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CD-0006-20 (National Park Service)

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April 16, 2021

Chair Steve Padilla
c/o Mr. John Weber
Federal Consistency Program
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: Coastal Commission Staff Report recommending conditional concurrence for the Point Reyes National Seashore and North District Golden Gate National Recreation Area General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Padilla:

This letter is to share my support of the National Park Service's (NPS) request for a Coastal Consistency Determination (CCD) for the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and Northern District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) General Management Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Statement (GMPA EIS). UC Cooperative Extension Marin has participated actively throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process conducted by NPS staff to the develop the GMPA EIS, providing scoping comments (attached) and comments on the Draft EIS (attached) offering our organization as a resource for NPS staff and affected agricultural producers ranching on the PRNS and GGNRA.

This letter also communicates technical and evidenced-based information from my professional experience and expertise in the region and the field of watershed management. There exists a broad body of literature, long-term local implementation of conservation practices with corresponding documented beneficial impacts, and a regulatory framework that can inform California Coastal Commission (CCC) staff's recommendation for conditional concurrence and Commissioner consideration of this recommendation for the proposed action.

Watershed Management

Dr. Kenneth Brooks and co-authors share a working definition for watershed management explaining that it "is the process of organizing and guiding land, water, and other natural resource use on a watershed to provide desired goods and services to people without affecting adversely soil and water resources.[1]" This definition is complemented by the concept and definition of ecosystem services from the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment[2] explaining that:

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[1] Brooks et al. 2012 Hydrology and the Management of Watersheds, Fourth Edition
[2] UN MEA. 2003. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, Ecosystems and Human Well-being; A Framework for Assessment.

"ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, which the MA (*Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*) describes as provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services. Ecosystem services include products such as food, fuel, and fiber; regulating services such as climate regulation and disease control; and nonmaterial benefits such as spiritual or aesthetic benefits."

The National Park Service has been engaged in adaptive watershed management in the proposed action planning area since the formation of PRNS and GGNRA. The originating legislation of 1962 and 1972, followed by amendments in 1976 and 1978, subsequent directive by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in 2012, and lastly the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 combine to establish PRNS' uniqueness in integrating grazing livestock and dairy farms into its mandate and mission to manage multiple resources.

The GMPA EIS and the requested action is a continuation of PRNS legislated and active implementation of watershed management including protection against adverse impacts to soil and water and facilitation of ecosystem services. From the outset, the preferred alternative B forms Ranchland and Scenic Landscape zones, and further employs a sub-zoning framework within the Ranchland zone, to support the management and protection of multiple resources and provision of goods and services. It goes on to set "desired conditions" for natural and cultural resources in each zone, combining 20-year leases, ranch operating agreements, and the comprehensive list of field-tested conservation practices in Appendix F to achieve those desired conditions. Confirmation that these practices support attainment of desired conditions in general is available through the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Effectiveness Assessment Program[3]. The proposed leases, ranch operating agreements and ranch subzoning are further underpinned and supported to achieve desired conditions by the application of Residual Dry Matter Mapping and Monitoring in Appendix E and Forage Model in Appendix K. The analysis conducted in each directly informs grazing livestock management prescriptions for PRNS staff and ranchers to use in achieving desired conditions for soil and grasslands in respective subzones.

Of specific interest and focus, given CCC staff's recommendation for conditional concurrence, is obtainment of water quality desired conditions. Here again it useful to share that conservation practice effectiveness on grazing livestock ranches and dairies have been confirmed to improve water quality. A comprehensive scientific review of the conservation effectiveness of all range management practices funded through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation initiative programs provides a research synthesis to address specific hypotheses about the effectiveness of stocking rate moderation, grazing system selection, timing of grazing and rest from grazing, as well as a suite of riparian management practices to improve hydrologic function and water quality[4]. Similar summaries on the factors and benefits of conservation approaches and practices to manage waterborne pathogens in agricultural watersheds have been completed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service[5] and the World Health Organization[6]. These summaries present the considerable amount of research conducted

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[3] USDA NRCS CEAP 2021 - https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/nra/ceap/.

[4] Briske, D.D. 2011 - https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/nra/ceap/?cid=stelprdb1045811

[5] Atwill et al 2012 - https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=32935.wba

[6] WHO, 2012 - https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/animal_waste/en/

on the efficacy of beneficial management practices (BMPs) for both extensive (i.e., cow-calf rangeland grazing) and intensive (i.e., dairy farms) livestock production systems to reduce microbial contamination from these facilities. These on-farm BMPs typically rely on several common strategies that endeavor to be practical, affordable, and adoptable, such as the strategic use of vegetative buffers between grazing sites and adjacent bodies of water, riparian exclusion to livestock grazing several months prior to and during the rainfall season, adequate storage time and drying of manure solids prior to land application, vegetating or use of straw to cover the surface of cattle loafing areas during the rainfall season, and appropriate setback distances between sites receiving manure solids and adjacent downslope bodies of water. The GMPA EIS is in alignment with these summary findings, building upon longstanding stewardship efforts and conservation practices that have already occurred in the planning area with a clear process for PRNS staff and ranchers to collaborate on additional conservation practice planning and implementation of practices with documented effectiveness.

Confirmation of watershed scale improvements to water quality from conservation practice implementation on working farms and ranches is also available from regional and local watersheds. This includes published research in the planning area for both the Tomales Bay[7] and coastal watersheds[8][9]. These longer-term repeated measures studies of the relationship of indicator bacteria and un-ionized ammonia to conservation practice implementation demonstrate a decrease in both as practice implementation on working farms and ranches is executed. These longitudinal investigations of basin scale outcomes require forethought and a commitment of resources to be accomplished. Natural resource management agencies and entities often face budget constraints requiring them to forego these endeavors. Conventional wisdom when making fiscal decision to allocate available funds for implementation or long-term monitoring in watershed management leans toward implementation once that implementation has been confirmed to be effective. To have three of longitudinal studies in the region, two of which are in the planning area, is a unique opportunity. Combined, they provide confirmation that the GMPA EIS process is on track to maintain and increase improvements to surface water quality and in keeping with conventional wisdom for financial resource allocation, should prioritize that implementation.

Regulation of grazing livestock ranches and dairy farms in the planning area to protect water quality is the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Region California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB). Foundationally, this begins with the CRWQCB Basin Plan and protection of identified beneficial uses for respective waterbodies and watersheds. In 2004, the State Water Resources Control Board approved its Nonpoint Source Implementation and Enforcement Policy, providing the framework for the nine CRWQCB in the state to addresses NPS sources, including agriculture. Subsequently, the San Francisco Bay Region CRWQCB has approved the Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Grazing Operations in the Tomales Bay Watershed[10] and General Waste Discharge Requirements for Confined Animal Facilities Within the San Francisco Bay Region[11]. Respectively, these regulatory programs require water quality management planning and implementation to be conducted by the grazing

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[7] Lewis et al 2019, https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/19/5516/htm
[8] Voeller et al 2020, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rama.2021.02.011
[9] Meyer et al. 2019, http://calag.ucanr.edu/archive/?article=ca.2018a0042
[10] CRWQCB 2018, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/agriculture/grazing/tomalesgrazing/2018webpageupdate/Tomales_Bay_Grazing_Waiver_Res_10-16-18.pdf.
[11] CRWB 2016, https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/agriculture/CAF/CAF%20General%20WDRs%20Order%20R2-2016-0031%20(Complete%20with%20attachments).pdf

operations and dairy farms in the planning area, including annual reports of progress made in adopting practices that are confirmed to contribute to water quality improvements. In the case of dairies, this also includes nutrient management plans determining how manure is handled and utilized as a fertilizer through best practices. At the San Francisco Region CRWQB meeting on April 14, 2021, these requirements and programs were summarized in a presentation to the Board and in the Executive Officer's Report, pages 5 through 8 (attached). This presentation and report describe how CRWCB staff conduct ranch and dairy inspections, how the ranches and dairies are complying with these regulatory programs, and the recommendations and plans for increased collaboration between CRWQCB staff, NPS staff, and ranchers through the implementation of the GMPA EIS. In addition to the CRWQCB role in regulating water quality, Tomales Bay and Drakes Bay Estero, are or have been regulated for water quality to meet the more stringent water quality requirements for shellfish production by the National Shellfish Protection Program and the California Department of Public Health (DPH). That commercial shellfish production and harvest is allowed is indicative that these water bodies meet water quality conditions, during a significant portion of the year, to allow for consumption of raw shellfish as confirmed by DPH annual sanitary surveys.

Summary

CCC staff, in its analysis of the proposed action, has been disciplined in its understanding and application of the California Coastal Act. Particularly, in its recognition of PRNS and GGNRA as reserved federal lands and its inquiry into potential "spillover effects". The GMPA EIS directly addresses CCC staff concerns for water quality and will be effective in achieving desired conditions for water quality, and other resources, because it will implement conservation practices that are confirmed at the practice scale to be effective and at the basin scale to result in beneficial impacts. The regulatory framework by the CCC's counterpart California Agency, CRWQCB, already is requiring annual reporting and direct interaction to confirm water quality improving practice implementation with PRNS staff and ranchers. Furthermore, Tomales Bay and Drakes Bay Estero, one of the planning area's coastal watershed, have documented conditions meeting stringent water quality to safeguard human health and support the beneficial uses of contact and non-contact recreation and raw shellfish consumption. For these reasons, the proposed action deserves your consideration and approval.

Thank you,

David Lewis
Director

Attachments:

Scoping comments dated November 30, 2018
Draft EIS review comments dated September 23, 2019
SFR CRWQCB Executive Officer Report dated April 14, 2021

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November 30, 2018

Cicely Muldoon
Superintendent
Point Reyes GMP Amendment EIS
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Subject: Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment — Draft Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Comments

Dear Superintendent Muldoon,

Introduction

Ranching and dairy farming on the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) is the next opportunity to achieve the shared benefits and integration of working landscapes and land conservation. Conservation that increasingly is successful in protecting and improving soil, water, and habitat quality and simultaneously contributing to a stronger local food system and economy. This opportunity was made possible by decisions and agreements made nearly 50 years ago to establish PRNS and GGNRA. During that half a century, the science and practice of conservation has advanced. The following comments, organized by potential impact topics, are offered to convey this science for application in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analysis of the General Management Plan Amendment (GMP Amendment) and during future implementation to assist the National Park Service (NPS) staff and PRNS and GGNRA ranchers and farmers to be successful in the protection of cultural and natural resources.

Specific Comments

Air Quality

- The EIS analysis should include the larger context of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for all activities within the planning area. This context and the methods used are important for apportioning individual sector contributions. For instance, well-defined and accepted methods for estimating emissions from livestock production and agriculture are under development by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and in use, such as the National Air Quality Site Assessment Tool (NAQSAT, 2018). Additionally, estimates of livestock agriculture contribution to GHG emissions is 18% globally (FAO, 2006), less than 3% for the United States (EPA, 2009) and California (CEC, 2005; Pitesky et al., 2009), and 5% for Marin (ICF International, 2015). Using tools designed purposeful to estimate agricultural emission, presenting a comprehensive context for all planning area GHG emissions, and reconciling the

GMP amendment estimate with these other inventories will strengthen the EIS' focus on the largest sources of GHG emissions and facilitate realistic goal setting for reductions and mitigation across all relevant sectors.

- The EIS should analyze agriculture's potential as a formal and active partner in emission calculations, goal setting, and developing and implementing practices to obtain goals similar to Yolo County, California Climate Action Plan. This analysis should include the climate benefits already realized in dairy (Capper et al. 2009) and beef cattle (Capper 2011) production over the last five decades, and accounting for PRNS and GGNRA farms and ranches being pasture based and grass-fed operations with documented reductions in emissions relative to other systems (Obrien et al. 2014). Similarly, the EIS analysis will be improved by the inclusion of reductions in GHG emissions from nutrition and feed modifications (USDA, 2004), manure storage and handling (Mitleohner et al, 2009; Owen and Silver, 2014), and land management strategies (Lal 2007) among other options. Lastly, it will provide planning area NPS Staff and farmers and ranchers with the tools to increase their resiliency to climate change.
- Analysis in the EIS should include mitigation through carbon sequestration. The voluntary goal for emission reduction through methane capture technologies on Marin dairies is estimated at 4,638 ($MTCO_2e$) countywide (ICF International, 2015). Currently, Marin farmers and ranchers are voluntarily implementing carbon farming programs and practices in collaboration with industry member associations and partners. This includes the Marin Carbon Project and carbon farm planning and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Climate Smart Agriculture and Alternatives for Methane Management Program, all of which should be considered and analyzed in the EIS. Conservative estimates of the amount of potential carbon sequestration from compost application, just one of 32 identified climate beneficial practices being implemented, are 10 to 100 times greater than methane capture and emission reduction goal (Ryals and Silver, 2013). Expanding the EIS to include sequestration is critical for a comprehensive plan that will make beneficial and lasting contributions to GMP Amendment goals.

Rangeland Management and Ecosystem Services

- The EIS should analyze the contributions to ecosystem services that can be made through documented effective grazing and rangeland management. California's annual grasslands are one of the world's major biodiversity hotspots, supporting thousands of plant and animal species. These lands also provide a critical economic foundation for rangeland livestock production and cultural heritage in the state (Roche et al. 2015). An extensive body of scientific literature has demonstrated that through active stewardship and conservation, land managers can manage for agricultural production and a diversity of other ecosystem goods and services across these working landscapes. Managers can use prescribed grazing (the controlled implementation of timing, frequency, and intensity of grazing) as a tool to support and enhance multiple agricultural and conservation goals (Briske 2011a)—including biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and grassland health.

  Large-scale weed invasion is a major threat to both conservation and agricultural goals on annual grasslands. Invasive weeds can significantly reduce rangeland health by inhibiting biodiversity, depressing forage productivity and quality for both wildlife and livestock, and depleting soil water resources. Proper grazing management can maintain or enhance grassland diversity and productivity (Gornish et al. In Press). Managed grazing can be used to target specific weeds, particularly as part of a long-term integrated pest management program. The most critical components of a prescribed grazing program for weed management are timing and

intensity of grazing (Davy et al. 2015). Target weeds must be grazed during their most biologically susceptible stages. Using appropriate grazing timing and intensity can reduce undesirable weeds and increase desirable species and ecosystem productivity.

