

UNIT 142

VAN DAMME STATE PARK

GENERAL PLAN

June 1995

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VAN Damme

STATE PARK



GENERAL PLAN

PRELIMINARY

August 1994

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Acknowledgments are too numerous to mention here, due to the many changes in departmental personnel during the length of this planning effort. However, special credit is extended to certain individuals who made valluable contributions to this plan:

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With thanks to the several Resource and Interpretive Specialist who prepared portions of this plan, and the many citizens who helped shape this plan through participation at workshops and meetings.

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLAN

AUGUST 1994

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STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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Resolution 22-95
adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Fort Bragg on
June 21, 1995

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has presented to this Commission for approval the proposed Van Damme State Park General Plan; and

WHEREAS, this reflects long-range development plans to provide for optimum use and enjoyment of the unit as well as the protection of its quality;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the State Park and Recreation Commission approves the Department of Parks and Recreation's Van Damme State Park General Plan (Preliminary) dated August 1994, subject to such environmental changes as the Director of Parks and Recreation shall determine advisable and necessary to implement the provisions and objectives of said plan.

Van Damme State Park General Plan

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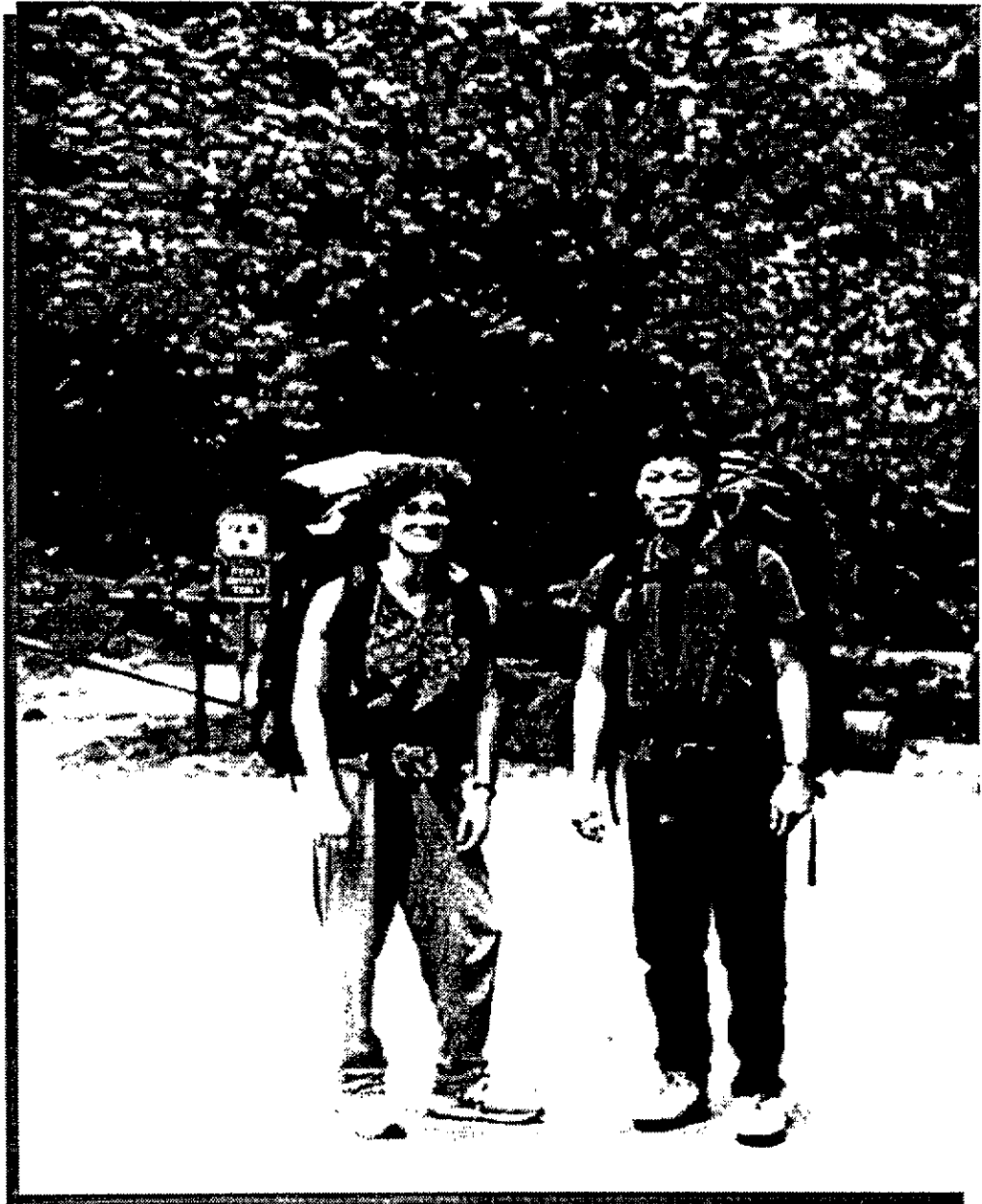
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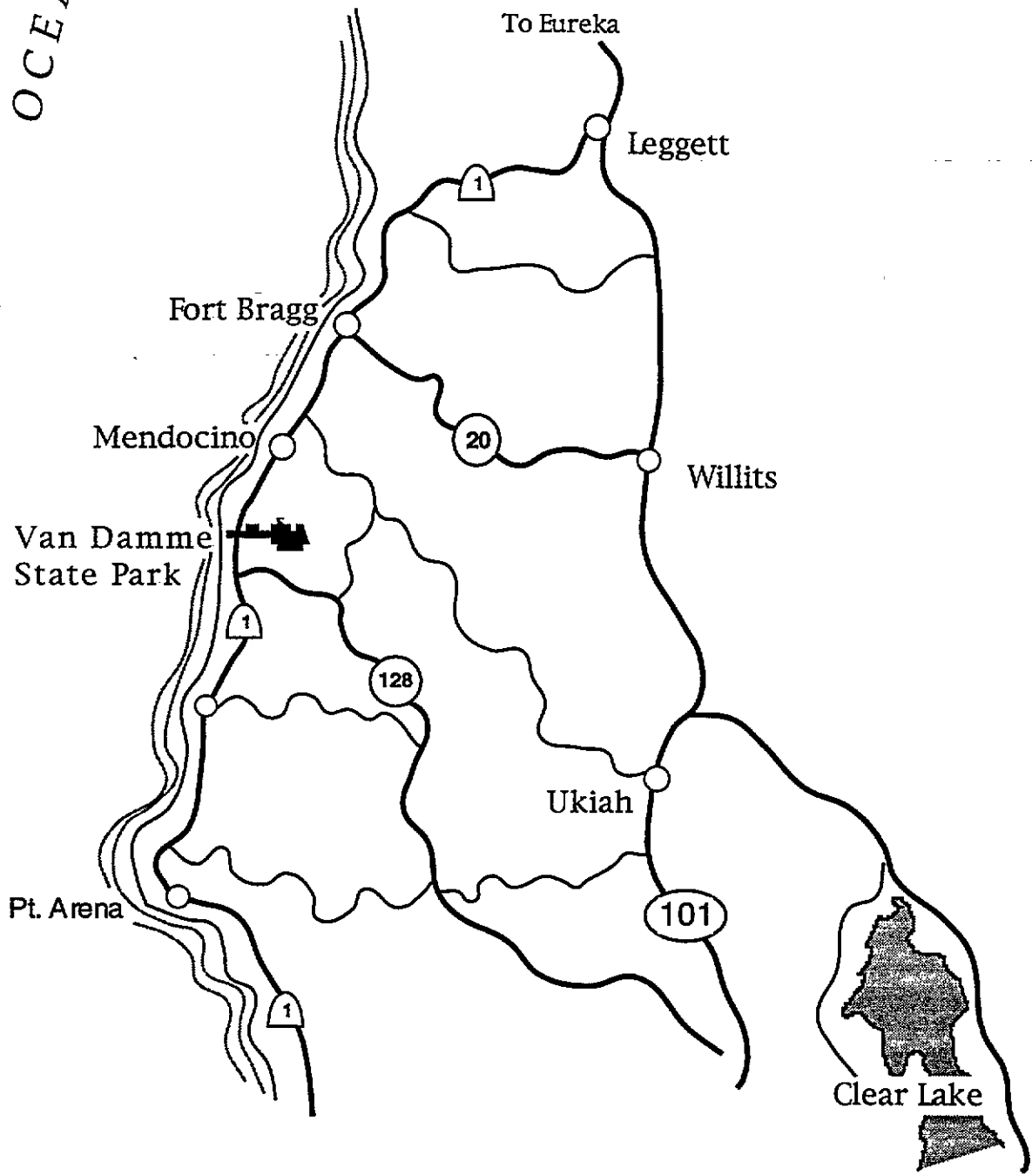
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VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Introduction



PACIFIC OCEAN



ORTH

REGIONAL MAP

Van Damme State Park General Plan

MAP NO. 1

INTRODUCTION

This general plan was prepared to guide the management and development of this state park for the next ten to twenty years. It sets forth goals and objectives for park management and use and analyzes the physical, economic, and social context in which the park exists.

This plan also identifies and analyzes the relative importance of the park's many natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation resources and provides guidelines as to how they should be preserved and managed.

Finally, this document portrays the patterns and intensities of desirable uses and the nature and location of proposed development.

Park Setting

Van Damme State Park is located three miles south of the town of Mendocino on state Highway 1. The park encompasses 2,170 acres including 20 acres of marine environment under lease from the State Lands Commission. The park extends about 3 miles inland encompassing nearly 55% of the Little River watershed, from Gordon Lane and Comptche Road at the north, to Little River Airport Road at the south.

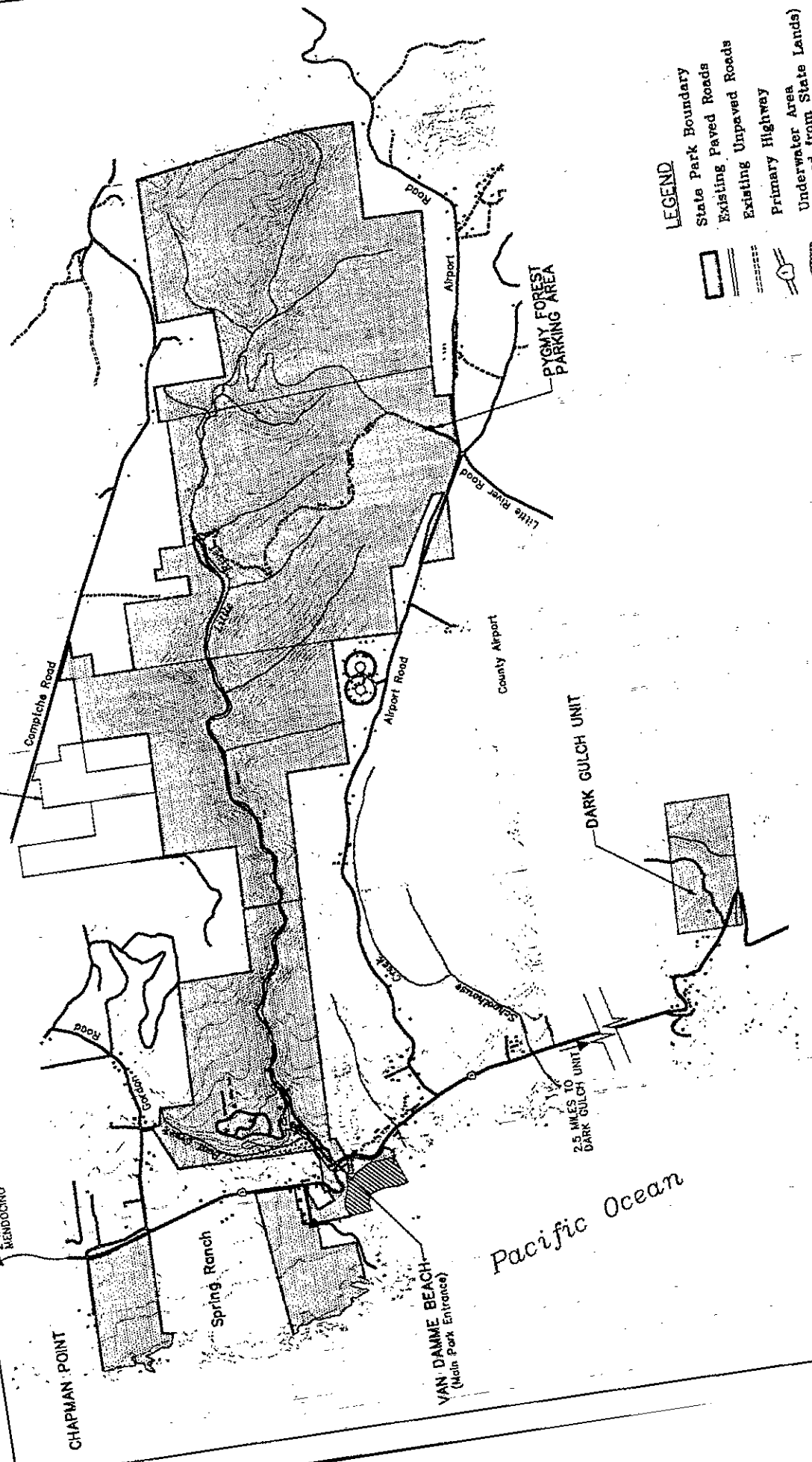
Little River runs through the park with its mouth at Van Damme Beach. It is the home for spawning steelhead and salmon during the winter months.

Two other parcels, located north of the beach and west of the highway, are mostly open grassland terrace. The park also includes a separate 80 acre parcel, 2.5 miles south of the entrance and east of State Highway 1 at Dark Gulch.

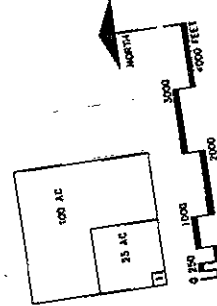
Total ocean frontage in Van Damme State Park is 1,700 feet. An estimated 225,000 people visit the park each year, including about 55,000 people making use of overnight facilities.

Coastal Mendocino County is renowned for its rich natural and cultural heritage and its rugged coastline, with a backdrop of coniferous forest. The natural attributes and historic features of the area have statewide as well as national significance and draw many visitors to the area.

NATURE CONSERVANCY AND
U.C. CALIF. PYGMY FOREST



Van Damme State Park OWNERSHIP



Pacific Ocean

State acquisition of the park property and its early development coincided with use of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to develop state and federal parks. From their camp at Russian Gulch, CCC workers built camping facilities, trails, and restrooms, as well as a Recreation Hall for public use. In 1937, they established a three-and-one-half mile road up the canyon, crossing the river with two bridges and nine fords.

The park has been enlarged over the past half-century through a number of small acquisitions. Expanded camping facilities were established in the 1950s and 1960s to meet increasing public demand. Today, the park is a favorite destination for abalone divers, as well as for campers and hikers.

Along much of the Mendocino Coast, the mountains meet the sea in an abrupt coastline and the ocean is cold and often rough. Van Damme beach is a protected cove with a small sandy beach at the mouth of Little River. The beach and parking lot allow easy access for divers, who comprise the majority of the overnight users. The park has 74 family campsites and a group camp, which will accommodate either tents or recreational vehicles. This fern-laden park is "split-level" with a canyon-type campground area and an upper meadow campground. Hiking trails, in moderate to steep terrain, wind up the Fern Canyon to the Pygmy Forest. This trail system combines paved and unpaved roads and natural trails for back-packers, bicycles, and trail campers.

The Pygmy Forest of the Mendocino Coast and the terraces below it disclose an intricate web of ecological interaction among soils, climate, and geology. Here on the Mendocino coast, and nowhere else in the world are the Mendocino Pygmy Cypress found. They are decades old, a few feet tall and their gnarled, lichen-encrusted trunks are less than an inch in diameter. There are several species of plants that are endemic to this forest that add to its character. The Discovery trail, a raised boardwalk, directs the visitor through the sensitive forest. This walkway provides handicap access and an easy walk for all visitors.

Even though most of the park was heavily logged during the settlement period, the upper watershed of Van Damme State Park is biologically important due to the presence of four special plant species, four rare plant communities, the northern spotted owl, and a functioning anadromous fishery with both steelhead and coho salmon. This redwood forest represents some of the oldest and largest second growth on the Mendocino coast.

A visitor center, staffed by volunteers, is located in an historic building near the park entrance. The theme of the visitor center, "Living With The Sea", is illustrated in a series of dramas and murals which depict how people have interacted with the sea.

The General Plan — Purpose and Need

This general plan will guide the management and future development of Van Damme State Park. It was prepared to satisfy requirements of the Public Resources Code Section 5002.2, whereby the California State Park and Recreation Commission is required to approve the general plan prior to any development that would constitute a permanent commitment of natural or cultural resources.

This plan summarizes the available information about the park, documenting the planning process and the relevant data used in making land use decisions and recommends specific management and development proposals. As conditions change, the plan will be reviewed and amended, to responsibly guide departmental actions for this unit.

This plan, however, is not meant to provide detailed plans for site development, resource management, or park operation and maintenance. Overnight, day-use, and parking capacities indicated by the plan are approximate only, indicating maximum capacity and may be reduced when specific site plans are prepared for funding and implementation. Details of resource management will be included in future resource management programs prepared at a later date.

Discussions about land not owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation have been included. These lands represent potential acquisition opportunities based on available data. However, the discussions are intended for planning purposes only and do not represent an intention or commitment for acquisition.

This Plan Is Made Up of the Following Elements:

- The Resource Element evaluates the natural and cultural resources of the park and sets management directives for protection, restoration, and use of these resources.
- The Land Use Element describes current land uses and relevant planning parameters. It defines planning issues and outlines land use objectives and solutions that will best fulfill the purpose and goals of the park.
- The Interpretive Element proposes programs and facilities for public education and interpretation of the park's natural and cultural resource values.

- The Facilities Element describes current facilities and proposes development to enhance public recreational enjoyment of the park's resources and other values. It establishes specific design criteria for carrying out development proposals to protect the park's esthetic values and enhance its spirit of place.
- The Operations Element describes specific operational and maintenance requirements and guidelines unique to the park.
- The Concessions Element summarizes opportunities to provide appropriate goods and services to the public through concessions contracts.
- The Environmental Impact Element provides the environmental impact assessment required by the California Environmental Quality Act. It assesses environmental effects of plan implementation and proposes mitigation measures and alternatives. The entire General Plan constitutes the Environmental Impact Report. This element may contain references to other sections of this plan.

Goals for Van Damme State Park

Through a careful consideration of the established park purpose, legal constraints, and park system policies, the following goals were created to guide the planning, future management, and visitor use of the park.

1. Preservation and Restoration of Natural Resources:

- Identify, protect and perpetuate the diversity of existing ecosystems which are found at Van Damme State Park and are representative of the California coastline. Give special attention to the Redwood and Pygmy Forest, Riparian Areas and Wetlands, and Marine Areas.

2. Cultural Resource Preservation:

- Identify, protect, and preserve the significant prehistoric and historic resources of Van Damme State Park; including Native American sites, as well as structures from early settlement and CCC construction periods.

3. *Access and Circulation:*

- Develop a safe and efficient circulation system, with organized facilities and provide trail access to inland forest, beach, and coastal headlands.

4. *Interpretational Education:*

- Expand the public's awareness and appreciation of the diversity, interdependence, and fragility of Van Damme State Park's natural, cultural, and recreation resources. Support and encourage organized volunteer efforts and programs to accomplish the park's goals and missions.

5. *Park Operation:*

- Maintain a safe, functional, and orderly environment that provides opportunities for park resource preservation and visitor enjoyment.

6. *Land Use and Development:*

- Develop land use and facilities plans for Van Damme State Park that create a harmony between human enjoyment and the preservation of valuable park resources.

The Planning Process

The planning team for Mendocino Coast park units was an interdisciplinary team consisting of the Mendocino District Superintendent and Chief Ranger, Landscape Architects, Resource Ecologists, Historians, Archaeologists, an Interpreter, and staff from the Sacramento headquarters, and the Northern Region Offices. Landscape Architects, with expertise in park planning and design, served as project manager and team leader.

The core team was supplemented as necessary by persons with expertise in energy conservation, concessions management, real estate and property acquisition, law, geology, and forestry. The Department contracted with Humboldt State University to obtain important underwater resource information. An environmental review specialist ensured that the plan was in conformance with California Environmental Quality Act requirements.

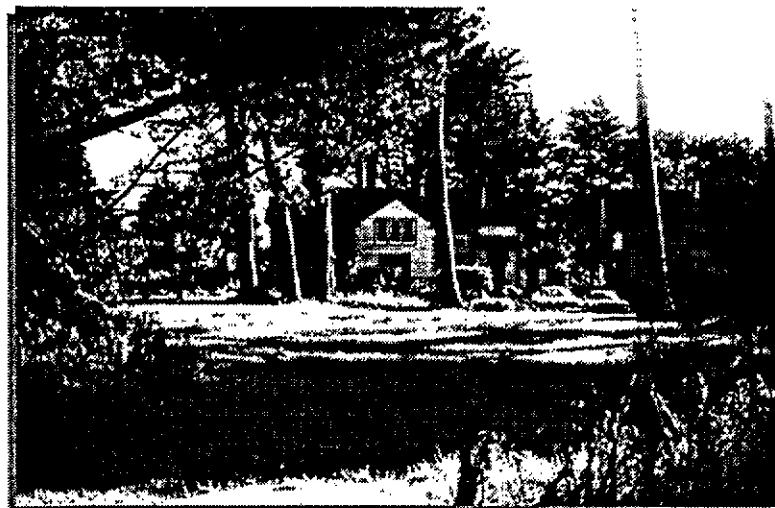
Planning for the Mendocino coast park units began in late 1989. Over the next 12 months members of the planning team conducted field reviews, research, and interviews to compile an information base of existing data. All park units on the Mendocino coast were inventoried at the same time and evaluated for their individual and collective resource values. In the summer of 1990 a visitor survey was distributed to park visitors. This provided the planning team with detailed information about visitor preferences. Work began to gather specific information relating to Van Damme State park, surrounding land uses, recreation demand and deficiencies, visitor use patterns, and the desires and requirements of other planning and regulatory agencies.

During October 1990, the planning team held a public meeting in Mendocino to identify important issues and public concerns. This meeting served to inform the public of both the nature of the park's resources and also the planning process. Comments received at this meeting helped guide the planning efforts for Van Damme State Park, as well as Russian Gulch State Park, Jug Handle State Reserve, and Caspar Headlands State Beach and State Reserve.

All the ideas gathered from the visitor surveys, public meetings, individuals contacts, and from previous planning documents were considered in developing the alternative and single plan proposals presented at the second public meeting in December, 1991. At this meeting the local residents and agency representatives had an opportunity to express their preferences regarding proposals developed by the planning team.

A preliminary single plan document was then formulated for Van Damme State Park and distributed for (CEQA) public review and comment. This general plan document represents a single plan, with changes and additions made necessary by this review process.

Park neighbors located on Peterson Lane and Highway 1, include Rachel's Inn and several residences in the Little River community.





Little River Inn and golf course is located immediately south of the park

Local and Regional Planning Agencies

The plans and policies of other public agencies in Mendocino County, as well as some State and Federal agencies, influence management and planning decisions for Van Damme State Park.

The California Coastal Commission has produced policies and guidelines for the use and development of the coast. These policies are regarded as planning constraints, or parameters, which guide future land use and development decisions affecting the coastline and lands within the coastal zone. Generally, policies of the commission support recreational use and public access as a priority for shoreline areas and do not appear to be in conflict with State Park System policies.

The Mendocino County Planning Department's General Plan for Mendocino County addresses issues related to the development and use of State Park Lands. In particular, the Coastal Element of the County General Plan (Local Coastal Plan) establishes policies for protection of public access and use of the coastline, guidelines for planning and development of facilities, and preservation of coastal resources. These policies will serve as constraints on coastal land use and development as the county assumes permit

authority for development from the State Coastal Commission. Portions of the Coastal Element policies pertinent to the planning of Van Damme State Park are briefly summarized in Appendix D.

The California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Mendocino County Department of Public Works are the agencies responsible for maintaining roads and highways around Van Damme State Park. Implementing general plan proposals for circulation improvements may involve easements and right-of-ways inside and outside State Park ownership and would require agreements and close coordination with these agencies.

The major Mendocino transit systems with park-serving potential are the Mendocino Transit Authority and the Mendocino Stage.

The marine environment at Van Damme State Park falls under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission, which is entrusted with title, while the Department of Fish and Game has jurisdiction over the living marine resources, both plant and animal. The Department currently leases approximately 20 underwater acres from the State Lands Commission and has authority to enforce certain rules and regulations applicable to those tidal or submerged lands. The Department also has authority to enforce certain State Park System regulations on all tidal and subtidal lands adjacent to its coastal border ownership.

Steelhead and coho salmon runs still occur in Little River and are managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. Aquatic habitat restoration and management directives are established in this general plan that will require future permits, monitoring, and guidelines be established through the Department of Fish and Game.

Park planners and managers in the Mendocino region, include the Mendocino County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the California Department of Parks and Recreation. All agencies, through their land use and resource management policies, influence the level of recreational opportunities provided in this region. Continued coordination between these agencies is essential for effective plan implementation.

The following summary provides a quick reference to recommendations and general plan proposals. The reader must refer to the separate sections of this plan for details of individual topics, priorities, and conditions for plan implementation.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Resource Management Proposals

A complete summary of significant resources and a resource management outline is provided in the Resource Element, Table 3 page 107.

- Classify 200+ acres of the Pygmy Cypress Forest as a Natural Preserve.
- Manage Little River within Van Damme State Park to improve or protect the natural production of coho salmon and steelhead trout.
- Extend Marine Area protection to additional subtidal lands adjacent to Van Damme State Park.
- Maintain and preserve the historic fabric and exteriors of remaining historic structures (visitor center and employee residence #7).
- Preserve the CCC-built rock features in the Little River, as much as possible, during any modification of fords for fisheries protection.
- Develop and implement a vegetation restoration and management program.
- Develop a specific management program for animal species that are threatened or endangered.
- Protect the scenic resources from all unnecessary degrading intrusions.
- Develop a wildfire management plan for this unit.
- Preserve the redwood dams and interpret logging history in Little River.
- Develop an aquatic habitat restoration and management plan.
- Prepare a vegetation management plan for the terrace grassland.

Interpretive Recommendations

- Plan, fabricate, and install panels for an off-coast underwater "trail".
- Improve the interpretation of the Pygmy Forest to emphasize ecological processes.
- Develop interpretation for the Fern Canyon trail and the Bog Trail.
- Develop a self-guiding auto tour/district-wide brochure to interpret the highlights of the entire Mendocino Coast for motorists travelling on Highway 1.
- Develop and conduct interpretive bicycle tours along Fern Canyon.
- Conduct research to support interpretation of this unit's resources.
- Collect, organize, and curate appropriate interpretive objects, photographs, and references.

Land Use Proposals

- Maintain and improve vehicular access and pedestrian circulation at the Highway 1 entrance to Van Damme State Park.
- Preserve and enhance the aquatic habitat and scenic values at the Little River mouth.
- Convert the area surrounding the visitor center to day use. Designate a second group camp in place of existing family campsites.
- Develop new walk-in campsites in the forested area north of the Highland Meadow campground.
- Maintain Fern Canyon Road for continued pedestrian and bicycle access. Prohibit vehicle access beyond the trailhead parking lot.

- Provide service vehicle access to the environmental/trail camps from the pygmy forest area.
- Develop a day use picnic area and trailhead outside the proposed Pygmy Forest Natural Preserve.
- Develop additional hiking trails for all levels of accessibility.
- Develop day use parking and coastal access at Chapman Road and North of Peterson Lane. Establish a bluff trail connection between these two locations.
- Continue present use of Dark Gulch residence and/or consider for surplus or exchange.

Facilities Proposals

A complete summary of park facilities is provided in Table 4, page 224.

- Develop new entrance station, with entry parking, turnaround, and adequate stack lanes for camper arrivals.
- Remove maintenance building and restore riparian vegetation.
- Reduce beach parking capacity to 60 cars and improve boat access for divers and beach users.
- Provide low-flush toilets with sewer connection for beach restroom facilities.
- Provide 5 beach picnic tables and 3 fire rings, one site with paved surface and barrier free access to restrooms and parking.
- Maintain visitor center and preserve historic structure.
- Remove campsites #1-5 and develop day use picnic and parking (max. 10 sites). Potential for evening use for enroute campers.
- Redesign campsites #6-13 to accommodate group camp.

- Restore riparian vegetation for screening of facilities.
- Rehabilitate campsites #21-30 and upgrade restroom facilities.
- Preserve historic residence #7 and maintain for adaptive use; such as office, maintenance, camp host, hostel, or employee residence.
- Maintain campfire center and parking, with improved access.
- Replace existing comfort station, with new restroom and showers in the Highland Meadow campground.
- Develop 6 new walk-in campsites, access trail/road, and restrooms. Provide 6 parking spaces in the Highland Meadow campground for these walk-in sites.
- Construct 8 miles of new hiking trails in Fern Canyon and on the coastal bluff.
- Develop Pygmy Forest day use picnic area 5 sites, 15 cars, and restroom facilities.
- Develop day use parking and coastal access at two locations near Chapman Road and Peterson Lane. At each location: construct car parking, restroom, 5 picnic sites, utilities, bluff trail, and interpretive facilities.



VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Resource Element



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RESOURCE ELEMENT

The Resource Element for Van Damme State Park identifies specific natural and cultural resources along with their values, sensitivities, and physical constraints. The Resource Element also sets forth long-range management objectives for the natural, cultural, and scenic resources and identifies specific actions or limitations required to achieve these objectives. Department guidelines for acceptable levels of use and development are then established with respect to these values. Through development of a Resource Element, the department complies with Div. V., Chapter 1, Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code and Title 14, Chapter 1, Section 4332 of the California Code of Regulations.

RESOURCE SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

The following resource information is a summary and evaluation of more detailed data contained in the Resource Inventory for the unit, on file with the Department in the district. The natural resource information is presented in regional and unit-specific descriptions of abiotic and biotic conditions followed by specific geographic-based descriptions called ecological units. Scientific nomenclature for plant names follows "Munz and Keck (1973) in A California Flora and Supplement". General cultural resource information is presented below with more detail provided in the section following Ecological Units.

Evaluation of the information presented in the summary involves assessing relationships between ecosystem components with respect to biological, physical and social conditions, as well as assessing the significance and sensitivity of cultural resources. Ecological units, considered along with cultural resource sensitivities, are intended to serve as working models for assessing the impacts of management actions within and outside of State Park System units.

