative Facility discharges its waste to a septic system.

<u>Watershed Restoration</u>. In general, watershed restoration for water quality issues focuses on the upgrading, reshaping and/or abandonment of outdated roads. Many of these older roads were constructed in a manner that now create significant potential for the road to wash out or fail and deliver large volumes of sediment into streams that support anadromous fisheries. Although restoration efforts are undertaken for the purpose of reducing sediment discharges to these streams, road maintenance, reshaping, and abandonment activities can also cause incidental sediment discharges. The BLM employs erosion control measures, frequently termed "best management practices" (BMPs), as needed during watershed restoration activities to reduce or eliminate incidental sediment discharge. Some of the BMPs include mulching, installation of sediment curtains, placement of hay bales, and other drainage control features, construction of rolling dips, and seasonal limits on operations.

<u>Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries</u>. The KRNCA provides habitat for salmon and steelhead listed as "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The fish were listed by Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs). The four ESUs are: Southern Oregon/Northern California Coasts (SONCC) coho salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch), California Coastal (CC) Chinook salmon (O. tshawytscha), Central California (CC) coho salmon (Oncorhynchus kisutch), and Northern California (NC) steelhead (O. mykiss), hereinafter referred to as Pacific salmonids. Available information indicates that KRNCA salmonid habitat is recovering from the combined impacts of relatively recent flood events and past land uses, and riparian vegetation has reestablished in the impacted area. However, in logged areas, climax communities along streams will not return to pre-harvest levels for centuries affecting recruitment of large wood to streams. Instream habitat quality and quantity has been reduced due to past land use practices, severely impacting salmonid populations. Restoration efforts, changes in land use patterns and riparian protection standards, and public ownership of lands has allowed instream habitat to begin recovering. Sedimentation from roads continues to be a primary impact to salmonid habitat, although impacts have been reduced through cooperative road maintenance efforts between public and private landowners, road restoration efforts, and broad scale transportation management and maintenance programs.

• • •

<u>Terrestrial Ecosystems and Vegetation</u>. The KRNCA consists of habitats that are both structurally and compositionally diverse. Steep coastal ridges that bar most coastal fog incursion, plus the prevailing easterly winds, help to create and maintain an unusual mosaic of plant communities and species assemblages. As a result, the area hosts a number of rare species, some of whom are almost entirely restricted to the King Range. Such a large block of coastal habitat is rare in California and the Pacific coast of North America at large. The rugged nature of the King Range and its remote location have discouraged high levels of development or timber extraction from the area, and have also protected it from much exotic vegetation establishment, and thus maintained a high level of integrity for these ecosystems.

The RMP also provides detailed descriptions and the status of these terrestrial habitat types present in the KRNCA (and, in many instances, in the adjacent lands of the coastal zone): forests, grasslands, chaparral, coastal scrub, coastal dune, coastal beach, and rocky intertidal. The RMP also addresses threatened, endangered, and other sensitive species in the KRNCA:

All known occurrences of sensitive species are currently monitored and managed under the various regulatory requirements . . . The dune habitat along Mattole Beach is monitored annually for frequency and distribution of beach layia. Monitoring has indicated continuous population increases since the beach was closed to motorized vehicle use. Annual monitoring programs have also been recently initiated for coastal milkvetch and maple leaf checkerbloom.

The RMP contains four sections that are particularly relevant to the aforementioned Coastal Act policies – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries, Wildlife, and Terrestrial Ecosystems and Vegetation.

<u>ACEC</u>. These are areas of public land where special management attention is required to protect important natural and/or cultural resource values. The ACEC goal is as follows:

Manage current areas and designate new areas with important resource values and that require special management as ACECs.