California's grasslands provide habitat connectivity, which is critical for annual migration of many wildlife species. These lands also support important foraging and nesting habitat for wild pollinator populations, which provide critical pollination services. Livestock grazing, via appropriate and sustainable management strategies, can be used to maintain or enhance herbaceous plant diversity. For example, grazing has been shown to enhance California's unique vernal pool habitats by controlling exotic annual plants and enhancing herbaceous plant diversity, which can lead to longer pool inundation periods benefiting a diversity of aquatic species, including endangered species such as the California tiger salamander (Huntsinger and Oviedo 2014).

Grazing has also been shown to reduce accumulation of thatch. Excessive amounts of thatch cause shading and reduces near surface temperatures, which suppresses germination and emerging seedlings. This in turn reduces species richness (Bartolome et al., 2007; Eviner, 2016).

Including researched and confirmed grazing management methods and the resulting beneficial ecosystem services and goods that result in the EIS analysis will contribute to successfully achieving the GMP Amendment goals on range and pasture portions of the planning area.

Socio-economics

- In conducting the EIS analysis, careful consideration and attention is required in deciding the geographic area and the primary impact or direct effect inputs of any socio-economic analysis to accurately model the economic benefits of each alternative. The goal of socioeconomic analysis is to use a well-established methodology to quantify the benefits and costs borne by society under a given set of scenarios. While socioeconomic analysis encompasses several different types of analyses concepts, the most common concept applied when considering alternative situations like the General Management Plan Conceptual Alternatives is cost-benefit analysis. While the concept is simple – compare the net present value of expected future benefits to the present value of estimated future costs – the practitioner designing the economic modeling faces many complex decisions that will influence the results. To reduce some of the discretion and uncertainty associated with these decisions, many economists and consultants providing economic impact analysis use the widely-adopted, input-output modeling database IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning Model).

The IMPLAN model is widely used in economics, planning, and engineering studies to account for interrelationships among sectors and institutions within regional economies and to ultimately ascertain full economic impacts of injections or withdrawals of regional economic activity. California and Federal agencies that have utilized the IMPLAN model include: California Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management. IMPLAN constructs social accounting matrices for a given geographic area (usually a county, group of counties, or state) based upon actual business transactions in the area for a given sector (e.g., beef production, dairy production, etc.) that enable researchers to observe the full economic impact in the area. Thus, practitioner decisions of the geographic area included in the analysis will be a driver of the model outcomes.

The researcher also must determine the *primary impact* or *direct effect* of the scenario to input into the IMPLAN model. The primary impact is the monetary change that results from the

policy implementation or scenario being analyzed. Based on the primary impact, IMPLAN generates secondary impacts of two types: *Indirect impacts* are determined by the amount of reduced spending, under each scenario, on supplies, services, labor, and taxes due to the primary impact. The *induced impact* of the project accounts for the reduction in spending in the area from the indirect impact, as some portion of that income would have been spent within the geographic region. The magnitude of both indirect and induced impacts are determined by the degree to which income "leaks" from the local economy by being spent outside its defined boundaries.

Soil Health

- Analyze as part of the EIS the soil quality drivers and the effectiveness of livestock management and conservation practices to improve soil quality and health in grazing livestock operations settings. Key soil processes that affect the sustainability of rangelands include compaction, runoff and erosion. Grazing management that improves soil health results in a series of interconnected positive outcomes, including: 1) soil bulk densities and soil structure that allows root and water penetration of the entire profile; 2) vigorous plants with capacity to develop and maintain extensive rooting systems; and 3) stable, resilient increases in primary productivity both above- and below- ground. These outcomes are of course strongly dependent upon site specific factors such as grazing intensity and timing, soil resilience to compaction, and precipitation. A recent comprehensive analysis found that reduced grazing intensity (e.g., moderate vs. heavy grazing intensities) improved soil health metrics; additionally, the analysis revealed that rotational grazing strategies reduce compaction and increase soil carbon relative to continuous grazing strategies, suggesting that rotational grazing could create climate change mitigation opportunities over continuous grazing (Byrnes et al. 2018). Additionally, a statewide study in California annual rangelands using the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) model suggested that erosion is low in most settings if recommended residual dry matter targets are obtained (Salls et al. 2018).

Water Quality

- Analyze as part of the EIS the water quality drivers and the effectiveness of livestock management and conservation practices to improve water quality in range livestock operations settings. The primary drivers of water quality degradation by range livestock are 1) excessive livestock numbers relative to site resiliency to negative livestock impacts to vegetation, soil, and hydrology; 2) livestock preference to inhabit critical hydrologic zones, thus disproportionately concentrating negative impacts and waste in these sensitive areas. Range management practices and strategies which directly and indirectly act to mitigate these drivers will lead to water quality improvements, a conclusion which is well supported within the research literature and by practice adoption by ranchers and range managers.

  Briske (2011a) recently lead a comprehensive scientific review of the conservation effectiveness of all range management practices funded through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation initiative programs (e.g., Environmental Quality Incentive Program, EQIP). In this review, Briske et al. (2011b) and George et al. (2011a) conducted a research synthesis to address specific hypotheses about the effectiveness of stocking rate moderation, grazing system selection, management of timing of grazing and rest from grazing, as well as a suite of riparian management practices to improve hydrologic function and water quality. The authors determined that 1) setting site specific moderate stocking rates is an essential practice to sustain hydrologic functions and minimize soil erosion and pollutant

transport; 2) simple seasonal-rotation grazing systems at moderate stocking rates result in improved upland soil hydrologic function compared to intensive rotational grazing systems at higher stocking rates or livestock densities; 3) management of timing and intensity of grazing and rest can improve riparian vegetation composition and structure, hydrologic function, and water quality; 4) livestock distribution practices, such as drinking water developments, supplement feed placement, and herding, are effective means of reducing livestock residence time and impact in riparian zones; 5) practices that reduce livestock densities, residence time, and waste loading in riparian areas and stream flow generation areas can reduce nutrient and pathogen pollution of surface waters; and 6) riparian vegetation can substantially filter waterborne pollutants from runoff, but the implementation of optimally efficient riparian buffers must incorporate site-specific biophysical factors such as flow regime and soil type.

Similar summaries on the factors and benefits of conservation approaches and practices to manage water borne pathogens in agricultural watersheds have been completed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (Atwill et al. 2012) and the World Health Organization (WHO 2012). These summaries present the considerable amount of research conducted on the efficacy of beneficial management practices (BMPs) for both extensive (i.e., cow-calf rangeland grazing) and intensive (i.e., dairy farms) livestock production systems to reduce microbial contamination from these facilities. These on-farm BMPs typically rely on several common strategies that endeavor to be practical, affordable, and adoptable, such as the strategic use of vegetative buffers between grazing sites and adjacent bodies of water, riparian exclusion to livestock grazing several months prior to and during the rainfall season, adequately storage time and drying of manure solids prior to land application, vegetating or use of straw to cover the surface of cattle loafing areas during the rainfall season, and appropriate setback distances between sites receiving manure solids and adjacent down slope bodies of water.

These international and national summaries are complemented by corresponding water quality management endeavors and evaluation in the Tomales Bay Watershed, including the GMP amendment planning area. Water quality results on working diaries and ranches confirmed that extensively grazed management units had indicator and nutrient concentrations similar to reference ambient conditions (Lewis et al. 2005). Building upon these findings, investigation of measures and practices to improve water quality in surface runoff from high use areas and pastures that receive manure confirmed that a suite of practices, including implementation of buffers, treating surfaces with mulch and seeding, applying manure in advance of runoff producing storms, and applying aged manure provide producers tools to successfully reduce pathogen loads (Lennox et al. 2007; Lewis et al. 2009; Lewis et al. 2010; Miller et al. 2007; Miller et al. 2008). In the Olema Creek Watershed, the NPS staff and PRNS/GGNRA ranchers have implemented livestock management methods and 48 conservation practices from 1998 to 2017, with implementation continuing beyond this period. Simultaneously, the NPS has monitored water quality in Olema Creek. Analysis of the water quality results confirms a significant reduction in indicator bacteria concentrations (Voeller et al. 2018).

- Include in the EIS analysis the progress and beneficial impacts made and to-be made through the planning and implementation of water quality improving conservation practices on dairies and grazing cattle ranches. PRNS and GGNRA ranchers and farmers and NPS staff have participated in and contributed to both the California Dairy Quality Assurance Program (Meyer et al. 2019) and the California's Rangeland Water Quality Plan (Larson et al. 2005; George et al. 2011b). These education and planning programs have led to the implementation of conservation practices through state and federal funding programs and in partnership with financial and technical assistance organizations including the Marin Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Incorporating in the EIS analysis the

momentum and progress made from these education and implementation program partnerships will facilitate the GMP Amendment's future success to protect and improve water quality.

Wildlife Interactions

- Include in the EIS analysis the increasing understanding of interactions and management solutions for livestock grazing and wildlife compatibility. Ranching and wildlife have coexisted for centuries. The key has always been proper stocking rate and grazing intensity to ensure that negative impacts from grazing do not occur to the grassland ecosystem. In fact, livestock grazing often provides valuable benefits to ecosystems and wildlife through their removal of dead and decadent forage. This vegetation removal stimulates new vegetative growth, opens up canopies for access to food resources previously inaccessible to many wildlife species, and helps to manage invasive weed species (Wolf et al. 2017).
- Include in the EIS the specific interactions and conflicts between elk and cattle, including the need for additional study and adaptive management to reduce or remove conflicts. Understanding the interactions between cattle and elk is essential in the assessment of impacts from allowing any co-habitation of the two species. Few studies have assessed compatibility of beef cattle and elk and none have evaluated those interactions between elk and dairy cattle. Elk and beef cattle diets show considerable overlap, with 42% overlap observed in Colorado (Hansen and Reid, 1975) and 46% in Nevada (Beck and Peek, 2005). While these results were not with tule elk and cattle diets they provide useful context. Additionally, tule elk home range is approximately 536 acres (Cobb 2010) to 1037 acres (Gogan 1986), small compared to other North American elk. An overlap of this home range and diet poses a significant constraint for PRNS dairymen, which are organic certified, requiring cows to meet 120-day, 30% dry matter intake minimum from pasture for organic certification (Rinehart and Bairer, 2011). Elk grazing during the same period that dairy cattle are required to meet nutritional regulations presents management conflicts from forage competition. Compensating dairy producers for loss of pasture forage does resolve the conflict of losing organic certification if dairies cannot meet the standards required of them.

  Elk and beef cattle have been reported as socially compatible (Wallace and Krausman, 1987), potentially influencing the amount of time elk spend grazing cattle pasture. Beyond the impact this has on consuming important forage for cattle, it may also lead to dangerous interactions during the elk rutting season, where cattle may become involved in aggressive reproductive interactions leading to injury. While elk tend to use more aggressive threats than injury-resulting physical aggression on other elk (de Vos et al., 1967), no research has been conducted to determine how dairy cattle react to these situations and the associated risks. Injury, and potentially death of cattle, are economic losses to ranchers and farmers, both immediately from veterinary bills and long-term from loss of future production and income.

  To reverse the severe decline and near extension in tule elk from the California Gold Rush and other impacts, twenty-one groups have been relocated from reserves to open lands resulting in a statewide population of 3800 (CDFW 2014a). By 1987, at least twelve of the state's relocated elk groups had significantly damaged private property (CDFW 2014b). This includes frequent and routine damage to fences and other ranching infrastructure.

  Johne's positive cattle herds experience an economic loss of nearly $100 per cow from production losses and increased cow replacement costs (Ott et al., 1999). Further, if cows are showing symptoms of Johne's disease at culling, this cost increased to nearly $200 per cow. The free-ranging elk herd within PRNS is considered a Johne's positive herd and creates the risk to spread this disease to cattle, both dairy and beef that are considered Johne's free herds. If elk herds in the planning area continue to grow they will increase their ranging area and come

into contact with cattle herds more frequently and with herds not yet intermingling with the elk. This presents a real economic concern, as some herds within PRNS are considered Johne's free through testing and may become Johne's positive through this mingling.

Recognizing the impacts presented by the interaction of elk and cattle, the gaps in knowledge about them, and being prepared to adapt management measures to relieve them in the EIS, will contribute to a GMP amendment that is better prepared to manage the conflicts between cattle and elk going forward.

Closing

These comments have been developed by a multi-disciplinary (Animal Science, Agricultural Economics, Dairy Science, Epidemiology, Integrated Pest Management, Rangeland Ecology, Soil Science, Veterinary Medicine, Watershed Hydrology, and Wildlife Biology) group of UC Cooperative Extension Advisors, Specialists, and Faculty whose applied research and education programs focus on solution development to achieve integrated conservation objectives on working landscapes. The group is prepared to be a resource and collaborator going forward in the development and implementation of the GMP amendment and offers these recommendations and references to support the GMP Amendment's goals, including the opportunity to successfully advance land conservation for multiple and integrated objectives.

Respectfully,

David J. Lewis

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September 23, 2019

GMPA
c/o Superintendent Cecily Muldoon
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Subject: Review Comments on the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment — Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Superintendent Muldoon,

Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area North District (PRNS/GGNRA) General Management Plan Amendment (GMP Amendment). We are a multi-disciplinary (Animal Science, Agricultural Economics, Dairy Science, Epidemiology, Integrated Pest Management, Rangeland Ecology, Soil Science, Veterinary Medicine, Watershed Hydrology, and Wildlife Biology) group of UC Cooperative Extension Advisors, Specialists, and Faculty whose applied research and education programs focus on solution development to achieve integrated conservation objectives on working landscapes. As we did in our scoping comments (dated November 30, 2018). We prepared to be a resource and collaborator going forward in the development and implementation of the GMP amendment and offer the following comments to support the GMP Amendment's goals, including the opportunity to successfully advance land conservation for multiple and integrated objectives.

Specific Comments

The following comments are offered to improve the accuracy and adequacy of the DEIS and GMP Amendment, building upon our scoping comments submitted on November 30, 2019 for that same purpose and attached to complement these review comments.