Regional and Unit Characteristics

Van Damme State Park lies on both sides of State Highway 1, approximately 3 miles south of the town of Mendocino on the Mendocino County coast. Van Damme State Park includes approximately 2,170 acres, mostly upland forest, and includes about 20 acres of tidal and ocean bottom lands leased from the State Lands Commission. The unit extends about 3 miles inland encompassing nearly 55% of the Little River watershed. Two other separate parcels (80 acres each) are found north of the beach and west of the highway. The unit also includes a separate 80 acre wooded parcel 2 1/2 miles south of

Van Damme Beach and east of State Highway 1 in Dark Gulch. Total ocean frontage in Van Damme State Park is 1,700 feet. An estimated 225,000 people visit the unit each year including about 55,000 people making use of overnight facilities.

Characteristic climatic features of the Mendocino Coast are moderate temperatures with small daily and seasonal fluctuation, frequent dense fogs, and northwesterly winds. The average annual precipitation for the unit is about 40 inches, half of which falls between December and February. Summer rain is uncommon, but summer fog drip is a significant source of moisture. A persistent moderate wind (15 to 30 mph) occurs during the summer months and, in combination with the fog, provides a cool, damp relief from the hot, dry interior of California. Air quality for the Mendocino Coast is excellent.

Van Damme State Park is in the coastal zone of the northern Coast Ranges geomorphic province and comprises gently sloping marine terraces on the west and heavily wooded ridges on the east. Both ridge line and terrace have been dissected by local rivers and streams that have cut steep valleys along their courses westward out of the mountains towards the sea.

The oldest rocks in the region are the Cretaceous age (135 to 65 million years) sandstone, shale, conglomerate, and volcanic rock of the Franciscan Complex coastal belt. The coastal belt lies east of the San Andreas fault and extends along the coast from the Point Arena area at Alder Creek north to Cape Mendocino. The largely marine sedimentary rocks have a northwesterly trend and generally dip to the east.

In a plate tectonic setting, the Farallon plate lay between the converging Pacific and North American plates during the Cretaceous, and was being forced under (subducted) the western margin of the North American plate. During this time most of coastal Mendocino County was part of a continental marine shelf, slope, and trench laying near the Farallon plate subduction zone offshore of an ancestral California coastline. For more than 60 million years, until the Farallon plate was completely subducted beneath the North American plate, sediments accumulating in the trench were scraped from the Farallon plate and forcibly attached to the continental margin to later become the Franciscan Complex rocks.

Coastal erosion is primarily from wave-action along bedding planes, joints, and fractures in the Franciscan Complex rocks. Wave energy works upon these zones of weakness, gradually widening them to form surge channels and sea caves in the cliffs. As wave and surge continuously pluck at soft and weakened rocks, sea caves and channels collapse and the connection with the mainland is finally lost. The erosional remnants are left behind as rock sea stacks, isolated from shore and marking the steady retreat of the coastline.

Along the coastal margin, the Franciscan Complex has been cut by wave-action into a series of nearly level erosional terraces that stair-step upward with increasing age to the east. Remnants of the terraces can be seen along nearly the entire Mendocino coastline, but where best-preserved, the terraces ascend from steep rocky cliffs at the ocean's edge to gently sloping uplands in a series of five steps starting from sea level and reaching a maximum elevation at 650 feet. In Van Damme State Park the terraces are best seen along the coastal headlands. Throughout the rest of the unit the terraces have been obscured by erosion and a heavy cloak of vegetation. The terraces reflect fluctuating sea levels superimposed upon relatively slow and steady coastal uplift. During mid-Pleistocene times, changes in global climate initiated a period of first freezing and then melting of glacial ice that alternately lowered and raised sea levels. During periods of freezing, water was locked in glacial ice and sea levels dropped, forming the first terrace by stranding the erosional platform and its mantle of debris above sea level. As glacial ice melted, rising sea levels eroded vertical sea cliffs and debris accumulated on the newly cut erosional surface that would later become a marine terrace with the next episode of uplift and sea level retreat. The light colored terrace deposits overlaying the dark gray Franciscan Complex rocks are readily seen wherever erosion and vista coincide to provide a cross-sectional view of the coastline.

No major faults are known to exist in Van Damme State Park; however, the trace of the active San Andreas fault zone lies just 5 miles offshore. The San Andreas fault is the most probable source of earthquake shaking in Van Damme State Park. During the 8.3 Richter magnitude earthquake centered on the San Andreas fault in Marin County in 1906, structural damage ranged from relatively minor in the town of Mendocino to quite severe 8 miles north in Fort Bragg. Population of the entire area has grown significantly since 1906, and a magnitude 8+ earthquake centered along this segment of the San Andreas fault could cause considerable damage. Earthquake effects would probably include local landslides in the steep-sided canyon of Little River, liquefaction and settlement of structures located on beach deposits and along the Little River floodplain, and local tsunami inundation at the mouth of Little River.

Although most of the Mendocino Coast is underlain by sandstone and shale of the Franciscan Complex, soils of the region are derived mainly from unconsolidated marine deposits or alluvium. Grazing, timber production, and recreation are the primary land uses on these soil types in the region. The variability of the soils is best explained by the dynamic geologic history of the area. Uplift of marine sedimentary formations, sea level changes, a large complex of active faults, climatic changes, and differences in vegetative cover have resulted in localized differences in soil forming factors (parent material, relief, climate, biota, and time). The more common soils near the coast are prairie-like with dark color, high organic content, and low pH. Ancient and impoverished soils called *podzols* are found on the upper terraces. These soils are extremely

acidic, have very low fertility, and often feature a hardpan; characteristics that account for the dwarfed vegetation called Mendocino pygmy cypress forest.

Marine and tidal environments are important natural features of the Mendocino coastline. The same forces that created the series of staircase or marine terraces common to the area are still at work and easily visible.

Moderate-sized streams, often with seasonal lagoons at their mouths, are other natural features of the area. Riparian woodlands and lagoon environments, with their diversity of plant and animal life are important natural ecosystems, greatly reduced throughout the state due to agricultural and flood control projects.

The terrestrial portion of the unit includes grasslands on the terrace, riparian corridors, and coastal forest that shifts in composition from one dominated by Bishop pine to tall redwoods, to Mendocino pygmy cypress forest on the upper terraces. Several plant and animal species of special management interest occur in the unit. Table 1 and Table 2 on pages 99-104, list the specific plant or animal species, indicating their current status



The Bog Trail footbridge crossing the Little River from the campground

for protection by Federal and state Laws. Also, several plant communities found in the unit are listed as rare natural communities by the Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) (see Table 1). The redwood forest that occurs in the canyon of Little River represents some of the oldest and largest second growth on the Mendocino Coast and provides habitat for the northern spotted owl, a federally listed threatened species.

Even though most of the park was heavily logged during the settlement period, the upper watershed of Van Damme State Park is biologically important due to occurrence of four sensitive plant species, four rare plant communities including Mendocino pygmy cypress forest, the northern spotted owl, and a functioning anadromous fishery with both steelhead and coho salmon. There are no large areas in coastal Mendocino County that have not been logged; yet, little evidence of 19th century logging activities, once pervasive on the Mendocino Coast, persists to the present in the unit. A mill was constructed at the mouth of Little River in 1878 and the campground area along the lower river was the site of a mill pond during this time. Because of easy access, stream canyons were logged first and as a result these areas now have the oldest and most developed stands of second growth trees on the Mendocino coast.

Coastal Mendocino County is renowned for its rich natural and cultural heritage. Its rugged coastline, with a backdrop of coniferous forests provides for high quality scenery and water-related recreation. The natural attributes and the historic features of the area have statewide as well as national significance and draw many visitors to the area.

Open marine terraces with long shoreline views, wave battered rocky cliffs, and protected coves at river mouths are some of the region's outstanding scenic features.

Recreational activities in Van Damme State Park are concentrated near the ocean and include scuba and skin diving, sea kayaking, sport fishing, nature study, camping, and picnicking. Whale watching and beachcombing are especially popular activities. The area offshore of Van Damme State Park is a designated underwater addition to the park. The protected cove and its sandy beach allow easy access for divers, who make up the majority of the unit's overnight users during the abalone season. Hiking along park roads and trails is a popular activity in the interior portion of the unit.

Ecological Units

Eight ecological units (EU) were delineated at Van Damme State Park: Marine, Coastal Beach, Coastal Bluff, Coastal Terrace, Riparian Areas and Wetlands, Bishop

Pine Forest, Redwood Forest, and Pygmy Forest (see Map 3). These ecological units constitute ecosystems whose boundaries were drawn based on analysis of vegetation, landforms, and hydrological process, and apply to all systems, not just undisturbed native systems. Descriptions and locations of primary features, and discussions of the sensitivities, importance, influences, and impacts in each ecological unit are presented below and shown on the Ecological Units, Map 3.

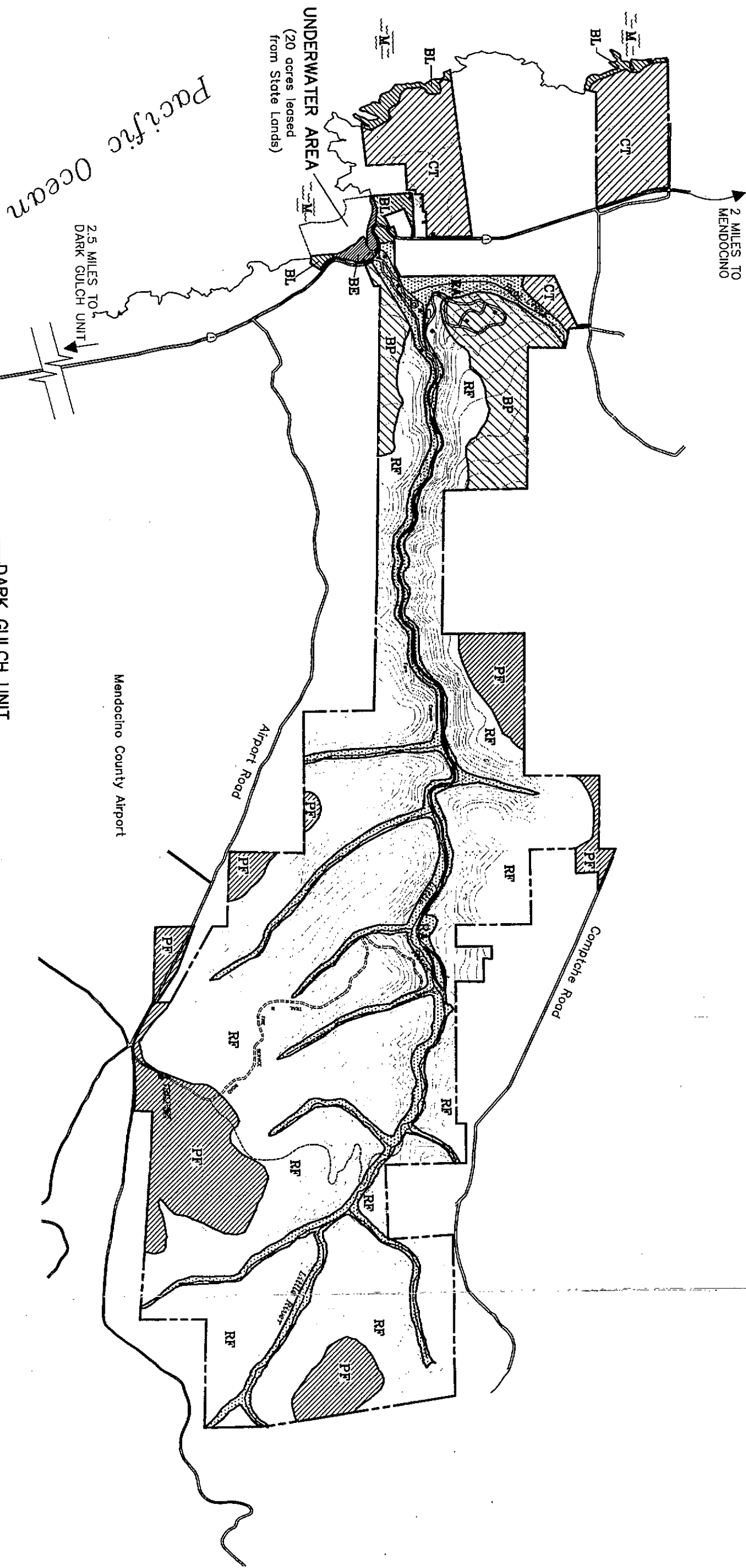
Marine Ecological Unit

The Marine Ecological Unit encompasses the near shore and underwater areas adjacent to the terrestrial boundaries of Van Damme State Park, generally running seaward 1,000 feet and parallel to the ordinary high water mark. As such, all of its features are part of the marine environment, constituting a diverse ecosystem.

The marine environment at Van Damme State Park falls under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission, which is entrusted with title, while the Department of Fish and Game has jurisdiction over the living marine resources, both plant and animal. Although the Department of Parks and Recreation has no ownership, the marine environment is an integrally important component of the terrestrial features and the plants and animals influenced by both environments. The Department currently leases approximately 20 underwater acres from the State Lands Commission which extends the park into the underwater environment. Opportunities to expand the underwater lease area exist where additional shoreline parcels north of the cove have been acquired.

A major portion of the Marine EU is comprised of Van Damme cove. The topography of the Van Damme cove consists of a relatively short, steep beach and a subtidal zone with relatively low relief to 18 feet in depth. Substrate varies with exposure. Fine sand is found within the northern section of the cove and coarse sand/fine gravel toward the southern boundary. Near the southern boundary, intertidal and subtidal substrate consists of sand and rock in the form of various sized boulders and bedrock. Tidepools occur south of the beach. Seaward from the beach, substrate ranges from sand at about a depth of 35 feet to gravel at around 50 feet. The exposed northern shoreline areas are characterized by rocky intertidal areas, wash rocks and small islands. The coastal margin here is steep and plunges rapidly to depths of about 30 feet.

The variations in exposures and habitats within this EU results in a diverse biotic assemblage. The shallow subtidal zone along the northern shore is dominated by short canopy algae. Filter feeders such as sponges and tunicates are common there. Large portions of the cove area are dominated by beds of bull kelp (*Nereocystis luetkeana*). A giant kelp (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) bed is an outstanding feature, representing the



Van Damme State Park ECOLOGICAL UNITS

- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - Marine
 - Coastal Beach
 - Coastal Bluff
 - Coastal Terrace
 - Bishop Pine Forest
 - Riparian Areas & Wetlands
 - Pygmy Forest
 - Redwood Forest

DRAWING NO. 26672	VAN DAMME STATE PARK ECOLOGICAL UNITS GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	APPROVED _____ DATE _____	DESIGNED D. KECK
				DRAWN D. AMBAGIS
MAP 3				CHECKED D. KECK
				REVISIONS

northern edge of the range of this community. An increase in kelp production has been noted and has been correlated with the inception of the commercial urchin fishery in 1985. Van Damme cove is a major fishing ground for the red sea urchin and red abalone. Red abalone densities appear to have declined from levels observed before 1970 as a result of increased popularity of diving and a greater harvest pressure. During the last decade, though, densities for the whole cove appeared to be stable with some annual and spatial variation. The recent increase in kelp production may be making red abalone more difficult to find and harvest.

The cove has been used by commercial fishing boats as a temporary anchorage during both inclement weather and calm periods. Anchoring has occurred within the underwater lease area and may constitute an unauthorized commercial use of lands under department jurisdiction.

California gray and humpback whales have been seen offshore from the unit. The California gull, tufted puffin, California brown pelican, marbled murrelet, common loon, and double crested cormorant are all bird species that are likely users of the marine environment. Many of these bird species have been observed in or around the unit.

Coastal Beach Ecological Unit

The Coastal Beach EU encompasses the Van Damme Beach. The physical and esthetic conditions at Van Damme Beach make it the center of recreational activity for the entire State Park. The parking lot adjacent to the highway, easy diving access from the sandy beach, and the protected conditions in the cove make this beach one of the most popular diving spots on the Mendocino Coast.

The bluffs to the northwest of the cove protect the cove from prevailing winds and wave action. The sands of Van Damme Beach vary in texture with changes in exposure, from fine sand along the north to coarse sand and fine gravel to the south. Beach qualities change seasonally depending upon ocean currents and weather patterns.

The plant community found in this area is coastal strand and is characterized by low growing perennials adapted to windy and highly saline conditions. Common plants on Van Damme Beach include sand verbena (*Abronia latifolia*), beach bur (*Ambrosia chamissonis*), sea rocket (*Cakile maritima*), and rushes (*Juncus* sp.). Because of abundant visitor use vegetation is trampled and is not as widespread as it would be under natural conditions.

The wildlife habitat in this EU consists of the sandy beach and the sparse coastal strand vegetation. Shorebirds feed on the invertebrate fauna which inhabit the sand. Decaying kelp on the beach sustain kelp fly adults and maggots which in turn serve as forage for other animals such as swallows and skunks. Heavy visitor use can disturb

wildlife at the beach and therefore decrease its value as wildlife habitat. Dogs off their leash are particularly disruptive to shorebird feeding and resting behavior. The offshore rocks provide nesting for black oystercatchers and roosting habitat for shorebirds and gulls. Two animals of special management interest, the California gull and the California brown pelican, may be seen from the beach roosting on offshore rocks. Although the southwestern orientation of the beach does not permit prime whale viewing, California sea lions and harbor seals have been seen from the beach.

The Little River enters the cove by flowing over the sandy beach. During the summer a lagoon forms behind the beach. Lagoon formation creates important habitat for steelhead smolts before they migrate out to sea. The whole area would be subject to inundation during a tsunami and possibly during a combination of river flooding and extreme high tides.

In addition to use by scuba and free divers, the beach is a popular access for sea-kayaking. Other recreational activities include beachcombing, bird watching, fishing, nature study, and picnicking. The beach-side parking lot is the only one in the area and serves to limit visitor use during the peak season, i.e. demand for parking exceeds current supply. The beach parking lot also serves as overflow, enroute camping (1 night only) for about 30 vehicles. The beach and parking lot are full during much of the summer. Highway noises, especially airbrakes of trucks, are audible at the beach.

Coastal Bluff Ecological Unit

The rocky shore, cliff faces, and the vegetated slopes of coastal bluffs constitute this long linear ecological unit. It is a terrestrial ecosystem that is subject to severe wind and salt spray conditions. Substrate is primarily composed of exposed bedrock materials. The few areas of soil development are restricted to protected, less-steep sites.

The vegetation consists of a mosaic of herbaceous plants and dwarfed shrubs interspersed with substantial areas of bare ground. Some areas are dominated by short, mostly native grasses. The northern coastal bluff scrub is the plant community found most widespread on bluff faces and is a rare natural plant community that commonly includes such species as the seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), seaside sunflower (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium* var. *artemisiaefolium*), wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum latifolium*) and the non-native sea fig (*Carpobrotus aequilaterus*). Mendocino coast Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja mendocinensis*) is found along bluff edges in the northern parcels. Potential plants of special management interest include Blasdale's bent grass (*Agrostis blasdalei* var. *blasdalei*) and Northcoast phacelia (*Phacelia insularis* var. *continentis*).

Although seemingly inhospitable for wildlife, the coastal scrub habitat provides resources for many species. Birds commonly seen foraging along the bluffs include seed eating birds such as American goldfinch, savannah sparrow, house finch, and song sparrow. This habitat is important for the western harvest mouse and the western fence lizard, both of which are prey for the common garter snake. The American peregrine falcon, listed as endangered by both state and federal agencies, and the tufted puffin have been sighted offshore in the cove south of the headland. Local bird watchers report that tufted puffins may be nesting on the steep bluff faces at Mendocino Headlands, about two miles north of Van Damme State Park. The bluffs and offshore rocks within the unit and its outlying parcels could provide roosting and possibly burrow or crevasse nesting habitat for tufted puffins.

The Coastal Bluff EU has been subject to moderate human-caused disturbance since the settlement era. Where the bluffs are steep and tall, vegetation is relatively undisturbed. Where slope allows access, fishermen and divers have caused localized and severe vegetation trampling, as well as the formation of a network of unplanned trails. In areas near the highway non-native species, including pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) and French broom (*Cytisus monspessulanus*), have become established.

The northern parcels are used by visitors for fishing, diving access, tidepooling, hiking, and photography. Scenic qualities are quite high in this area and the opportunities for solitude and an ocean-shore experience are high in the Coastal Bluff EU. The coastal bluffs, besides providing unobstructed coastal panoramas, are excellent areas for viewing whales.

Coastal Terrace Ecological Unit

The Coastal Terrace Ecological Unit consists of the marine terraces west of State Highway 1. These broad, gently sloping coastal areas constitute the most recent terrestrial portion of the series of wave cut terraces formed in the area by Pleistocene sea-level changes and uplifting. Both of Van Damme State Park's coastal parcels are bisected by a low ridge that runs north-south across the coastal terrace.

Semi-consolidated marine terraces are geologic deposits of major importance as ground water sources. Because of the relative thinness of terrace deposits, their limited east-west extent, and their consequent lack of storage capacity, fractured bedrock is the principal water source. Ground water is the principal source for domestic water supplies and for irrigation in coastal Mendocino County, although diversions of surface waters from streams is not uncommon. Ground water quality for the region is recognized as very good to excellent, characteristically a sodium-chloride bicarbonate water with relatively low dissolved solids. A small spring-fed stream is found on the

eastern edge of the northernmost parcel. Additional seeps are found on the western ocean-facing slopes.

According to USDA Soil Conservation Service soil survey, the terraces are covered by very deep sandy loam soils with slight to moderate constraints for campground, picnic area, and road development. Constraints for septic systems are high, because of slow percolation or excessive drainage, depending on the particular soil series. (See Physical Constraints Map 4, page 35).

Non-native grasslands cover most of the Coastal Terrace EU. Plantings of non-native trees including Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.) are extensive throughout both parcels, as are artificially established native Bishop pine (*Pinus muricata*), shore pine (*Pinus contorta* ssp. *contorta*), and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) on the southern parcel. Developing on the coastal slope of the northern parcel is a Bolander's beach pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *bolanderi*) forest, a rare natural community. Freshwater seep vegetation, another rare natural community, provides potential habitat for coast lily (*Lilium maritimum*) and swamp harebell (*Campanula californica*). A scrub component of coyote brush (*Bacharis pilularis* ssp. *consanguinea*) is present as well as extensive stands of exotic broom. The relative distribution of native grassland, scrub, and forest cover in the pre-settlement era is difficult to discern from historical information; however, it is likely that most of the oceanside edge was a coastal prairie (mostly bunchgrasses). Moving away from the shore, vegetation probably shifted towards a Bolander's beach pine savannah to denser forests of bishop pine and grand fir, to redwood forest or Mendocino pygmy cypress forest depending on the soils. Native Americans probably burned terraces for various reasons, thereby maintaining the grasslands and savannahs.

The grasslands are dominated by non-natives such as velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*), hairgrass (*Aira caryophyllea*), flax (*Linum angustifolium*), rattlesnake grass (*Briza maxima*), and plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Common natives include Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), blackberry (*Rubus vitifolus*), and bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*).

The original vegetation was cleared during the settlement period; plowing for agricultural use and grazing of livestock followed. Eucalyptus trees were planted near the highway around 1870 and survivors of this original planting probably exist within the unit. Other non-native species that have become established include pampas grass, Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) and tansy ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*). The grassland that exists now is composed predominantly of introduced European

annual and perennial species. The southern parcel is heavily planted with Monterey pine and other non-native species and is immediately adjacent to a residential area. The grassland is mowed for hay annually. The eastern half of the northern parcel has a young Monterey pine plantation. The northern parcel grassland has not been mowed or grazed in recent years. Supple daisy (*Erigeron supplex*) is a special plant species found along the terrace of the northern parcel. The large privately owned Spring Ranch which lies between the two parcels is currently operated as a sheep ranch. In the absence of disturbances such as grazing, fire, or mowing, both the native Bolander's beach pine and the planted Monterey pine would replace much of the grassland areas except for the near shore margin, where salt spray and wind desiccation will limit tree growth.

The wildlife habitat of the Coastal Terrace EU consists primarily of perennial/annual grassland with the few trees providing characteristics of the closed-cone pine forest habitat. Although many species utilize the grasslands, particularly for forage, some species need additional features for breeding, resting and escape cover. The coastal terrace is rich in small and large herbivorous/granivorous birds and mammals such as the white crowned sparrow, mourning dove, western meadow lark, Botta's pocket gopher, and black-tailed deer. Predatory species include northern harriers, black-shouldered kites, and American kestrels during the day, and barn owls and coyotes after dark. Ticks can be a nuisance in the grassland.

Both parcels that make up the Coastal Terrace EU provide high quality land and ocean views. Present use is very low and concentrated along the ocean's edge. Although the planted trees obstruct short range views from State Highway 1, ocean views from the highway are primarily limited by the north-south trending ridgeline that lies between the highway and the ocean.

Riparian Areas and Wetlands Ecological Unit

The Riparian Areas and Wetlands EU consists of a corridor following Little River and Beal Creek, beginning near the mouth of Little River (adjacent to the Coastal Beach Ecological Unit), and reaching inland and upstream to the eastern boundary. It includes wetlands, riparian and aquatic habitat. A campground, day use facilities and buildings are found along the lower river and a surfaced road follows the river upstream approximately 1.5 miles. The watershed was heavily logged beginning in the late 1800s and various dams were built to aid in the transport of logs to a mill that was located near the mouth of the river. These severe disruptions are now difficult to discern as vegetation has matured since park establishment and the streams are recovering.

Figure 1

PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS MAP KEY

NOTE: This figure describes land use constraints for soil and flood prone areas at Van Damme State Park, as shown on the Physical Constraints Map #4 Drawings #25999 and 25999.1 Additional soils information for specific soil types found at this unit are described in the unit's Resource Inventory document.

I. LAND USE CONSTRAINTS FOR SOILS (USDA SCS 1989)

MAPPING UNIT #	SOIL SERIES	PICNIC AREAS AND CAMPGROUNDS	PATHS & TRAILS	ROADS	SEASONALLY FLOODED/HIGH WATER TABLE	SEPTIC SYSTEM CONSIDERATION
111	* IRMULCO	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	No	N/A
111	* TRAMWAY	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	No	N/A
111	* VAN DAMME	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	Severe: Slope	No	N/A
330	ABORIGINE	Severe: Wetness / Percs Slowly	Severe: Wetness	Severe: Wetness	Yes	Perc Slowly
330	BLACKLOCK	Severe: Wetness / Percs Slowly	Severe: Wetness	Severe: Wetness	Yes	Perc Slowly
360	COASTAL BEACH	NOT RATED _____ Unsuitable for development due to instability and wave action. _____				
370	DYSTROPEPTS	NOT RATED _____ Moderate to severe water erosion, underlies wetland/riparian. _____				
760	* GIBNEY	Moderate: Percs Slowly	Slight	Moderate: Shrink-Swell	No	Perc Slowly
760	* SHINGLEMILL	Severe: Wetness / Too Acid	Moderate: Wetness	Severe: Low Strength	No	Perc Slowly
770	* CABRILLO	Moderate: Percs Slowly	Slight	Slight	Yes	Perc Slowly
770	* HEESER	Slight	Slight	Slight	No	Extremely Rapid Drainage
771	HEESER	Moderate: Slope	Slight	Moderate: Slope	No	Extremely Rapid Drainage
810	* FERNCREEK	Severe: Acid	Severe: Erodes Easily	Severe: Low Strength	No	Perc Slowly
810	* QUINLIVEN	Moderate: Slope / Percs Slowly	Severe: Erodes Easily	Severe: Low Strength	No	Perc Slowly
825	FERNCREEK	Severe: Acid	Severe: Acid	Severe: Low Strength	No	Perc Slowly
841	TROPAQUEPTS	NOT RATED _____ Unsuitable for development due to hydric conditions / wetlands. _____				
861	BIAGGI	Moderate: Slope	Slight	Moderate: Depth to Rock	No	N/A

II. 100—YEAR FLOOD / TSUNAMI ZONES (FEMA1983)



Severe: Flooding / High Waves

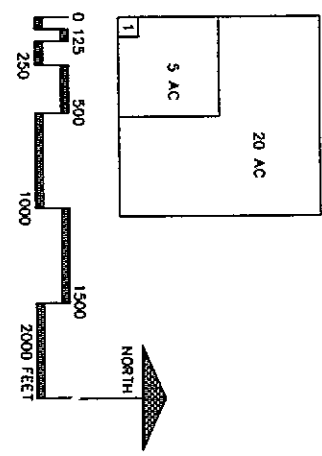
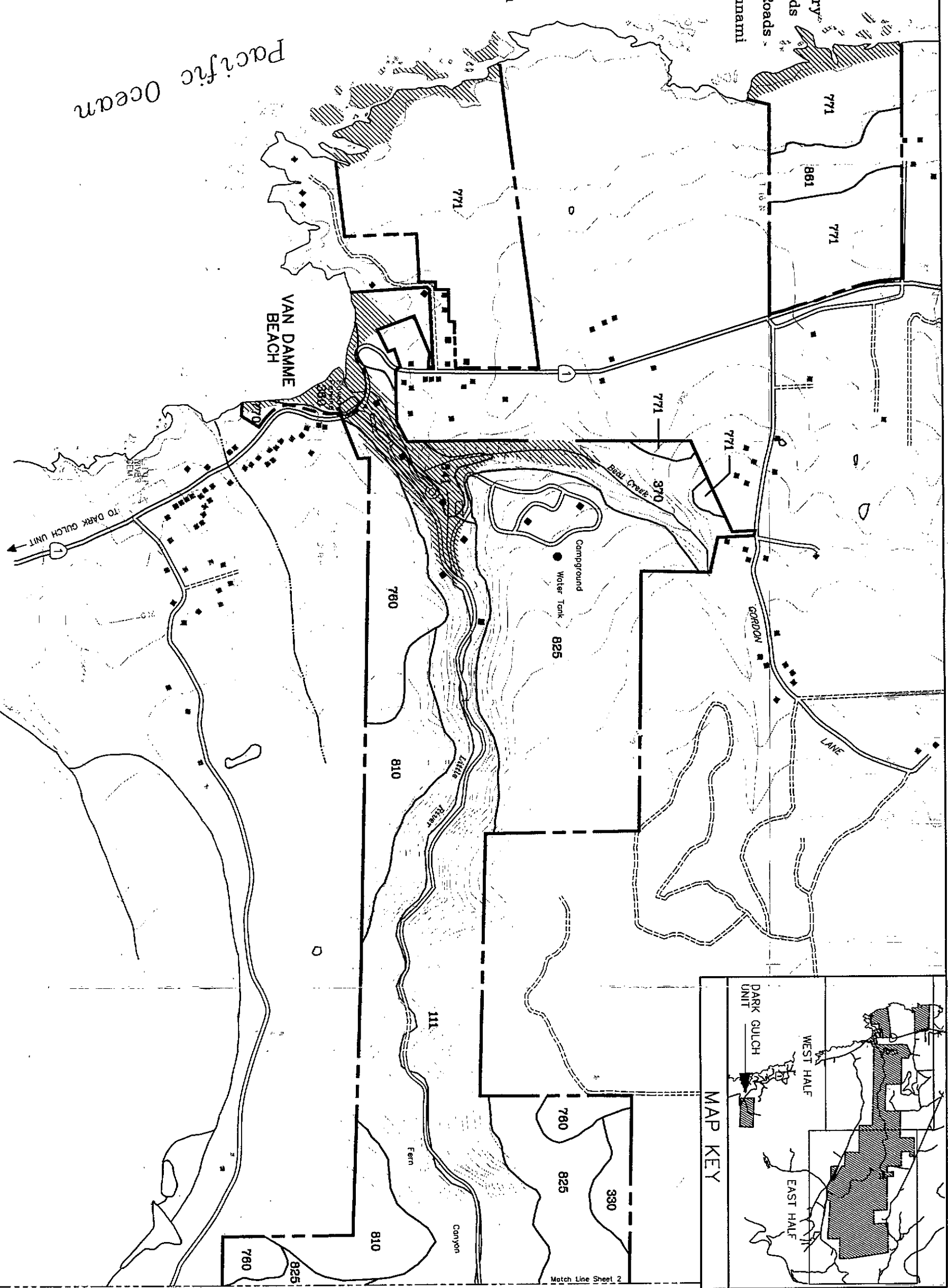
Slight

Severe: Flooding / High Waves N/A

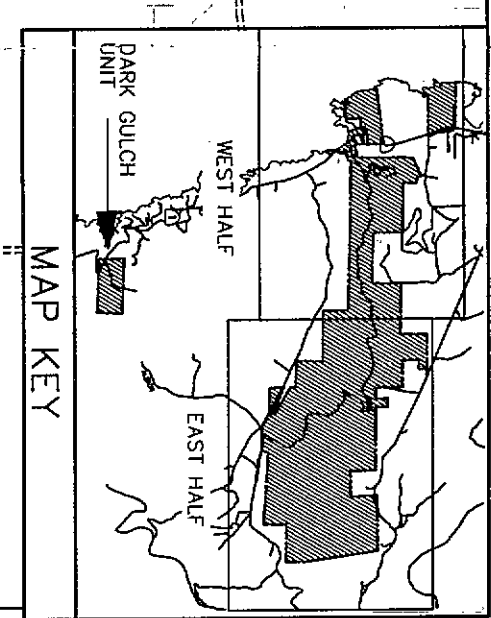
N/A

* Denotes soils series which are so intermingled that they are given the same mapping unit # and collectively become a Soils Complex.

- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - ▨ 100-Year Flood/Tsunami Zone (Ferna 1983)
- SOILS KEY**
- | MAPPING UNIT # | SOIL SERIES |
|----------------|---------------|
| 111 | Irrmulo |
| 111 | Tramway |
| 111 | Van Damme |
| 330 | Aborigine |
| 330 | Blacklock |
| 360 | Coastal Beach |
| 370 | Dystropepts |
| 760 | Gibney |
| 760 | Shinglemill |
| 770 | Cabrillo |
| 770 | Heeser |
| 771 | Heeser |
| 810 | Femcreek |
| 810 | Quinliven |
| 825 | Ferncreek |
| 841 | Tropaquepts |
| 861 | Blaggi |



Van Damme State Park
PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS



MAP 4	DRAWING NO. 25999	VAN DAMME STATE PARK PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS WEST HALF GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	REVISIONS	DATE
		APPROVED _____ DATE _____	DESIGNED D. KECK DRAWN L. SPEED CHECKED D. KECK		

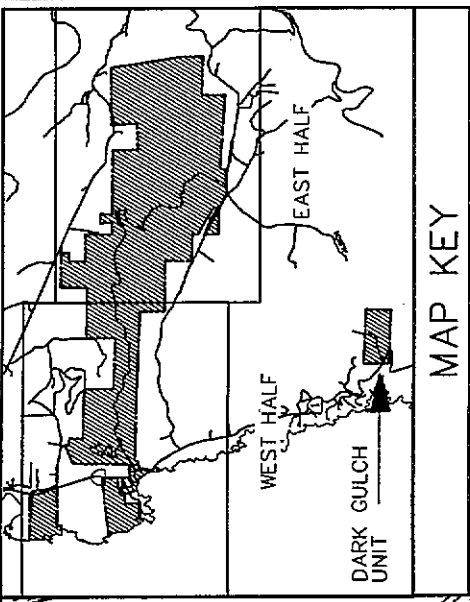
DESIGNED D. KECK	REVISIONS	DATE
DRAWN L. SPEED		
CHECKED D. KECK		

RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
APPROVED _____ DATE _____

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS
EAST HALF
GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT

DRAWING NO.
25999.1

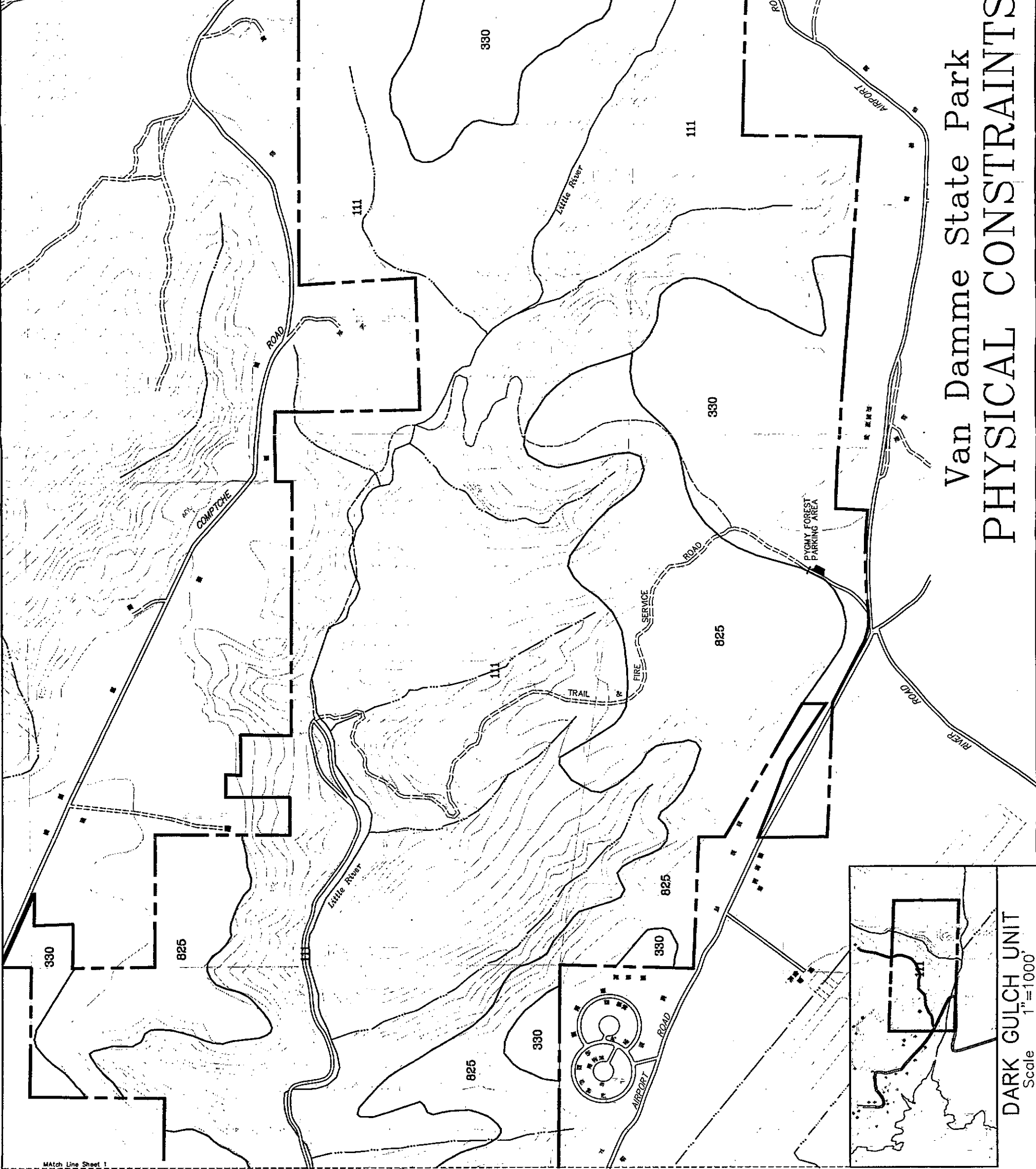
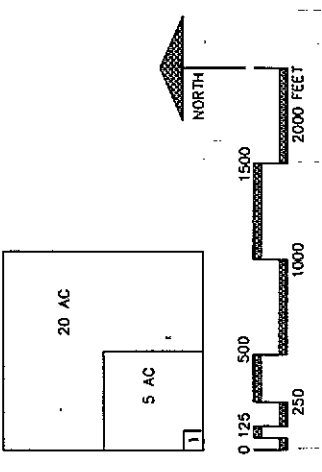
MAP
4



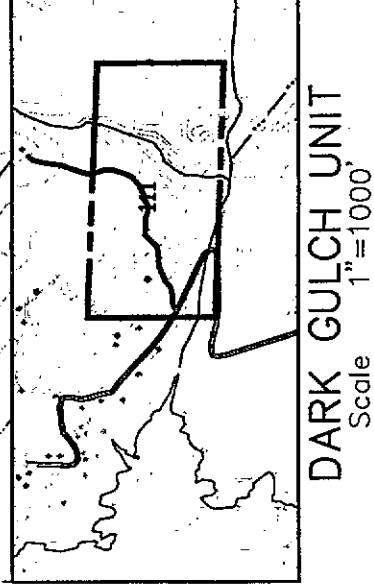
- LEGEND**
- State Park Property
 - ==== Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - ▨ 100-Year Flood/Tsunami Zone (FEMA 1983)

SOILS KEY

MAPPING UNIT #	SOIL SERIES
111	Irmulco
111	Tramway
111	Van Damme
330	Aborigine
330	Blacklock
360	Coastal Beach
370	Dystropepts
760	Gibney
760	Shinglemill
770	Cabrillo
770	Heeser
771	Heeser
810	Femcreek
810	Quinliven
825	Ferncreek
841	Tropaquepts
861	Biaggi



Van Damme State Park PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS



Along the Mendocino County coast, unconsolidated alluvium and river channel deposits are geologic deposits of major importance as ground water sources, as well as prominent features of riparian and wetland habitats. Deep alluvial deposits provide a reliable water source. Ground water quality for the region is recognized as very good to excellent, characteristically a sodium-chloride bicarbonate water with relatively low dissolved solids. On a regional basis, surface water quality for the Mendocino coast is also high. Dissolved minerals are predominantly calcium-bicarbonates and have very low percent sodium, low total dissolved solids, and low chlorides. Surface waters are moderately soft, but high hardness values are often observed during periods of low flow. The water source for the unit is a well in an alluvial deposit. Springs and seeps are very common along the lower canyon slopes.

Narrow steep-walled canyons with little bottom land and moderate to steep gradients yield rapid runoff response within Van Damme State Park. Discharge shows strong seasonal fluctuation mainly in response to heavy winter rain. Although flow is greatly reduced during the summer, Little River is perennial. A small floodplain occurs from the mouth to about a half-mile upstream. Most of this area is included in the 100-year floodplain and would be subject to inundation from a tsunami as well (See Physical Constraints Map 4).

Hydric soil conditions, common in this EU, severely restrict uses due to flooding, wetness, and shrink-swell potential. The soils along the riparian corridor are generally very deep, very poorly drained, with highly variable texture. The water table is very high and according to the Soil Conservation Service constraints are high for most uses.

Mature red alder riparian forest, a rare natural community, occurs along the creeks in Van Damme State Park, providing important wildlife habitat. Dominant species in this community include red alder (*Alnus oregona*), willow (*Salix* sp.), giant horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia* var. *braunii*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), stinging nettle (*Urtica holosericea*), and thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*). Fringed false hellebore (*Veratrum fimbriatum*) a plant of limited distribution, occurs along Little River and in Beal Creek, a tributary that joins Little River in the lower campground area. A skunk cabbage bog (*Lysichiton americanum*) occurs along the lower end of Beal Creek.

Sitka spruce/grand fir forest also occurs near the stream corridor. Common overstory trees are grand fir (*Abies grandis*), Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), and western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). Understory species include wax myrtle (*Myrica californica*), and cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*). Sitka spruce, which grows as far north as southeast Alaska, has its probable southern limit of distribution inside the unit. Three Sitka spruce trees are found south of the entrance road west of the entrance kiosk. Local botanical authorities believe this to be a natural occurrence.

Logging along the Little River and the subsequent flooding probably increased the extent of red alder. Over time, the stream-side red alders are usually replaced by longer lived conifers. Opportunities for reestablishment of red alder are provided by various natural disturbance events such as stream bank failures, undercutting of individual trees, landslides on the lower slopes of the canyon, and possibly from occasional debris flows.

Wildlife habitats that occur in this EU according to the California Wildlife Habitats Relationships (WHR) System are Valley Foothill Riparian and Riverine habitats. The Valley Foothill Riparian habitat provides important wildlife habitat features such as food, water, migration and dispersal corridors, and escape and nesting cover for a variety of wildlife species. Riparian areas are very important for amphibians, certain species of which are in decline throughout North America. A large number of birds utilize riparian areas as nesting cover or overwintering sites. Species common to the riparian and wetland habitat include the Pacific giant salamander, shrew-mole, yellow warblers, belted king fisher, and Swainson's thrush. The northern spotted owl was seen in recent years at Van Damme State Park, suggesting there is forage and/or nesting habitat for this species in the unit.

Little River supports both steelhead and coho salmon. Three additional species of fish were collected from the stream: threespine stickleback, prickly sculpin, and Coast Range sculpin. Pacific giant salamanders were collected in the unit. Steelhead are of special interest because they are presently considered a depleted resource by the California Department of Fish and Game. Coho salmon stocks show decline throughout California, Oregon, and Washington. Stocks in California north of San Francisco Bay that inhabit small coastal streams such as Little River, have been identified by the American Fisheries Society as "at moderate risk of extinction". No other special aquatic organisms are known to occur within the unit.

Aquatic habitat in Little River appears to be well recovered from past logging. Moderately deep pools are common. Cover is present, but not abundant in the form of undercut root wads and large woody debris. Bedrock limits depth along the upper sections of Little River. A number of concrete fords with culverts limit salmonid migration to certain flow conditions and appear to restrict use of upstream habitat. The abrupt changes of channel elevation created by road crossings, with an increase in stream velocities and a decrease in depth, constitute barriers to fish passage and appear to have limited salmonid use, as well as sculpin and stickleback distribution.

Woody debris, in the form of fallen trees and branches, has a critical function for stream dynamics and therefore affect habitat for aquatic organisms. Logs and other large woody debris that enter the stream as a result of stream bank erosion, slope instability,



Little River Riparian Habitat

or wind throw provide cover habitat, act as energy dissipaters and natural sediment dams, and create pools as stream flow scours the stream bed around them. Stream flow is redirected by woody debris. In some cases, accelerated bank erosion impinges on the road along Little River. Removal of tree fall can reduce or alter aquatic habitat without necessarily providing greater protection for the road.

The park's water supply comes from a collection system on the Little River, and the effect of water diversion from the under flow in Little River has not been fully evaluated. Withdrawals during periods of low natural flow may affect fish populations if a reduction in flow coincides with critical life stages of aquatic organisms. The sewage line that crosses under Little River also needs further evaluation. If the line is not buried deep enough in relation to stream bed elevation, a sewage spill could occur if the line is stressed and breaks during a high flow event.

The tall trees along the riparian corridor and along the lower slopes of the canyon allow long, majestic forest views as seen from the campground and the road that follows Little River. The mature red alder with its white bark provides a striking scene for campground users. Currently, an environmental camp (ten sites) two miles up-river enables overnight hikers to experience the quiet and stillness of the deep forest. Bicyclists can ride up the river road to a dirt road that climbs out of the canyon to the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest. This is the only route in the unit currently open to mountain bikes and present use is low. The paved portion of the service road that follows the river is subject to moderate hiking and biking use, primarily during the summer. Park staff use the road for routine maintenance and operations.

Bishop Pine Forest Ecological Unit

Bishop pine forest occurs on the second marine terrace along the Mendocino Coast. At Van Damme State Park this Ecological Unit is found east of State Highway 1 on terraces north and south of Little River. This area is characterized by moderate slopes (5-15%). Soils are mostly derived from old sand dune deposits and are usually very deep and poorly-drained sandy loams. They are seasonally saturated and compact easily. According to the Soil Conservation Service, constraints for all uses are high, due primarily to erodibility.

Marine terrace deposits are generally very thick in this area. Terrace deposits are the primary water sources for the area south of Big River. Reliability of groundwater supplies for deposits in the unit are relatively good compared to the larger area, but are subject to seasonal variation and drought effects.

The primary plant community found in this Ecological Unit is the northern Bishop pine forest, which is a rare natural community. Occasional pockets of upland redwood forest are found interspersed. Common canopy species include Bishop pine, coast redwood, and grand fir. Understory species include huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), and bracken fern. Pygmy cypress and Bolander's beach pine* are found in areas that are a transition to Mendocino pygmy cypress forest.

Northern Bishop pine forests were logged during the late 1800s, but have recovered to form a mature even-aged forest with a closed canopy and little understory development. Very little invasion by non-natives has occurred since logging with the exception of the dense stands of French broom occurring in the power line right-of-way. Bishop pine is adapted to regeneration after fire and prescribed burning is an appropriate technique to renew stands by providing optimum seed bed conditions. Seedling establishment can occur in the absence of fire. As old overstory trees are killed by insects, fungus, or heavy winds, canopy openings provide conditions favorable for growth of understory trees. Bishop pine appears to be vulnerable to root damage from understory burning.

Tall Bishop pine on shallow soils or on soils with a hardpan is susceptible to wind throw. Recreational development can increase wind throw susceptibility. Opening the canopy makes individual trees more vulnerable to the wind. Direct root disturbance and compaction weaken the root system's ability to support the tree.

The Bishop pine forest EU contains Closed-Cone Pine-Cypress wildlife habitat. Species utilizing this wildlife habitat include the western toad, alligator lizard, California quail, scrub jay, California ground squirrel, and gray fox. This habitat type provides possible nesting opportunities for the red-tail hawk and great horned owl. Except for the campground, this EU experiences very little recreational use. Park hiking trails for the

most part do not enter Bishop pine forests. The mature stands with closed canopies offer long interior forest views and easy access. Younger or more open stands contain well developed understories and make hiking and viewing more difficult.

Pygmy Forest Ecological Unit

The Pygmy Forest Ecological Unit occurs on the third and higher terraces. This unbroken succession of increasingly older terraces extending inland from the ocean along the Mendocino Coast displays a geologic, biologic, and evolutionary timespan unseen elsewhere in the world. Mendocino pygmy cypress forests have limited distribution and are endemic to northwestern California. The values of the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest ecosystem have been previously recognized by other land management agencies. The Nature Conservancy and U.C. Reserve System manage



Highland Meadow Campground

protected areas adjacent to the Van Damme State Park Mendocino pygmy cypress forests. The Mendocino pygmy cypress forests in the unit are designated Significant Natural Areas by the DFG Natural Areas Program. A 1985 appraisal of preserve opportunities sponsored by DPR Statewide Planning Section designated an area comprising the upper watershed and Mendocino pygmy cypress forests of Van Damme State Park as a 'worthy candidate' for natural preserve designation. These Mendocino pygmy cypress forests are considered the best examples of this unique community.

The soil features on these terraces are the strongest influence on the dynamics of the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest ecosystem. Most of the upper terrace areas contains podzolic soils. Conditions necessary for the development of podzols are high precipitation, coniferous forest cover, and long periods without soil profile disturbance. The high levels of moisture and acidic conditions created by decomposed organic material cause severe leaching of nutrients from the upper soil layer. These minerals accumulate below the leached horizon, sometimes forming a cemented hardpan. The essentially sterile layer beneath the humus is called the podzol horizon (Russian podzol, "ash layer"), and a common name for the area - White Plains of Mendocino - is derived from its light, ashy color.

Drainage is extremely poor and standing water is common for long periods during the wet season, primarily due to the hardpan. The inundation of sewage leach lines by a seasonally-high perched ground water table can result in the rapid downstream migration of sewage related contaminants. In addition, anaerobic conditions lower soil organisms capacity to decompose organic material. As a result, solids may accumulate, further reducing infiltration rates, and increasing surface flow of contaminants. Leach fields that drain below the hardpan may cause nitrate pollution of groundwater, because nitrate removal occurs through plant uptake and the root zone occurs, for the most part, above the hardpan.

No sewage systems are built on pygmy soils. However, if this occurred it would alter soil-vegetation relationships. Plant speciation has occurred on these soils over as much as a half-million-year span. Soil infertility has been a significant factor in this process. Changes in soil nutrient levels that may result from nitrate pollution from nearby septic systems could seriously threaten this complex relationship between plants and substrate development.

Large areas of Mendocino pygmy cypress forest are found in the unit north and south of the Little River. The drainage basin that encompasses the northern site includes residential development. Several roads penetrate undeveloped Mendocino pygmy cypress forest adjacent to the northern boundary. The drainage basin for the main southern site is nearly wholly contained within the unit, and therefore appears to be unthreatened by sewage pollution.

The Pygmy Forest Ecological Unit encompasses areas of stunted vegetation called Mendocino pygmy cypress forest and areas of taller vegetation of similar species composition best described as a northern Bishop pine forest community. The latter is found on third and fourth terraces where soils are younger and deeper and in areas transitional to the colluvial soil of the canyon slopes; both of these communities are rare. The northern Bishop pine forests in the Pygmy Forest EU have a different species composition, understory development, and size characteristic than the forests dominated by Bishop Pine on the lower coastal terraces.

The Mendocino pygmy cypress forest is dominated by pygmy cypress (*Cupressus pygmaea*), Bolander's beach pine, with occasional Bishop pine. Shrub species include Fort Bragg manzanita (*Arctostaphylos nummularia*), a species endemic to Mendocino pygmy cypress forests; Labrador tea (*Ledum glandulosum*); huckleberry; and California rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*). Understory plants include salal and bear grass (*Xerophyllum tenax*). Special species found in this ecosystem include Bolander's beach pine, pygmy cypress, California swamp harebell, and coast lily. California sedge (*Carex californica*), a rare sedge commonly found in other Mendocino County pygmy cypress forests may also occur at Van Damme State Park.

Wildlife habitat in the Pygmy Forest EU is classified as Closed-Cone Pine-Cypress. Although many aspects of the wildlife habitat are similar and many of the same wildlife species utilize the two EU's (Pygmy Forest and Bishop Pine Forest), the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest has unique attributes in terms of its soils and plant composition, water availability, and structural characteristics that make it more desirable for particular wildlife species. Wildlife utilizing the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest include western fence lizard, brush mouse, hairy woodpeckers, pygmy owl, black-shouldered kite, big brown bat, black tailed hare, and bobcat. The Mendocino pygmy cypress forest may offer specific habitat elements preferred by some more specialized wildlife species, including the Mendocino cypress beetle and the Helfer's blind weevil, both of which have been cited as being endemic to the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest on the Mendocino Coast.

Potential threats to Mendocino pygmy cypress forests include sewage pollution noted above and interruption of surface drainage by roads and trails. In areas where the soil profile is disturbed, vegetation recovery is extremely slow. Moderate to heavy levels of horse use of trails could potentially impact soils and vegetation by the deposition of manure and by trampling trail side vegetation. Mendocino pygmy cypress forest vegetation appears to be adapted to fire. Bolander's beach pine and pygmy cypress both have serotinous cones, but natural fire frequency is unknown. Seedling establishment for dominant species was high after two recent low-intensity wildfires that occurred in the unit's Mendocino pygmy cypress forests.

Mendocino pygmy cypress forests protected by the University of California Reserve System and the Nature Conservancy are found immediately adjacent to the Mendocino pygmy cypress forests north of Little River. South of the unit, a large Nature Conservancy reserve and undeveloped county-owned land surrounding the county airport connect Mendocino pygmy cypress forest habitat over a large expanse which is occasionally interrupted by roads and runways.

Terrain in the vicinity of Mendocino pygmy cypress forests is usually flat. No long landscape views are available from trails. The stunted trees, however, provide a curious, sometimes odd scene for visitors, especially in transition from the dark enclosed views of the tall redwood forest to the light open expanse of Mendocino pygmy cypress forest.

Redwood Forest Ecological Unit

The Redwood Forest EU consists of the coast redwood dominated forests of the canyon slopes of Little River. These are some of the oldest and most developed second-growth forest on the Mendocino Coast. Because the redwood forest will eventually attain an old-growth condition and because development and timber harvesting will likely continue in surrounding lands, the biological significance of these areas will increase over time.

The soils found on the slopes of Little River and its tributaries are derived from colluvium and are much deeper, better drained, and more fertile than the adjacent terrace soils found in the Pygmy Forest EU. Because of steepness, these soils are prone to erosion and landslides. Old slides are evident along the length of the service road up Little River. Seeps and springs are common along the lower canyon slopes and chronically saturated soil conditions may contribute to slope instability. The road may destabilize some slope areas. The service road from the environmental camp to the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest boardwalk is a potential sediment source to the unit stream system if drainage is not properly maintained through drainage structures and grading practices. Currently the road is stable and erosion is minimal.

Upland Redwood Forest is the plant community that dominates the Redwood Forest EU. Characteristic taxa of the overstory include redwood, Douglas-fir, tan oak (*Lithocarpus densiflora*), grand fir, and western hemlock. The understory is composed of sword fern, redwood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*), and bracken fern, with fairy bells (*Disporum sp.*) and wake robin (*Trillium sp.*) on mesic sites. Occasional pygmy cypress trees are found in transition areas between redwood forest and Mendocino pygmy cypress forest. These cypresses are tall and demonstrate that their stunted habit on

pygmy soils is not a genetically controlled characteristic. No other special plants have been discovered in this ecological unit.

The redwood forest along Little River was heavily logged between 1870 and 1890, and occasional logging occurred throughout the park until its acquisition by the department in 1936. Although the forest is classified as second growth, it contains some of the habitat elements characteristic of old growth forests: large diameter trees (greater than 24" average), snags, multiple canopy layers, and developing understories. The forest is about 100 years old, quite young when compared to primeval forests, but because of soil characteristics, moisture availability, and climate, tree sizes are extraordinary for their age. In addition, there are large snags and "wolf trees" leftover from the original stand because they were unmerchantable to early loggers or were too difficult to fell. These provide important sites for cavity nesting wildlife species. Also, some areas contain down logs and other woody debris; wildlife habitat particularly important for amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals. The forest contains occasional openings from individual tree falls and small pockets of disease- or insect-killed trees. These openings allow understory development and initiate the development of the multi-layered canopy common in old-growth forests.

The role of fire in the development of coastal Mendocino redwood forests is poorly understood. Due to the lack of lightning ignitions in the near coast environment, fires in the local vicinity before the settlement period were largely a result of Native American activities. Based on fire history studies for other similar forests, fire frequency for the forests in the unit is probably between 20 and 50 years. Fires were of low intensity and did little to alter the dominance of redwood. Stand dynamics research in Humboldt County suggests that redwood maintains dominance with or without periodic fire; however, fire's role in redwood forests on small-scale effects like the creation of snags, trunk hollows, down logs, and canopy openings has only recently been investigated. These structural changes play a key role in the development of critical habitat elements for species such as the northern spotted owl. Also, periodic fire may have an important role in nutrient cycling.

Wildlife habitat in this EU is classified as Redwood by WHR. It provides food, shelter, nesting or other essential habitat elements for over 190 wildlife species. The area includes preferred habitat for ringtail, fisher, and osprey. Characteristic wildlife species include Pacific tree frog, Wilson's warbler, Stellar's jay, band-tailed pigeon, Townsend's big eared bat, and western grey squirrel. The northern spotted owl has been observed in the canyon of the Little River. There is not enough adequate habitat within the unit to sustain a breeding pair, therefore linkage of existing or potential habitat would be required to constitute a functional habitat area.

Excellent interior views of the tall forest and deep canyon slopes are available from the service road along Little River and from the trails that wind through the forest. Especially dramatic the fern-carpeted lower slopes of the canyon as viewed from the river. Long views that offer verdant and graceful forest scenes are common.

Recreational use within this EU is limited almost exclusively to hiking and bicycling. Mountain bike use is currently restricted to the service road that winds up Little River and climbs from the environmental camp up to the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest terrace. Current bicycle use on the upper portion of the service road is light. Hiking use of the upper canyon trails is similarly light. Very little horseback riding occurs in the unit.

Cultural Resources

Cultural Background

Human presence on the Mendocino Coast extends back 11,000 years, but only for the past 3000 years is the archaeological record relatively well defined. During this later period, the archaeological finds indicate that an earlier (possibly Yukian speaking) population was gradually replaced by Pomo peoples who made periodic visits to the



Service Road connection with Fern Canyon Trail

coast from their interior homelands. The quest for marine foods and resources was of particular importance to these people, but year-round settlement of this section of the coast probably did not occur until historic times.

At the time of contact, the area was included within the territory of the Northern Pomo language group known as the Mitom Pomo. Principal villages of these people were situated in interior Little Lake (Willits) Valley of Mendocino County, but they made annual visits to the coast to collect food and other resources. The mouth of Little River, which provided a protected camping place, was called Ka-lai-lu.

Social organization was based on the village unit, which was considered to be autonomous. Chieftainship was hereditary, but oratorical ability, goodness of heart, and sometimes wealth were important prerequisites. There were two varieties of chiefs, those actually in power ("big chief," or "man above") and those who were eligible by reason of descent ("boy chiefs"). Larger villages would sometimes have two or three unrelated "big chiefs." The principal duty of such men was to serve as peacemakers and advisors, settling disputes, providing moral guidance, and organizing the distribution of stored goods. A "big chief" was usually a man past his physical prime, who due to advanced age was expected to exhibit exceptional knowledge and wisdom. The term "boy chief" was applied to younger men who were potential successors to chieftainship. Succession usually came through the mother's line, so that the chief's eldest sister's son would ordinarily be expected to follow him in office.

Mitom structures were of three types: dwelling houses, sweat houses, and dance houses. A common form of simple dwelling house on the coast was the redwood slab bark house. These cone-shaped dwellings had a diameter of about 10 feet and were 6 to 8 feet high. Every village also had a semi-subterranean sudatorium, which was usually 15 to 20 feet in diameter. On the coast, these sweathouses generally faced either east or west. Women were normally excluded from sweathouses except when they were the site of a gambling event. The third type of structure was the large, earth-covered "Ghost House." These were from 40 to 60 feet in diameter and used primarily for the Ghost ceremony or mourning rites for the dead.