Objective No. 1 of this goal calls for continued management of the 655-acre Mattole Estuary ACEC to protect significant archaeological sites, the fragile sand dune ecosystem, riparian areas, and wildlife values in the Mattole Estuary and coastal strand south to Sea Lion Gulch. The management actions associated with this objective are as follows:

The following supplemental rules would be incorporated into the Mattole ACEC:

- Firewood collecting would not be allowed in the Mattole Estuary.
- Use of motorized watercraft would not be allowed in the Mattole Estuary.
- Public lands north of Lighthouse Road and south of the Mattole River for a distance of one mile inland from the Mattole Campground would be closed to overnight camping. Public lands along Mattole Beach for 500 feet north and south of the Mattole Campground would also be closed to camping. Dispersed camping would continue to be allowed on other public lands. These distances may be changed as necessary to meet resource protection objectives for the ACEC, or recreation opportunity goals in the area surrounding the Mattole Campground.
- Dispersed camping would continue to be allowed along the access route identified in the Transportation section of the plan (Section 4.18). Barriers of natural materials (mainly driftwood) would be placed along the access route to allow a small number of dispersed camping locations, but to restrict vehicle and camping access from disturbing sensitive estuary resources and riparian areas. This site would not be designated as an overflow or dispersed campsite, but would be managed to allow continued use at a small number (5-10) of dispersed locations. These rules are further described in Appendix B.
- Commercial collection of special forest products would not be permitted.

The <u>Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries</u> (AEF) section of the RMP states that the KRNCA contains important habitat for species listed under the Endangered Species Act, including listed Pacific salmonids. The AEF goals are as follows:

- 1. Restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems on public lands, and, to the extent possible, partner with other landowners to coordinate restoration efforts across watersheds.
- 2. Restore and maintain the physical, chemical, and biological components of stream habitat so that each stream or stream reach supports a desired compliment of native species appropriate for the capability of each stream or stream reach. Thus, the stream habitat and water quality conditions for a small, headwater stream may be quite different than conditions in large, salmon-bearing streams since the habitat capability and native fauna of these two types of stream are quite different.

# 3. Maintain and restore habitat necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems.

The <u>Wildlife</u> section of the RMP notes that the BLM does not have direct jurisdiction over wildlife populations, but is the primary manager of wildlife habitat on public lands. The RMP includes provisions for cooperative management of wildlife habitat, populations, and public education with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and includes the following goals:

- 1. Cooperate with federal, state, and local partners to minimize or eliminate the need for additional listing of species under the Endangered Species Act and to contribute to the recovery of species already listed as such. The BLM will take measures to promote the recovery and conservation of all special status animal species within the King Range.
- 2. Maintain or enhance existing populations of native species for their protection and conservation and to increase the knowledge base of these species.

In regards to these goals, the RMP includes the following management objectives:

<u>Brown Pelicans</u>. Disturbance at roosting sites frequented by brown pelicans would be minimized, and roost sites on the offshore rocks would be protected by working cooperatively with the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM).

<u>Western Snowy Plovers</u>. Maintain suitable nesting habitat for nesting/wintering plovers if/when the population responds to meet goals in the recovery plan and re-colonize the area.

Steller's Sea Lions. Minimize disturbance to Steller's sea lions at haul-out sites.

<u>Intertidal Zone Species</u>. Manage visitors to limit impacts to the intertidal zone to maintain the natural diversity of intertidal organisms in this special habitat. Work cooperatively with CDFG and NOAA Fisheries in the management of marine life. Although the intertidal habitats are outside of BLM's jurisdiction, access points to tidepools and other intertidal areas are on public lands, and tide pools are a major attraction to visitors to the KRNCA.

The <u>Terrestrial Ecosystems and Vegetation</u> section of the RMP states that the BLM manages the vegetative resources of the King Range to promote the overall health of this diverse biogeographical region, and to provide for the wide spectrum of organisms, ecosystem processes, and human resource needs that depend on these plant communities. The RMP goal is as follows:

Manage vegetative types or habitats to produce and/or maintain a mosaic of compositionally and structurally diverse habitat types and plant communities that have historically occurred prior to the era of mechanized logging and exclusion of fire regimes in the region (approximately 1950). The RMP includes the following management objectives to help meet this goal:

<u>Special Status Species</u>. Maintain and encourage viable populations of threatened, endangered, and BLM Special Status plant species known to occur in the King Range.

<u>Coastal Dunes Habitat</u>. Maintain a semi-stable dune system in the vicinity of the mouth of the Mattole River that would continue to promote a diverse assemblage of native plant species. This habitat would be managed to remain free of invasive plant species, which increase the stability of these sandy substrates and compromise the health of native species.