Diversification and Succession

DEIS agricultural diversification and ranch succession planning elements parallel similar efforts and programs, such as but not limited to Grown in Marin, Kitchen Table Advisors, and California Association of Family Farms. The aims of these efforts are to create pathways for farm and ranch viability and successful handoffs of operations to future farm generations. DEIS goals and its conservation strategies are similar to these aims and the following specific comments are provided to improve these elements within the DEIS so the GMP Amendment is successful.

- **Row crop on 2.5 unirrigated acres** (DEIS Ch.2, p. 37): Very few crops grown for commercial purposes lend themselves to exclusively dry-farming systems, and even those that do are successful through specialized variety selection, frequent tillage, and highly site-specific conditions such as rainfall and soil type. Some of the most common crops grown without irrigation are also high-acreage crops such as grains, vines and tree fruit – a clear mismatch with the 2.5-acre cap. And to limit this production to only the Ranch Core subzone precludes specific instances wherein Pasture subzone soil and site conditions are better suited for this type of diversification. The draft language suggests that even with available water, any diversification into row crop farming must be dry-farmed in the Ranch Core Zone. Revise language to read, "Up to 2.5 acres of row crops would be allowed in previously disturbed areas in the Ranch Core and Pasture subzones."
- **Tilling and Seeding** (DEIS Ch.2, p. 37): Many commercially grown row crops are not direct sown but transplanted. And in both transplant and direct-sow systems, some measure of primary and secondary tillage throughout the season is typically required. This language suggests that only direct-sown crops are allowed within row crop diversification, and no tillage would be allowed. Revise language to read, "Tillage minimization is encouraged, including use of no-till seed drills for direct-sown crops."
- **Crop Protection and Wildlife Management** (DEIS Ch.2, p. 37): This section suggests that the only form of acceptable protection for crops is fencing, a practice that is ineffective for gophers. This would inappropriately eliminate many common forms of management for row crop pests. Revise language to read, "Management of wildlife associated with protection of row crops should adhere to IPM methodology[1][2], prioritizing non-lethal methods such as fencing and other forms of exclusion from cropping areas. Any lethal forms of wildlife management as protection for row crops must be identified and approved in the Ranch Operating Agreement (ROA)"
- **Sales of Local Agricultural Products:** Repeated mention is made of "sales of local agricultural products" in DEIS Ch.2, p. 37, Ch.4, p. 118, 121, 150) and Appendices (Appendix K, p. 75) but explicit lists of Diversification activities and the subzones to which they have been assigned in Ch.2, p.37, Appendix K, p.15-16, Appendix L, p. 15 as well as Draft Sample Lease, Exhibit B, "Ranch Operating Agreement" make no mention of sales of local agricultural products. This creates confusion as to what the NPS envisions and evaluated when considering diversification on ranches as it relates to on-farm sales of products. The opportunity for members of the public to engage with agricultural operations directly as consumers of local products draws them closer to the region's long ranching history and yields both economic and cultural benefits. Visitors to the park benefit from the direct experience of what ranchers are producing and ranchers benefit from the opportunity to explain their practices and sell the fruits of their labor. Include in any enumerated lists of activities labeled "Diversification, Ranch Core Subzone" a bullet for "Sales of local agricultural products." Also include in Draft Sample Lease Exhibit B and elsewhere throughout DEIS, "Sales of Local Agricultural Products" among other forms of Diversification to be allowed.
- **Public-serving Ranch Activities** (DEIS Ch.2, p. 38): "Diversification activities authorized in the Ranch Core and Pasture subzones are: …Livestock species, … Public-serving ranch activities that support park goals for interpretation and education (i.e. farm stays, ranch tours)" It is unclear whether fee-for-service events such as farm-to-table dinners, pumpkin patches, fundraisers or weddings would be allowed under "Public-serving ranch activities". Some may assume that these activities fall under Draft Sample Lease section 4.13 *"Lessee may neither authorize nor host activities that require a National Park Service Special Use Permit, including*

[1] UC Integrated Pest Management - http://ipm.ucanr.edu/

[2] Vertebrate Pest Control Handbook - http://vpcrac.org/about/vertebrate-pest-handbook/

organized events and filming activities, upon the Premises without Lessor's prior approval and issuance of a Special Use Permit." The distinction between these two categories of public-serving programs needs to be made, including greater clarity around what kinds of events require a Special Use Permit. Revise language to read, "Public-serving ranch activities that support park goals for interpretation and education (e.g. farm stays, ranch tours and other forms of agritourism as approved in Ranch Operating Agreement (ROA)". Use this language to make consistent throughout Draft EIS and Appendices, Draft Sample Lease, etc. the activities allowed under diversification. Insert language outlining what kinds of "organized events" stand outside of the allowable forms of Diversification included in Alternative B.

- **Livestock Diversification** (DEIS Ch. 4, pp.133-134): "Ranch Management - Diversification": *"...only ranches with an occupied residential complex would be authorized to diversify livestock."* This statement does not fully agree with Appendix K, 3.2.12.2, p. 16 which restricts chickens in the Pastoral Subzone (up to 500 with up to 3 associated mobile huts) to ranches that have residential occupation but places no restrictions on sheep and goats beyond the caps on AU equivalents. Resolve the difference by allowing diversification of livestock species in the Pastoral Subzone of all ranches, maintaining for all the limitations on numbers based on AU equivalents. This would include the 500-chicken allowance for which the restriction to residentially occupied ranches is arbitrary and without clear cause.
- **Succession**: The draft and separate Succession Policy referenced in the DEIS uses the phrase "immediate family member" without a definition, leaving open the question of whether a niece, nephew, grandchild or cousin could join an operation and be added to the lease. In an era where succession for many farm families is unclear, preserving options for bringing in family members to take on leadership roles in the operation is essential. Modify language to read: "...Named Lessees on an individual permit, with the agreement of all other current Lessees, may request to add additional family members to that lease/permit."

Appendix D

DEIS' Appendix D – Management Activity Standards & Mitigation Measures, in conjunction with the proposed Permit/Lease and ROA, provides clarity to the options available and the expectations required for NPS staff and leasing ranchers to manage and achieve resource conservation goals, including agricultural operations. The following specific comments, when addressed, will bring additional clarity to the Final EIS and GMP Amendment.

- **Number of projects a year** (p. D-3): "The estimated number of individual projects to be implemented is up to 24 per year" Is this the projected total across the entire park? What is the definition of "project"? Table D-1 delineates *activities* which, together, might make up a project. Many of these activities, however, are part of ongoing agricultural practices that would be defined in the Ranch Operating Agreement (ROA). It should be clearly understood that while any project may entail multiple activities, the use/implementation of one or more activities listed in Table D-1 would not necessarily constitute a project. In absence of such a distinction, it could be argued that activities such as Mowing (p. D-4), Integrated Pest Management (p. D-4), Prescribed Grazing (p. D-5) and Forage Production (p. 6) which might be part of every ranch's ROA would count towards the 24-project cap. Insert definition of "project" to the effect of, "Any establishment of a new agricultural practice, built structure or other form of land use not currently in in effect on a given ranch".
- **Nonlethal Wildlife Control** (Table D-11, p. D-51): "Use nonlethal wildlife control (i.e. scarecrows or decoys and control garden debris) because lethal control of wildlife is prohibited." Use of traps and raptor boxes are common forms of integrated pest management to

control gophers[3], voles and other burrowing rodents that threaten row crops. Exclusion via underground fencing is not viable beyond a garden scale, but the wording in this section leaves few other options. Revise language to read: "Prioritize whenever possible nonlethal wildlife control (i.e. scarecrows or decoys and control garden debris). Any lethal forms of wildlife management as protection for row crops must be identified and approved in the Ranch Operating Agreement (ROA)"

- **Cover Crop and Mulch** (Table D-11, p. D-51): "Plant cover crop or cover soils with straw mulch…(until April 1)" The exact timing of cover crop termination is a delicate balance between crop maturity, soil and air temperatures and soil moisture. Prescribing a date upon which cover crops must be terminated sets an unrealistic expectation and does not allow sufficient flexibility to respond to conditions. Additionally, many farms are using other forms of mulch besides straw to stop erosion and halt weed growth in fields during the rainy season. The prescription to use straw mulch is overly specific and closes the door to new methods. Revise language to read, "Plant cover crop or cover soils with mulch and use at least 30% cover in fallow crop areas throughout the rainy season."
- **Tilling Activities** (Table D-11, p. D-51): "For row crop diversification, conduct tilling activities row crop areas, as well as ripping, disking, or harrowing, after August 20 and before the first rains or November 1." Tillage associated with row crop production occurs at different moments during the season for different purposes. Primary tillage associated with preparing fields for planting in spring (disking, listing, rototilling, spading, etc.) would all take place outside of the August-November window; as would some secondary tillage associated with cultivating fields to control weeds and recycle planting areas. The dates listed here may be intended for field preparation for cover-cropping, but create an unworkable expectation for other forms of necessary tillage. Revise language to read, "For row crop diversification, *conclude* tilling activities in row crop areas… prior to first significant rains or November 1, whichever comes later."

Lease/Permit Template

The following table provides detailed questions and comments to clarify points in the draft PRNS and North District GGNRA Agricultural Lease/Permit and Ranch Operating Agreement. In addition to including this template formally within the Final EIS and GMP Amendment, the Lease/Permit and Ranch Operating Agreement will be improved to facilitate achieving the National Park Service's goals and conservation strategies for the GMP Amendment.

[3] Baldwin, R.A. 2016, http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/r7600111.html

Item/Section	Text	Implication	Revision/Modification
1.9.2 (p.4)	Hazardous Waste is defined as any material or substance "that is or becomes defined as a "hazardous waste," "extremely hazardous waste," "restricted hazardous waste," "hazardous substance," "pollutant," "discharge," "waste," "contaminant," or "toxic contaminant" under any Environmental Requirement, or any above-ground or underground storage containers for the foregoing…"	The definition of "Hazardous Waste" would include manure and other dairy wastewater, but while 26.1.1 allows Lessee to "bring, use, handle, generate, treat, keep or store [Hazardous Materials] …in compliance with all Applicable Laws and as approved in writing by Lessor.", 26.1.2 forbids Lessee to "release, discharge or dispose of any Hazardous Materials". This sets up a conflict between the generation of waste and the discharge/disposal of it via manure spreading and/or sprinkling of water on pasture from manure lagoons.	This conflict could be resolved with the addition of the following to 26.1.2: "…except where allowed in Applicable Law and as outlined in Ranch Operating Agreement (ROA)" Additionally, the "TBD" language in 15.1 regarding the "Waiver of Waste discharge Requirements for CAFs" should make clear that these waivers are a method of providing oversight and regulatory compliance for both the storage and discharge of waste.
4.1 (p.8)	"…For Leases where residential use is authorized, Lessee agrees to use the Premises as the principle residence (as defined by the Internal Revenue Service) of at least one of the undersigned Lessees throughout the entire Term of the Lease."	This seems to preclude the possibility that a ranch could dedicate all housing to employee housing. It is unclear throughout Draft Lease and Draft Sample EIS as a whole whether employee housing is treated as a residential use and so fundamental to the terms of the lease or if the establishment of employee housing could be allowed through the ROA process alongside other Improvements or Alterations, bringing housing for agricultural workers to sites where none currently exists.	Add language to Draft EIS and Draft Sample Lease clarifying: 1. Whether Section 4.1 of the Draft Sample Lease could be satisfied by the use of residential buildings as principle residence by <u>employees of the Lessee</u> 2. Whether employee housing units would be allowed beyond the 18 ranches for which residential occupation is currently authorized, perhaps by classifying the use of manufactured housing for employees as a form of Improvement or Alteration.
18.1 and 18.2 p.14	"Lessee shall not provide any rancher worker housing on the Premises except as authorized in the ROA, including in manufactured housing units that are Lessee's Personal Property."	As Diversification activities are created/expanded, so, too, will the need for employee housing. Provisions in the Draft Sample Lease assert that manufactured housing would be treated as a personal property belonging to the Lessee but make no reference to how many and on what grounds new units would be allowed within a ranch's Ranch Core Subzone. Additionally, there is no mention of any evaluation of the impacts from necessary accompanying work of upgrading/installing septic systems and domestic water systems.	Add language to Draft EIS and Draft Sample Lease clarifying: 1. By which means limits would be set on the number of housing units (or housed employees) that a ranch would be allowed. 2. By whom additional infrastructure to support rancher worker housing (septic, water) will be approved and paid. 3. Include language that these costs could potentially be paid via maintenance reserve accounts

4.13 p.9	"Lessee may neither authorize nor host activities that require a National Park Service Special Use Permit, including organized events and filming activities, upon the Premises without Lessor's prior approval and issuance of a Special Use Permit."	Neither Draft EIS nor Draft Sample Lease indicate what circumstance/set of circumstances would trigger the need for an NPS Special Use Permit. Is this something acquired separate and outside of the once-annual ROA process? In absence of a definition of the Special Use Permit and the kind of organized event that necessitates one, confusion arises around some forms of Diversification described in Appendix K 3.2.12.1 such as "ranch tours" which are authorized through the ROA.	Add language to Draft EIS and Draft Sample Lease clarifying when and how an NPS Special Use Permit must be acquired. Distinguish this process in substance, form and timing from the ROA negotiation process.
6.1 p.10	Regarding rent, Draft Sample Lease states: "Note: There is no draft lease language for rent at this time because the formula for determining fair market rent will be determined through an appraisal conducted under the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice adopted by the Appraisal Foundation. NPS anticipates that lease rental rates will allow for annual adjustments so that rents remain consistent with market conditions."	Lease rent rate is based on an appraisal of "fair market rent" – but market rates are notoriously inappropriate indicators of value on agricultural lands for which use is restricted to agricultural activity, from which extractable value is limited to agricultural enterprise. Additionally, it is not clear whether/how lease rates will be adjusted every year to reflect changes in ROA. This complicates a ranch's calculation to diversify their operation if they cannot know in advance whether/how their lease will change with the addition of new livestock, product processing, etc. Additionally, Ch. 2, "Alternatives", p.37, under the heading "Appraisal Process", it is stated, "*Under alternative B, rather than individual appraisals, NPS anticipates development of a master appraisal process managed by the US Department of the Interior to determine FMV for park ranch operations.*" Because ROA's potentially change annually, independent of neighboring ranches, it is unclear how a "master appraisal process" would treat individual ranches that add diversification or make other changes to the operation.	Make explicit the relationship between appraisals, Ranch Operating Agreements and lease rent rate in terms of frequency and degree of change.
14.2 p. 13	"Lessee acknowledges that wildlife may cause occasional damage to fences, ranching structures, livestock, forage and Lessee's personal property and agrees to seek no reimbursement or other compensation therefore."	The establishment of a maintenance reserve account is mentioned in several places, but the purpose of these accounts is typically paired with maintenance of ranch buildings. No mention is made of how ranches will cover costs associated with damage to infrastructure, etc. caused by wildlife.	Descriptions of maintenance reserve accounts should state explicitly that funds will be available to ranches to pay for damage to infrastructure and compensate for lost forage due to wildlife.