The subsistence economy was based on hunting and gathering of wild foods, and involved a wide variety of plant and animal species. This diversity provided some protection against the failure of the acorn crop or other important foods in a bad year. While men did the fishing along the coast, women collected shellfish (abalone, mussels, turban snails, limpets and chitons) as well as seaweed and kelp. Salmon and steelhead were taken from coastal streams.

Cooking was done by the women, as was most collecting of plant foods; food procurement by men mainly involved hunting and fishing. Both men and women, however, participated in collecting acorns. Basket making was principally a women's activity, but men would also make burden baskets and weave rabbit skin blankets.

An important specialized occupation, practiced only by certain men, was the manufacture of beads, which served not only as ornaments but as trade currency. The two main sources of bead material were clam shell and magnesite. The former material was acquired during expeditions to Bodega Bay.

The first contact of the Mitom with non-native peoples probably occurred after 1812 and involved Aleutian sea-otter hunters who travelled along the coast from the Russian-American settlement of Fort Ross in search of fur-bearing sea mammals. Later expeditions involved Russian officials who explored the coastal area. American and Hudson's Bay Company hunters passed through the area, notably in 1833, but these people were primarily interested in beaver pelts, and when they did not find them along the coast, they moved on.

With the Russian departure from Fort Ross in 1841, the Mexican government encouraged permanent settlement in the Mendocino area by making land grants available to its citizens. Little River lay within the borders of the Albion Rancho claimed by William Richardson in 1844. Whether this rancho had any impact on the area of Van Damme State Park is uncertain. Richardson's operations were concentrated on the Navarro and Albion Rivers, and although he is said to have had 250 Indians working for him, it is not known if any of them were Mitom.

A key event in the history of the area near Little River was the wreck near Point Cabrillo in 1850 of the brig *Frolic*, bound for San Francisco with a cargo of Chinese goods. The salvage crew sent north from San Francisco had little luck with the cargo but did discover rich stands of redwood suitable for logging and milling.

In 1852, a sawmill was built near the mouth of Big River, and the influx of American settlers began. Some of the Mitom found work as laborers for the mill company, and the Mitom settlement of Buldam, located adjacent to the town of Mendocino, was converted from a seasonal camp to a permanent village. Although most North Coast Indian peoples were taken to the Mendocino Indian Reservation at Fort Bragg between 1856 and 1867, the Mitom seem to have escaped this fate, finding employment as farm and lumber workers.

The first American settlers at Little River were a group of market hunters, who took up land on the coastal terrace north of the river mouth in 1852. The leader of these men

was evidently Jerome Beall, who lent his name to a small creek which flows along the west side of the present Upper Campground. While the men may have planted a few crops, their primary occupation was providing deer and elk meat to the Mendocino Mill. In 1856, Beall sold his land claim to William H. Kent and moved north to accept employment at the newly-established Mendocino Indian Reservation.

Although Kent was the first permanent American settler on the Little River, his economic interests were tied to Mendocino. Born in Maine in 1821, he worked in the woods and operated a farm before joining the California gold rush in 1850. After working in the mines for two years, he heard about the construction of the new sawmill at Mendocino and moved there in 1853. He worked as a mill hand, as a teamster and as a scaler before buying Beall's claim in 1856.

Upon buying this property, Kent turned from lumbering to agriculture. His original purchase was just north of the present park boundary, but in 1873 he bought an adjoining parcel that now forms the northern coastal extension of the park. Kent at first emphasized dairying, but later shifted his efforts to butchering. By the 1870s, he was credited with the largest slaughterhouse on the Mendocino Coast, an operation that in 1880 processed 350 cattle, 500 sheep and 150 hogs. The same year he also produced 450 pounds of butter. In 1901, Kent transferred the farm to his son Nathaniel W. Kent, who continued the slaughtering and dairying operations. W.H. Kent died in 1906. Nathaniel died in 1932.

The real founding of the Little River settlement dates to the arrival, in 1864, of Silas Coombs, Ruel Stickney, Tapping Reeves, Isaiah Stevens, and Charles Pullen. All the settlers except Reeves were from Maine, and like Kent, they all had farms. They settled directly on the harbor at the mouth of the river and there built the sawmill that was to form the economic basis of the town.

The originators of this enterprise were Silas Coombs and Ruel Stickney, two brothers-in-law from Lincoln County, Maine. Coombs was born in 1817 and became a lumberman and farmer. Stickney, eight years younger, was a ship carpenter. In 1856, the two men sailed for California and then proceeded directly to the Mendocino woods, going to work for the Albion Mill.

In 1863, after several years as lumber contractors, they turned their attention to Little River and decided to construct their own mill. They formed a partnership with Reeves, a New York engineer, and drawing on their connections in the east, they sent for Pullen, a millwright, and Stevens (another of Coombs' in-laws), a teacher who was to work as the company clerk. All the men took up claims around the harbor and along the river. From there the company gradually extended its timber holdings over the next two decades.

The mill was constructed by Pullen on the south side of the river (between the present Entrance Kiosk and Recreation Hall) in 1864. It featured a double circular saw, an edger, a planer and a picket saw, all powered by steam. It had a capacity of about 25,000 feet per day, and the company employed 50 men. A dam was constructed across the mouth of the river (approximately at the location of the present highway), forming a pond along the north side of the mill. Logs reached the mill by means of river drives carried out during periods of high water in the winter and spring. An apron chute was also built on the south side of the harbor. The first lumber shipment was made in January 1865.

During its first decade, the Little River mill was reputed to be the steadiest producer on the Mendocino Coast, immune to the protracted closures forced upon other mills by mechanical problems or unavailability of logs. Reeves sold his interest to his two partners in 1871.

In February 1874, Stickney sold his half of the company to his son-in-law, Charles Perkins, and retired to his ranch in Anderson Valley. Perkins, too, had been born in Maine, in 1839, and had come to California in 1862. Two years later he went to work as a teamster for Stickney, Coombs & Reeves. Shortly after the reorganization of the company as Coombs & Perkins, a fire broke out in the engine room of the mill and completely destroyed it. A new mill of similar capacity was quickly constructed, across the river from its predecessor and closer to the ocean. A new chute was built on the north side of the harbor, and a wharf was built, extending into the harbor from the east side.

Over the following decade Coombs & Perkins extended their holdings in the Little River drainage until they included most of the area of the present park, as well as considerable additional land to the east and south.

One area of the present park not owned by Coombs & Perkins was the land on the north side of the harbor, which composed the farm of Isaiah Stevens. Stevens was the chief clerk of the lumber company as well as the Little River postmaster, and it was from his original holdings that most of the town developed. Stevens sold parcels for both commercial and residential developments. Most of these parcels lay outside the park boundaries: two important exceptions were the sites of a hotel and a shipyard. One of these lots, located west of the highway and south of Peterson Road, was the site of the Randlett House. This hotel, built in 1869 by Henry A. Randlett, operated into the 1880s under periodically changing management.

A neighbor of Randlett was Capt. Thomas H. Peterson, a Danish shipwright who established a shipyard on the north side of Little River harbor in 1869. In 1874, he purchased the shipyard property from Stevens and erected a house there as well.

Peterson built ships on commission for most of the major mill owners in the region, and his vessels were a common sight in every doghole on the coast. He built and launched at least 12 schooners at the Little River yard before moving his operations in 1879 to other ports.

Meanwhile, in 1878, Coombs & Perkins purchased a mill that had been operating on Elk Creek, further south along the coast, and transported it to Stillwell (or Buckhorn) Gulch, about a mile and a half south of Little River. This new facility had a capacity of about 20,000 feet per day and employed an additional 50 men in the woods and mill. Finished lumber was transported by a wooden railway to a new chute constructed on the south side of Little River harbor.

The partnership of Coombs & Perkins was dissolved in 1883, with Coombs retaining the company plant and its lands in the Little River drainage. Perkins received the company's holdings to the south, turning his attention to timber interests on Greenwood Creek and Big River.

Silas Coombs continued the mill operation for another decade, but his timber reserves were rapidly dwindling. When the panic of 1893 disrupted the lumber industry, he ran the mill for a final season and then closed it permanently. He died the following year.

Coombs' holdings were divided among his heirs, and the mill machinery was sold off in 1899. The mill buildings burned in 1910. The dismantling of the mill in 1899 was accompanied by the closure of the north chute. The wharf and the south chute were maintained, however, and the latter was used into the 1930s.

In 1928, four real estate parcels totalling 40 acres, including the lower river and the beach at its mouth, were purchased by Charles Van Damme from Coombs' heirs and other local residents. Van Damme had been born in Little River in 1873, but had left to become a successful San Francisco businessman and operator of the Richmond-San Rafael ferry line. Van Damme never forgot Little River, and upon his retirement, he purchased the land there as a picnic and camping area for the public. Upon his death in 1930, the terms of his will bequeathed the land to the state for a park. Much of the upper Little River drainage was acquired from the heirs of Silas Coombs in 1933, and Van Damme State Park was officially opened to the public in 1934.

State acquisition of the park property corresponded with use of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to develop state and federal parks. From their camp at Russian Gulch, CCC workers built camping facilities, trails, and restrooms, as well as a Recreation Hall for public use. In 1937, they established a three-and-one-half mile road up the canyon, crossing the river with two bridges. Nine stone and concrete fords were added by the CCC in 1940.

The park has been enlarged over the past half-century by means of a number of small acquisitions. Expanded camping facilities were established in the 1950s and 1960s to meet increasing public demand. Today, the park is a favorite destination for abalone divers, as well as for campers and hikers.

Archaeological Sites

Five prehistoric archaeological sites exist within Van Damme State Park, four of which were first recorded during the current survey. All of these sites (CA-MEN-1089, MEN-2283, MEN-2284, MEN-2285, and MEN-2287) are located along the coastal bluffs extending north of Little River; all are shell middens reflecting seasonal exploitation of the marine environment. In addition to the known sites, reports from the late 1800s mention a former village site located along Little River, which was subsequently covered by the mill pond. No evidence of the site could be found in the current surface survey. As early as the 1870s, the lumber company reported problems due to the mill pond filling with silt, so the village site may simply be covered with alluvium. No prehistoric sites were found in surveyed areas of redwood forest in Fern Canyon or in the Mendocino pygmy cypress forest lands on the terraces surrounding it.

Historic Features and Sensitive Areas

At least three features survive from the sawmill era at Little River, all of them remnants of the log dams that formed the mill pond. The most substantial of these has been identified by local historian Francis Jackson as the "Middle Dam" of the Little River logging operation. Located about four miles upstream from the river mouth, this structure was a cribwork of redwood logs 30 feet high, 20 feet deep, and 100 feet wide at the highest point. Today, only the lowest courses of logs remain, along with a few remnants of heavy chain and wire rope. The second feature consists of a log retaining wall situated along the north side of the river below the Ranger Residence, about .3 mile upstream from the river mouth. Identified as a "wing dam," it was designed to divert logs to a desired direction in swiftly flowing water. Just downstream on the opposite side of the river is the third feature, the remnant of another log retaining wall aligned perpendicularly to the preceding one. This feature was evidently part of the "Upper-Lower Dam", which separated the mill pond from the boom.

In addition to these visible features, the silting in of the mill pond may have buried other logging-related features. Similarly, no surface remnants survive of the Randlett House or the Peterson Shipyard, but buried features may exist. Other logging features may survive in now-overgrown areas in the eastern portion of the park.

Pacific Ocean

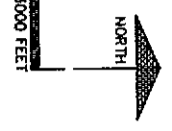
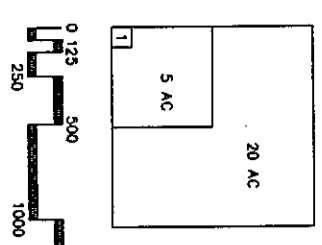
Midden Sites

LEGEND

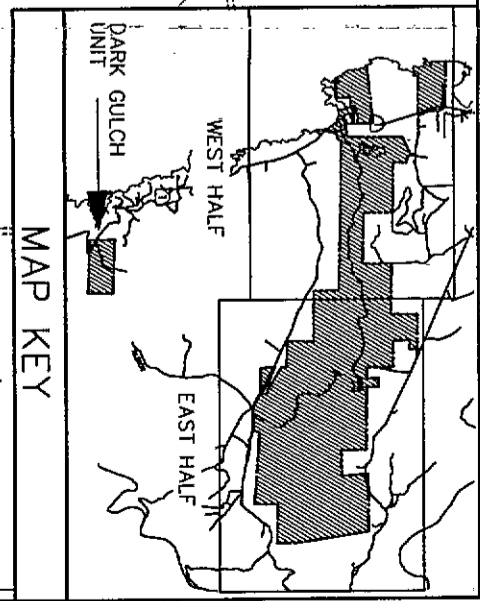
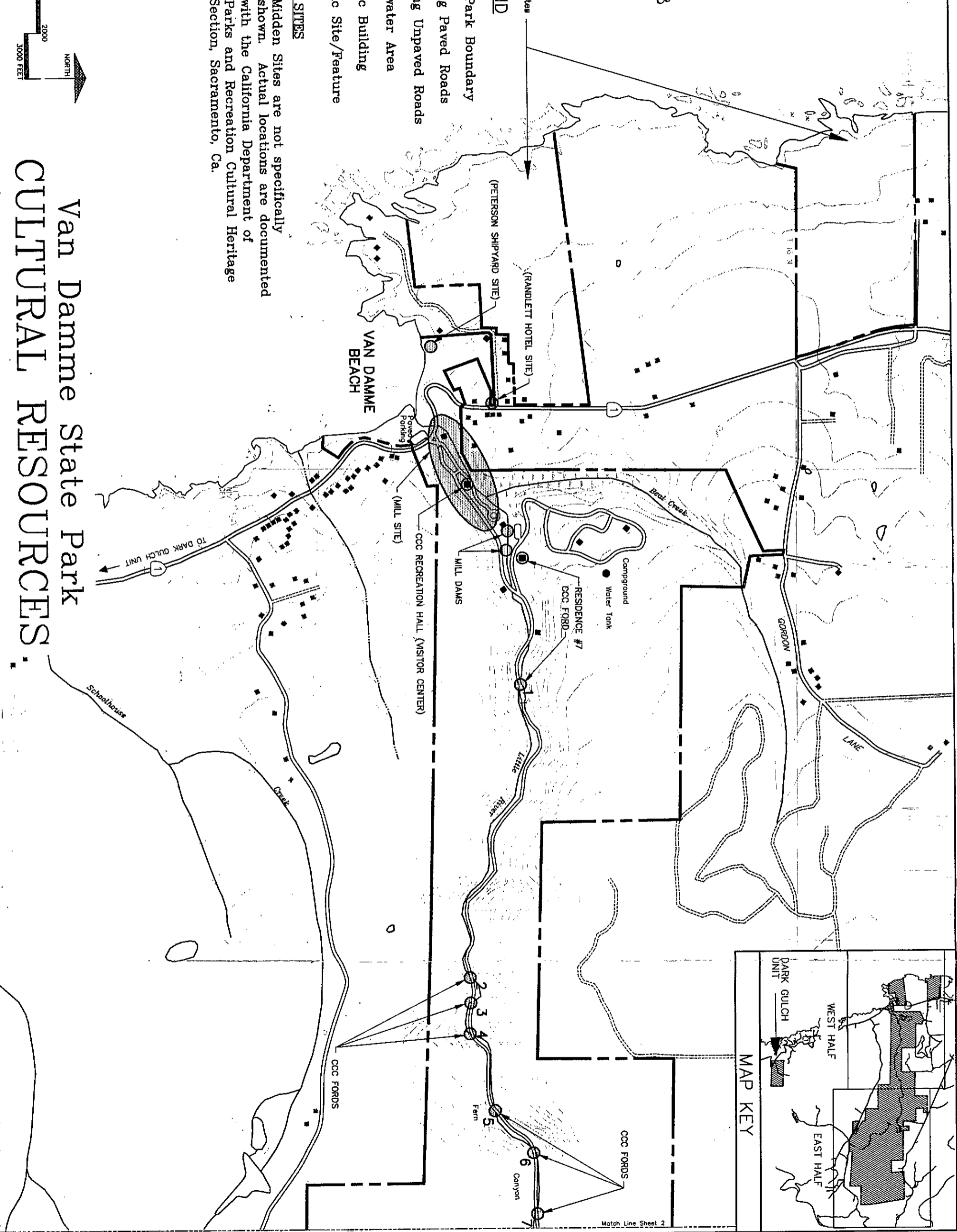
- State Park Boundary
- ==== Existing Paved Roads
- Existing Unpaved Roads
- ▨ Underwater Area
- Historic Building
- Historic Site/Feature

KNOWN MIDDEN SITES

- MEN-ISO-19 Midden Sites are not specifically shown. Actual locations are documented with the California Department of Parks and Recreation Cultural Heritage Section, Sacramento, Ca.
- MEN-540
- MEN-1089
- MEN-2283
- MEN-2284
- MEN-2285
- MEN-2287



Van Damme State Park
CULTURAL RESOURCES



Match Line Sheet 2

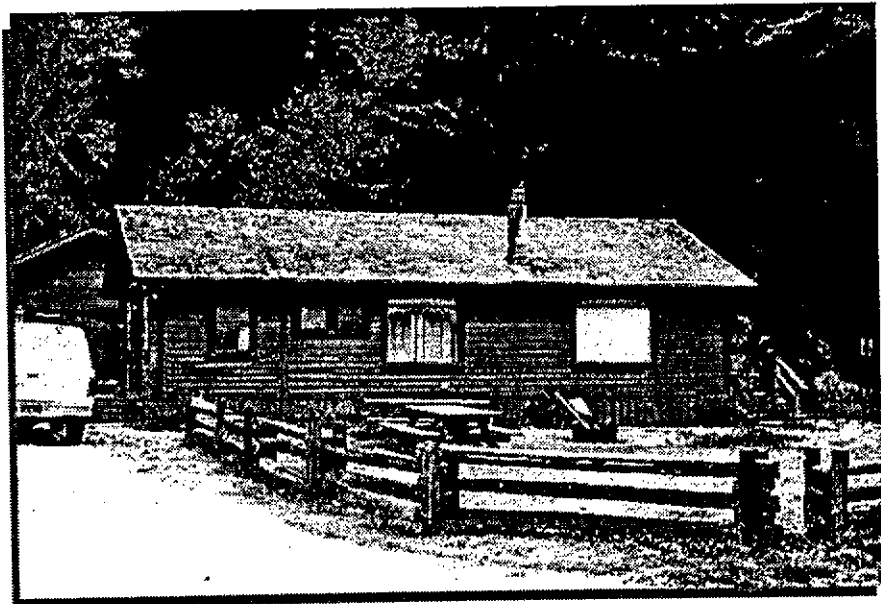
DRAWING NO. 26000	VAN DAMME STATE PARK CULTURAL RESOURCES WEST HALF GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION		DESIGNED D. KECK
		APPROVED _____ DATE _____	DATE _____	DRAWN L. SPEED
MAP 5			REVISIONS	CHECKED D. KECK

Of the campground furniture and other CCC construction, everything has been removed except one structure (see below) and the series of nine stone fords on the service road that follows Little River up Fern Canyon.

Historic Structures

Van Damme State Park contains two historic buildings: the current visitors' center and the ranger's residence. The visitors' center was a CCC-built recreation hall, designed in 1938 and completed by 1940. Although the interior has been extensively modified by the addition of interpretive displays, these were installed in such a way as to avoid damage to the historic fabric. Consequently, the building retains much historical integrity.

The ranger's residence (Residence 7) was built in 1939 for the Golden Gate Exposition held at Treasure Island in San Francisco. It was subsequently dismantled and moved to its current location in 1940. Though a modest dwelling, it is a good representative of Park Rustic architecture.



Ranger Residence #7 located across from the group camp

RESOURCE POLICY FORMINATION

The development of natural and cultural resource management policy is a multi-step process that includes:

1. The application of a classification as a unit of the State Park System that provides a general framework for management of resources;
2. A Declaration of Purpose that defines more specifically the purpose of the unit, its prime resources, and the broadest goals of management;
3. The delineation of a zone of primary interest which describes the area where environmental changes outside the unit may impact unit resources;
4. The formation of resource management directives designed to achieve specific objectives developed during an evaluation of resource conditions and general policy direction.
5. The development of geographically specific Resource Management Zones with site-specific objectives for management.



View of Van Damme Beach and Cove

Classification establishes broad management guidelines and direction for public use. It provides certain resource protections under the California Public Resources Code (PRC 5019.50), California Parks and Recreation Commission policies, and resource management directives of the Department. An inventory of the unit's scenic, natural, and cultural features must be submitted by the Department to the California State Park and Recreation Commission for its consideration prior to classification action (PRC 5002.1).

State acquisition of the parcels in this unit began in 1930. Approximately 2,150 acres are currently within Van Damme State Park. Twenty additional acres offshore are leased from the State Lands Commission and form the current underwater portion of the park.

Van Damme State Park was classified and named by the State Park and Recreation Commission in 1963. The unit is also included within the designation of state seashore. The objectives and directives in this Resource Element are designed to assist the Department in achieving the goals outlined in the Public Resources Code definition of state parks and state seashores. Public Resources Code section 5019.56 defines a state park as follows:

State Parks consist of relatively spacious areas of outstanding scenic or natural character, oftentimes also containing significant historical, archaeological, geological, or other values. The purpose of state parks shall be to preserve outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural values, indigenous aquatic and terrestrial fauna and flora, and the most significant examples of such ecological regions of California...

Each state park shall be managed as a composite whole in order to restore, protect, and maintain its native environmental complexes to the extent compatible with the primary purpose for which the park was established.

Improvements undertaken within state parks shall be for the purpose of making the area available for public enjoyment and education in a manner consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, cultural, and ecological values for present and future generations. Improvements may be undertaken to provide for recreational activities including, but not limited to, camping, picnicking, sightseeing, nature study, hiking, and horseback riding, so long as such improvements involve no major modification of lands, forests, or waters. Improvements which do not directly enhance the public's enjoyment of the natural, scenic, cultural, or ecologic values of the resource, which are attractions in themselves, or which are otherwise available within a reasonable distance outside the park, shall not be undertaken within state parks.

State seashore designation was given to a portion of the Mendocino coast in 1978. As defined in the Public Resources Code Section 5001.6, the Mendocino Coast State Seashore, consists of appropriate coastal lands between Jughandle Creek and the Gualala River.

The Public Resources Code, Section 5019.62, defines state seashores as follows:

State seashores consist of relatively spacious coastline areas with frontage on the ocean, or on bays open to the ocean, including water areas seasonally connected to the ocean, possessing outstanding scenic or natural character and significant recreational, historical, archaeological, or geological values. State seashores may include underwater areas within them, but may not be established solely in the underwater environment.

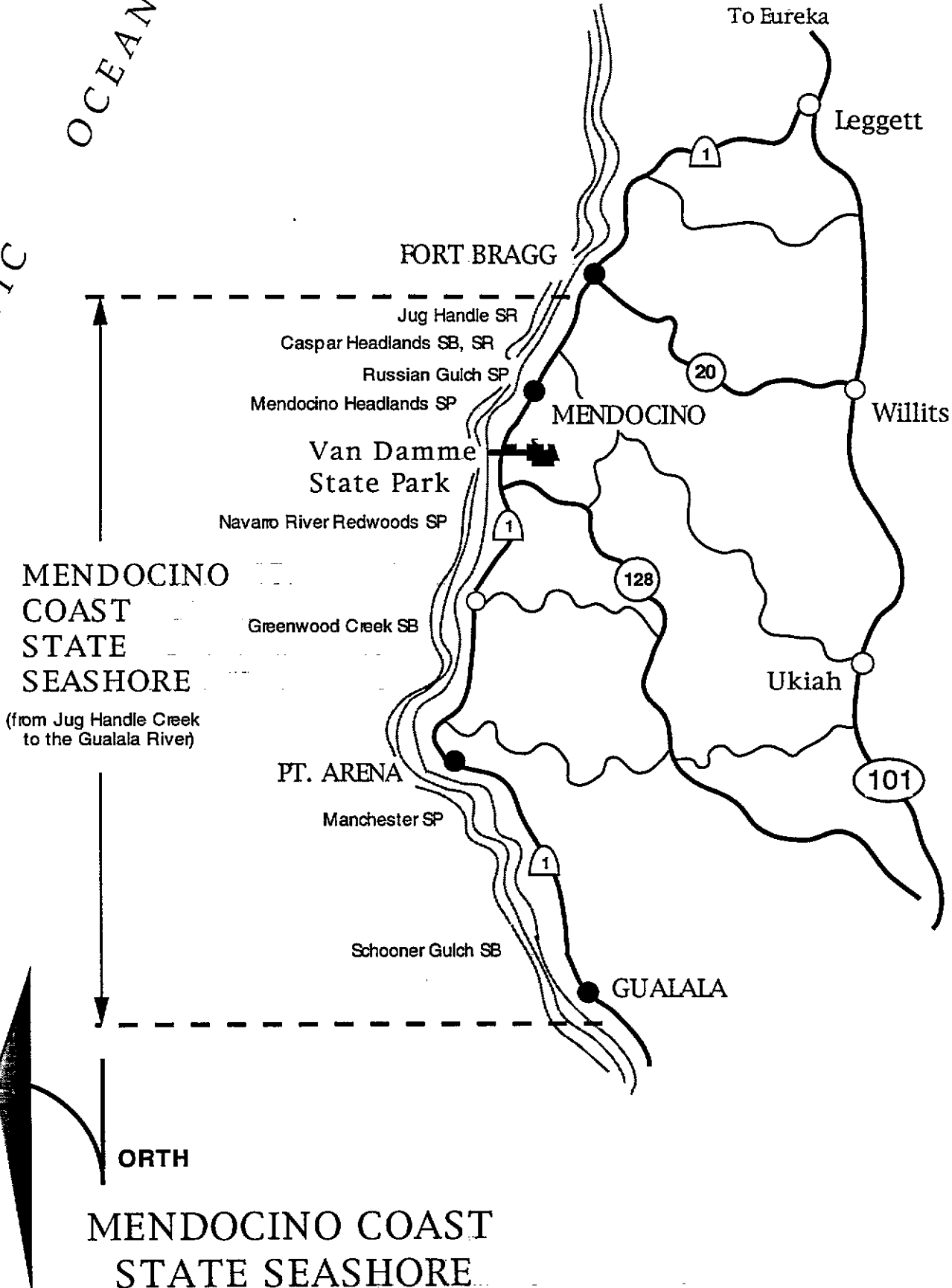
The purpose of state seashores shall be to preserve outstanding natural scenic, cultural, ecological region and to make possible the enjoyment of coastline and related recreational activities which are consistent with the preservation of the principal values and which contribute to the public enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of those values.

Improvements undertaken within state seashores shall be for the purpose of making the areas available for public enjoyment, recreation, and education in a manner consistent with the perpetuation of their natural, scenic, cultural, ecological, and recreational value. Improvements which do not directly enhance the public enjoyment of the natural, scenic, cultural, ecological, or recreational values of the seashore, or which are attractions in themselves, shall not be undertaken.

Subclassification

The Public Resources Code establishes several categories of units that may be included within the boundaries of another unit of the State Park System. These categories include state wilderness, natural preserve, and cultural preserve. The general plan process establishes a mechanism for further determination of values that may warrant inclusion in one or more of these subclassifications. A suitable natural preserve area has been identified and is addressed in the Land Use Element of this General Plan. The natural preserve category, as defined by the Public Resources Code, is included here for clarification of the department's objective in establishing such areas.

PACIFIC OCEAN



MENDOCINO COAST STATE SEASHORE
(from Jug Handle Creek to the Gualala River)

MENDOCINO COAST STATE SEASHORE

Van Damme State Park General Plan

MAP NO. 6

The Public Resources Code, Section 5019.71, defines natural preserves as follows:

Natural preserves consist of distinct areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance established within the boundaries of other state park system units. The purpose of natural preserves shall be to preserve such features as rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystem, representative examples of plant and animal communities existing in California prior to the impact of civilization, geologic features illustrative of geologic processes, significant fossil occurrences or geological features of cultural or economic interest, or topographical features illustrative of representative or unique biogeographical patterns. Areas set aside as natural preserves shall be of sufficient size to allow, where possible, the dynamics of ecological interaction to continue without interference, and provide, in all cases, a practicable management unit. Habitat manipulation shall be permitted only in those areas found by scientific analysis to require manipulation to preserve the species or associations which constitute the basis for the establishment of the natural preserve.

This General Plan recommends that a portion of Van Damme State Park be classified as natural preserve (see Map 14, page 171). This classification establishes certain protections for the resources and guides the Department in the management and operation of the unit. The directives in this Resource Element are designed to assist the Department in achieving the goals outlined in the Public Resources Code definitions of state parks, state seashores, and natural preserves.

Declaration of Purpose

A declaration of purpose is required by the Public Resources Code, Section 5002.2(b), "setting forth specific long-range management objectives... consistent with the unit's classification".

The Declaration of Purpose defines the purpose of the unit in the context of the State Park System and the broadest goals of management. It includes an identification of prime resources, a broad statement of management goals consistent with unit classification, and a general statement of appropriate recreational opportunities. The impetus and purpose for acquisition of Van Damme State Park were to preserve an important segment of the scenic Mendocino coastline that included an outstanding wooded canyon. The natural features include diverse marine environments, ocean frontage embracing dramatic sea cliffs and sandy beaches, marine terraces, riparian

habitats, upland forest of redwood, bishop pine and Mendocino pygmy cypress forest; each hosting a variety of wildlife species. Cultural features include significant historic structures and prehistoric sites. Scenic and recreational opportunities are associated with the natural and cultural features. The Declaration of Purpose for Van Damme State Park shall be as follows:

The purpose of Van Damme State Park is to make available to the people for their inspiration, enlightenment, and enjoyment, in an essentially natural condition, the outstanding scenic features and natural values, including the coastline and offshore environs; the dramatic sea cliffs, and stretches of sandy beach; the headlands and marine terraces; the riparian habitats associated with Little River and Beal Creek; the variety of forest communities including the grand fir/Sitka spruce forest, Bishop pine forest, redwood forest, and Mendocino pygmy cypress forest; the geology and plant and animal life; the significant historical and archaeological resources; and the scientific values therein.

The department shall define and execute a program of management to perpetuate the unit's declared values, and provide recreational facilities, interpretation and access, that make these values available in a manner consistent with their perpetuation.

Zone of Primary Interest

The zone of primary interest is a declaration of the department's concern for any environmental changes outside the unit that could jeopardize or degrade State Park System values.