<u>Coastal Scrub Habitat</u>. Maintain and encourage a productive and vigorous coastal scrub community that would produce an abundance of new foliage as forage for ungulates and other herbivores, allow for the establishment of decadent scrub communities as habitat for other species, and provide habitat for rare plant species known to occur in the vicinity of the King Range.

The RMP proposes no management changes or development in the KRNCA that would generate any adverse impacts to aquatic or terrestrial habitats in the adjacent waters and lands of the coastal zone. The proposed closure of the Backcountry Zone coastline to non-emergency motorized watercraft landings and the proposed closure of the Mattole Estuary to the use of all motorized watercraft is consistent with previous Commission concurrences with BLM decisions to limit motorized recreation in order to protect sensitive habitats of, and plant and animal species inhabiting the Lost Coast. The RMP calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique aquatic and terrestrial habitats that currently exist within the KRNCA. With these commitments, the marine resources and environmentally sensitive habitats of the adjacent coastal zone would not be adversely affected by KRNCA development activities or management decisions. The BLM has also committed in the subject consistency determination to submit additional consistency and/or negative determinations to the Commission for any future projects or management decisions in the KRNCA that hold the potential to affect marine resources and environmentally sensitive habitats in the coastal zone. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed RMP will not adversely affect aquatic and terrestrial habitats of the coastal zone, and that the RMP is consistent with the marine resources and environmentally sensitive habitat policies (Sections 30230, 30231, and 30240) of the Coastal Act.

C. Visual Resources. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act provides:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

The RMP summarizes the visual resources of the KRNCA as follows:

The KRNCA encompasses one of the most dramatic coastal landscapes in the contiguous 48 states, and conservation of the area's scenic attributes was an important factor in its designation as a National Conservation Area. The scenic qualities of most landscape settings in the KRNCA are mostly defined by dramatic natural features. The characteristic landscape in the southern two-thirds of the area consists of steep walled, heavily forested mountains rising abruptly from black sand beaches. On the lower slopes, solid forests are only broken by occasional landslides carving long open swathes down to the waterline. Upper slopes are a mosaic of dark green conifers and pale snags interspersed with patches of grey-green chaparral. North of Kinsey Ridge, the vegetation changes to a mixture of forest and golden coastal prairies.

In the northern part of the King Range, cultural resources also contribute to scenic values. Wooden structures from historic and present-day ranching operations are integral parts of a highly scenic pastoral landscape. The historic Chambers Cabin, with associated barn and corrals set against a majestic backdrop of coastal prairies, regularly appears in scenic calendars and books. The Punta Gorda Lighthouse, perched on a rocky outcrop above an isolated stretch of beach, is another example of a popular scenic attraction.

The RMP states that the visual quality of the rugged coastline along the King Range is one of the key attributes that attracts both residents and visitors to the area, and that the BLM intends to ensure that any development or changes in the scenic landscape maintain or enhance the overall viewshed qualities. Visual resource goals are as follows:

- 1. Protect and enhance the scenic qualities and visual integrity of the characteristic landscapes of the KRNCA through the application and implementation of the VRM [Visual Resource Management] Classification System.
- 2. Enhance opportunities for visitors and residents to view the outstanding scenic landscapes characteristic of the Lost Coast.
- 3. Conduct management activities and complete developments in a manner that is sensitive to the visual qualities of the area and in compliance with applicable VRM classes.
- 4. Protect and enhance the scenic qualities and visual integrity of each of the three zones through the application and implementation of the VRM Classification System.

In addition, there are numerous management objectives to implement these goals, including:

VRM 1.2: Ensure that coastal developments do not detract from the scenic integrity of the area by working with Humboldt County, the California Coastal Commission, and other agencies with management jurisdiction.

The RMP proposes no development that would generate any adverse impacts to scenic views to or along the shoreline. The RMP calls for the BLM to continue to protect the unique and outstanding visual resources that currently exist within and towards the KRNCA. With this commitment, the visual resources of the adjacent coastal zone – views to and along the shoreline,

offshore waters, and the uplands of the KRNCA – will also be protected. The BLM has also committed in the subject consistency determination to submit additional consistency and/or negative determinations to the Commission for any future projects in the KRNCA that hold the potential to affect the visual resources from the adjacent lands or waters of the coastal zone. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed RMP will not adversely affect the visual resources of the coastal zone, including the views of the King Range National Conservation Area from the adjacent lands and waters of the coastal zone, and is consistent with the visual resource policy (Section 30251) of the Coastal Act.