16.2 p.14 21.2 p.18	"If Lessee desires to undertake any Diversification Activities, …or use any pesticides, Lessee shall notify NPS at least 30 days in advance of the annual ROA meeting referred to in Article 4 of this Lease and provide a brief, written description of the activity."	"Pesticide" is, as defined in California state law is "Any substance, or mixture of substances which is intended to be used for defoliating plants, regulating plant growth, or for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest … which may infest or be detrimental to vegetation, man, animals, or households, or be present in any agricultural or nonagricultural environment whatsoever." The breadth of this definition means that many commonplace substances would qualify as a pesticide and, as such, require a rancher to report to NPS. Herbicides, both organic and conventional are only one example. Having only one window in a year to gain approval of a pest-management practice is insufficient to allow a rancher to respond to changing conditions across the four seasons. As diversification on ranches increases to include row crops and small-scale processing, the complexity of managing pests increases.	Language regarding pesticide use should be removed from references to ROA and 16.2 should be amended to read: "Lessee shall notify Lessor of any use of pesticides by the 10th day of the month following application. All uses of pesticides must comply with Applicable Laws including reporting and certification requirements."
Exhibit B, "Ranch Operating Agreement" 7.2, p. 36	"Hay may only be produced for cattle owned by Lessee that are authorized under the terms of the Lease."	On ranches that opt to diversify livestock to include sheep or goats or even horse boarding, the ability to grow hay for their feeding is both sensible and efficient. However, the use of the word "cattle" in 7.2 implies that this may not be allowed.	Change the word "cattle" to "livestock".
Exhibit B, "Ranch Operating Agreement" 11.2, p. 38	"Pesticide application work must be supervised by a person licensed or certified in the use of the approved pesticides"	Under state law, no license or certification is required for a rancher to apply pesticides on their own land. These criteria are only required when applications are conducted by an employee of the operation.	Revise the language to read, "When required by Applicable Law, pesticide application must be supervised by a person suitably licensed or certified in the use of the approved pesticides."
Exhibit B, "Ranch Operating Agreement" 8, p. 37	"Lessee is authorized to undertake the following types of Ground Disturbance…"	Absent a definition of Ground Disturbance, many basic activities associated with agriculture could be assumed to be Ground Disturbance and, as such, be hindered by the once-annual ROA negotiation process. Use of keyline plow, subsoiler or other similar practice for improving soil health in pasture and rangeland could be mistaken for Ground Disturbance. Routine scraping of ranch roads to fill potholes and level bumps could be mistaken for Ground Disturbance.	A formal definition for "Ground Disturbance" should be established. Marin County code established a threshold of 250 cubic yards for amount of soil moved as the trigger for its Grading Permits. Something like this would help ranchers distinguish between routine agricultural activity and things which must be delineated and approved in the ROA.

Soils

The DEIS in preparing the Soils sections in Chapters 3 and 4 used the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Soil Survey interpretations to restrict land use decisions rather than to guide management decisions. Soil Survey interpretations such as compaction resistance and erosion hazard rating are limited by the data that is collected by the soil survey. This data is not always the essential data that accurately explain a soil's behavior. For example, while using the NRCS soil compaction resistance interpretation is convenient, it fails to capture the most important property that governs susceptibility to soil compaction, which is soil moisture. Soils are most prone to compaction when they are wet. Thus, careful management of stocking rates, stocking density and timing of heavy traffic can avoid compaction. NRCS's interpretation does not use soil moisture as an intrinsic property because soil survey does not monitor soil moisture. The compaction interpretation uses soil properties that have a secondary influence on compaction: texture, structure, rock fragment content, bulk density and organic matter content. Thus, it is a good indicator of relative differences in susceptibility to compaction among soils, but it is a poor indicator of the actual risk to compaction. Moreover, it does not link to any specific stocking rates or management goals.

A similar problem is associated with erosion hazard. The approach to risk or "adverse impact on soil" is faulty in the DEIS because it is based on the USDA-NRCS erosion hazard rating. This rating considers slope and K factor, but it does not use cover. Thus, erosion hazard is a relative interpretation of the intrinsic erodibility of bare soil on different slopes. It does not reflect the reality of anchored soil by vegetative cover. A recent study showed that grazing has minimal impact on soil erosion in California because plant cover is exceedingly high, even under high grazing scenarios (Salls et al., 2018). Moreover, soil survey in describing the erosion hazard rating states, "The soil loss is caused by sheet or rill erosion in off-road or off-trail areas where 50 to 75 percent of the surface has been exposed by logging, grazing, mining, or other kinds of disturbance". The extent of this amount of bare-soil condition is limited to very few instances of high-use. The DEIS scales this up to reflect hundreds or even thousands of acres, which is not correct and in the instance of cattle trails is no different than that of human trials which the DEIS suggests are fine.

Similarly, the use of wind erodibility to livestock trails is also questionable given that the wind fetch is extremely low. Wind erodibility on agricultural fields must be judged relative to the timing of the unvegetated surface. If bare dry soil exists then wind erodibility is high, however, if bare soil is moist wind erodibility is exponentially lower. This again limits the applicability of soil survey interpretations as a risk assessment.

None of the USDA-NRCS erosion hazard ratings suggest that management should be removed as mitigating action. Rather it is suggested that careful management is needed on erodible land. One possible exception is the most restrictive instance of this interpretation "very severe," described in soil survey to have the most conservative actions: *"loss of soil productivity and off-site damage are likely, and erosion-control measures are costly and generally impractical*". Only 13% of the planning area is rated "very severe" with the high likelihood that this land is too steep for any management activity that would remove over 50% of the vegetative cover. Thus, any hypothetical change to land use within the planning area is likely to have no effect on soil erosion assuming ranchers use careful management such as prescribed grazing practices that meet residual dry matter targets. Unfortunately, the DEIS grouped severe and very severe classes into one class, a questionable decision given that severe ratings simply require careful management.

It is not clear how the acreage of high-intensity-use areas was determined. First paragraph on page 104 suggests 150 acres within grazing areas associated with trails, salt licks trough areas etc. This number may be smaller depending upon the inclusion or exclusion of animal concentration areas. It is difficult to quantify the spatial extent of these localized areas accurately. Moreover, the soil survey

cannot be used at such a fine scale, thus we have no way of knowing how susceptible the soils are to compaction at these localized scales, making it difficult to use them to make statements and conjecture that suggest long-term adverse impacts on soils.

The DEIS assumes that there has been or will be soil degradation because of activities that are on what are perceived to be susceptible soils. There is no proof that many of these activities adversely affect these soils, with the exception of animal concentration facilities. The DEIS does not explain how soil survey data was aggregated. This is important because soil survey does not delineate individual soils but multiple soils that comprise a map unit. It appears in some cases that the DEIS pushes the limits of scale in terms of the questions soil survey can answer. Moreover, they do not explain how soil survey data was aggregated to report interpretations e.g. dominant soil component, dominant condition, spatially weighted average, most limiting condition etc. Soil Survey interpretations are not meant to restrict land activities. They are intended to guide careful management. In some instances, across the country highly erodible lands have been excluded from activities that could accelerate soil erosion. This is typically focused on removing land from cultivation. There is no evidence that careful grazing practices in California leads to adverse soil impacts, yet these statements persist in the DEIS. The result is a document that reads with an extremist view on the effects of management on soil.

The Final EIS and GMP Amendment will be improved and support achievement of the NPS goals and conservation strategies by revising its use of the USDA NRCS Soil Survey to the appropriate scale and to guide management practice decisions instead of restrict land use for the specific items mentioned and others where the DEIS relies upon the soil survey.

Air Resources

The DEIS Executive Summary appropriately contextualizes the planning area air resources stating, "While emissions of criteria pollutants and greenhouse gases would vary among alternatives, these emissions would continue to be a small contributor to overall impacts when compared to emission sources and transport of emission from outside the planning area (page ix)." Additionally in Chapter 3 the DEIS explains "...most deposition sources likely affecting the park come from sources outside park boundaries...(page 96)." These points should be strengthened in the Final EIS by placing the planning area Greenhouse House Gas (GHG) emissions inventory within inventories for Marin County and California as requested in the attached scoping comments.

Adding to this context, the Final EIS will improve the context for the impacts and mitigation of air quality by accounting for carbon sequestration in agricultural soils relative to emissions estimates. The point here is to analyze and present the level of balance that currently exists in the planning area to inform the scale of mitigation that is even possible. Additionally, there have been modifications to the use of "global warming potential" of different GHGs referred to as GWP* (Allen et al., 2016). Using these will improve the accuracy of analysis and management recommendations within the Final EIS based upon cumulative and short-lived climate pollutants.

Lastly, the DEIS statement "...NH3 emissions can contribute to visibility impairment and to harmful ecosystem impacts from excess nitrogen deposition (page 93)" is true and deserving of additional context. This occurs when a nitrate particulate is formed. It is important point that this is a reversible reaction. It is not clear if planning area conditions year-round would lead to this reaction. The resulting nitrate particulate is from gas engines, meaning both ammonia and car or engine exhaust are needed in the same place for the reaction to occur. The Final EIS must explain the potential for the reaction to occur instead of implying that all ammonia would form particulate nitrate and impact visibility.

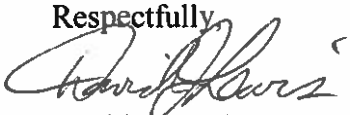
Appendix I

With the case study examples now available in the DEIS' Appendix I, a complete peer-review of R Forage ( ) to Predict Rangeland Residual Dry Matter (RDM) is warranted to assure that the model and its outputs are addressing the intended objectives and contributing to achievement of the GMP Amendment conservation strategies. This could even provide a conceptual framework for the grazing use, overlap, and competition between livestock and elk that would the development and use of a "forage" model. It will provide NPS with technical support beyond assumption confirmation early in model development. It would also help bring clarity to the question or questions being asked as the impetus for creating the model. It would also be instrumental to facilitate the use of other existing data in the planning area including measured forage production and residual dry matter and authorized animal units. Lastly, it will help to resolve confusion in the application of terms and concepts applied in the model, including needed differentiation and definition of RDM, forage production, and consumption. For, example winter or spring estimates of RDM are contrary to the concept of RDM as a measure of material left at the end of a grazing year when it is dry and hot (typically measured in August or September). This is one example of where concepts are not clearly applied or described in Appendix I, giving rise to questions about the assumptions and the purpose of the model. Conducting a complete peer-review will improve the model and description in Appendix I by pointing out these questions and providing revisions to the model purpose and structure.

Closing

Thank you again for the opportunity to support the NPS and community stakeholders with our scoping comments (attached) and now with our DEIS review comments. We will continue to be a resource for research-based information and a constructive partner for the development and implementation of the Final GMP Amendment.

Respectfully,



David J. Lewis

Attachments

Scoping comment letter dates November 30, 2018.

References

Allen, M.R., J.S. Fuglestvedt, K.P. Shine, A. Reesinger, R.T. Pierrehumber, and P.M. Forster. 2016. New use of global warming potentials to compare cumulative and short-lived climate pollutants. Nature Climate Change volume 6, pages 773–776.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

MEETING DATE: April 14, 2021

Item: 4

Executive Officer's Report

Executive Officer's Report April 7, 2020

Items in this Report (Author[s])

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In-house Training: How to be a Visionary Regulator (Carrie Austin)

In March, I kicked off the training with a reference to Yoda and how failure can be the best teacher if we take the time to learn from it. We then heard from two powerhouse keynote speakers on factors that support visionary environmental leadership. Meredith Williams, Director of the Department of Toxic Substances Control, is a physicist who worked in Silicon Valley and the private sector before pivoting to the environmental field and public sector. She had always been the person on the team nominated to speak truth to management. Felicia Marcus, former Chair of State Water Board, is an attorney who on behalf of Heal the Bay (Santa Monica) sued the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. That led to her being recruited and hired to run Public Works where she gained the helpful insight that work is hard on the other side, too. They both spoke to the importance of people skills, especially listening well, and owning the moment when you have sufficient information to make decisions and lead. They reminded us that we can all be leaders and to bring your entire self to the work rather than letting your technical education narrowly define your approach. We will make available to staff links to the many books and TED talks they both referenced.