At Van Damme State Park, the department is concerned about proposed off-shore oil drilling, water diversions on Beal Creek and Little River, forest management and residential development impacts within the unit watersheds, changes in land use at the adjacent golf course and airport, and alignment and width changes for State Highway 1.

Resource Management Policy

A declaration of "resource management policy" setting forth the precise actions and limitations needed to achieve the objectives established in the declaration of purpose is required in the Resource Element pursuant to Section 5002.2(b) of the Public Resource Code. This section identifies specific directives which collectively constitute the "Resource Management Policy" for Van Damme State Park.

Resource management in the State Park System is governed by laws contained in the Public Resources Code, by federal laws, by regulations in the California Administrative Code, by directives approved by the department's director and by policies approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission. Specific departmental policies detailed in the Department's Resource Management Directives amplify the legal codes, and provide clear management guidelines.

An aim of the General Plan is to apply the guidelines listed above to a specific unit of the State Park System. This plan includes broad or unit-wide direction embodied in General Directives and geographically based direction in the form of Resource Management Zone Directives.

General Directives

Presented below are directives that are broad or unit-wide in their application. Directives specific to a geographic area are found in the Resource Management Zone Directives in a following section of the Resource Element.

Geological Processes

Seismicity

The central Mendocino County coastline is not an area of high seismic activity; however, movement recorded within the San Andreas fault zone and evidence of smaller earthquakes indicate the area will continue to be subject to earthquake shaking. The most probable source of earthquake shaking within Van Damme State Park is the San Andreas fault zone.

The active trace of the San Andreas Fault lies about 2 miles offshore of Van Damme State Park. The fault is capable of generating a magnitude 8.3 earthquake. Continued seismicity, ground rupture, and violent shaking are to be expected.

Directive: A geologist shall be consulted on the siting and design of permanent structures, and detailed site investigations and soil testing shall be conducted before the construction of major public projects.

Tsunami Inundation

Tsunamis are large sea waves that originate directly or indirectly from earthquakes, submarine volcanic eruptions, or large submarine landslides. Available tsunami statistics

do not directly cite Mendocino County. However, the unit lies between Crescent City in Del Norte County and San Francisco, where wave height can be expected to reach 8 feet at least once every 100 years and damage can be great regardless of point of origin.

All areas of the exposed coast lying below 25 feet above mean sea level would be subject to tsunami inundation that could damage park structures and injure park staff and visitors. Because the forces involved with tsunami inundation are so great, the only positive means of protection is to avoid areas subject to tsunamis. However, since most of the entrance area, visitor center, and Little River campsites are located within this tsunami/flood hazard zone, avoidance is not always practical. (See Physical Constraints Map 4, page 35).

Directive: New permanent structures shall be constructed above elevation 25 feet above mean sea level. Emergency evacuation and facility maintenance plans shall address visitor safety and building protection for existing or temporary facilities lying within the tsunami/flood hazard zone.

Liquefaction and Differential Settlement

Liquefaction involves significant reduction of strength in a buried layer of water-saturated silt or sand, which results in a temporary quick-sand like condition and ground failure. Differential settlement is the uneven settling of the ground surface as materials of different types respond differently to loading. This process may be the result of local liquefaction or differential compaction of alluvium during construction or earthquake shaking. Buildings with foundations in such layers may overturn, sink, or settle unevenly.

Low-lying coastal areas underlain by beach, lagoon, or wetland soils probably contain the structurally weak materials and high water tables necessary for liquefaction and differential settlement to occur. (Refer to Physical Constraints Map Key Figure 1, page).

Directive: Structures with high visitor use should not be built in areas subject to liquefaction and differential settlement, or shall be designed to withstand such problems.

Landslides

A number of small, generally shallow slides exist along road cuts, in steep valleys and stream canyons, and along the steep-cliffed erosion-prone coastal headlands. Most of the slides are in weathered bedrock, colluvial material, or in the more erosive terrace deposits. The intersections of stream channels with sea cliffs are also common localities for landslides. Landslides undoubtedly exist in other areas not field-checked.

Damage due to landslides can be reduced or prevented by (1) the avoidance, selective removal, or stabilization of landslides in areas of proposed development, and (2) by regulating construction practices to include proper techniques for drainage control in all areas of construction such as road cuts and foot trails on steep slopes. In all cases, the first and critical step is to recognize the presence of pre-existing earth failures.

Directive: *Generally, new buildings, roads and pipelines, water tanks, and septic tanks shall not be constructed on landslides or areas recognized as having a high potential for slope failure. If facilities must be constructed in landslide areas, a site-specific geologic report shall be prepared early in the project planning process in order to evaluate the geologic conditions which would affect the proposed facility. This report shall be used to propose special modifications to the facility to lessen the potential impact from landslides.*

State Highway 1

The Pacific Coast Highway (State Highway 1) is adjacent to or crosses coastal areas of Van Damme State Park. The frequently unstable north coast geology combines with natural coastal retreat to ensure the need for perpetual maintenance and repair of the highway by the Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Traditional, engineering procedures used for stabilization or modification of the highway can have significant impact on park resources.

Directive: *To assure sensitivity to park resources and that proposed work is environmentally sound, the Department shall review and comment on all proposed repair, maintenance or development plans for those sections of State Highway 1 that cross or are in physical or visual proximity to park resources along the Mendocino Coast.*

Geologic Specimen Collection

The collection of onshore coastal rock specimens for the purpose of extrapolating petroleum-bearing potential and reservoir characteristics of offshore geologic formations or other mineral exploitation schemes may constitute commercial collection for the production of profit and is prohibited by Section 4610.2, California Administrative Code, Title XIV, Division 3, Chapter 6.

Directive: *The department shall not allow the collection of geologic specimens for potential commercial purposes.*

Trail Development

Hiking trails are the primary means for State Park System visitors to experience undeveloped areas of the unit. For this reason they are a critical component of any development plan. Unless well planned and maintained they also may constitute a significant environmental impact in terms of esthetics, altered surface drainage, and damage to vegetation and cultural sites. In addition, they may bring visitors to areas with special plant and/or wildlife populations, which require special protection.

Directive: New trail construction shall minimize effects on natural, cultural, and scenic resources. Proposed trail routes shall be reviewed by a Department Resource Ecologist and Cultural Resource Specialist to evaluate environmental impacts and approved by the District Superintendent. All unauthorized trails shall be abandoned and restored to natural contours and conditions.

Sea Cliff Retreat

Sea cliff retreat is an ongoing natural process that should be considered when designing and placing facilities near bluff edges. The average rate of cliff retreat is difficult to determine because of the different rock types and variations in their rates of erosion. Basalt erodes very slowly, perhaps at most a few inches each year. Less resistant sedimentary rocks and landslide materials are much more prone to erosion and could retreat as much as tens of feet per year.

Directive: A zone of exclusion shall be established to include the base, face, and top of all bluffs and cliffs extending inland to a plane formed by a 45-degree angle from the horizontal at the base of the cliff or bluff. No new permanent structures shall be constructed within this zone. A zone within which stability must be demonstrated shall be established in the unit to extend inland from the zone of exclusion to the intersection of the ground surface with a plane inclined 20 degrees from the horizontal from the toe of cliff or bluff.

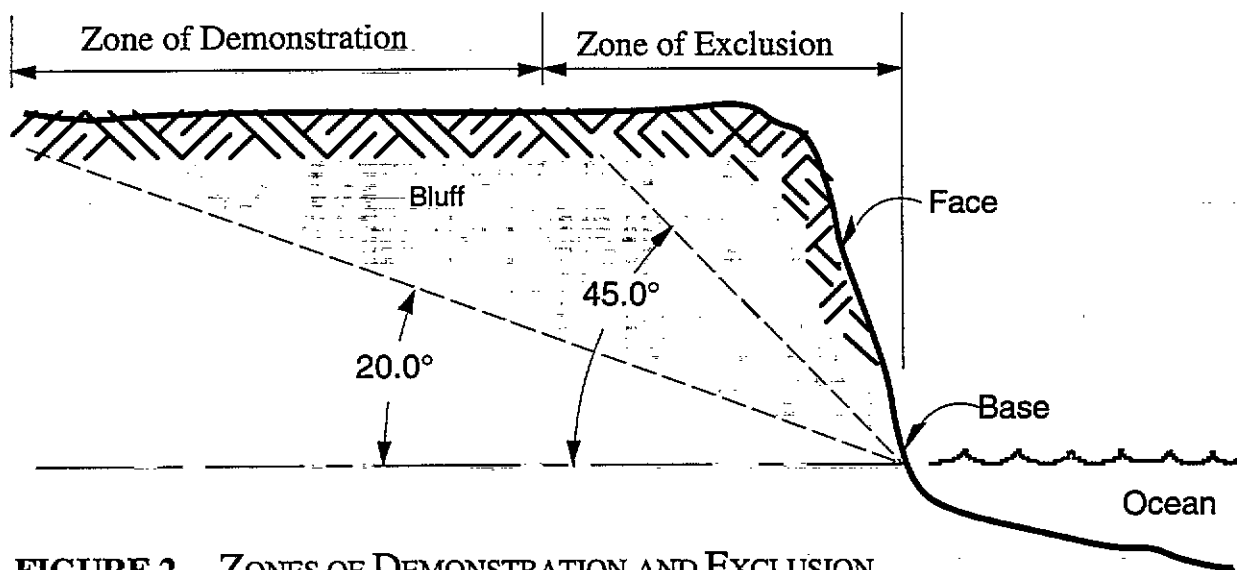


FIGURE 2. ZONES OF DEMONSTRATION AND EXCLUSION

Plant Life

Vegetation Management

The preservation and perpetuation of representative examples of natural plant communities are statewide goals for the department. In addition, a central goal of natural area management in the State Park System is to restore, protect, and maintain native ecosystems, and indigenous flora and fauna.

Many of the plant communities in Van Damme State Park have been impacted in the last 150 years by logging, residential and industrial development, artificial plantings, livestock grazing, plowing, alteration of the fire regime, and invasion by non-native species. These impacts have caused a shift in species composition, changes in the structure of plant communities, and a change in the pattern of communities at a landscape level. The changes in turn have generally had detrimental ecological effects on natural floral and faunal diversity, wildlife populations, hydrologic processes, nutrient cycling, and microclimate.

Directive: The primary objective of vegetation management in Van Damme State Park shall be to manage toward a natural condition with a minimum of disruption to natural processes. In order to perpetuate the natural diversity of native flora and fauna, a secondary objective shall be to restore and perpetuate native communities to the condition that would currently exist had they not been disrupted by Euroamerican influence.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Department shall develop and implement a vegetation restoration and management plan for Van Damme State Park. The plan should include at least the following features:

- 1) Identified management units (these may correspond to Resource Management Zones and may include more than one plant community).
- 2) An evaluation of current conditions, disturbance factors, and successional patterns.
- 3) An estimate of pre-Euroamerican-era conditions.
- 4) Site specific and quantifiable vegetation goals for each management unit.
- 5) Analysis of landscape level patterns (the interaction of topography, drainage/watersheds, plant communities, and land ownership and use in the local area and region outside the park unit boundaries, and their implications for wildlife habitat in the unit and in adjacent lands.
- 6) An evaluation and prioritization of restoration opportunities for all management units based on the rarity, present condition, level of threat, and feasibility of restoration for each of the management unit's plant communities.
- 7) Establishment of management actions for each management unit that consider management needs, treatment costs, appropriate technology and techniques, and alternatives.
- 8) A monitoring and evaluation program that quantifies management effects and serves to guide adjustments to the plan.

All components of the vegetation restoration and management plan need not be completed before specific projects in individual management units are implemented; however, applicable components for each management unit must be completed prior to commencing work.

Natural vegetation in campgrounds and other high visitor use areas may be managed for safety and esthetic objectives using ecological principles consistent with other park values.

Landscaping Plant Materials

Non-native plant species can detract from the natural appearance of the unit, escape into wildlands, and displace native plant species.

Directive: Landscaping in developed areas shall consist of species indigenous to the area. Non-native species, used because no indigenous species are suitable for the purpose or location, or that are used for interpretive reasons, shall be species incapable of naturalizing and spreading into other areas of the unit and those not requiring a permanent irrigation system.

Exotic Plants

Many exotic plant species have become naturalized in the unit and are successfully competing with native plant species. Perpetuation of native plant communities is dependent on control and removal of exotic invaders. Monterey pine, Monterey cypress, and French broom are species that currently occupy large areas of the unit and should be given priority for removal.

Directive: The department shall pursue a long-range objective of reducing exotic vegetation established in the unit. The highest priority for control efforts shall be given to those species most invasive and conspicuous in the unit.

Sensitive Plants

Sensitive plants are listed annually on the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Sensitive Plant list. Those species listed by the U.S. Fish and wildlife Service, the CDFG, and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as rare, threatened or endangered are a subset of the Sensitive Plant list. Other, locally sensitive species, important to the management of park units are also considered special by the department.

Sensitive plants can be inadvertently destroyed by facility development, maintenance programs, visitor use, or other activities, especially when the exact population locations, habitat requirements, and tolerances are not known.

Populations of four sensitive plant species are known within Van Damme State Park (Table 1). Other populations of these plants may also occur. Many other special plant species known from the Mendocino coast could also potentially occur in Van Damme State Park (Table 1).

Directive: Sensitive plants within Van Damme State Park shall be protected and managed for their perpetuation in accordance with state law (Fish and Game Code Division 2, Chapter 10, Section 1900). Management plans will be developed for all sensitive plant species found within the unit. All populations found shall be mapped.

Prior to any site-specific development, heavy use activities, or prescribed burns, additional surveys for sensitive plants shall be made by a resource ecologist during the flowering season in the areas that will be affected.

Livestock Grazing

The State Park System (SPS) policy and philosophy, and enabling legislation mandate that SPS units be managed by the Department for the primary purposes of preserving natural, scenic and cultural resources, and providing the public access and recreational opportunities to enjoy and gain an appreciation for these resource values. While livestock grazing may be an appropriate use of private land, and of public lands managed for multiple commodity and recreational uses, it is generally incompatible with SPS management objectives of preservation and public recreation. The Public Resources Code prohibits the commercial exploitation of resources in units of the State Park System.

Directive: Livestock grazing shall be prohibited in Van Damme State Park.

Prescribed Fire

Native Americans burned oceanside terraces along the Mendocino Coast in order to enhance hunting conditions and to promote the reproduction of food plants. These fires probably occurred in the fall as they left coastal camps for the interior. Terraces probably were mixes of open perennial grasslands, pine savannahs, and coastal scrub. Lightning-caused ignitions are currently extremely rare along the coast strip, and historically, were probably similarly infrequent. Prescribed fire is a management tool that allows modern managers to mimic pre-Euroamerican influences that have shaped both the evolution of individual species and the pattern of vegetation across the landscape.

Directive: *The use of prescribed fire should be considered for ecosystem management in the unit. If prescribed fire is deemed necessary, a unit-wide prescribed fire management plan that details an ongoing program of prescribed fire use shall be prepared consistent with the vegetation management and restoration plan. The prescribed fire plan should identify, as nearly as possible, the pre-Euroamerican fire regime by estimating timing, frequency, intensity, and extent of these fires for each plant community in the unit.*

The plan for prescribed fire use shall be consistent with the Department's prescribed fire management policies and contain program objectives, guidelines and treatment constraints, specific burn plans, and provisions for monitoring and evaluation. Particular care shall be taken to minimize deleterious effects on the unit's natural, cultural, and scenic resources. Artificial modifications and processes shall be minimized. A program of prescribed fire shall not preclude in any way the necessity for wildfire prevention and suppression.

Fire Suppression and Prevention

Wildfire can be a threat to human life and property and can also severely damage State Park System resources. Because conventional fire control facilities and procedures often cause longer-lasting damage to resources than does fire itself, the development of standards and procedures applicable to this unit is necessary.

Directive: *A wildfire management plan that addresses wildfire prevention, presuppression, and suppression shall be developed by the department, in cooperation with the responsible fire control agencies. This plan shall include prevention measures; criteria, standards, and location of fire access roads and fire protection facilities; visitor evacuation routes; and acceptable fire suppression procedures.*

The plan shall be consistent with primary unit resource values and major unit objectives. Department standards require a minimum disturbance of soil and primary emphasis on avoiding esthetic impacts in the location, construction, and maintenance of fire roads and fuel breaks. Suppression methods shall be those that cause the least resource damage commensurate with effective control.

Animal Life

Wildlife Management

Animal life is an important part of natural ecosystems and adds interest and variety to the park experience. Van Damme State Park encompasses valuable wildlife habitat used by many species. Protection and perpetuation of natural wildlife populations are major management objectives in Van Damme State Park.

Directive: The Department shall protect and perpetuate native wildlife species and their habitats and shall avoid significant imbalances caused by human influences. Natural habitats altered by non-Native American human influence since 1800 A.D. should be restored as nearly as possible to conditions that would exist had natural processes not been disrupted.

Special Animals

Special animal species are defined as those species listed on the Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base Special Animals list. Species listed by state and federal agencies as threatened, endangered, of special concern, and fully protected species, and species under investigation as candidates for listing are included on this list. Other species locally sensitive and important to the management of park units are also considered special by the Department. Numerous special animal species occur or possibly occur within Van Damme State Park (Table 2). They are a primary resource management concern and require careful consideration when land management decisions are made.

Directive: Threatened, endangered, and candidate wildlife species in the unit shall be a high management priority, and these species shall be protected and managed for their perpetuation in accordance with state and federal law. Specific management programs shall be developed, when appropriate, for animal species that are threatened or endangered, and for other special animal species. Management shall focus on the identification and protection of critical habitat, and specific habitat management guidelines may be incorporated into the vegetation restoration and management plan for the unit.

Population characteristics of special animal species shall be monitored in the unit. Observations of these species, active reproductive areas, and other important habitat resources for these species should be documented.

Information on location of special species shall not be generally available to the public. Programs or projects undertaken in the unit shall be planned and designed so that sensitive wildlife will not be adversely affected.

Releasing Wildlife

Animals which have been removed from the wild because of injury or unauthorized removal (such as 'rescue' of 'abandoned' deer fawns), or animals which have been kept as pets are often treated by groups or individuals with the intent of releasing the 'rehabilitated' animal back into nature. Also, wildlife are occasionally captured and transported by well-intentioned persons from sites where habitat is being destroyed by development. Unfortunately, releasing these animals into established biological systems can disrupt natural processes and destroy stable ecosystems.

Directive: *Wildlife should not be released into units of the State Park System unless the particular individual is known to have originated in the specific unit or unless there has been a determination of no detrimental impact. A Department Resource Ecologist should be consulted prior to any release.*

Stranded Marine Mammals

Van Damme State Park provides habitat for both harbor seals and California sea lions. Occasionally, these marine mammals become stranded or beached for a variety of often unknown reasons, including sick or injured animals, abandoned or orphaned pups, or animals merely resting on the beach. During the spring months, females may pup or give birth on the beach, and during the winter, animals may be found on the beaches during or after storms. If left alone, most of the animals are gone within a day. However, well-meaning visitors can become concerned about the welfare of the animal and may take inappropriate actions which may result in endangering the animal and/or themselves.

Any recovery efforts should be coordinated with the assistance of the National Marine Fisheries Service by contacting the Stranding Coordinator, 300 South Ferry Street, Room 2011, Terminal Island, CA 90731, (213) 514-6664. Standard signs quoting federal regulations protecting marine mammals are available from the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Marine Mammal Center (a non-profit organization licensed to rescue marine mammals from San Luis Obispo to the Oregon border) can be contacted for further information.

Directive: If a marine mammal is found on the beach and an injury is not readily apparent, the animal shall not be touched and shall be watched and protected from harassment for 24 hours. If public contact is considered a problem, the site can be signed. If a visitor brings an animal to the unit office, the visitor shall be instructed in the proper procedures and the animal shall be returned to the site from which it had been removed, and watched.

All stranded marine mammals, particularly if the animal is a whale or a dolphin, is obviously injured, or does not leave within a reasonable amount of time, should be reported to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Because not all situations are alike, the approach toward a stranded marine mammal shall depend on the discretion of the unit ranger.

Wildlife Requiring Special Management Consideration

Certain wildlife species, both native and exotic, can affect natural population dynamics of other wildlife populations or cause public safety concerns, requiring special management. Feral or domestic dogs, cats and horses are not part of the native ecosystem and affect native wildlife through disturbance, predation, and competition for resources.

Brown-headed cowbirds are a management concern due to their habit of nest parasitism, which threatens native songbird species. Although currently not a problem in Van Damme State Park, this species is spreading due to habitat changes throughout California and could be more common on the Mendocino Coast in the near future.

Ticks are invertebrate species of special management concern on the Mendocino coast. Ticks are found in grassy or brushy areas, where they can be brushed off onto warm-blooded hosts including park visitors. Mendocino County is an endemic area for Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia, and other tick-borne diseases. Up to four percent of the western black-legged ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*) in Mendocino County may harbor the Lyme disease organism and, therefore, pose a potential threat to visitor health.

Directive: When it is necessary to regulate animal populations, methods that are based on principles of ecosystem management, consistent with the general policies of the Department, and that avoid disturbance to other natural values of the unit shall be used. When control, removal, or other management actions are required, a specific management plan shall be developed which considers the biology and behavior of the species and interpretive/educational elements.

Regional Cooperation

Fundamental to achieving the goals of conserving natural diversity is a recognition that natural ecosystems interact and change in response to their surroundings. Ecosystem processes and elements must necessarily range across unit boundaries. State Park System units must be seen, therefore, not as isolated reserves, but as integral parts of a complex economic, social and ecological system of relationships encompassed by the greater geographic region.

The Department recognizes the desirability of involvement in the management of lands outside unit boundaries when possible, to protect significant natural, cultural, scientific, and recreational values. Principles developed by the emerging discipline of landscape ecology help to deal with the complexity of managing natural processes across a landscape of different ownerships, each with its particular set of management objectives. Protecting whole watersheds, preserving migration corridors, and preventing habitat fragmentation or isolation, are some of the goals accommodated by this broader view. Management activities that reflect this regional framework include cooperative planning and management with adjacent land management agencies and interest groups. Providing landscape linkages and wildlife corridors between separate protected natural areas may also be approached through easements and leases. If lands of habitat importance adjacent or near the unit, or if lands in unit watersheds, should become available for purchase, the Department should consider the factors discussed above when determining the suitability of the property for State Park System purposes.

Directive: The Department shall work with pertinent government agencies (such as the Department of Fish and Game, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), private owners, and other organizations to insure that preserves, wildlife habitat, and natural processes of mutual interest are effectively managed at a regional level. Cooperative agreements, memorandum of understanding, and other instruments should be used when possible.

Esthetics and Recreation

Scenic Preservation

The scenic qualities of the Mendocino Coast are well known, drawing visitors as well as new residents. The diverse landscape of this region of the coast offers visitors a variety of scenic experiences from open views of the sea, coastline, and dunes to the

wooded hills of the Coast Range. The visual resources of the coast are currently protected by policies contained in the Mendocino County Local Coastal Plan (LCP). Obstruction of the coastal view from public areas and from State Highway 1 are specifically prohibited. State Highway 1 traverses the western end of Van Damme State Park. The visitors traveling on the highway represent the great majority of those who enjoy the units' esthetic resources.

The scenic resources of the unit may be protected in a variety of ways, from well-planned facility development to the level of maintenance. Development can be integrated into the environment through the use of appropriate citing techniques, scale, materials, and colors. Major park facilities can be located in areas close to the unit's periphery, and in areas most accessible by motor vehicle, at the same time preserving the scenic qualities of the ocean views from State Highway 1 as called for in the Mendocino County Local Coastal Program. Land use or facility development that significantly impairs or detracts from the views of motorists passing through the unit should not be permitted. Signs should be kept to a minimum and strategically located.

Directive: The Department is to protect the scenic resources of Van Damme State Park from all unnecessary degrading intrusions.

Cultural Resources

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

Five prehistoric archaeological sites have been located at Van Damme State Park (CAMEN 1089, MEN-2283, MEN-2284, MEN-2285, and MEN-2287). They are coastal bluff shell middens located north of Little River, and appear to be temporary camps for the exploitation of marine resources. An additional village site, said to have been located under the site of the mill pond, was not found during this survey and may be covered with alluvium.

Directive: No development involving ground disturbing activity shall be undertaken on the known prehistoric sites at Van Damme State Park, without an on-site investigation and approval by a Department Archaeologist.

The Department shall develop an Archaeological Management Plan for the sites in Van Damme State Park. The plan shall focus particularly on sites threatened by erosion or other negative impacts, and it shall incorporate allowances for research-oriented excavation as an important tool in increasing knowledge of ancient adaptations as well as increasing the effectiveness of long-term management.

The coastal erosion monitoring program developed at Van Damme State Park shall include prehistoric archaeological sites as specific focus areas. Results of this program shall be incorporated on a continuing basis into the archaeological management plan.

Historic Archaeological Sites and Areas of Historical Sensitivity

Remnants of three redwood dams survive to mark the history of logging in the park. The "Middle Dam" is located approximately four miles upstream of the mouth of Little River. A less massive "Wing Dam" is situated about .3 mile upstream of the river mouth. In addition, a number of features once existed in the area of the historic mill pond, and traces of them may exist beneath alluvium deposited by the river. Similarly, though no surface evidence of the Randlett House, a historic hostelry dating to 1869, or Peterson's Shipyard, established the same year, was located during this survey, subsurface remains may exist. These areas must be considered to be potentially culturally special.

Directive: *The redwood dams shall be preserved as a tool for the interpretation of the logging history of the park. It is the Department's intention to preserve and protect historic archaeological sites within Van Damme State Park. To this end, staff will maintain a sensitivity to the possibility of buried features and other remains in the vicinity of historic use areas. If, in the course of ground-disturbing activities, evidence of such resources is encountered, work shall be halted and a Department Archaeologist shall be contacted to determine their significance and the need for mitigation. No ground-disturbing activities shall be undertaken in the vicinity of known historical features or deposits without prior approval of a Department Archaeologist.*

Historic Structures

Two historic structures exist within the park: the CCC-built 1940 Recreation Hall, now the Van Damme Visitors' Center, and Residence 7, built in 1939 for the San Francisco's World's Fair and moved to the park in 1940. Both are examples of the Park Rustic style of architecture and retain their historic external appearance largely intact.

Directive: The exteriors of these structures shall be maintained in their historic condition; it is the goal of the department to maintain their historic fabric, particularly their exteriors. Compatible materials, consistent with the style and character of the structures, should be used in maintenance and repair.

Civilian Conservation Corps Features

Although the CCC played an important part in the development of the park, little evidence of their works remain. No CCC-built picnic or campsite furniture survives today in Van Damme State Park. The only remaining examples of CCC stone work are found in the (9) concrete fords on Fern Canyon Road. Although the restoration of both the natural fluvial processes of Little River and the river's anadromous fishery are major resource goals, the CCC-built fords are considered a significant historic resource.

Directive: Modification or removal of any fords or bridges shall be addressed in a Little River aquatic habitat restoration and management plan developed with the assistance of a cultural resource specialist. The plan shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 1) Analysis of each river crossing to determine the cultural and historic value of CCC-built features.*
- 2) Evaluation and prioritization of ford modification, or removal, with potential impacts to cultural features and natural stream values.*
- 3) Engineering and acceptable bridge design criteria.*

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONES

One goal of the Resource Element was to provide geographically specific guidance for the management of natural and cultural resources. The following describes the decision-making process used to achieve this goal.

Resource Management Approaches

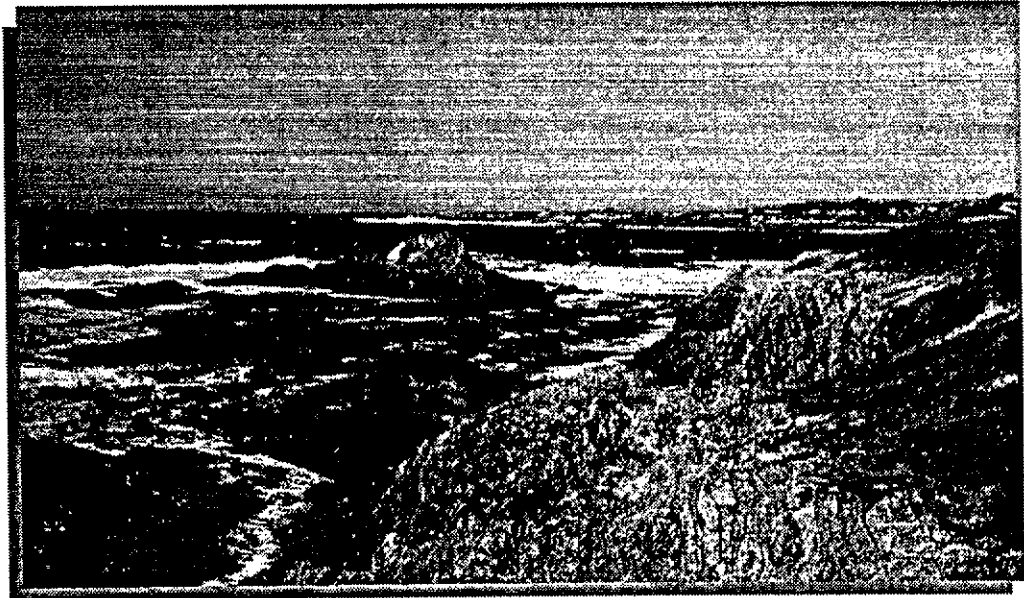
The development of policies began with the evaluation of the ecological units and cultural information presented in the Resource Summary. The evaluation of natural and cultural features helped decide the management approach most appropriate for a given area. Resources in the State Park System are generally managed under one or more of the four approaches briefly described below:

- 1) **Natural Process Management:** Nature is recognized as a dynamic system with a complex of processes and interactions. Under this approach, natural processes are allowed to occur with minimal interference, and where they have been altered or interrupted by human influence, attempts are made to restore processes to a natural condition.
- 2) **Cultural Area Management:** This type of management is appropriate in areas of historical or archaeological significance, where cultural features are given highest priority. Historic zones and historic landscape scenes are managed under this approach.
- 3) **Recreation Enhancement:** Management to enhance visitor appreciation and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources calls for unique resource management approaches. For instance, management of natural vegetation in campgrounds may be based on ecological knowledge, but vegetation would be controlled to enhance visitor safety and facility maintenance.
- 4) **Special Protection:** Giving management priority to a specific element or condition is sometimes required or suggested by legislation earmarking acquisition funding, by unit classification, by declaration of purpose, as well as by federal, state, and local laws. Archaeological site protection, scenic viewshed protection, rare species or rare habitat management, and management for a specific successional stage (e.g. Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve) are all examples of special protection.