D. <u>Cultural Resources</u>. Section 30244 of the Coastal Act provides:

Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be applied.

The RMP states that:

The KRNCA is rich in the remains of prehistoric occupation and numerous historic activities. The topography, coastal setting, presence of numerous perennial and seasonal water sources, wide range of floral and faunal species and other natural resources made this region a prime location for human habitation and economic pursuits over thousands of years. Cultural resources in the KRNCA range from early Native American village sites and activity areas to remains of historic structures associated with tanbark, shipping, ranching, and recreational industries.

The RMP calls for proactive management of sites through monitoring, Native American consultation and involvement, site stabilization, protection, and evaluation as research projects, and National Register nominations. Cultural resource goals are as follows:

- 1. Manage public lands within the KRNCA to preserve, protect, and study cultural resources which represent at least 3,000 years of human occupation and use along the coastal strand, and more than 6,000 years for the interior.
- 2. Integrate cultural resources management with other multiple uses within the KRNCA for the health of the land and other priority BLM initiatives for the benefit of the public.
- 3. Continue to develop and maintain working relationships with appropriate tribal entities and Native American individuals; ensure that Native American burial grounds are protected from disturbance or harm; and re-establish traditional cultural practices through enhanced management of resources.

In regards to these goals, the RMP includes numerous management objectives and actions, including the following:

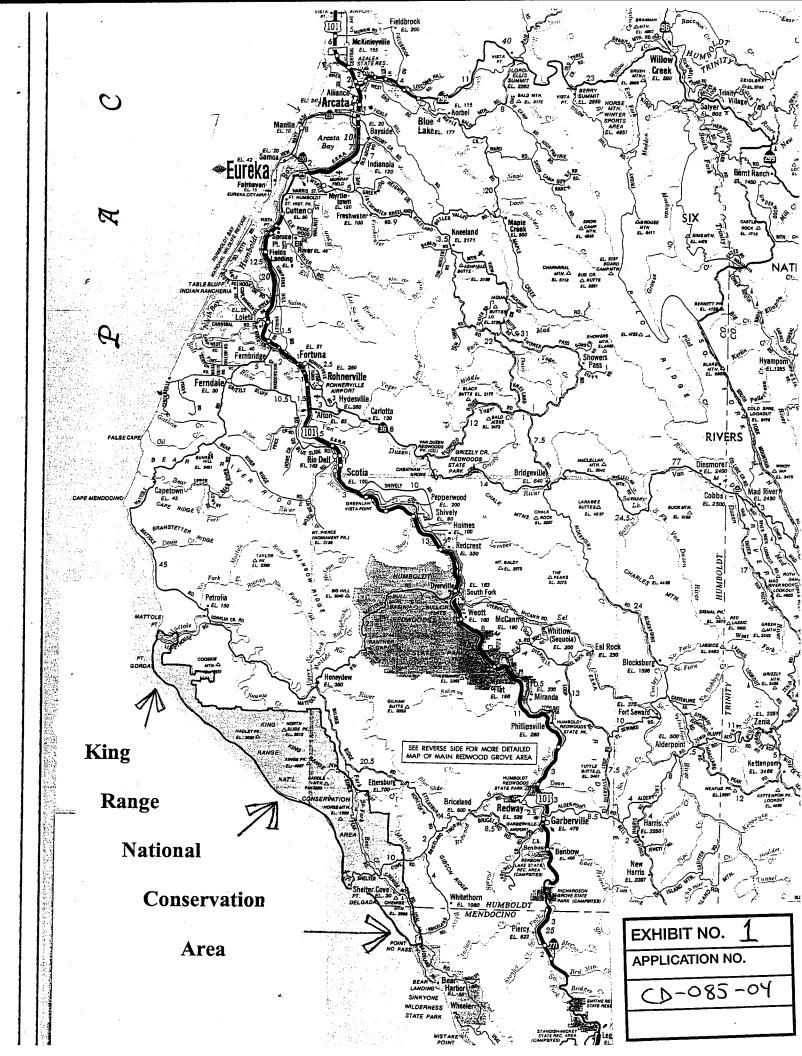
1.1 Develop cooperative efforts and formal agreements with educational institutions, students, tribes, volunteers from the public, and interested private consultants for scientific