In the second half of the training, we held breakout sessions with eight of our very own in-house visionary regulators, as follows:

Topic	Speaker	Moderator
Qualities Common to Visionary Leaders	**Tamarin Austin** Office of Chief Counsel	Celina Hernandez
What's the difference between vision and delusion?	**Bill Johnson** NPDES Division Chief	Setenay Frucht
Becoming a Performance-Driven and Accomplished Organization OR Getting Better Environmental Outcomes and Happier Employees, Simultaneously	**Lisa Horowitz McCann** Assistant Executive Officer	Renee Hu
Grapes, dirt, concentrated runoff, and fish – a permit to protect streambed conditions in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds	**Mike Napolitano** Planning Division Staff	Joseph Martinez
Innovation driven by crisis management – Saving Tribal Water Systems in a Drought	**Mike Montgomery** Executive Officer	Alyx Karpowicz
Innovating to advance green stormwater initiatives	**Keith Lichten** Watershed Division Chief	Elizabeth Wells

Suisun Bay Reserve Ghost Fleet – Regulating stormwater discharges from a scary source	**David Elias** Groundwater Protection Division Section Leader	Carrie Austin
Innovating to address climate change	**Xavier Fernandez** Planning Division Chief	Lindsay Whalin

During these breakout sessions staff heard examples of and about best practices for thinking outside the box, taking risks, building coalitions, soliciting and listening to feedback, adaptively managing for innovation and effective new programs, procedures, permits and collaborations aligned with our mission. There were many opportunities throughout the training for staff to practice their moderator skills, as you can see on the above list, plus Tong Yin, Rene Leclerc, and Sami Harper moderated other portions. Tom Mumley, Assistant Executive Officer, closed the training with his toolkit for innovation in our office. Much appreciation to Janet O'Hara and Jim Ponton, Seniors in the Planning Division, for leading this training and to staff members Guy Gutterman and Demir Worthington for their work. In April, our training will address implicit bias.

Water Quality Impacts of Dairies and Ranches at Point Reyes National Seashore (Jan O'Hara and Laurie Taul)

In the March 10, 2021 Board meeting, members of the public voiced concerns about the water quality impacts of dairy and beef ranches in Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS). The commenters requested we urge the National Park Service to continue year-to-year leases rather than extending leases for these ranches to 20 years, as proposed in the PRNS General Management Plan Amendment. They also highlighted recent water quality data that indicate high bacteria concentrations in Abbotts Lagoon and nearby creeks.

Water Quality Information

The commenters referred to water quality data collected for the Western Watersheds Project in January 2021 following a rain event. These data, which appear to be of good quality, show high bacteria densities in surface water downstream of ranches that have implemented best management practices (BMPs) such as fencing, manure management, wastewater collection systems, off-stream livestock water supply, and other infrastructure. Commenters were rightly concerned that water quality, as characterized in January, is poor despite existing pollution prevention ranch practices.

Other data sets also show elevated bacteria densities in certain creeks that drain into Drake's Estero and the Pacific Ocean. The National Park Service (NPS) evaluated data it collected between 2003 and 2013 in four watersheds with dairies and/or beef cattle grazing. These watersheds include Kehoe creek, Abbotts Lagoon, Drakes Estero and East Schooner Creek. Concurrent with the monitoring, ranch operators, NPS, and others collaborated to implement BMPs across the study area. The study found that bacteria decreased by one or two orders of magnitude where BMPs were implemented. Bacteria still exceeded water quality standards periodically, especially during rain events, when bacteria counts were elevated in all samples. Watersheds with dairies had larger reductions in bacteria than did those with beef cattle operations.

The Western Watersheds Project data provide a snapshot that shows elevated bacteria during a single rain event, and from limited sample locations. This is useful information, but lacks the context given by the NPS study, which included a decade's worth of data. The NPS study found bacteria counts were reduced over time in conjunction with implementation of BMPs that targeted manure management, animal concentration areas, and livestock distribution to reduce fecal inputs to surface waters. However, additional progress is needed to meet water quality standards during every season and in all sample locations.

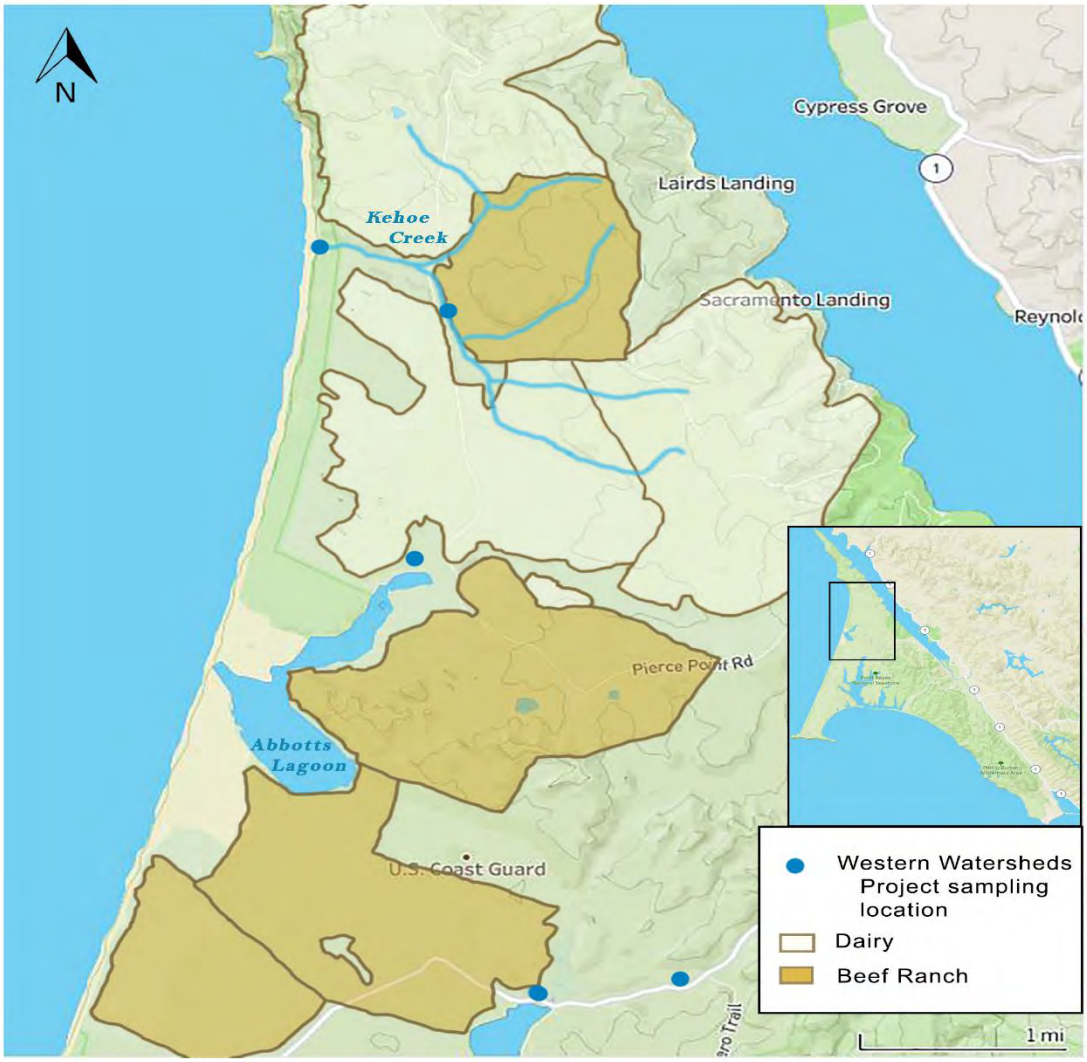


Figure 1: Western Watersheds Project sample points and PRNS land use

Mitigating Water Quality Impacts in Point Reyes National Seashore

Currently, the NPS is the primary entity overseeing implementation of ranch BMPs within PRNS, and all ranches enter into ranch operating agreements with the NPS. Proposed amendments to the PRNS General Management Plan call for more details, including additional water quality BMPs, to be included in ranch operating agreements. We understand the added details would mirror the requirements of our orders (described below), thus adding NPS oversight to our own oversight of dairy and beef ranch compliance with the orders. The amendment also identifies zones within PRNS where grazing and other operations are prohibited to protect sensitive species.

In addition to implementing additional BMPs, the factors below may also help to mitigate water quality impacts at PRNS:

Density of animals: Dairies at PRNS generally have a lower density of animals per acre than ranches in other parts of California. For example, the average PRNS dairy has 390 head of cattle, compared to 2120 head in Tulare County. Cows also pasture graze for a

larger portion of their food intake and spend less time in concentrated feeding areas in PRNS.

Organic Certification: All six PRNS dairies are certified organic. To meet the requirements under the National Organic Program, dairies must prevent runoff of water and wastes to surface water; practice erosion control and protect natural wetlands and riparian areas; put animals to pasture at least 120 days per year with a minimum 30 percent dry matter intake from grazing; and maintain a pasture management plan that ensures pasture of a sufficient quality and quantity is available to graze throughout the grazing season. While not a guarantee, we would expect organic certification would help in protecting water quality from polluted dairy runoff.

Lease Terms: The proposed PRNS General Management Plan amendment proposes to extend lease agreements to 20 years. While one commenter at the March Board meeting suggested that keeping single-year leases is the best way to encourage ranchers to improve their BMPs, we suggest that the security of having a 20-year return on investment period is a better way. For example, fencing to keep cattle out of streams is particularly expensive; a rancher concerned about losing the lease is less likely to consider this investment.

Water Board Staff Actions

Water quality impacts from dairies and grazing operations are a major focus for Water Board staff. We developed and enforce General Waste Discharge Requirements for Confined Animal Facilities (CAF Order) and several Conditional Waiver Programs for Grazing Operations (Grazing Waiver), including a Grazing Waiver for the Tomales Bay Watershed. Both programs require ranchers to install and maintain best management practices to minimize impacts to water quality. The CAF Order also requires a manure management plan, a pasture management plan, and monitoring of instream receiving water and domestic wells. Monitoring requirements are new, and few valid data have been submitted to date.

The CAF Order covers all six dairies at PRNS. While we maintain authority to enforce the CAF Order, NPS staff are a local presence and have been the primary entity to inspect ranches. Water Board staff intend to work more closely with NPS staff as the PRNS General Management Plan amendment is completed.

Because a portion of PRNS drains to Tomales Bay, ten of its 18 grazing operations (those that drain to Tomales Bay) are covered by the Grazing Waiver. Water Board staff inspect grazing operations in PRNS on a rotational basis. Each year, staff consider all the grazed watersheds in our region and focus inspections based on water quality data, past violations, time since last inspection, and similar factors. We plan to inspect PRNS ranches and dairies at our earliest opportunity.

Last December, Water Board staff commented on the proposed General Management Plan Amendment for PRNS. Our overriding concern was that ranch lease agreements and/or ranch operating plan agreements should require compliance with our CAF Order and Grazing Waiver. We think our comments will be acted upon and see this amendment process as an opportunity to improve our coordination and cooperation with the NPS, and to ultimately improve water quality.

Finally, our staff have been instrumental in helping applicants obtain federal 319(h) grants for water quality improvements in the Tomales Bay Watershed and beyond. One of the dairies adjacent to a Western Watersheds Project sampling site (see above) is currently installing new fencing on the Tomales Bay side of its ranch with 319(h) funding. Our staff have fostered and advocated for regional grant projects, expanded our grazing and CAF programs across the North Bay and San Mateo County and managed all these programs with just 2.5 person-years. To leverage our resources, we work with partners such as NPS, Tomales Bay Watershed Council, local Resource Conservation Districts, U.C. Cooperative Extension, CA Dairy Quality Assurance Program, and the Farm Bureaus to help obtain data and to encourage improved BMPs to protect water quality.

Prosperity Cleaners Status Update, Marinwood (Ralph Lambert)

This is an update regarding the cleanup progress at the former Prosperity dry cleaner site located in the Marinwood Plaza shopping center north of San Rafael in Marin County.

Background

Releases of tetrachloroethene (PCE) from past dry-cleaning operations impacted soil, soil vapor and groundwater at the site. In September 2020, you adopted Cleanup Order R2-2020-0025 which replaced the prior cleanup orders (R2-2014-0007, R2-2014-0036, and R2-2018-0035). The Order requires Marinwood Plaza, LLC, and Hoytt Enterprises Inc., to cleanup PCE and its degradation by-products, to monitor remediation effectiveness and specifies start and end dates for the groundwater cleanup (June 2021 and February 2027, respectively).

Groundwater Cleanup

PCE exceeds the 5 µg/L Maximum Contaminant Level in groundwater in an area that extends from the Source Property to about ½ mile east. Affected properties include the Silveira cattle ranch and land owned by Catholic Charities. The ranch uses groundwater for its operations. While PCE concentrations are below the drinking water standard of 5 µg/l in its wells, Marinwood LLC, provides wellhead treatment to the ranch to ensure the water is safe and useable. Catholic Charities does not use groundwater. Both Silviera and Catholic Charities have been before you expressing concerns about the plume migration onto their properties.

Due to prior delays, the recently issued Order also required a progress report to ensure that startup will occur by June 2021. The progress report deadline of January 15th was missed and this was added to the enforcement considerations. Since referral of this matter to enforcement we have received a draft progress report and field work is expected to start the week of April 12. We are working closely with them and their new consultant towards meeting the June 2021 completion date.

Soil Vapor Cleanup

PCE was also detected in soil vapor at the former dry cleaner in excess of screening levels for commercial use. At this time, the former dry cleaner is not occupied and indoor air concentrations in the neighboring grocery store do not exceed applicable screening levels.

In April 2020, we issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) for failing to submit a completion report for onsite soil vapor remediation and quarterly monitoring reports. We issued an additional NOV in November 2020 for a missed monitoring report.

Due to the reporting and monitoring violations, and delay in implementing soil vapor remediation, the case was referred to our enforcement team following the NOV. The Dischargers have resumed conducting ongoing monitoring of groundwater and soil vapor again, as required by the Order. Regional Water Board staff and the Dischargers

are discussing a path to compliance including modifications to the delayed soil vapor remediation.

Benicia Industrial Park Status Update, Benicia (Bill Cook)

This is an update regarding the cleanup progress at the Benicia Industrial Park located east of Benicia in Solano County. In November 2019, the Regional Water Board adopted cleanup Order R2-2019-0031 to require additional investigations, remediation, and monitoring to reduce impacts to human health and the environment at the site.

In 1999, Caltrans reported chlorinated volatile organic compounds contamination in some wetlands it restored near site, known as the Caltrans Mitigation Area (CMA), but did not identify a specific upgradient source. Subsequent investigations documented the use of trichloroethene (TCE) and poor handling practices at the Benicia Industrial Park. Releases of TCE from past manufacturing operations impacted soil, soil vapor, and groundwater at the Benicia Industrial Park. Investigations continued in an iterative manner until the lateral and vertical extent of the contaminant plume was defined. TCE migrated in groundwater to several downgradient commercial properties and the CMA.