After an approach, or blend of approaches has been decided, geographic-based resource management zones (RMZs) were delineated primarily based on ecological units and cultural sensitivity areas. More than one management approach can apply to a single geographic area. In situations where management approaches may conflict, resolving conflict and identifying priorities can be guided by intent of unit classification and Declaration of Purpose, as well as by professional judgment. The final RMZ may be subdivisions of ecological units so that geographic-based conflicts between approaches can be resolved. Alternatively, an RMZ may include two or more ecological units with similar management approaches and objectives. Resource management approaches are not land-use designations. Rather, they are philosophies or strategies that guide the development of resource management objectives and policies, and provide a basis for recommendations made in the Land Use Element.

The next step in the process is to establish specific objectives for resource management of each RMZ. Directives are then designed to achieve resource management objectives.

The final result of the process is designated RMZs for all areas within the unit. Each RMZ has an identified management approach or a combination of approaches, ranked resource management objectives, and when necessary, directives designed to meet specified objectives. Both the objectives and the directives are intended to guide the department in achieving the broader goals of the State Park System. Objectives and directives that have broad unit-wide or regional application are presented separately under the heading "General Directives."



Coastal Bluff and Marine Resource Management Zone (RMZ)

Resource Management Zone Directives

The development of Resource Management Zones (RMZs) for Van Damme State Park was achieved through an analysis of the natural conditions, cultural features, and current human use patterns for each of the ecological units and cultural resource sensitivity areas. Of particular importance were archaeological sites and historic structures (Map 5); Sensitive plant species and rare natural plant communities (Map 8); Sensitive animal species and their habitats (Map 9); and physical constraints, including areas of flood and tsunami hazards, soil limitations, and geologic hazards (Map 4). A brief description and outline of the resource management approach for each RMZ is presented in Table 3, page 107.

Presented below are the individual RMZs developed for Van Damme State Park. Each RMZ constitutes a distinct geographic area (Map 7). Included below for each RMZ is a brief summary of the management approach and a ranked list of resource management objectives. Where needed, specific directives have been developed to achieve stated objectives.

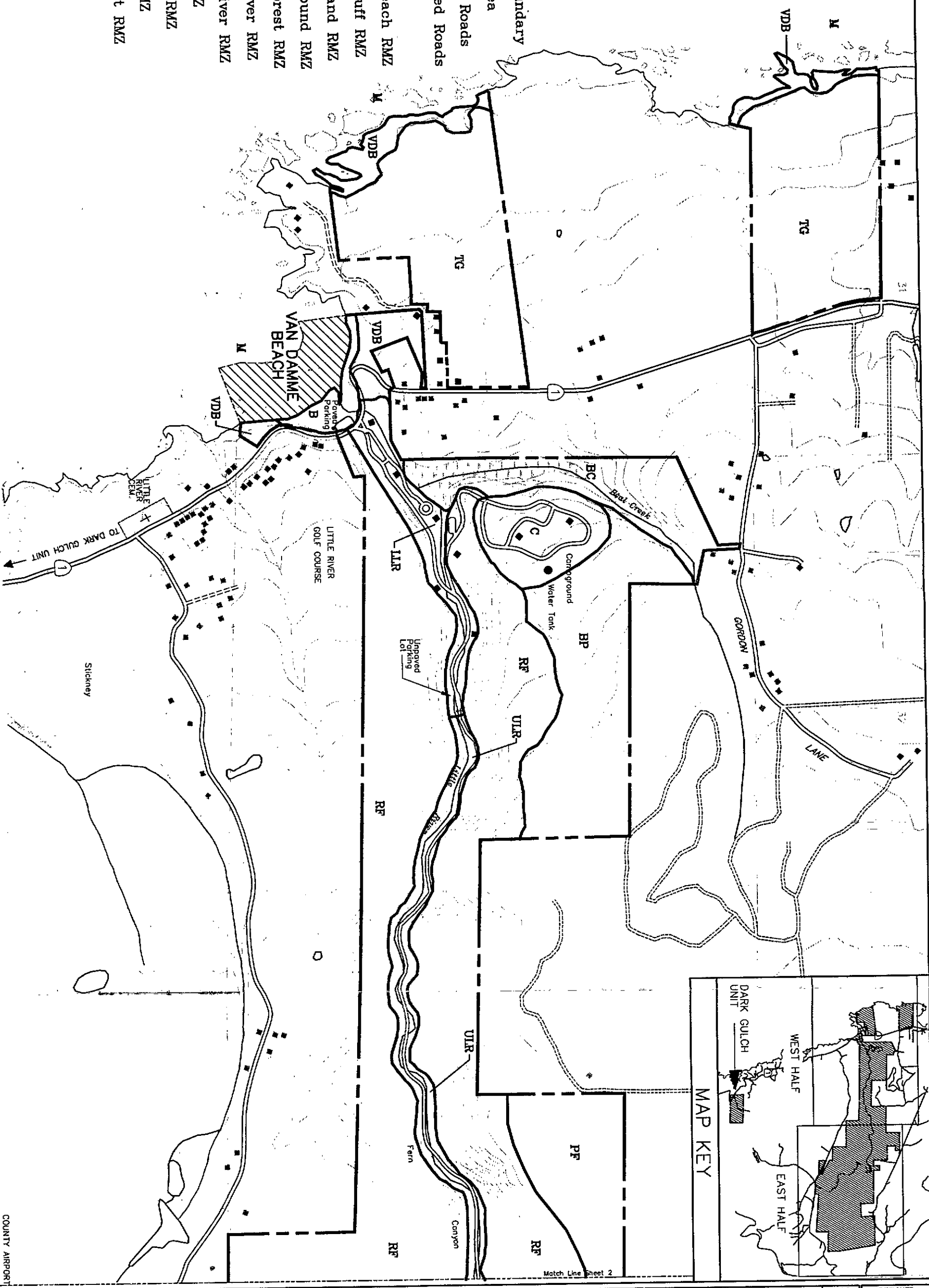
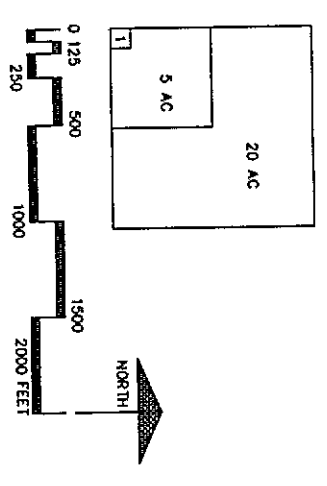
Marine RMZ

This RMZ includes all portions of the unit seaward from the high tide limit. This area should be managed under the principles of natural process management; however, there is some conflict between this and the management of certain marine organisms under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fish and Game. Sport and commercial harvest of various marine organisms has and continues to alter natural conditions. The Department of Parks and Recreation has authority to enforce certain statutes according to PRC 5003.05 which states:

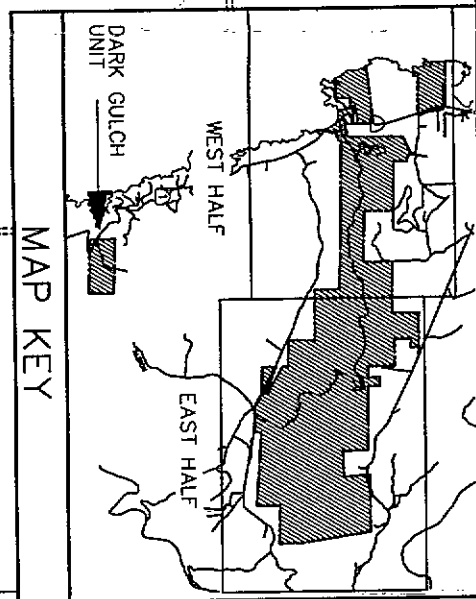
"Rules and regulations adopted pursuant to Section 5003 shall also apply on any granted or ungranted tidelands or submerged lands abutting property of the department and used for recreational purposes by members of the general public in conjunction with their use of the department's property between the boundary of the lands under the jurisdiction of the department and a line running parallel to and 1,000 feet waterward of the ordinary high water mark, so long as the rule or regulation being applied is not inconsistent with any rule or regulation of any other public agency which is applicable to those tide or submerged lands."

Pacific Ocean

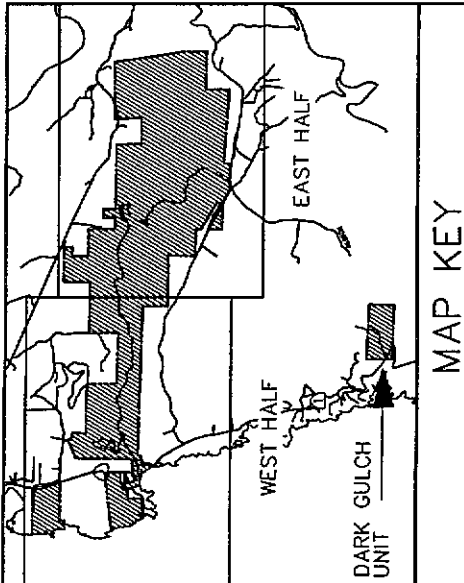
- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - ▨ Underwater Area
 - == Existing Paved Roads
 - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - M Marine RMZ
 - B Van Damme Beach RMZ
 - VDB Van Damme Bluff RMZ
 - TG Terrace Grassland RMZ
 - C Upper Campground RMZ
 - BP Bishop Pine Forest RMZ
 - ILR Lower Little River RMZ
 - ULR Upper Little River RMZ
 - BC Beal Creek RMZ
 - PF Pygmy Forest RMZ
 - DG Dark Gulch RMZ
 - RF Redwood Forest RMZ



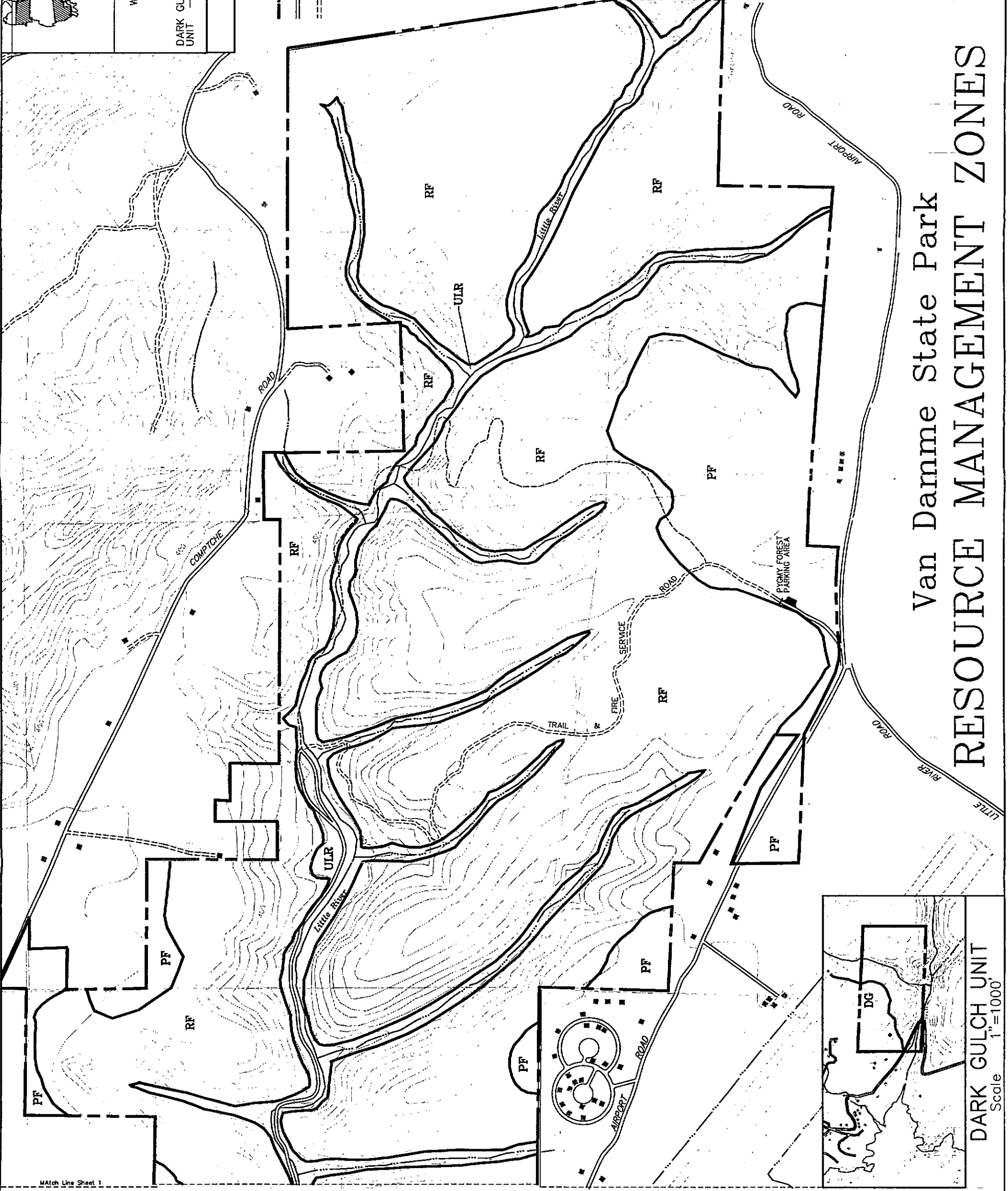
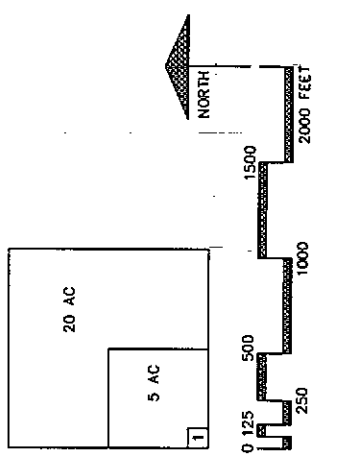
Van Damme State Park RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONES



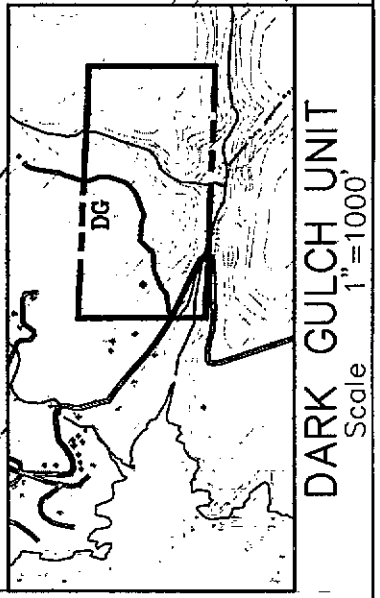
VAN DAMME STATE PARK RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONES WEST HALF GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION		REVISIONS	DATE	DESIGNED D. KECK
	DRAWING NO. 25820	APPROVED _____	DATE _____	CHECKED D. KECK	DRAWN D. AMBAGS
MAP 7					



- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - Marine RMZ
 - Van Damme Beach RMZ
 - Van Damme Bluff RMZ
 - Terrace Grassland RMZ
 - Upper Campground RMZ
 - Bishop Pine Forest RMZ
 - Lower Little River RMZ
 - Upper Little River RMZ
 - Beal Creek RMZ
 - Pygmy Forest RMZ
 - Dark Gulch RMZ
 - Redwood Forest RMZ



Van Damme State Park RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ZONES



Match Line Sheet 1

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements;
2. Give high management priority to sensitive species and habitat protection;
3. Protect the unit from offshore development influences;
4. Extend underwater park status to underwater lands adjacent to all Department ownerships and develop agreements with Department of Fish and Game to limit harvesting of marine resources;
5. Assess impact of commercial fishing boats anchoring in bay off of Van Damme Beach and reduce or eliminate if necessary.

Offshore Petroleum Development

The federal government has placed a moratorium on petroleum development off the northern California coast until the year 2001; however, offshore petroleum development along the Mendocino coast is a possibility during the life of this General Plan. Petroleum development would not only result in the construction of offshore platforms, but would also require substantial onshore development for support facilities during all phases of petroleum exploration, development, and production.

Onshore Impacts: If petroleum reserves are developed, the onshore support facilities may include marine supply terminals, petroleum refineries, pipelines and construction yards. Traffic on local highways would increase and local airports would become the helicopter support base for air supply to the petroleum platforms, creating a visual and acoustic distraction within adjacent State Park System units. The highly lighted and visible platforms would affect open ocean vistas.

Marine Impacts: Sea conditions are generally rough, and winds tend to be onshore, making petroleum recovery an improbability and clean up activities extremely difficult in the event of a spill. Rocky headlands, offshore rock sea stacks, and small pocket beaches would be nearly impossible to clean. Local fisheries might also be impacted by a spill.

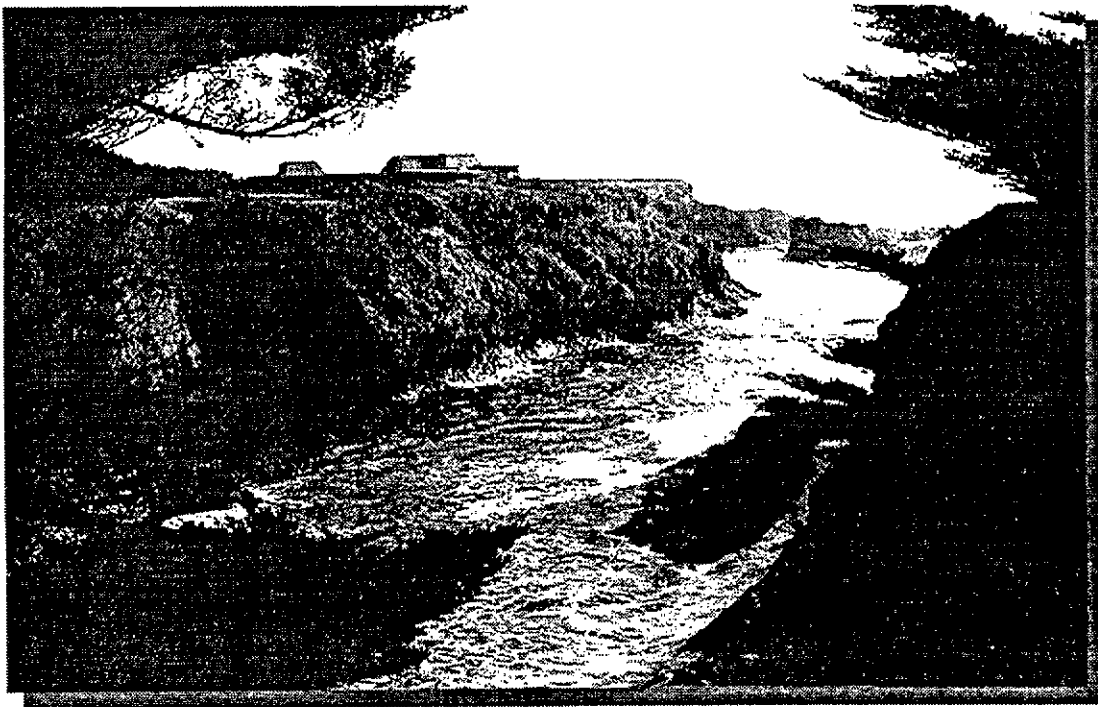
Directive: If petroleum reserves are developed along the Mendocino coast the Department shall implement the following:

- 1) *Prohibit access to or across lands and waters within its jurisdiction for the purpose of any activity associated with offshore oil development having the potential to damage or impair State Park System values and*

resources. This prohibition shall apply to all oil companies and companies associated with oil exploration, development, production or transportation. The Department shall work with other state and county agencies to assure that DPR ownerships are protected, and if damaged, a restoration program instituted.

2) Cooperate with other responsible agencies to develop a regional petroleum development response plan to delineate issues and management concerns in coastal Mendocino County. The Department shall be involved in the development and operation of a petroleum spill response network.

3) Initiate an ecological monitoring program in tidal and subtidal areas in order to establish baseline information and develop criteria to assure replacement of natural and cultural resources that may be damaged or lost due to petroleum development impacts.



Resource protection requires coordination with other responsible agencies and private property owners

Submerged Subtidal Lands Lease

Underwater resources offshore at Van Damme State Park are of statewide significance including diverse habitats associated with tidepools, numerous rock sea stacks, and diverse underwater topography. Biologically this area is valuable due to the diversity of habitats and marine invertebrates. Recognition of this unique marine area and additional protection from commercial and sport harvest are considered necessary to help assure perpetuation of the resource.

The creation of an underwater portion of this unit requires the lease of a designated area from the State Lands Commission.

Directive: The Department shall petition the State Lands Commission for a lease of additional subtidal lands off of Van Damme State Park. Once the lease is acquired, the area shall be managed to perpetuate the significant natural values. The Department shall also establish agreements with appropriate regulatory entities to ensure protection of marine resources.

Van Damme Beach RMZ

The Van Damme Beach RMZ is the sandy strand at the mouth of Little River west of Highway 1 and is the area of highest use in the unit. Any additional development should not cause any further reduction of natural and scenic resource values.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Minimize development impact on scenic values;
2. Maintain natural fluvial processes at river mouth;
3. Protect unit from offshore development influences.

Monitoring Erosion and Sand Loss

Beach erosion and sea cliff retreat have been recognized as serious threats to archaeological sites, facilities, and visitor use of State Park System coastal units. Better baseline information on erosion rates is needed to plan for resource management, appropriate land use, and visitor safety.

Directive: *A monitoring program shall be established to document: 1) sea cliff retreat, 2) landslides, 3) beach elevation, and 4) beach width. The program should include comparison of historical and recent aerial photographs, ground photos with explanations, and installation of permanent monuments should be coordinated with any data collection efforts by the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Department of Boating and Waterways.*

Van Damme Bluff RMZ

The Van Damme Bluff RMZ consists of the rocky cliffs immediately inland from the ocean, an arena for dynamic erosional change. Special plant species, plant communities, and archaeological sites are all impacted by visitor trampling.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements;
2. Protect special species and their habitats;
3. Protect unit from offshore development influences;
4. Protect archaeological sites;
5. Develop recreational access that allows for natural geologic and ecosystem processes to occur.

Shoreline Protective Devices

There are currently no known threats to public or private developments from beach or bluff erosion occurring at Van Damme State Park; however, as the coastline continues to change and develop, beach segments could someday be suggested for protection by riprap, revetments, seawalls, or other structures to protect public or private developments. Structural protective measures are not consistent with the general objectives for resource management within the State Park System.

Directive: *The Department shall cooperate in developing regional, non-structural solutions to coastal erosion problems and shall undertake structural protective measures only if non-structural, bioengineering measures (i.e. relocation of a facility, setback, redesign, or beach replenishment) are not feasible.*

If a protective structure is constructed (riprap, rock revetment, seawall, etc.), the structure shall not:

- 1) significantly reduce or restrict beach access;*
- 2) adversely affect shoreline processes and sand supply;*
- 3) significantly increase erosion on adjacent properties;*
- 4) cause harmful impacts on vegetation, wildlife or fish habitat;*
- 5) be placed further than necessary from the development requiring protection; or*
- 6) create a significant visual intrusion.*

Terrace Grassland RMZ

The Terrace Grassland RMZ is found in the two disjunct parcels north of Van Damme State Park beach and west of Highway 1. This RMZ is dominated by grassland species with extensive stands of exotic trees. Restoration of the native plant community is the primary resource management goal for this area. The grasslands on the first marine terrace are dominated by non-native perennial grasses and have been planted with non-native trees such as Monterey cypress, Monterey pine, and eucalyptus. Restoration efforts should not jeopardize Sensitive plant populations or archaeological sites. Grasslands on the southern parcel of terrace are presently mowed annually. These mowings create an artificial condition that disrupts natural processes for wildlife and native plants. Prescribed fire may be a useful tool for restoring and maintaining a native grassland.



Grasslands on the terrace are presently mowed annually

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve, protect, and restore ecosystem processes and elements;
2. Remove non-native tree species where feasible;
3. Protect archaeological sites;
4. Protect special species and their habitats, especially freshwater seeps;
5. Develop recreational access consistent with allowing natural geologic processes to occur.

Directive: A vegetation management plan will be prepared that addresses natural processes, restoration of the native plant community, and mowing practices.

Bishop Pine Forest RMZ

The Bishop Pine Forest RMZ occurs on the upland portions of the unit north of Little River and east of the upper campground. This area should be managed under principles of natural process management.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements.
2. Institute a prescribed fire program.

Upper Campground RMZ

The Upper Campground RMZ is the meadow and forest areas in the immediate vicinity of the upper campground. Recreational development must be carefully managed to minimize root disturbance of individual trees, maintain canopy closure, and promote overall vigor of the stand.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Avoid impacts of development on viability of Bishop pine forests;
2. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements.

Campground Management

The Bishop pine forest surrounding many campsites is highly susceptible to tree failure during winter months.

Directive: The department shall develop and implement a vegetation management plan for this RMZ that maximizes the long term stability of the Bishop pine forest.

Riparian Resource Management Zones (RMZs)

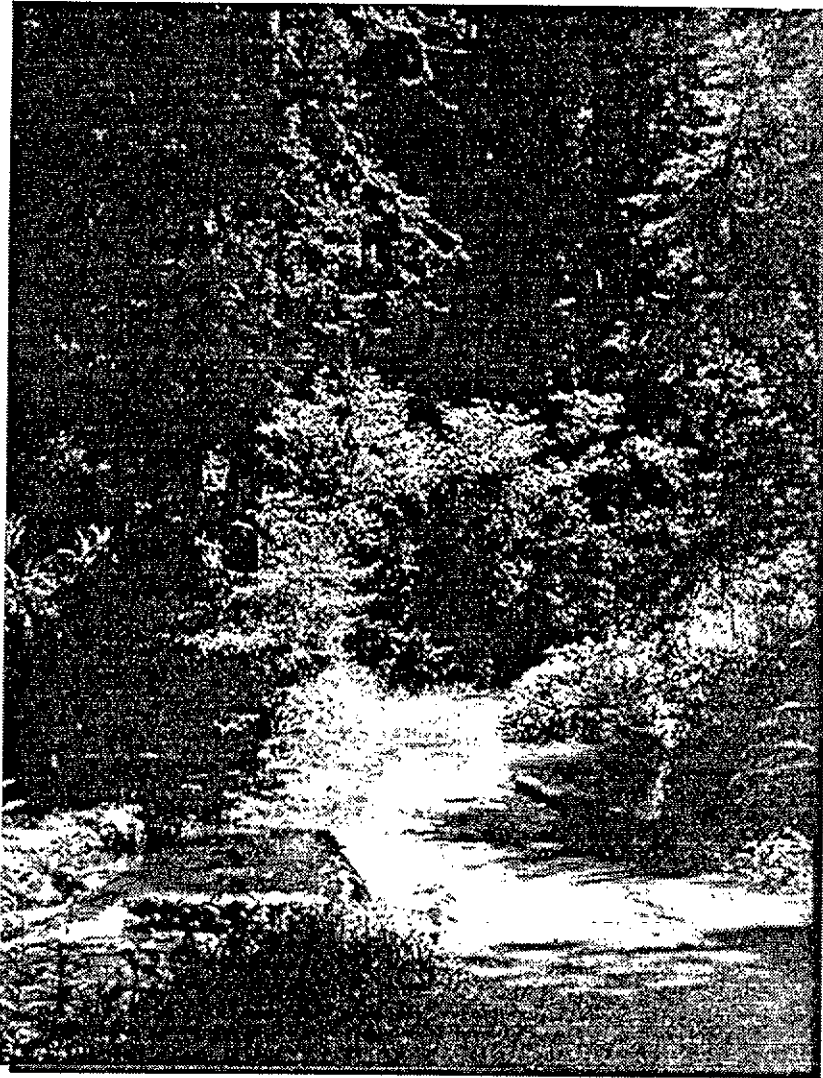
Included within this description are the: Lower Little River RMZ, ; Upper Little River RMZ, and Beal Creek RMZ. The following resource issues and directives apply to all three RMZs.

Riparian Zone Geomorphology

Natural rivers and streams have an equilibrium in which the components of the fluvial system including watershed, length, slope, width, floodplain, channel depth, and bed form evolve in relationship with each other. The equilibrium derived from the proper relationship of these components determines the character of the watercourse and results in a diversity of streambank and floodplain vegetation and habitat necessary for aquatic and terrestrial riparian life.

Directive: Wherever a watercourse is not in equilibrium, the proper relationship of one fluvial component to another shall be determined and rehabilitated whenever possible. In situations in which a watercourse or floodplain must be modified for any reason, the components of the natural fluvial system and their proper relationship to one another shall be determined and incorporated, whenever possible, into the design of the channel and/or floodplain modification project so that the natural dynamic processes of the watercourse shall be protected and/or rehabilitated.

Road and trail access in the riparian corridor shall be developed and maintained only where it is found to be compatible with the natural resource values and will not disrupt or interfere with the natural dynamics of the watercourse. The construction of new buildings and/or permanent facilities shall be avoided within the riparian corridor.



Existing Fern Canyon Road/trail crossing Little River

Permanent engineered structures for flood control, by their static nature, are in conflict with the flexibility demanded by the dynamic processes of rivers and streams, and inevitably require protective measures that are inconsistent with the general objectives for resource management in the State Park System.

Directive: Flood control measures taken by the Department shall not include structures or devices that impede the natural periodic inundation of the riparian corridor, or that impose unnatural fluvial process

Wetland Soil Constraints

Water interacting with soil texture has a strong influence on soil strength. Water weakens the bond between soil particles and makes it easier for particles to shift and compact under a load. Human, animal, and wheel traffic damages wetland soils by destroying vegetation and compacting it into a sodden mass that resists revegetation when dry. When wetland soils lose vegetative cover and dry, they are highly sensitive to wind erosion.

Directive: All trails and roadways through wetland areas shall be designed and constructed to allow access over, but not on, structurally weak wetland soils.