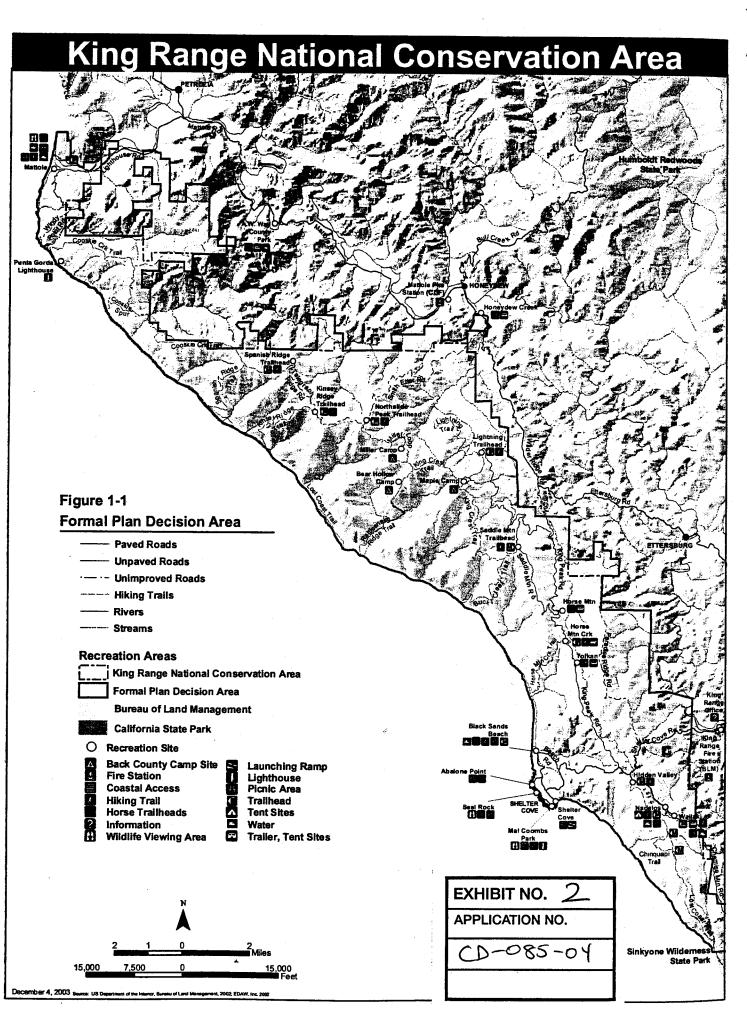
studies, educational opportunities, and enhanced management of cultural resources in the KRNCA.

3.1 Place emphasis on cooperative and volunteer outreach and greater collaboration with the Native American community. Include Native American participation in all aspects of cultural resource management within the King Range and adjacent areas.

3.2 Continue primary coordination with the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria for government-to-government relations regarding Native American issues in the KRNCA. Continue participation in the Strategic Partnership Coalition with coastal tribes.

The RMP cites numerous state and federal laws and regulations regarding the management and protection of cultural and archaeological resources that may pertain to the KRNCA. The RMP contains provisions for surveying cultural and archaeological resources, project-specific environmental assessments, coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and coordination with and participation by Native Americans in surveys, monitoring, protection, and interpretation of cultural and archaeological resources. The BLM has committed to submit consistency and/or negative determinations to the Commission for future projects in the KRNCA that hold the potential to affect cultural or archaeological resources located within the adjacent lands or waters of the coastal zone. Therefore, the Commission finds that the RMP will not adversely affect cultural and archaeological resources in the King Range National Conservation Area or in the coastal zone, that necessary coordination with SHPO and adherence with SHPO recommendations will occur, and that the RMP is consistent with the cultural and archaeological resource policies (Section 30244) of the Coastal Act.





~