A groundwater plume with TCE concentrations up to 4,800 µg/L exceeds the drinking water maximum contaminant levels of 5 µg/L. This plume extends a half mile to the southeast through a commercial area into the CMA. Since 2004, interim remedial actions were implemented at the Benicia Industrial Park source property. The source property's sub-slab depressurization system is operating to reduce concentrations of soil vapor and indoor air impacted by TCE. In-situ chemical oxidation injection was implemented at the source property between 2006 and 2019 to reduce concentrations of TCE in groundwater.

Soil Vapor and Indoor Air Sampling Results

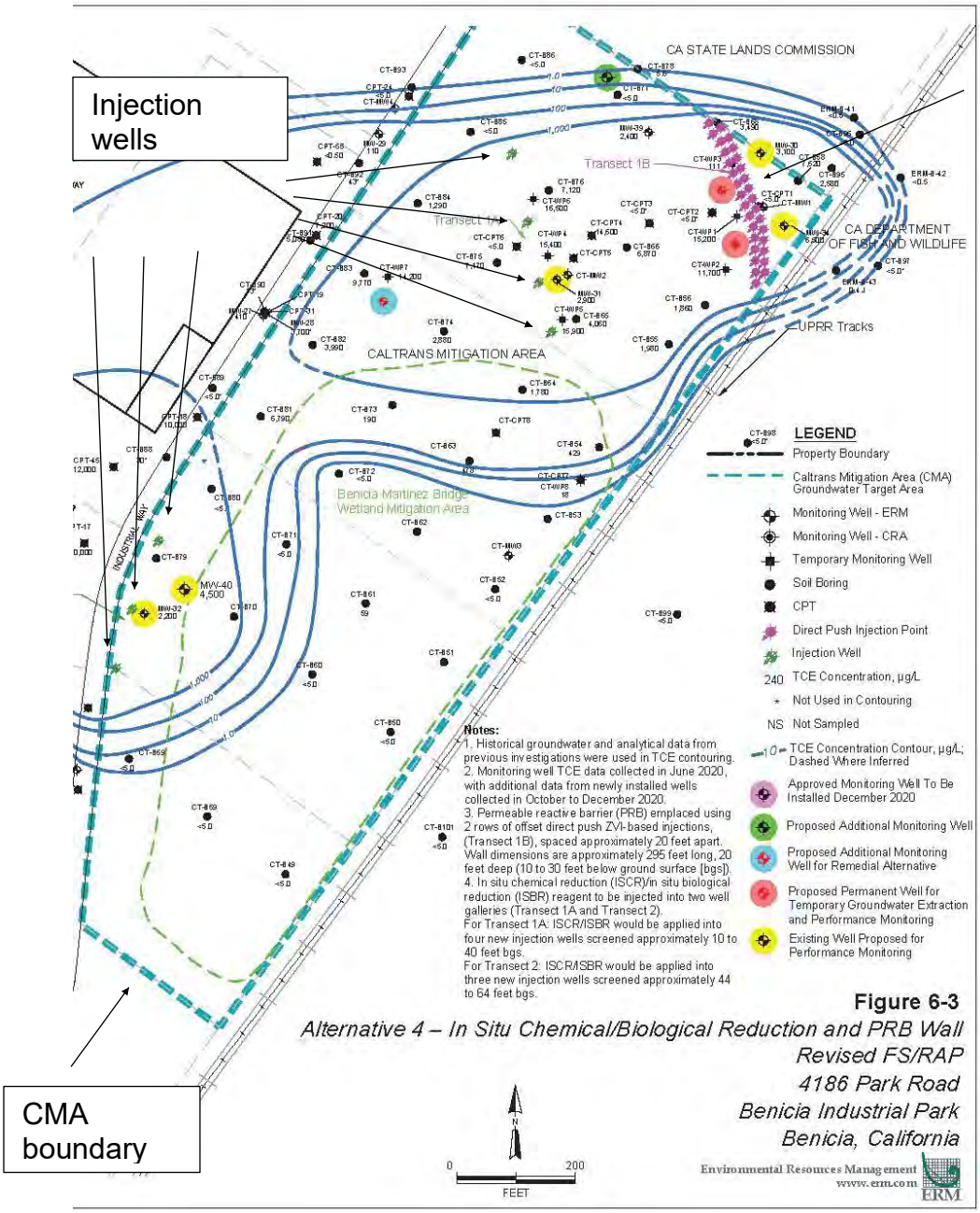
In 2020, pursuant to the Board's order, the dischargers sampled vapor below buildings and indoor air. TCE was found in sub-slab soil vapor samples at concentrations above the commercial/industrial environmental screening level (ESL) under two buildings downgradient of the Benicia Industrial Park. The indoor air results for TCE were below commercial ESLs. Tetrachloroethene (PCE) was detected in indoor air at a concentration exceeding the commercial ESL in one building south of the Benicia Industrial Park. Subsequent results for this building were below the ESL PCE is not the primary contaminant of concern but can be found in indoor air samples due to other potential consumer sources.

Revised Feasibility Study/Remedial Action Plan

During January 2021, pursuant to the Board's order, the dischargers submitted a Feasibility Study/Remedial Action Plan (Plan), which proposes additional remediation in the CMA to reduce exposure risk to the environment including surface water and wildlife. The proposed remediation includes injection of bacteria degrading TCE and its breakdown products. The Plan also proposes placing a permeable reactive barrier containing powdered inert metallic iron to facilitate the break down of chlorinated volatile organic compounds into carbon dioxide and chloride ions. The proposed placement (see figure below) should reduce the exposure risk of aquatic organisms using the wetland as an ecosystem.

The discharger does not currently propose additional remediation in the area of the commercial buildings downgradient of the Benicia Industrial Park, because

concentrations of chlorinated volatile organic compounds in groundwater are consistently declining over time. Contingency plans for additional remediation in this area were included in the Plan should contamination increases, or additional information indicate that the risk is higher than currently assessed. Wetland access requires securing specific access permits. We are working with the dischargers, property owners and agencies to facilitate the access. This spring, we will be inviting the public to comment on the Plan with the issuance of a factsheet. Following the public comment period, we anticipate responding favorably to the submitted Plan by May 2021. We anticipate onset of the remediation beginning on or about July 1, 2021.



April 2020 Enforcement Actions (Brian Thompson and Jessica Watkins)

The following tables shows the proposed and settled enforcement actions since March's report. In addition, enforcement actions are available on our website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/public_notices/pending_enforcement.shtml

Proposed Settlement

The following is noticed for a 30-day public comment period. If no significant comment is received by the deadline, the Executive Officer will sign an order implementing the settlement.

Discharger	Violation(s)	Proposed Penalty	Comment Deadline
Univar USA, Inc.	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	April 21, 2021
Treasure Island Development Group	Discharge limit violations.	$3,000	April 21, 2021
Windy Hill PV Five CM, LLC	Discharge limit violations.	$3,000	April 21, 2021
SJ Park Almaden LLC	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	April 21, 2021
Daly City Serramonte Center, LLC	Discharge limit violations.	$9,000[1]	April 26, 2021
S&B Milpitas, LLC	Discharge limit violations.	$6,000	April 26, 2021
Martinez Refining Company LLC	Discharge limit violations.	$120,000[2]	April 26, 2021
Lehigh Southwest Cement Company	Unauthorized chlorinated water discharges.	$60,000[3]	April 28, 2021
Republic Services, Inc. and West Contra Costa Sanitary Landfill, Inc.	Failure to comply with waste discharge requirements and industrial stormwater general permit.	$460,600[4]	April 30, 2021

[1] Includes $4,500 to supplement Regional Monitoring Program studies. The Regional Monitoring Program is managed by the San Francisco Estuary Institute to collect water quality information in support of management decisions to restore and protect beneficial uses of the Region's waters.

[2] Includes $60,000 to supplement Regional Monitoring Program studies.

[3] The Discharger is also responsible for funding and implementing a Selenium Fish Tissue Monitoring Study.

[4] Includes $223,300 to supplement Regional Monitoring Program studies.

Settled Actions

On behalf of the Board, the Executive Officer approved the following:

Discharger	Violation(s)	Imposed Penalty	Supplemental Environmental Project
City of Sunnyvale	Unauthorized discharge of partially-treated wastewater.	$187,000[1]	$93,500

[1] Includes $93,500 towards a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) for the City of Sunnyvale to integrate green stormwater infrastructure into a planned traffic improvement project.

401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Abigail Smith)

The table below lists those applications received for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification from January 29 through March 10, 2021. A check mark in the right-hand column indicates a project with work that may be in BCDC jurisdiction.

Project Name	City/Location	County	May have BCDC Jurisdiction
Estuary Dock Repair at 2841 Marina Drive	Alameda	Alameda	✓
MLK Regional Shoreline Bay Trail and Improvement	Oakland	Alameda	✓
Moraga Creek Flood and Erosion Control	Moraga	Contra Costa	
Install pipe liner in existing 48 diameter stormdrain pipe crossing Ivy Dr	Orinda	Contra Costa	
Sycamore Avenue Trunk Sewer Replacement	Pinole	Contra Costa	✓
Black Point Bridge Fender Repair	Novato	Marin	✓
Bear Canyon Creek Fish Passage Maintenance	Napa	Napa	
Vineyard Development at 3580 Monticello Rd	Napa	Napa	
Stratford Bay Homeowners Association Rip-Rap Replacement	Redwood City	San Mateo	✓
The Shore at California Bayside Rip-Rap Replacement	Redwood City	San Mateo	✓
Oyster Cove Marina Maintenance Dredging	San Mateo	San Mateo	✓
Sailing Lake Access Road Improvement	Mountain View	Santa Clara	✓
Residential Development at Dobe Lane	Fairfield	Solano	
Vallejo Ferry Dredging	Vallejo	Solano	✓

Jared Huffman	**Mike McGuire**	**Marc Levine**	**Dennis Rodoni**
Member of Congress	State Senator	State Assembly	Supervisor
California 2nd	California 2nd	California 10th	Marin County 4th

April 15, 2021

California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Concurrence in Consistency of Point Reyes National Seashore GMPA

Dear Commissioners:

Each of the undersigned elected officials, in our respective federal, state and county capacities, is honored to represent not only the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) but also the surrounding communities that depend on and cherish this national treasure – communities that are directly impacted by management decisions affecting PRNS. The consistency determination pending before the California Coastal Commission is of great importance to the communities we serve. We are therefore taking the unusual step of writing this joint letter to express our unified support for your approval of the staff recommendation that your decision on the consistency of the National Park Service's General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA) should be conditional concurrence.

The GMPA process has been long, comprehensive, and inclusive. While we do not consider the GMPA to be perfect, it will provide stronger protections for the natural and cultural resources in the PRNS, honor longstanding commitments, and provide planning and operational certainty for all stakeholders. We therefore support the completion of the GMPA. As the plan goes forward and is implemented, we are also committed within the context of our jurisdictional roles to ensuring that the Park Service upholds the highest environmental and public trust standards at PRNS.

We appreciate the public engagement and spirited advocacy the GMPA has generated, particularly with respect to management of the Tule Elk. The reintroduction of native Tule Elk at PRNS and the growth and expansion of the elk population to now include three distinct herds is a success story we should all celebrate. But whatever one thinks about the Park Service's plans for managing these herds of majestic elk, those activities cannot be part of your consistency determination. That is because this Commission's jurisdiction is limited to the "coastal zone" as defined by the federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) and California Coastal Act, and the PRNS federal lands -- including all of the elk managed by the Park Service within those lands-- are excluded from the coastal zone. As Commission staff correctly concluded, the "proposed elk management measures proposed by the NPS will not cause effects on coastal zone resources that conflict with Coastal Act policies that protect coastal species and habitats. The proposed elk management measures would affect individuals that live entirely outside of the coastal zone and would maintain viable herd numbers in accordance with wildlife agency recommendations."

GMPA activities that are within the jurisdictional purview of the Commission include support for agriculture, which is surely consistent even though the GMPA results in a slight reduction of ranching; public access, which is preserved and increased; and cultural resources which are protected, including the historic ranches within the Point Reyes Peninsula Dairy Ranches Historic District and Olema Valley Dairy Ranches Historic District. The GMPA also includes strategies to meet air quality standards and to protect special status species.

Commission staff did identify germane spillover effects from the GMPA related to water quality and the protection of marine resources, and recommended strengthening these provisions. We concur that this is the right focus and believe the GMPA can be strengthened in these specific areas. It is our understanding that the Regional Water Quality Board, which already regulates water quality in this area, is engaged in good faith with PRNS on efforts to deliver a water quality strategy and monitoring program as recommended in the Commission's staff report. We support the proposal to require development and implementation of a program, consistent with the Regional Water Quality Control Board criteria and including best practices, to enhance and further protect water quality within the GMPA planning area as a condition of your consistency determination.

Finally, we are heartened that the Park Service is demonstrating a genuine interest in developing a closer working relationship with Native American tribes, whose ancestral lands we now call our public land, in the management of PRNS. This includes protection of historic sites and artifacts, interpretive programs, ceremonial activities, and a role in managing the restored Tule elk herds which are sacred to the tribe.

As you have undoubtedly discovered by now, there is no shortage of passion and strong opinions when it comes to management of Point Reyes National Seashore, its legislative origins, and the Park Service's longstanding efforts to balance the multiple uses and values that make PRNS so unique. Whether it is oysters or wilderness, historic ranches or restored Tule Elk herds, spirited debates over the future of PRNS will continue.

These debates and conflicts, however, are extraneous to the narrow question pending before the Commission. Your staff has carefully evaluated this matter from the proper legal and policy perspective and recommended a conditional concurrence in the Park Service's GMPA. On behalf of the North Bay communities we represent, we urge your support for that recommendation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Jared Huffman	**Mike McGuire**	**Marc Levine**	**Dennis Rodoni**
Member of Congress	State Senator	State Assembly	Supervisor
California 2nd	California 2nd	California 10th	Marin County 4th

COUNTY OF MARIN

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES
Promoting and protecting agriculture, environmental quality, and ensuring equity in the marketplace.