Anadromous Fish

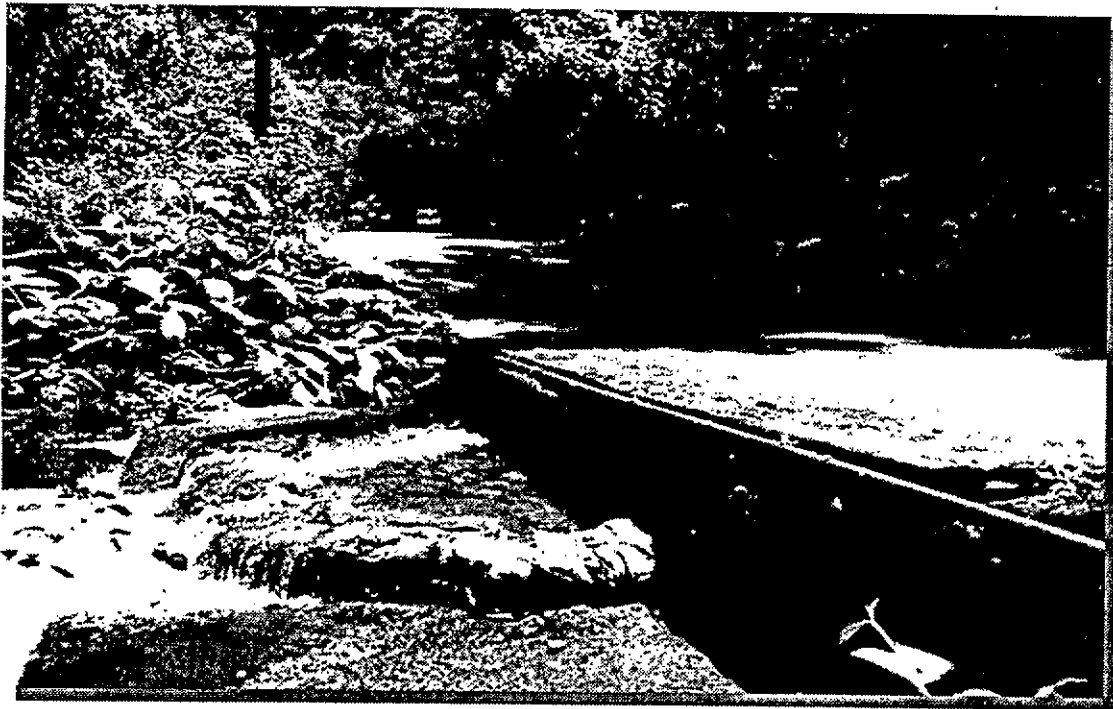
The coho salmon resources within Mendocino County coastal streams have been identified as having unique genetic attributes and are considered a pure strain. Many of the coho salmon runs in the area occur in small, short stream systems, and are referred to as short-run coho; which are recognized as unique within the state. Small streams can be quickly altered or impacted from inappropriate land uses.

Steelhead and coho salmon runs still occur in Little River, but at levels that are reduced when compared to historic run sizes. The Salmon, Steelhead Trout and Anadromous Fisheries Program Act of 1988 (Section 6900 et sub. of the Fish and Game Code) identifies improving natural production of coho salmon and steelhead through the improvement of stream and streambank conditions or changes in stream flow operations, without an effect on land ownership or land use practices. These conditions generally are applicable to all streams within the unit.

The American Fisheries Society's 1991 list of depleted Pacific salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat from California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho identifies threats to the various stocks (fish that spawn in a particular river system, or portion of it, at a particular season, and that do not interbreed to any substantial degree with any group spawning in a different place, or in the same place at a different season) on the Pacific coast of the mainland U.S.. This list includes a stock of coho salmon identified as "California small coastal streams north of San Francisco Bay" and given status B, "at moderate risk of extinction". Individual streams were not identified because of inadequate information; however, it is likely that individual streams such as Little River contain unique stocks. Identified threats to these stocks are present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat and range, including mainstream passage and flow problems.

A major impediment to upstream migrating adult coho salmon and steelhead are road crossings of Little River within Van Damme State Park. While no crossing completely blocks upstream migration, each one constrains the passage of adult fish to upstream spawning areas. Salmon and steelhead adults must hold below each crossing until flows are adequate for them to swim upstream past each structure. Each crossing therefore adds an element of delay to fish migrating upstream. Individual fish are unlikely to pass all structures during one storm event. Because a majority of the Little River watershed is protected, most of the usual threats to salmonid populations (habitat loss from water diversion and sedimentation) do not occur. However, the road crossings in the unit may be having the same net effect by causing localized stream habitat changes adjacent to each ford and by restricting spawner access so that existing spawning, nursery, and rearing habitat is not fully utilized.

The district has addressed these concerns with a management plan to modify or remove the fords and provide for continued access of the Little River Canyon by Department personnel and visitors. A CEQA review has been completed and the concrete fords have been surveyed for 5021 requirements. One of the two most serious barriers to fish passage (first ford) has been removed. Removal or modification of the remaining fords may become necessary. Apart from the fords, the other major barrier of serious concern is the associated structures with the second Little River bridge.



Little River Ford #1 shown before its removal in 1993

Management of the streams for the protection or improvement of coho salmon and steelhead trout spawning areas, juvenile, yearling, and smolt habitats, overwintering pool habitat, critical habitat for adult spawners, and migration corridors up and downstream would benefit anadromous fish populations and aid to restore these important resources.

Directive: *The Department acknowledges the sensitivity of anadromous salmonids in the Little River and shall follow the goals of the Salmon and Steelhead Trout Anadromous Fisheries Program Act to improve and protect conditions in anadromous streams for Coho salmon and steelhead trout. Anadromous streams within Van Damme State Park shall be managed to improve or protect the natural production of coho salmon and steelhead trout. Restoration work may include modification or removal of existing man-made barriers and shall consider habitat needs for other native aquatic or terrestrial organisms.*

It is the intent of the department to preserve genetic integrity when restoring and maintaining native animal populations, including fish, to appropriate habitats within the State Park System. Hatchery reared fish should be used only if reared from pure, wild parental stock taken from Little River or adjacent stream systems. Artificial rearing facilities within Van Damme State Park may be appropriate on an interim basis only for the restoration of Coho salmon runs.

Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Management

The riparian corridor of Little River requires careful management to reduce the impact of facility protection and recreational use, as well as for the restoration of aquatic habitat for salmonids and other aquatic organisms.

Directive: *An aquatic habitat restoration and management plan shall be developed that:*

- 1) Provides for restoration of habitat for all native aquatic species, including the elimination of fish passage problems across existing man-made structures;*
- 2) Identifies guidelines for streamside road clearing and maintenance that includes consultation with aquatics specialist;*

3) Accomplishes an in-stream flow study that measures flows, withdrawals, and habitat use;

4) Establishment of a monitoring system for flows, withdrawals, habitat changes and species use of the Little River and its tributaries.

5) Identifies potential impacts to cultural features through consultation with a cultural resource specialist.

Red Alder Forest Management

The red alder riparian forest is highly susceptible to tree failure during winter months.

Directive: *The Department shall develop and implement a vegetation management plan for the campground areas that maximizes the long term stability of the red alder forest.*

Lower Little River RMZ

This is the most developed area of the unit extending from the entrance kiosk up Little River to the paved parking lot. As the floodplain of Little River, it represents a critical portion of the riparian corridor for stream dynamics and for fish habitat. Actions taken to protect facilities from flooding must be sensitive to the dynamics of the ecosystem that encompasses them. Where necessary, vegetation should be managed to improve safety for visitors and facilities.

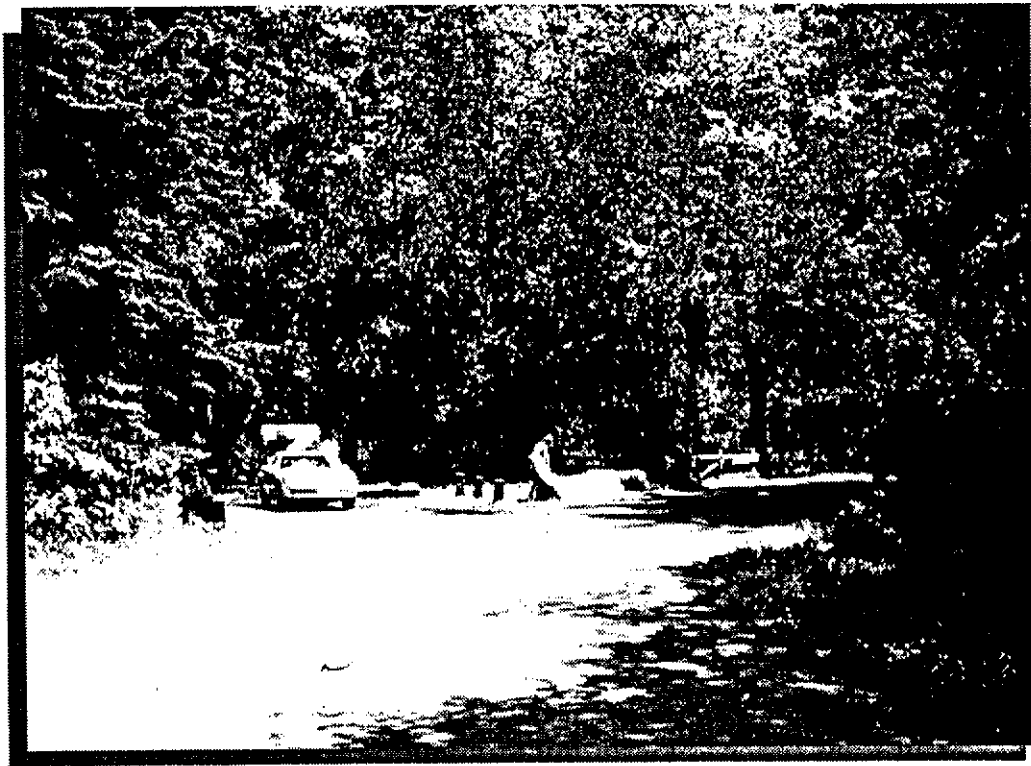
Resource Management Objectives

1. Allow limited modification of natural conditions to protect existing facilities (e.g. bank protection, tree safety improvements);
2. Preserve and protect riparian ecosystem processes;
3. Protect special species and their habitats/restore anadromous fisheries; modify or remove stream crossings to improve fish passage;
4. Protect natural development of riparian vegetation;
5. Restore natural fluvial processes; develop guidelines for road and trail maintenance including cultural feature protection;
6. Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences.

Campground Management

Campsites are currently located throughout the riparian corridor and the vegetation and wildlife are seriously impacted by existing campground development and maintenance practices.

Directive Campsites along the Little River that are determined by a Resource Ecologist to have negative effects on the resources shall be removed and restored to as natural a condition as possible.



Campsite located within the Little River riparian corridor

Upper Little River RMZ

This RMZ extends along Little River beginning at the paved parking lot upstream to where the river enters the unit. Activities in this zone should be guided by principles of natural process management. Maintenance activities for the streamside road should not reduce or degrade aquatic habitat.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect riparian ecosystem processes;
2. Protect special species and their habitats; restore anadromous fisheries;
3. Protect natural development of riparian vegetation;
4. Restore natural fluvial processes; develop guidelines for road maintenance;
5. Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences;
6. Determine impacts of stream diversions occurring in the unit.

Beal Creek RMZ

The Beal Creek RMZ is the boggy area immediately around Beal Creek beginning near the visitor center and extending up the creek to the unit boundary. Activities in this zone should be guided by principles of natural process management. Vegetation and tree fall clearing should be accomplished only in the trail width and to provide for visitor safety.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect riparian ecosystem processes;
2. Protect special species and their habitats;
3. Protect natural development of riparian vegetation;
4. Restore natural fluvial processes;
5. Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences;

Pygmy Forest RMZ

The Pygmy Forest RMZ encompasses all stands of Mendocino pygmy cypress forest on the uplands north and south of Little River. This zone should be managed to allow natural processes to occur. Access should be carefully allowed to avoid site disturbance. More research is needed to determine natural disturbance patterns in Mendocino pygmy cypress forest*, especially the role of natural fires.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Protect and preserve natural forest ecosystem processes;
2. Protect special species and their habitats;
3. Protect Mendocino pygmy cypress forests from soil disturbance, alteration of natural drainage, and pollution from residential sewage systems.
4. Allow only foot traffic access on Mendocino pygmy cypress forest trails.
5. Remove unnecessary trails from Mendocino pygmy cypress forest area.

Redwood Forest RMZ

The extensive stands of second-growth redwood north and south of Little River are included in this RMZ. This zone should be managed to restore natural conditions. Although severely disturbed by logging, all elements and processes are intact and it is recovering well. Fire appears to be an important process in forest development, but the specifics for this forest type are poorly understood and further research is needed.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Protect and preserve natural forest ecosystem processes;
2. Promote development of old-growth forest characteristics through the use of prescribed fire or other means;
3. Inventory and monitor all special old-growth related wildlife species, especially the northern spotted owl.

Dark Gulch RMZ

This parcel is separate from the rest of the unit. The vegetation is primarily redwood forest, although there are significant areas of northern Bishop pine forest, freshwater seep, and red alder riparian forest. This RMZ should be managed to allow natural processes to occur.

Resource Management Objectives

1. Preserve and protect natural forest ecosystem;
2. Allow limited modification of natural processes to protect facilities.



TABLE 1.
Plants and Communities of Special Management Interest

Status designations are as of August 1993 NDDDB Special Plant List.

<u>Sensitive Plants</u>	<u>Status*</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
Blasdale's bent grass, <i>Agrostis blasdalei</i> var. <i>blasdalei</i> **	F2, 1B	bluffs
Bolander's beach pine, <i>Pinus contorta</i> ssp. <i>bolanderi</i>	F2, 1B	pygmy forest
California sedge, <i>Carex californica</i> **	2	terrace
California swamp harebell, <i>Campanula californica</i>	F2, 1B	wetlands
Coast lily, <i>Lilium maritimum</i>	F1, 1B	variable
Fringed corn lily, <i>Veratrum fimbriatum</i>	4	riparian
Mendocino coast Indian paintbrush, <i>Castilleja mendocinensis</i>	F2, 1B	bluffs
Northcoast phacelia, <i>Phacelia insularis</i> var. <i>continentis</i> **	F2, 1B	bluffs
Pygmy cypress, <i>Cupressus pygmaea</i>	F2, 1B	pygmy forest
Fort Bragg manzanita, <i>Arctostaphylos nummularia</i>	EIM***	pygmy forest
Giant kelp, <i>Macrocystis pyrifera</i>	EIM***	marine
Sitka spruce, <i>Picea sitchensis</i>	EIM***	riparian
Skunk cabbage, <i>Lysichiton americanum</i>	EIM***	riparian
Supple daisy, <i>Erigeron supplex</i>	1B	terrace
 <u>Plant of Management Concern</u>		
Eucalyptus, <i>Eucalyptus</i> sp.	exotic/invasive	terrace
French broom, <i>Cytisus monspessulanus</i>	exotic/invasive	terrace
Monterey cypress, <i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>	invasive	terrace, forests
Monterey pine, <i>Pinus radiata</i>	invasive	terrace, forests
Pampas grass, <i>Cortaderia jubata</i>	exotic/invasive	terrace
Tansy ragwort, <i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	exotic/invasive	terrace
 <u>Rare Natural Communities****</u>		
Beach pine forest	<u>Area of Occurrence</u> coastal terrace	
Freshwater seep	coastal terrace	
Northern Bishop pine forest	bishop pine forest	
Northern coastal bluff scrub	coastal bluff	
Mendocino Pygmy cypress forest	pygmy forest	
Red alder riparian forest	riparian and wetland areas	

* Codes (Federal, State, CNPS) are explained on the following page.

** Potential occurrence in the unit.

*** EIM is a special Department of Parks and Recreation code designating species of Educational, Interpretive, or Management interest which are not necessarily protected by federal or state law.

**** As designated by DFG-NDDDB.

Table 1. (continued)

Key to Species List Codes

- Status** (Currently, no plants found at this unit are listed as threatened or endangered by the State or Federal government.)
- F1** — Category 1 Candidate for Federal listing (Taxa for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient biological information to support a proposal to list as Endangered or Threatened).
- F2** — Category 2 Candidate for Federal listing (Taxa for which existing information indicates may warrant listing, but for which substantial biological information to support a proposed rule is lacking).
- EIM** — Species of Educational, Interpretive, or Management interest to DPR which are not necessarily protected by federal or state law.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Designation

- 1B** — Rare, threatened, or endangered in California.
- 2** — Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.
- 4** — Plants of limited distribution in California.

Pacific Ocean

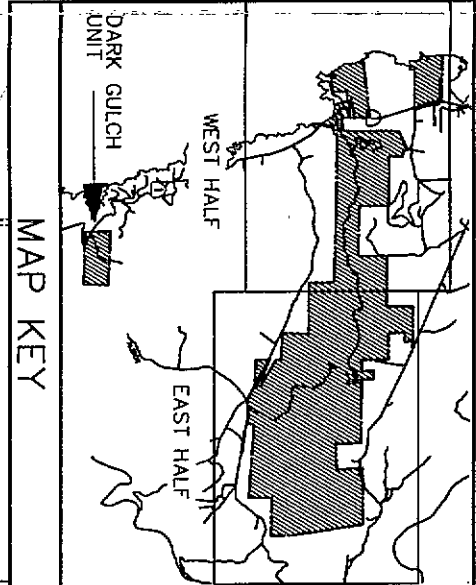
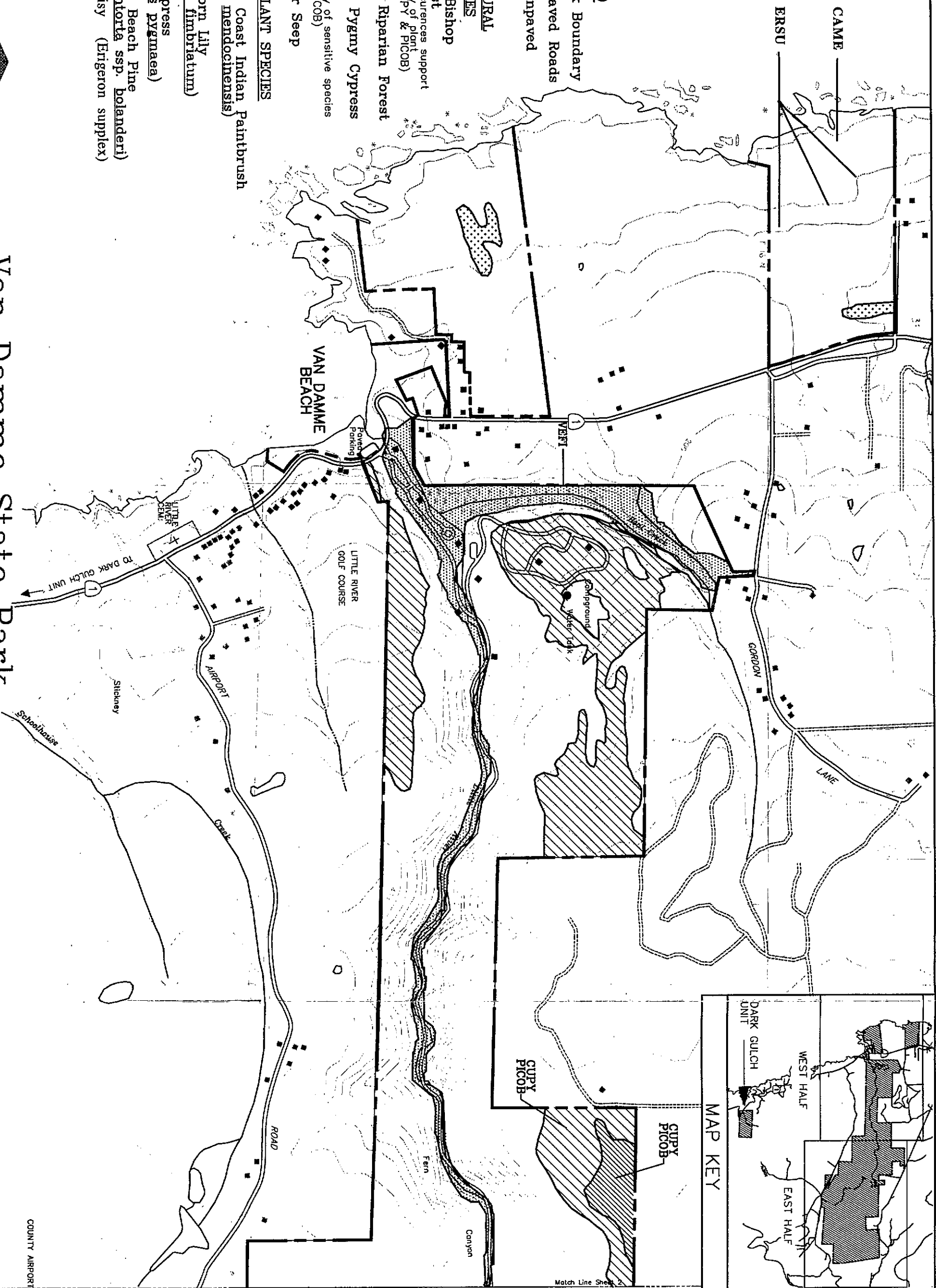
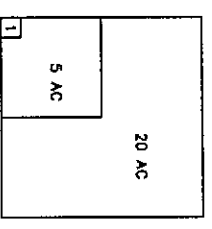
- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - ==== Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads

RARE NATURAL COMMUNITIES

- Northern Bishop Pine Forest
* eastern occurrences support high density of plant species (CUPY & PICOB)
- Red Alder Riparian Forest
- Mendocino Pygmy Cypress Forest
* high density of sensitive species (CUPY & PICOB)
- Freshwater Seep

SPECIAL PLANT SPECIES

- CAME** Mendocino Coast Indian Paintbrush (*Castilleja mendocinensis*)
- VEFI** Fringed Corn Lily (*Veratrum fimbriatum*)
- CUPY** Pygmy Cypress (*Cupressus pygmaea*)
- PICOB** Bolander's Beach Pine (*Pinus contorta* ssp. *bolanderi*)
- ERSU** Supple Daisy (*Erigeron supplex*)



Van Damme State Park
SPECIAL PLANTS & RARE NAT. COMM.

DRAWING NO. 25837	VAN DAMME STATE PARK SPECIAL PLANTS & RARE NATURAL COMMUNITIES - WEST HALF GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT		RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION		DESIGNED D. KECK
	APPROVED _____	DATE _____	REVISIONS	DATE	DRAWN L. SPEED
MAP 8					CHECKED D. KECK

TABLE 2.

Animals of Special Management Interest

Status as of December 1992 NDDDB Special animals List.

<u>Common and Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status*</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
<u>Invertebrates</u>		
Mendocino cypress beetle, <i>Trachykele blondeli cupreomarginata</i>	EIM	pygmy forest
Helper's blind weevil, <i>Raymondinemis helferi</i>	EIM	pygmy forest
<u>Fishes</u>		
Coho Salmon, <i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	CSC	riverine
Steelhead Rainbow Trout, <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	EIM	riverine
<u>Birds</u>		
Common Loon, <i>Gavia immer</i>	CSC	marine, riparian
California Brown Pelican, <i>Pelicanus occidentalis californicus</i>	FE, SE	marine, beach, bluff
Double-crested Cormorant, <i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	CSC	marine
Osprey, <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	CSC	marine, beach, bluff, riparian
American Peregrine Falcon, <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	FE, SE	variable
California Gull, <i>Larus californicus</i>	CSC	marine, beach, bluff
Marbled Murrelet, <i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>	FT, SE	marine, redwood forest
Tufted Puffin, <i>Fratercula cirrhata</i>	CSC	marine
Northern Spotted Owl, <i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>	FT	riparian, redwood forest
Yellow Warbler, <i>Dendroica petechia</i>	CSC	riparian
<u>Mammals</u>		
Townsend's Big-eared Bat, <i>Plecotus townsendii townsendii</i>	F2, CSC	variable
Harbor Seal, <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	EIM	marine, beach
Gray Whale, <i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>	FE	marine
Humpback Whale, <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	FE	marine

*Codes are explained on following page

Table 2. (continued)

Key to Species List Codes

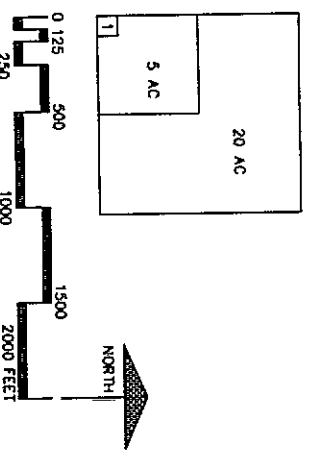
Status

- FE — Federal Endangered.
- FT — Federal Threatened.
- F2 — Category 2 Candidate for Federal listing (Taxa for which existing information indicates may warrant listing, but for which substantial biological information to support a proposed rule is lacking).
- SE — State Endangered.
- CSC — California Department of Fish and Game "Species of Special Concern".
- EIM — Species of Educational, Interpretive, or Management interest to DPR which are not necessarily protected by federal or state law.

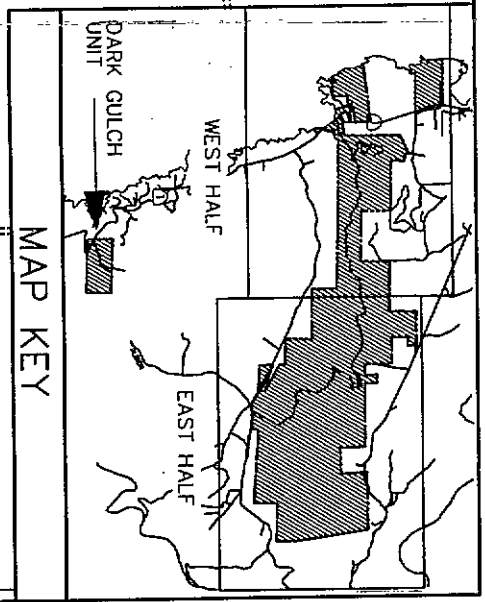
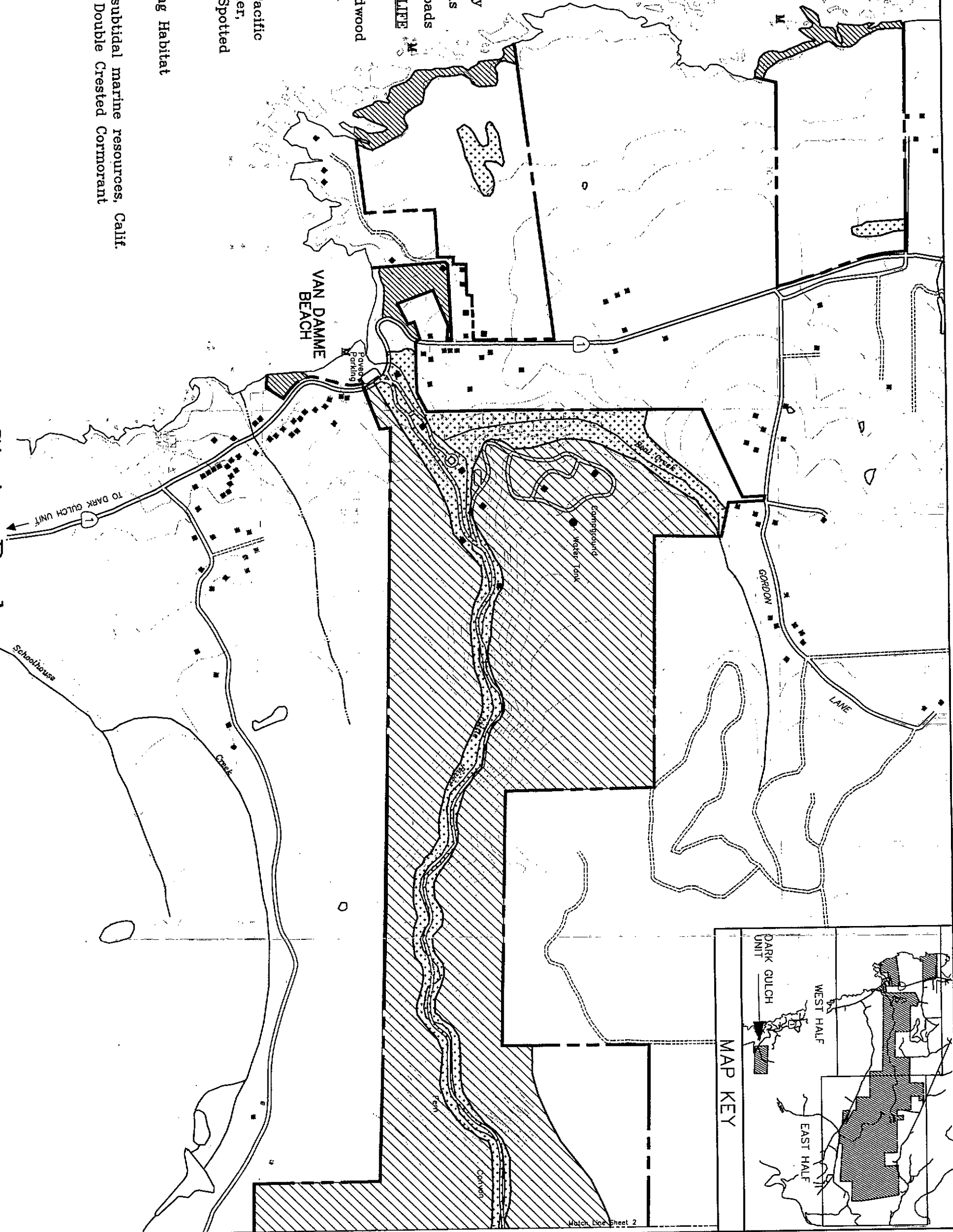
Pacific Ocean

LEGEND

- State Park Boundary
 - ==== Existing Paved Roads
 - - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
- SENSITIVE HABITAT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES**
- Bishop Pine and Redwood Forest Northern Spotted Owl
 - Aquatic, Riparian & Freshwater Seeps
 - Coho Salmon, Pacific Giant Salamander, Steelhead and Spotted Owl-foraging
 - Coastal Bluff
 - Sea Bird Nesting Habitat
 - Marine
- Intertidal and subtidal marine resources, Calif.
Brown Pelican, Double Crested Cormorant



Van Damme State Park
SENSITIVE WILDLIFE HABITAT



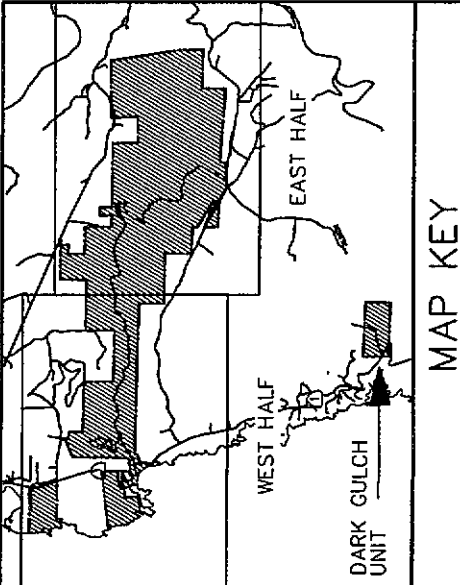
VAN DAMME STATE PARK SENSITIVE WILDLIFE HABITAT WEST HALF GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION		DESIGNED D. KECK
	APPROVED _____ DATE _____	REVISIONS	DATE
DRAWING NO. 25837	MAP 9	CHECKED D. KECK	DRAWN L. SPEED