Stefan P. Parnay
ACTING AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER
ACTING DIRECTOR OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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April 13, 2021

Mr. John Weber
Federal Consistency Program
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: Coastal Consistency Determination for the Point Reyes National Seashore and North District Golden Gate National Recreation Area General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Weber:

The Marin County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AGM) supports the National Park Service's (NPS) request for a Coastal Consistency Determination (CCD) for the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and Northern District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) General Management Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Statement (GMPA EIS). We have participated actively throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process used by NPS staff to develop the GMPA EIS, providing comments and offering our organization as a resource for NPS staff and affected agricultural producers ranching on the PRNS and GGNRA.

Throughout this engagement, we have been grateful for NPS staff's receptiveness to options and technical information that contribute to individual farm and ranch viability and environmental stewardship and integrity. We also have benefited from NPS staff explanations of the origins and intent for PRNS and GGNRA, NPS administrative and management process, and outreach throughout the NEPA process.

The resulting Preferred Alternative (Alternative B in the GMPA EIS) epitomizes that receptiveness and community engagement and the balance of cultural and natural resource management that NPS is mandated to integrate on PRNS and GGNRA. Furthermore, the Preferred Alternative has significant parallels and even mirrors the California Coastal Act (CCA). Specifically, CCA intent is to protect California's coast from development impacts so that coastal environments and ecosystems, recreational opportunities, and agricultural lands are enhanced. The GMPA EIS Preferred Alternative similarly provides

20-year leases and establishes strict ranch operating agreements using tested practice standards and measures (GMPA EIS Appendix F) to support sustainable and regenerative agriculture. It also establishes the management plan and measures that allow for two herds of free-range elk of more than 120 animals. Lastly, it provides direction and a framework for increasing visitor experience.

Because of this shared policy purpose and goal between CCA and GMPA EIS and the overall rigor and thoroughness of the GMPA EIS, Marin County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures supports NPS request for a Coastal Consistency Determination CCD for the requested action. We thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Stefan Parnay

Stefan Parnay
Acting Agricultural Commissioner
Acting Director of Weights and Measures

cc: Dennis Rodoni, President, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Judy Arnold, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Damon Connolly, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Stephanie Moulton-Peters, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Katie Rice, Marin County Board of Supervisors
Matthew Hymel, Marin County Administrator
Dan Eilerman, Marin Assistant County Administrator

Submitted via electronic e-mail: john.weber@coastal.ca.gov, carey_feierabend@nps.gov, laura_joss@nps.gov
cc: claire_card@nps.gov, Paul_Engel@nps.gov, gordon_white@nps.gov

December 27, 2020

Carey Feierabend, Acting Superintendent
National Park Service
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Laura Joss, Superintendent
Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Building 201, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123-0022

John Weber
Senior Environmental Scientist
CA Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: National Park Service 2020 General Management Plan Amendment for Point Reyes National Seashore and the North District of Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Dear Superintendent Feierabend, Superintendent Joss, and Mr. Weber,

On behalf of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, I am providing the Tribe's comments on the National Park Service's (NPS) 2020 General Management Plan Amendment (GMPA) for Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). As the federally recognized, culturally affiliated Tribe to Point Reyes National Seashore and GGRNA, we affirm that the Tribe has had continued participation in the GMPA process. In consultation with NPS, the Tribe consistently advocates for the protection of the environmental and cultural landscape and more specifically the protection of tribal sacred sites.

Through existing and ongoing consultation with NPS, the Tribe acknowledges the efforts by NPS to engage in tribal consultation throughout the GMPA process in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and implementing regulations at 36 C.F.R Part 800. The Tribe expects and looks forward to ongoing consultation, collaborative planning, and project implementation in the future at Point Reyes National Seashore and GGNRA. As noted in public records, the GMPA identified historic properties that may be affected. We recognize there are existing archaeological surveys of the Point Reyes National Seashore and GGNRA. The Tribe expects that new surveys and condition assessments for all leases and actions associated with implementing the GMPA will all be done in consultation with the Tribe. The Tribe sees this collaborative approach as an

FEDERATED INDIANS OF
GRATON
RANCHERIA

opportunity to improve the cultural survey work and protection of tribal sacred sites. All consultation will be done with the Tribe's Tribal Heritage Preservation Office (THPO). The Tribe demands the NPS protect and maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites.

The Tribe asserts that greater protections of the elk, a cultural species important to the Tribe, be made a priority. Inclusion of the Tribe's traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of this cultural species and our understanding of environment, are key pieces to improving the NPS adaptive management approach. We remain committed to working with the NPS on ways to improve the health and vitality of the elk herds in a culturally sensitive manner and will do so in consultation with the Point Reyes National Seashore and GGNRA.

Finally, we need to revisit the ranching lease program and look for ways that enable the landscape to heal. This should be done with the Tribe and using our TEK and understanding of the land. While restoration may not be economically feasible today, it is a gradual process that can be achieved through consultation and collaboration, over time. The Tribe thanks the NPS and the California Coastal Commission for the opportunity to provide these comments. Should you have questions please contact Buffy McQuillen, Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer, at 707-566-2288, ext. 137; or BMcQuillen@gratonrancheria.com

Sincerely,

Greg Sarris

Greg Sarris
Tribal Chairman

FEDERATED INDIANS OF
GRATON
RANCHERIA

December 21, 2020

Commissioners of the California Coastal Commission
Jack Ainsworth, Executive Director
John Weber, Senior Environmental Scientist
California Coastal Commission
455 Market St., Suite 300
San Francisco CA 94105

Re: 2020 General Management Plan Amendment for Point Reyes National Seashore

Dear Commissioners and Messrs. Ainsworth and Weber:

The Tribal Council of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, a federally recognized Indian tribe located in Rohnert Park, Sonoma County, would like to request that the matter of the 2020 General Management Plan Amendment for Point Reyes National Seashore be rescheduled from the January 14, 2021, agenda of the Coastal Commission.

Our Tribe has just become aware that this item is scheduled for the January agenda. The Point Reyes National Seashore is part of our indigenous lands. We are disappointed that the National Parks Service did not reach out to us and provide an opportunity for our Tribe to consult with the agency, as required under Executive Order 13175.

The Point Reyes National Seashore is located approximately 30 miles from our Tribe's reservation, within our ancestral territory. As such, the Tribe wishes to have an adequate opportunity to study and comment upon the agenda item. The January hearing is too soon and does not give us sufficient time. We therefore respectfully request a continuance of at least 60 days so that we may have the opportunity to provide input on this important issue.

We appreciate in advance your anticipated understanding and cooperation in this request.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Sarris

Greg Sarris,
Chairman

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November 26, 2018

Point Reyes GMP Amendment EIS
Cecily Muldoon
Superintendent
Point Reyes GMP Amendment
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Subject: Scoping Comments on the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Superintendent Muldoon:

The County of Marin has anticipated and embraces the Notice of Intent to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the General Management Plan Amendment (GMP Amendment) for the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and north district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) as a seminal opportunity, and our responsibility, to again fully partner with the National Park Service (NPS). Through our combined leadership we can secure West Marin's open and connected landscape for the fundamental, integrated and necessary role of human communities in the environment.

Marin County agriculture is recognized as a leader in California's agricultural sustainability movement and local food security. Farming and ranching in PRNS and GGNRA contributes to the stability of our entire County of Marin farm system. Point Reyes National Seashore ranches and dairies account for nearly 20% ($17.8 million) of all gross agricultural production in Marin County. These ranches and dairies play a critical role in maintaining the viability of Marin County agricultural infrastructure and economic viability. Application of an Economic Input-Output Model to NPS farms and ranches would have an economic multiplier impact of nearly four (4) times the gross production values, or $71.2 million.

The Marin County Board of Supervisors considers it a privilege to continue the legacy of our predecessor, Peter Behr. Through his leadership and collaboration with many instrumental partners, PRNS and GGNRA came into existence. Paralleling the steps and actions taken to make this possible are Marin County's precedent-setting land use policy actions to preserve Marin's complementing private agricultural lands and strategically supporting their viability through diversification in agricultural production in our Countywide Plan[i]. We have put these policies in place for the same purpose and goal that there is ranching on PRNS and GGNRA – that is, to support and embrace sustainable, viable and environmentally-friendly farming that protects West Marin's land and water endowment and the history of its agricultural community.

Accordingly, we express our full and unequivocal support for the continuation of viable livestock grazing, dairy production and diversified agriculture on the fullest expanse of PRNS and GGNRA pastoral area. The following specific comments are provided for consideration in the identification of what should be analyzed through the EIS.

Specific Comments

1. EIS analysis should include and account for the detailed and specific range management program activities, terms and conditions met by the ranches, including compliance with San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board's water quality regulations for grazing livestock and dairy operations.
2. EIS analysis of the proposed action and alternatives consider the connections and incorporate the options for solving management issues that exist across the planning area boundary. The connections between the GMP Amendment planning area with other portions of PRNS and GGNRA and the broader region are strong. The six dairies in the planning area are 20% of Marin's remaining dairy farms, shipping to local dairy processers such as Straus Family Creamery and Clover Sonoma. The free-range elk in the planning area originated from the herd in the adjacent Wilderness and are influenced by resource conditions there. Visitor experiences and opportunities are among the menu of options across the entire Seashore with the quality and extent of road, parking and trail networks influencing access to these options.
3. In analyzing and refining the GMP Amendment proposed action and other alternatives in the EIS analysis, the farmers' and ranchers' role as managers should be elevated as they represent the most direct connection to and provide the management needed to maintain and enhance the pastoral cultural landscape of PRNS and GGNRA. Marin is now fully understanding and benefiting from the critical role ranchers and farmers have as partners in achieving our shared goals.
4. Analyze in the EIS the benefits that ranching contributes to community well-being. We value the many benefits to our community that working ranches and farms provide, such as creating and contributing to enrollment and participation in our schools, churches and other important organizations.
5. Diversification on the PRNS and GGNRA ranches and dairies should be fully analyzed in the EIS proposed action and alternative so that it can be facilitated going forward. This includes selected crop production, forage production, farm sales, farm processing, farm stays and farm tours in and beyond the 2.5 acres proposed in the Ranch Core Land Management Unit. Diversification is a proven tool for the economic viability of both individual ranches and the broader community and it is a recognized and supported tenant in the Marin Countywide Plan. Diversification has enabled Marin's small and medium sized farms to be economically viable, build additional resiliency, and to avert the risks of business failure. This is especially important because these ranches do not benefit from economies of scale that larger operations enjoy. In effect, diversification has strengthened Marin's local family farms, local economy, local food systems, and ever-changing environmental conditions.
6. To make the proposed action and other studied alternatives stronger and successful in realizing the mutual benefits of working farms and ranches, include in the EIS guidelines to facilitate ranches and NPS making real-time operational decisions. This is the operational flexibility that the field-level partnership between the ranchers and staff require to be successful. The absence of clear guidance for agricultural operations hinders the decision-making ability of the rancher and NPS staff on-the-ground relationships. The needs to repair fences, re-roof barns and manage invasive plants are a few examples of operational decisions that often are delayed. These delays have had financial and ecological impacts.
7. Analysis of the proposed action and alternatives should include partnership with local organizations that increase the ability to implement integrated farm production and environmental stewardship solutions. Marin has enjoyed and benefited from a broad partnership of agricultural support organizations. This has included Marin County departments such as the Agricultural Department, Community Development Agency, and Cooperative Extension. Federal agencies such as the

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Organic Program are integral to this partnership. So too are community-based organizations like the Agricultural Institute of Marin, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, and Marin Resource Conservation District. This partnership has provided the combined, complementing missions and expertise in land use policy, agricultural and natural resource management, marketing and outreach, and education to accomplish precedent setting land conservation, environmental stewardship projects, and value-added farm production. PRNS and GGNRA Staff and ranches have been collaborators and partners on these innovations and accomplishments and should be encouraged do so going forward.

8. EIS analysis should integrate Marin County's Climate Action Plan Update[ii] and Drawdown Marin. Marin agriculture has demonstrated that it can be an important part of the solution to climate change through carbon farming and carbon offsets. An entire chapter was dedicated to agriculture in the Action Plan including the beneficial role of carbon farm plans.
9. When formulating the conservation framework and Land Management Units (LMU), EIS should provide transparency on the process and information used, including rancher input, for determining the locations, acreages, and authorized land uses. The previous four comments on diversification, operational decision making, local and agency organization partnerships, and Marin climate initiatives, should also be integrated into analysis and development of any conservation framework and land use management definitions and determinations. This will make available to the framework development and implementation the complementing expertise and resources needed to be successful in accomplishing the framework's goal to protect natural and cultural resources.
10. EIS analysis should incorporate into the conservation framework and LMUs flexibility to address problems and take advantage of opportunities that may cross the LMU boundaries. This may include invasive weeds, specific habitat, and agricultural diversification that would cross boundaries. There is a need for flexibility across LMUs to address problems and realize solutions consistently with effective practices and to avoid impactful discontinuity in management from one LMU to another.
11. EIS analysis should include how agricultural diversification can be part of ranches "without a developed complex or rancher occupied buildings." Those ranches represent real opportunities to advance the shared goal of natural and cultural resource protection that could be achieved through activities proposed for the Ranch Core LMU.
12. EIS analysis should include in the proposed action and considered alternatives a plan for operational succession to new members of existing farm families and alternative agricultural candidates if that option is not presented. This should include a plan for continuation after the proposed 20-year leases through lease extensions or renewals. Succession is critical for the perpetuity of agriculture's management and stewardship contributions. Marin has benefited through the successful farm transition from one generation to the next across as many as five family generations. Additionally, hand-offs of agricultural property and operations to non-family members have been successful with agricultural production and environmental stewardship persisting. We hold successful succession from current to future agriculturalists fundamental for the continuation of Marin's valued pastoral landscapes.
13. The proposed action and analysis of alternatives should include minimal allowance for commingling resource use and management objectives between ranching activities and any free-range elk, including to the maximum extent possible the separation of Elk from working ranches and dairies. When Elk are found in Pastoral Zones, management methods should be used to address their impacts. Wilderness

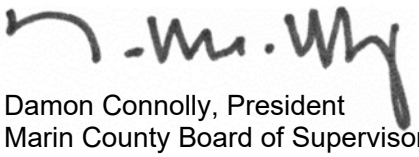
designated lands and Pastoral/Ranch leased lands should be given equal protection corresponding to their intended use and purpose.

14. Analyze and prepare a comprehensive elk management element. The time and resources allocated to conduct this GMP Amendment and corresponding EIS will not easily be garnered again. All the more reason to fully prepare for Elk management contingencies of all free-range elk. This includes the Drakes Beach herd, Limantour herd and any additional herds that form. It also includes the need to manage agriculture that is affected and contingent NPS responses and coordination when elk leave the planning area to access land throughout Marin. In other words, conduct the analysis and have a plan with effective measures and practices laid out so as to avoid the inability to respond to Elk conflicts presented by the 1998 NPS Elk Management Plan.
15. Analyze and prepare a comprehensive housing element. This should include a complete inventory of existing housing, including current uses and conditions, as well as number of vacant uses. The adequacy and affordability of housing available to agricultural workers should also be analyzed, including quality and safety of existing homes. Demand for housing generated by ranches and where this could be met, should be evaluated.

Closure

The GMP Amendment presents an important opportunity to celebrate the outcomes and endowment resulting from decisions made more than 50 years ago. We can do this best by reaffirming our commitment to an evolved understanding of humans' fundamental role in the environment, exemplified by all of Marin's working ranches and farms. We stand ready with the NPS, PRNS and GGNRA ranchers and farmers, and Marin's broader community to achieve this shared goal.

Respectfully,



Damon Connolly, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Congressman Jared Huffman

[i] Marin Countywide Plan and Agriculture and Food Chapter - https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/he/cwp_cd2.pdf

[ii] Marin Climate Action Plan Update 2015 - https://www.marincounty.org/~/media/files/departments/cd/planning/sustainability/climate-and-adaptation/execsummarymarincapupdate_final_20150731.pdf

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January 5, 2021

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Jack Ainsworth
Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, California 94501

Mr. Larry Simon
Federal Consistency Program
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Executive Director Ainsworth and Program Coordinator Simon:

The Marin County Board of Supervisors recommends approval of the National Park Service (NPS) request for a Coastal Consistency Determination (CCD) for the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and Northern District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) General Management Plan Amendment Environmental Impact Statement (GMPA EIS). Our recommendation is based upon our cooperative role with NPS throughout the formation and management of PRNS, agreement with Marin land use philosophy and policy, and alignment with the California Coastal Act.

The County of Marin has cooperatively joined the NPS, PRNS, and GGNRA through its efforts to plan for the future of ranching, farming, public access, and free-range elk on the Seashore. This cooperation is born from the leadership of our predecessor, Supervisor and State Senator Peter Behr, whose collaboration with many instrumental partners made possible the formation of PRNS and GGNRA. Paralleling the steps and actions taken to establish PRNS and GGNRA are Marin County's precedent-setting land use policy actions to preserve Marin's complementing private agricultural lands and strategically supporting their viability in our Countywide Plan[i].

To finalize the GMPA EIS process, PRNS staff are leading consistency review with relevant federal and state resource agencies including the California Coastal Commission (CCC). For CCC consideration in its review, we are confirming the Marin County Board of Supervisors' endorsement of Alternative B, the "preferred alternative" identified in the GMPA EIS. This alternative brings balance to the PRNS pastoral regions and provides greater stability to the affected ranching community to continue to provide fresh, local agricultural products and value-added commodities to our food system. It also aligns with the priorities and goals of Marin's Countywide Plan, Local Coastal Plan, and Climate Action Plan 2030, each of which identifies open connected working agricultural lands, and the people who manage them, as significant contributors to the well-being of our local community through multiple economic, social and environmental benefits.

Achieving this balance and realization of multiple benefits across open and connected working lands is a goal explicitly shared by the California Coastal Act. Since its enactment, it has simultaneously prioritized public access and recreation,

protecting coastal waters and resources, maintaining agricultural lands and the resulting local economy, and protecting of scenic qualities. The Marin County Board of Supervisors commends NPS staff for the rigorous and detailed plan laid out in the GMPA EIS to accomplish these goals. The applied zoning methodology (Appendix J), ranch operating agreements, management activities, practice standards, and mitigation measures (Appendix F), residual dry matter monitoring (Appendix E), forage model (Appendix K), water quality analysis (Appendix L) provide the framework and accountability for NPS staff and ranchers to successfully steward agricultural activities and natural resources. Similarly, careful cataloging of special status species (Appendix M) coupled with biological assessments from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Appendix N) and National Marin Fisheries Service (Appendix O) inform the zoning methodology and its limitation on activities and practices relative to habitat and wildlife resources. Lastly, expanded visitor experience and access is integrated throughout the GMPA EIS analysis and alternatives and is informed by additional public use and enjoyment detail (Appendix H).

As NPS takes the final steps to issue a Decision of Record for the GMP EIS, the County of Marin is collectively ready to partner with PRNS staff and the seashore ranchers and farmers in the implementation of Alternative B. Staff from numerous Marin County Departments, respectively and combined, have long and successfully collaborated with NPS and PRNS staff on related projects and initiatives. Alternative B represents an exciting opportunity to again collaborate on land use, recreation, food production, and other ecosystem services across our jurisdictions and boundaries.

In closing, we hold the NPS request for a Coastal Consistency Determination (CDC) for the GMPA EIS as the next opportunity for Marin, CCC, and NPS to embrace our shared vision for the future of coastal Marin.

Respectfully,

Dennis Rodoni, President
Marin County Board of Supervisor

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Congressman Jared Huffman

Attachments:

Review Comments on the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Sept 17, 2019
Scoping Comments on the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement, November 26, 2018

[i] Marin Countywide Plan and Agriculture and Food Chapter - https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/planning/currentplanning/publications/county-wide-plan/cwp_2015_update_r.pdf?la=en

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September 17, 2019

GMP Amendment
c/o Superintendent Cecily Muldoon
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

Subject: Review Comments on the Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Superintendent Muldoon,

Introduction

The release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS) and North District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) General Management Plan Amendment (GMP Amendment) is a significant milestone for the evolving and successful partnership to secure an open and connected landscape throughout west Marin. Sharing again our sentiments from our scoping comments letter (attached), submitted in November 2018:

> "The Marin County Board of Supervisors considers it a privilege to continue the legacy of our predecessor, Peter Behr. Through his leadership and collaboration with many instrumental partners, PRNS and GGNRA came into existence. Paralleling the steps and actions taken to make this possible are Marin County's precedent setting land use policy actions to preserve Marin's complementing private agricultural lands and strategically support their viability through diversification in agricultural production in our Countywide Plan. We have put these policies in place for the same purpose and goal that there is ranching on PRNS and GGNRA – that is, to support and embrace sustainable, viable, and environmentally friendly farming that protects West Marin's land and water endowment and the history of its agricultural community."

The County of Marin is also in complete agreement with the Joint Explanatory Statement regarding House Joint Resolution 31 (the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019) that stated "multi-generational ranching and dairying is important both ecologically and economically" and is "consistent with Congress's intent for the management of Point Reyes National Seashore."

In keeping with these actions and policies, and with the following specific comments on the Draft EIS considered, the County of Marin is in support of the preferred alternative identified in the Draft EIS – Alternative B. This alternative, by providing long-term leases to all currently active farm families on the maximum

extent of ranch land, embraces the connection of cultural and ecological resources that exists on Marin's working agricultural landscape. Specifically, Marin County recognizes the purposeful approach and significant detail to natural resource preservation and protection proposed in Appendix D and the draft PRNS and North District GGNRA Agricultural Lease/Permit and Ranch Operating Agreement template.

With that support stated, the County of Marin offers the following specific comments for completing the GMP Amendment and EIS.

Specific Comments to Draft EIS Adequacy in Analysis and Mitigation

While supporting Alternative B, we do have comments for additional analyses and inclusion in the Final GMP Amendment and EIS. We are requesting again the consideration of our scooping comments as submitted in their entirety on November 26, 2018 by attaching that letter to this submission. Addressing these points in the Final GMP Amendment and EIS will insure adequacy in mitigation measures, achievement of the GMP Amendment goals, and implementation of the PRNS/GGNRA enabling legislation intent. Regarding a select number of these we provide the following specific comments and rationale:

1. Strategies for the Preservation of Area Resources and inclusion of management and/or preservation strategy for ranch viability (Table 2, pages 27-30): The working landscape and agricultural viability is missing as a cultural resource in this table and throughout the Draft EIS. Marin County has long recognized the contribution of Marin's operating farms and ranches and the importance of a critical mass of these for the viability of Marin's food system.[1] Stemming from this local policy recognition, the Marin Economic Forum has recognized agriculture as a targeted industry[2] and is including agriculture in its ongoing business retention and expansion campaign[3]. The EIS must include an agricultural viability strategy in its analysis to achieve its cultural preservation goals and strategies.
2. Planning beyond the 20-year lease terms: In our scoping comments dated November 26, 2018 we recommended that the GMP Amendment should include a "…plan for continuation after the proposed 20-year leases through lease extensions or renewals." The GMP Amendment will be inadequate to achieve its stated strategies and the intent of the enabling legislation without this plan because it will create uncertainty for the preservation of PRNS/GGNRA's recognized working landscape as a cultural resource. By including an option for extending or continuing the leases beyond the 20-year terms, with a longer time period than the proposed 6-months prior to lease termination, NPS will avoid the need to again initiate and implement a lengthy and conflict-ridden planning process.
3. Viability of diversification – Marin County holds that "diversification has strengthened Marin's local family farms, local economy, and local food system (Scoping comments dated November 28, 2018)." Unfortunately, the Draft EIS presented options for diversification with constraints that render them inviable. For example, 2.5 unirrigated acres for row cropping is too small and misses opportunities for crop production using irrigation that will allow for year-round

[1] Marin Countywide Plan and Agriculture and Food Chapter - https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/he/cwp_cd2.pdf
[2] Marin Economic Targeted Industry Studies, Marin Economic Forum, 2004.
[3] Marin County Business Retention and Expansion Project, Marin Economic Forum

diversification. Similarly, the limiting of multi-species grazing to only the pasture subzones misses important and integrated natural resource management and agricultural diversification objectives in the range and resource protection subzones. Revising the EIS diversification options with analysis of their viability will advance achievement of the GMP Amendment goals and strategies.

4. Ranch Operating Agreement and real-time decision making: In our scoping comments of November 26, 2018 (attached) we emphasized the importance of real-time decision making for agricultural and natural resource management objectives. We are concerned that the only opportunity to make management decision changes is during the 30-day review period proposed as part of the annual Ranch Operating Agreement renewal process. The GMP Amendment and Final EIS must include a process for NPS staff and leasing agricultural operators to make needed and timely adjustments on at least a weekly and monthly basis to agricultural operations and mitigation measure implementation. This will provide the necessary adaptive management that is accepted and part of existing ranch and farm lease operations outside the Planning Area.
5. Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions and Carbon Offset potential: Through our updated Climate Action Plan[4] (CAP), we have set a path for partnering with west Marin agricultural operators in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the realization of offsets through carbon sequestration. This effort, and that of Drawdown Marin to do comprehensive action planning for the built and unbuilt environment that realizes significant and real change to Marin's carbon footprint, were recommended to the NPS in our scoping comments. The adequacy of the GMP Amendment and EIS will be improved by reconciling its GHG emissions inventory with that in Marin CAP and integrating with the opportunities for carbon offsets laid out in the Marin CAP and Drawdown Marin planning efforts, including carbon farm plans.
6. Ranch Zone and Subzoning Framework: Marin County is in general support of the proposed Ranch Zone and Subzoning Framework proposed in the Draft EIS. However, in keeping with our scoping comments, the County of Marin also holds that the final GMP Amendment and EIS will be inadequate until clarity for how the subzones will be determined, in concert with the leasing rancher, and the flexibility necessary for addressing resource management objectives across subzones are included. Where subzones are delineated and how to manage within each subzone will benefit from the long-term intimate knowledge of the landscape that each rancher has. Similarly, some agricultural and natural resource objectives will cross subzone boundaries and, unless considered in the final GMP Amendment and EIS, NPS staff and leasing ranchers will not be able to address them effectively.
7. Elk management plan and impacts to agriculture: The County of Marin supports the science-based wildlife management approach proposed within the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is, however, missing analyses and mitigation of impacts from competition between grazing livestock and elk. This includes compensation for losses of silage, improved pasture, supplemental feed and costs for fence and infrastructure repair resulting from elk consumption and damage. Additionally, the Draft EIS will present a more comprehensive management plan by including the analyses and option of elk relocation and

[4] Marin Climate Action Plan Update 2015 - https://www.marincounty.org/~/media/files/departments/cd/planning/sustainability/climate-and-adaptation/execsummarymarincapupdate_final_20150731.pdf

separation through fencing. Lastly, providing clearer definitions of what constitutes a new herd and the process and methods for preventing their development is required in the Draft EIS. The EIS will not be adequate until it includes these approaches and mitigates these impacts.

8. Quality and Quantity of Housing: Providing enough quality housing is of critical importance for the County of Marin and its communities, including west Marin. Housing on-farm is central to this community need and the integrity of the community fabric in supporting farm employees and families, including reduced labor force road miles and increased school enrollment. The GMP Amendment and DEIS will become a strong partner for secure housing by integrating with the Marin Housing Task Force and federal housing programs. This should include clarity in the Ranch Lease Template and Ranch Core subzone of the process for adding new housing and improving existing homes.

Closure

Main County commends NPS for releasing a well presented Draft EIS. Including the research and public participation from the start of the original Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan, this Draft EIS review period marks nearly five long years of effort to create a management plan and process to continue the mutual benefits of working ranches and dairies on the PRNS and GGNRA. The County of Marin is ready to work with NPS to resolve the remaining details, analyses and mitigation needed to arrive at a Final GMP Amendment and EIS that can accomplish the cultural and ecological mission and goals held on these NPS lands.

Respectfully,

Kathrin Sears

Kathrin Sears, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Kamala Harris
Congressman Jared Huffman

Attachment: Scoping Comment Letter dated November 26, 2018