DESIGNED	D. KECK
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CHECKED	D. KECK
DATE	
REVISIONS	

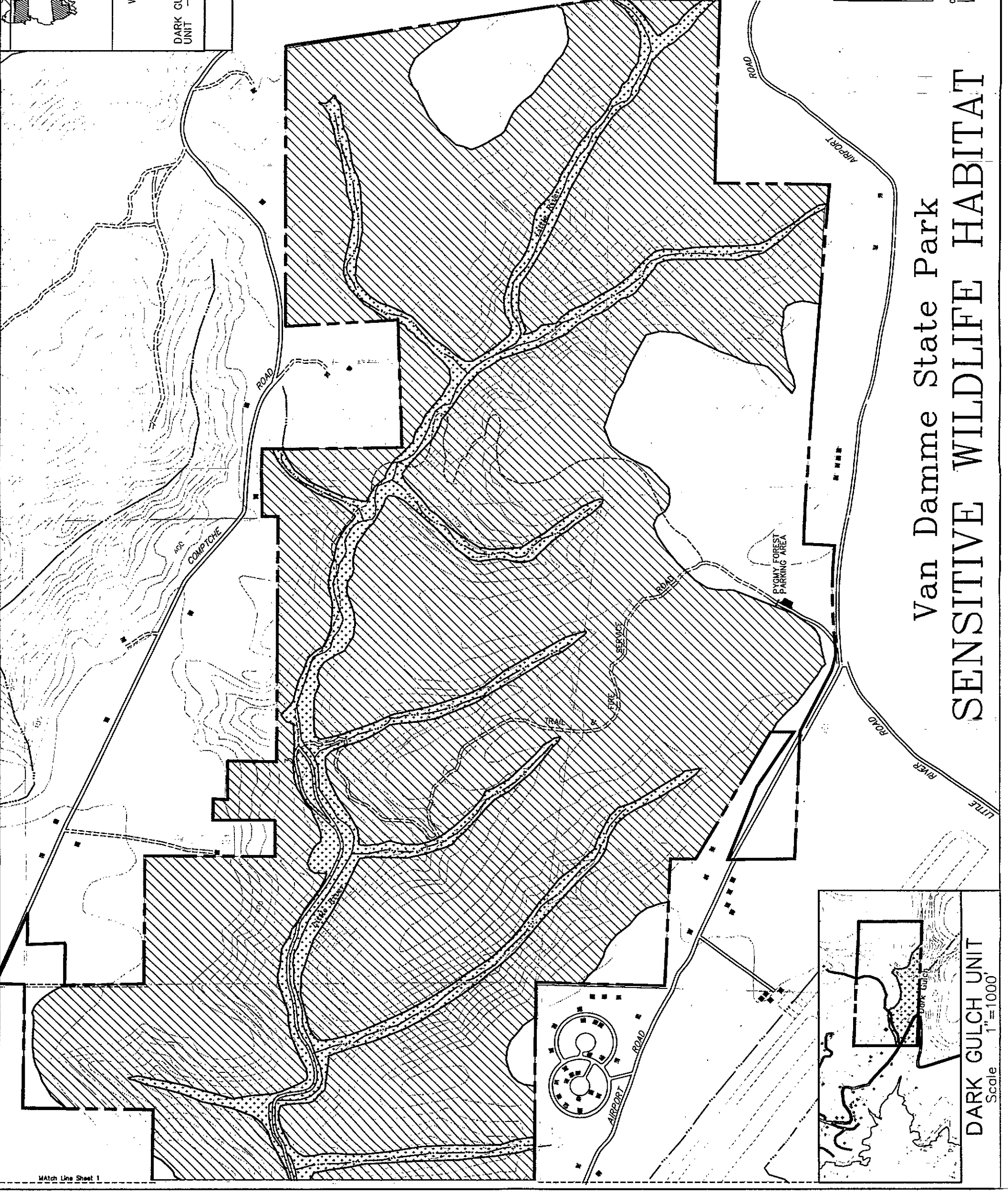
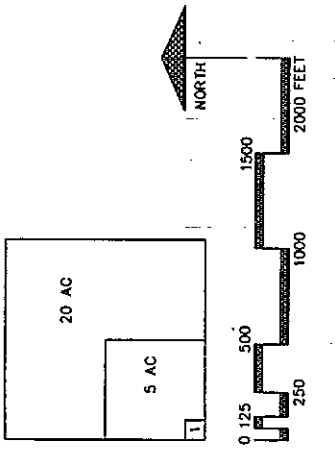
RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
 APPROVED _____ DATE _____

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
 SENSITIVE WILDLIFE HABITAT
 EAST HALF
 GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT

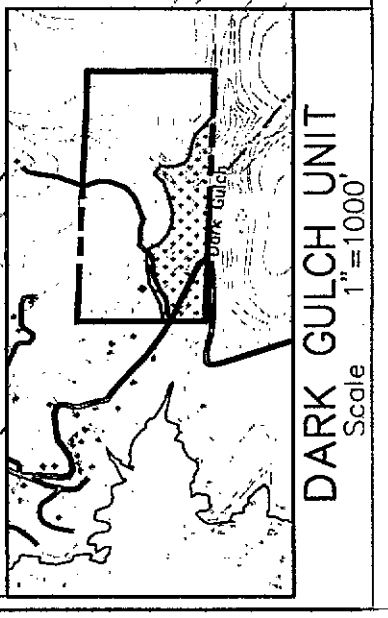
DRAWING NO. 25837
 MAP 9



- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads
- SENSITIVE HABITAT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES**
- Bishop Pine and Redwood Forest Northern Spotted Owl
 - Aquatic, Riparian, & Freshwater Seeps
 - Coho Salmon, Pacific Giant Salamander, Steelhead and Spotted Owl-foraging
 - Coastal Bluff Sea Bird Nesting Habitat
 - Marine
 - Intertidal and subtidal marine resources, Calif. Brown Pelican, Double Crested Cormorant



Van Damme State Park
 SENSITIVE WILDLIFE HABITAT



Match Line Sheet 1

TABLE 3.

**Summary of
Significant Resources and Resource Management Outline**

Note: See Map 3 for ecological units, Map 7 for resource management zones, and Tables 1 and 2 for plant, animal, and plant community designations.

<u>Ecological Unit/Resource Management Zone</u>	<u>Summary of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources/Processes</u>	<u>Resource Management Outline</u>
<p>Marine EU Marine RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: giant kelp. Fauna: red abalone; red sea urchin; sea birds; marine mammals. Physical: tidepools; tsunamis. Cultural: none. Esthetic: ocean vistas.</p>	<p>1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. a) Protect unit from offshore development influences. b) Extend Department authority to underwater lands adjacent to all Department ownerships; develop agreements with appropriate agencies to control harvesting of marine resources; c) Assess impact of commercial fishing boats anchoring in bay off Van Damme Beach and reduce or eliminate access if necessary.</p>
<p>Coastal Beach EU Van Damme Beach RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: none. Fauna: entry/exit point for Little River fish; sea birds; shore birds. Physical: tsunamis; coastal erosion Cultural: none. Esthetic: scenic bay vistas.</p>	<p>1. Minimize development impact on scenic values. 2. Allow for natural geologic processes to occur. a) Monitor erosion and sand loss. b) Consult Department geologist before constructing any shoreline protective devices. 3. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. a) Protect unit from offshore development influences. b) Assess impact of visitor use on shorebirds and reduce if necessary. c) Maintain natural fluvial processes at mouth of Little River.</p>

Table 3. (continued)
Significant Resources and Resource Management Outline

<u>Ecological Unit/Resource Management Zone</u>	<u>Summary of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources/Processes</u>	<u>Resource Management Outline</u>
<p>Coastal Bluff EU Van Damme Bluff RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: northern coastal bluff scrub; Mendocino coast Indian paintbrush; Blasdale's bentgrass; Northcoast phacelia; invasive French broom. Fauna: California brown pelican; peregrine falcon; possible tufted puffin nesting habitat. Physical: coastal erosion. Cultural: Native American archaeological sites. Esthetic: scenic ocean vistas.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect special species and their habitats. b) Protect unit from offshore development influences. 2. Protect Native American archaeological sites. 3. Allow for natural geologic processes to occur. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consult Department geologist before constructing any shoreline protective devices. b) Minimize impact of recreation access construction.
<p>Coastal Terrace EU Terrace Grassland RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: Mendocino coast Indian paintbrush; Bolander's beach pine; community; possible coast lily and California swamp harebell habitat; invasive French broom, Monterey pine, Monterey cypress, pampas grass, tansy, and eucalyptus. Fauna: raptor foraging area. Physical: freshwater seeps. Cultural: Native American archaeological sites. Esthetic: highly scenic ocean vistas.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect special species and their habitats, especially freshwater seeps. b) Remove exotic species where feasible. c) Develop a prescribed fire plan for grassland management. d) Discontinue mowing of terrace grasslands. 2. Protect Native American archaeological sites. 3. Allow for natural geologic processes to occur. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Minimize impact of construction for recreation access.

Table 3. (continued)
 Significant Resources and Resource Management Outline

Ecological Unit/Resource Management Zone	Summary of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources/Processes	Resource Management Outline
<p>Riparian Areas and Wetlands EU Lower Little River RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: red alder riparian forest; southern limit of Sitka spruce. Fauna: steelhead; coho salmon. Physical: flooding; tsunami; landslides. Cultural: Native American archaeological site; CCC built recreation hall and stream crossings; ranger residence; logging wing dam. Esthetic: forest/river views.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect sensitive aquatic species — modify stream crossings to improve fish passage and stop harvest of fish species. b) Allow natural development of riparian vegetation. c) Remove campsites which are having a deleterious effect from edge of Little River. 2. Allow for natural geologic processes to occur. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allow limited modification of natural conditions to protect existing facilities. b) Allow fluvial processes to occur —consult Department ecologists for guidance for road maintenance. c) Determine impact to stream of water diversions occurring in the unit. d) Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences. 3. Protect Native American archaeologist sites, historic buildings, and logging dam. 4. Provide for suitable modification of CCC structures in stream.
<p>Riparian Areas and Wetlands EU Upper Little River RMZ</p>	<p>Flora: red alder riparian forest. Fauna: steelhead; coho salmon; probable use by northern spotted owl. Physical: landslides. Cultural: CCC stream Crossings; logging dam. Esthetic: forest/river views.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect sensitive aquatic species — modify stream crossings to improve fish passage and consider stopping harvest of fish species. b) Allow natural development of riparian vegetation. 2. Allow natural development of riparian vegetation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allow limited modification of natural conditions to protect existing facilities. b) Allow fluvial processes to occur — consult Department ecologists for guidance for road maintenance. c) Determine impact to stream of water diversions occurring in the unit. d) Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences. 3. Provide for suitable modification of CCC structures in stream. 4. Protect logging dam.

Table 3. (continued)
Significant Resources and Resource Management Outline

<u>Ecological Unit/Resource Management Zone</u>	<u>Summary of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources/Processes</u>	<u>Resource Management Outline</u>
Riparian Areas and Wetlands EU Beal Creek RMZ	Flora: red alder riparian forest; skunk cabbage bog. Fauna: none. Physical: landslides. Cultural: none. Esthetic: forest and bog views.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements. 2. Allow for natural geologic processes to occur. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allow fluvial processes to occur — provide guidance for road/trail maintenance. c) Determine impact to stream of water diversions occurring in the unit. d) Protect riparian ecosystem from deleterious upstream influences.
Bishop Pine Forest EU Bishop Pine Forest RMZ	Flora: northern Bishop pine forest; small amount of pygmy cypress forest. Fauna: raptor nesting. Physical: landslides. Cultural: none. Esthetic: open forest views.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect natural forest ecosystem. 2. Develop a prescribed fire plan. 3. Develop a campground vegetation management plan which allows natural forest processes and protects park visitors.
Bishop Pine Forest EU Upper Campground RMZ	Flora: Bishop pine forest. Fauna: raptor nesting. Physical: none. Cultural: none. Esthetic: forest and meadow views.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect natural forest ecosystem. 2. Develop a prescribed fire plan. 3. Develop a campground vegetation management plan which allows natural forest processes and protects park visitors.

Table 3. (continued)
Significant Resources and Resource Management Outline

Ecological Unit/Resource Management Zone	Summary of Significant Natural and Cultural Resources/Processes	Resource Management Outline
Pygmy Forest EU Pygmy Forest RMZ	<p>Flora: Pygmy cypress forest; northern Bishop pine forest; pygmy cypress; Bolander's beach pine; California sedge; California swamp harebell; coast lily; Fort Bragg manzanita.</p> <p>Fauna: Mendocino cypress beetle; Helfer's blind weevil.</p> <p>Physical: podzol soils.</p> <p>Cultural: none.</p> <p>Esthetic: pygmy forest views</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and preserve natural forest ecosystem processes. 2. Protect sensitive species and their habitats. 3. Designate a Natural Preserve. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect pygmy forests from soil disturbance, alteration of natural drainage, and pollution from off-site sewage systems. b) Allow only foot traffic on trails in pygmy forest areas.
Redwood Forest EU Redwood Forest RMZ	<p>Flora: largest second-growth forest in western Mendocino County and some residual old-growth redwood; small areas of pygmy forest.</p> <p>Fauna: northern spotted owl; Townsend's big eared bat.</p> <p>Physical: landslides.</p> <p>Cultural: none.</p> <p>Esthetic: forest views.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and preserve natural forest ecosystem processes. 2. Promote development of old-growth characteristics through the use of prescribed fire or other means. 3. Assess habitat and monitor use by northern spotted owl. 4. Provide guidance for road/trail maintenance.
Redwood Forest EU Dark Gulch RMZ	<p>Flora: red alder riparian forest.</p> <p>Fauna: osprey nest near boundary.</p> <p>Physical: none.</p> <p>Cultural: none.</p> <p>Esthetic: none.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preserve and protect natural ecosystem processes. 2. Allow limited modification of natural processes to protect facilities.

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Interpretive Element



Interpretive Element
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INTERPRETIVE ELEMENT

State Park interpretive programs, publications, and facilities orient, inform, and inspire visitors so they can better enjoy, appreciate, and protect their parks.

Interpretation aims at enhancing public enjoyment and benefit in the State Park System through increasing understanding of significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and encouraging appreciation of their values. Interpretation is founded on the premise that knowledge deepens the park experience, providing lasting benefits not only to individuals but to society in general. The Interpretive Element works toward this goal by identifying park themes and a variety of facilities and programs appropriate for their presentation.

Interpretive Goals

The goals of interpretation at Van Damme State Park are:

- to orient and inform visitors to help them have enjoyable, meaningful, and safe visits to the area;
- to foster appreciation and conservation of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the area;
- to meet the special needs of visitors of all ages and abilities;
- to involve the local communities in its programs; and,
- to keep interpretive media appropriate and sensitive to the esthetic values of the area.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretation uses themes and media to connect visitors to their natural, cultural, and recreational resources in personally meaningful ways. Themes define the point of view to be given to the interpretation of the resources of this unit. Since this is an element of a general planning document, the themes recommended here will be kept relatively broad. The goal is to provide planners of future interpretive development and programs at this unit both thematic definition and enough creative leeway to successfully complete their interpretive project. Such future planning will necessarily entail a more detailed definition of these interpretive themes.

Thematic development has been coordinated for the ten Mendocino District State Park units covered by this general planning process. Interpretive resources for these units were listed and compared. Units were ranked according to how well they represented each resource. These rankings, existing interpretive efforts, and distances between units were analyzed to arrive at suggested interpretive themes for each unit. The goals are to tell the best stories where and when they can be best told and to avoid redundancy. As such, the following themes are not exhaustive. For example, marine mammals live offshore all of these units, but this topic is only recommended as an interpretive theme for the units where they are commonly seen.

This unit's themes are presented in three ways: the *unifying theme*, *primary themes*, and *secondary themes*. The unifying theme provides a conceptual focus for the interpretive programs of the Mendocino Coast State Park units. The unifying theme also sets the overall interpretive tone and direction, and implies the desired impression interpretation should have on visitors' attitudes and perspectives. The unifying theme is presented exclusively through the interpretation of the primary and secondary themes. Primary themes define the most important ideas to be interpreted, which should naturally receive more emphasis. Secondary themes provide support and interpretive context for the primary themes.

The unifying interpretive theme for this unit is:

Explore how natural forces, plants, animals, and people continually change this fragile and dynamic coast.

Primary Theme

Enjoying and Preserving the Mendocino Coast: Informed visitors can safely enjoy the Mendocino Coast and leave it unmarred for future enjoyment.

This theme helps visitors make decisions that lead to enjoyable, safe, and low-impact use of this unit's resources. This information can be conveyed through take-home interpretive materials (trail guides, the "North Wind" guide, guidebooks, maps, local history books, videocassettes), audio-visual programs, guided walks, roving interpretation, exhibits, and contact stations. About 125,000 people come to this unit annually to camp, hike, picnic, beachcomb, study nature, scuba and skin dive, sea kayak, sport fish, and ride mountain bikes on service roads.

Primary Theme

Explore the Marine Floor: Underwater Parks and Preserves help preserve the Mendocino Coast's marine heritage.

The underwater park area at Van Damme State Park should be interpreted so that visitors can appreciate its natural and recreational values better and minimize their impacts on it.



Calm waters and easy access makes Van Damme a popular dive area

Primary Theme

Discover Coastal Streams: Coastal streams are critical and fragile ecological magnets for diverse freshwater, terrestrial, and anadromous life.

The Mendocino Coast's stream or riparian habitats are wildlife magnets and corridors that both link and bisect grassland, coastal scrub, and coastal forest ecosystems. Mature red alder riparian forest forms dense canopies over this unit's streams. The lush vegetation offers a variety of nesting, feeding, and cover opportunities to wildlife. Many riparian birds are heard more than seen in this lush environment. Riparian bird life is at its highest and noisiest activity during the spring courtship and nesting period. A high percentage of riparian birds are cavity nesters. Many migratory bird species travel along stream corridors during the spring and fall. The riparian ecosystem is critical to many species. Never a large part of California's landscape, our state's original riparian areas have been largely destroyed by clearing, bank stabilization, channelization, and road building. Remaining riparian areas must be protected and restored. Little River supports steelhead and Coho salmon whose populations are generally threatened along the Mendocino Coast.

Primary Theme

Discover Pygmy Forests: The leached, nutrient-poor and highly acidic hardpan soils of the Mendocino Coast's upper marine terraces support rare plants and stunted conifers.

Pygmy forests occur in northwestern California. Along the Mendocino Coast pygmy forests occur on third level and higher marine terraces. "Podzol" soils strongly influence the pygmy forest ecosystem. Acidic conditions created by decomposed organic material and heavy rainfall cause severe leaching of nutrients from the upper soil layer. Leached minerals accumulate below the leached horizon forming a hardpan. The sterile layer beneath the humus is called the podzol horizon. This hardpan causes water to stand for long periods in the pygmy forest during the wet season.

The pygmy forest includes areas of stunted vegetation called Pygmy Cypress Forest and areas of taller vegetation of similar species composition known as the Northern Bishop Pine community. The latter is found on third and fourth terraces where soils are younger and deeper. Sensitive pygmy forest plant species include Bolander pine, pygmy cypress, swamp harebell, and coast lily. Endemic pygmy forest animals include the Mendocino cypress beetle, Helfer's weevil, and the pygmy nuthatch.

Primary Theme

Discover Second-Growth Redwood Forests: The Mendocino Coast's nearly century-old second growth redwood forests are still in the process of succession leading to a mature old growth community.

Van Damme State Park's redwood forests along the slopes of the Little River have some of the oldest second growth redwood trees on the Mendocino Coast. These pockets of 100 year-old protected redwoods will eventually become true old growth forests. Though still young when compared to true old growth forests, these second growth forests have developed some characteristics of mature forests. The wet climate and deep soils have resulted in extraordinarily large trees for their age. Snags, downed and rotting logs, forest openings, woody debris, disease- and insect-killed trees, multiple canopy layers, and developing understory vegetation all attest to the ecological recovery of this once logged redwood forest.

Secondary Theme

Discover Coastal Forests: Whether growing or decaying, native conifers support a rich variety of wildlife.

The Bishop pine forest and coast redwood forest support similar kinds of wildlife within and below their dense stratified vegetation. Within the forest, wildlife species will be found in specific habitats where they best thrive. Some species survive better on drier ridges and slopes while others can be found only in moister canyons. The bark of living trees and dead snags and fallen wood provide food and shelter for many kinds of invertebrates and their predators. Common forest amphibians and reptiles include the western toad, Pacific tree frog, clouded salamander, Pacific giant salamander, ensatina salamander, California slender salamander, western skink, and the ringneck snake. Common mammals include the silver-haired bat, big brown bat, red bat, hoary bat, Trowbridge shrew, vagrant shrew, Pacific mole, shrew-mole, Oregon vole, California vole, Townsend chipmunk, chickaree, western gray squirrel, brush rabbit, northern flying squirrel, dusky-footed woodrat, black-tailed deer, gray fox, ringtail, and the black bear. Common birds include the Wilson's warbler, purple finch, wrentit, pine siskin, western flycatcher, Allen's hummingbird, red-breasted nuthatch, hairy woodpecker, Steller's jay, golden-crowned kinglet, chestnut-backed chickadee, brown creeper, varied thrush, and the rufous-sided towhee.

Secondary Theme

Preserving the Coast's Natural Heritage: Native species populations that are rare, threatened, or endangered must be managed.

Each native species plays an important role in maintaining the ecological balance of its ecosystem. Van Damme State Park has the following rare, threatened, endangered or sensitive species which must be actively managed to help preserve them: Coho salmon, steelhead rainbow trout, Bolander pine, pygmy cypress, Mendocino coast Indian paintbrush, and the fringed false hellebore. Efforts to improve stream habitat to better support reproducing populations of anadromous fish should be interpreted.

Secondary Theme

Harvesting the Sea's Bounty: Though marine resources have been harvested on the Mendocino Coast for thousands of years, we must now carefully manage these resources to ensure continued abundance.

Native Americans have been harvesting marine resources along the Mendocino Coast for thousands of years. The increased pressure of today's recreational and commercial marine harvests can threaten the long-term productivity of some species. Red abalone, red sea urchin, and kelp harvesting should be interpreted to promote sustainable yield management of these species.

Secondary Theme

A Coast in Constant Change: Restless atmospheric and oceanic forces are daily changing this dynamic and fragile coast.

The Mendocino Coast's weather patterns of fog, winter storms and summer droughts are part of the constant exchange of air and moisture between the equator and the poles and between the ocean and continental surfaces. The cold southward moving California Current, upwelling currents, local waves and tides are part of the dynamic ocean system that moves energy, minerals, and nutrients around the Earth.

Secondary Theme

Discover the Kelp Forest: From their anchoring holdfasts to their floating fronds, towering kelp forests shelter and nourish diverse and colorful life-forms.

To survive, giant kelp requires a hard surface for its holdfasts to attach to, cool and clear water in moderate motion, and rich nutrients. Wherever these conditions are found, lush beds of giant kelp flourish along the Mendocino Coast. Similar to terrestrial forests, kelp forests support many kinds of animals in a layered three-dimensional habitat that goes through seasonal changes. Animals find greatly different survival conditions in the different layers of both kinds of forests. However, unlike land forests, kelp forests absorb all their nutrients directly from the water that envelopes and supports them. Exceptionally fast-growing, a giant kelp plant usually lives only one to seven years before it is torn from its anchoring rock by a storm wave. During its life a giant kelp supports and shelters a rich variety of marine life and, like a fallen tree, in its death a washed up kelp supports a new food chain of decomposers.

Secondary Theme

Discover the Rocky Shore!: The colorful and varied life-forms of the rocky shore have evolved fascinating ways of surviving in this productive yet harsh intertidal environment.

The rocky shore is a wonderful place to observe the variety, abundance, adaptations, and beauty of marine plants and animals. The physical and biological challenges of this environment are great, but the nutrients and productivity of the rocky shore are high. Nearly every phyla of invertebrate animal is represented at the rocky shore, many in great variety and profusion. Many ancient, highly successful, and strange animal forms and behaviors can be closely observed at the rocky shore, particularly at the lowest tides. The rocky shore is unsurpassed as a window into the marvels of ecology and evolution.

Many rocky shore organisms live most commonly in specific zones that have the conditions they are adapted for. This tendency accounts for the horizontal zonation of the intertidal. The upper zones have less competition for space, but have longer exposure to drying, more terrestrial and avian predation, and greater temperature and salinity ranges. The lower zones are exposed much less by the tides, but they have much greater competition for attachment sites and experience more marine predation. Attached upper zone animals are mostly encrusting forms. Lower down and in more protected areas attached animals are mostly erect or bushy.

The rocky shore economy is based primarily on plankton, and secondarily on attached algae. The feeding styles of the primary consumers are: filter feeding, microscopic algae grazing, and macroscopic algae browsing or scavenging. Some microscopic algae grazers have evolved to become carnivorous browsers of colonial polyps, sponges, and bryozoans. The reproductive, feeding, and protective adaptations of rocky shore life are complex, varied, and fascinating.

Secondary Theme

Discover the Sandy Shore!: Most sandy shore animals live beneath the sand and under the waves in this harsh and dynamic habitat.

Sandy shores are one of the harshest and most dynamic environments for life on earth. Winds, waves, and tides incessantly rearrange the topography and change the conditions for life. Shifting sand particles give organisms little chance of stable attachment. Exposure is great and temperature and moisture changes are extreme. Inhabitants are exposed alternately to aquatic and then terrestrial and aerial predators. Yet, the sandy shore ecosystem is endowed with rich nutrients, particularly from the sea, in the form of plankton, flotsam, and detritus. Life has evolved to thrive even in this harsh and dynamic environment. Relatively few species live here, but those that do often occur in great numbers. But, to see most of them one must look under the sand or beneath the beach wrack where living conditions are more favorable. The burrowing lifestyle offers protection from predation, wave impact, temperature extremes, and desiccation when the tide is out. But it poses problems of getting enough oxygen, finding mates, and acquiring food. Beach species have evolved adaptations that enable them to meet these problems.

Secondary Theme

Coastal Bluff Ecosystems: Plants and animals of the exposed sea stacks and coastal bluffs are adapted to living with wind, salt-spray, and steep slopes.

Plants and animals of Mendocino's coastal bluffs are exposed to constant wind and salt spray. The substrate is mostly made up of exposed bedrock. The vegetation is largely composed of a mosaic of herbaceous plants and dwarf shrubs called the northern coastal bluff scrub community. This rare community includes sea fig, seaside daisy, seaside sunflower, wild buckwheat, and Mendocino coast paintbrush. Although this environment is exposed to the elements, seed-eating birds such as the American goldfinch, savannah sparrow, house finch, and song sparrow live here. The western harvest mouse, western fence lizard, and garter snake also live on the coastal bluffs. The endangered American peregrine falcon and the tufted puffin have been seen offshore in the cove south of the headland.

Secondary Theme

Making a Living from Trees: Timber cutting, milling, and coastal shipping from doghole ports were the beginnings of many coastal towns, shaping generations of their citizens.

Many of the early settlers to Little River were from New England. Silas Coombs and four other men settled near the mouth of the river and built a steam powered sawmill which employed about 50 men on the south side of the river in 1864. In its first decade, this mill was one of the steadiest lumber producers on the Mendocino Coast. Thomas Peterson built ships at a shipyard on the north side of Little River harbor on commission for most of the major mill owners between 1869 and 1879. His ships were a common sight in Mendocino's doghole ports.

Interpretive Facilities and Activities

Interpretive Facilities

Existing interpretive facilities include a visitor center with exhibits and video programs, a campfire center, a brochure-guided boardwalk trail through the pygmy forest, a boardwalk bog trail, a brochure-guided trail along Fern Canyon, and a few outdoor panels at the beach and near the entrance station.

Proposed changes to interpretive facilities include:

- Plan, fabricate and install panels for an underwater trail in the cove;
- Renovate the interpretation of the Pygmy Forest Trail to emphasize ecological processes;
- Develop interpretation for the Fern Canyon Trail and the Bog Trail; and,
- Develop a self-guiding auto tour utilizing a district-wide brochure with map or an insert into the "North Wind" visitor guide to interpret the highlights of the entire Mendocino Coast for motorists travelling on Highway 1.

Interpretive Activities

The following interpretive programs are now conducted at this unit: campfire programs, Junior Ranger programs, interpretive walks, and whale watching programs.

Proposed changes to interpretive activities include:

- Plan and conduct interpretive bicycle tours up Fern Canyon.

Interpretive Concessions

No interpretive concessions currently operate at this unit and none are recommended.

Interpretive Associations

Throughout California, interpretive associations provide critical volunteer interpretive support to the Department's mission. The Mendocino Area Parks Association (MAPA) is "a non-profit organization that provides educational and interpretive activities that encourage visitors' and residents' awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural resources of the coastal area and the local parks. MAPA volunteers operate a visitors' center, sponsor monthly gallery exhibits, provide historical information to groups of children and adults, conduct activities for special events and show nature films on a regular basis, all at Ford House in Mendocino." The Van Damme Docent Council, part of MAPA, is an indispensable support to this unit's interpretation, including developing and operating the visitor center. No changes to the interpretive association are recommended.

Interpretive Collections

Interpretive collections include natural and historic objects, photographs, and references which support displays, programs, demonstrations, and research. There are currently no formal interpretive collections at this unit beyond the natural history specimens on exhibit at the visitor center. Cultural history photographs and the District's slide files are maintained at the Ford House in Mendocino. Appropriate interpretive objects, photographs, and references should be collected, organized, and curated.

Interpretive Recommendations

Research Needs

Interpretation can only be as valuable as it is accurate. Research should continue to support the interpretation of all themes. Further research on the following topics would

particularly aid the interpretation of this unit: succession of logged redwood forest towards an old growth stage; and the status of rare, threatened, and endangered species within the unit.

Future Interpretive Needs

Day use parking, trails, and picnic areas are proposed on the headlands, as described in the Land Use and Facilities Elements of this plan. Day use facilities developed at this location would provide excellent interpretive opportunities for exhibit panels with interpretive information on marine resources, the rocky shore, and coastal bluff plants and animals.

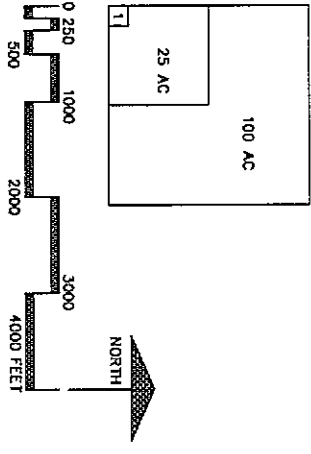
Popular visitor activities on the headlands include diving and fishing at Chapman Point, therefore, information on aquatic hazards and protected marine resources is appropriate. In addition, visitor orientation panels should be included at new parking locations for travelers who are enroute to other destinations on the Mendocino Coast.

Project Recommendations

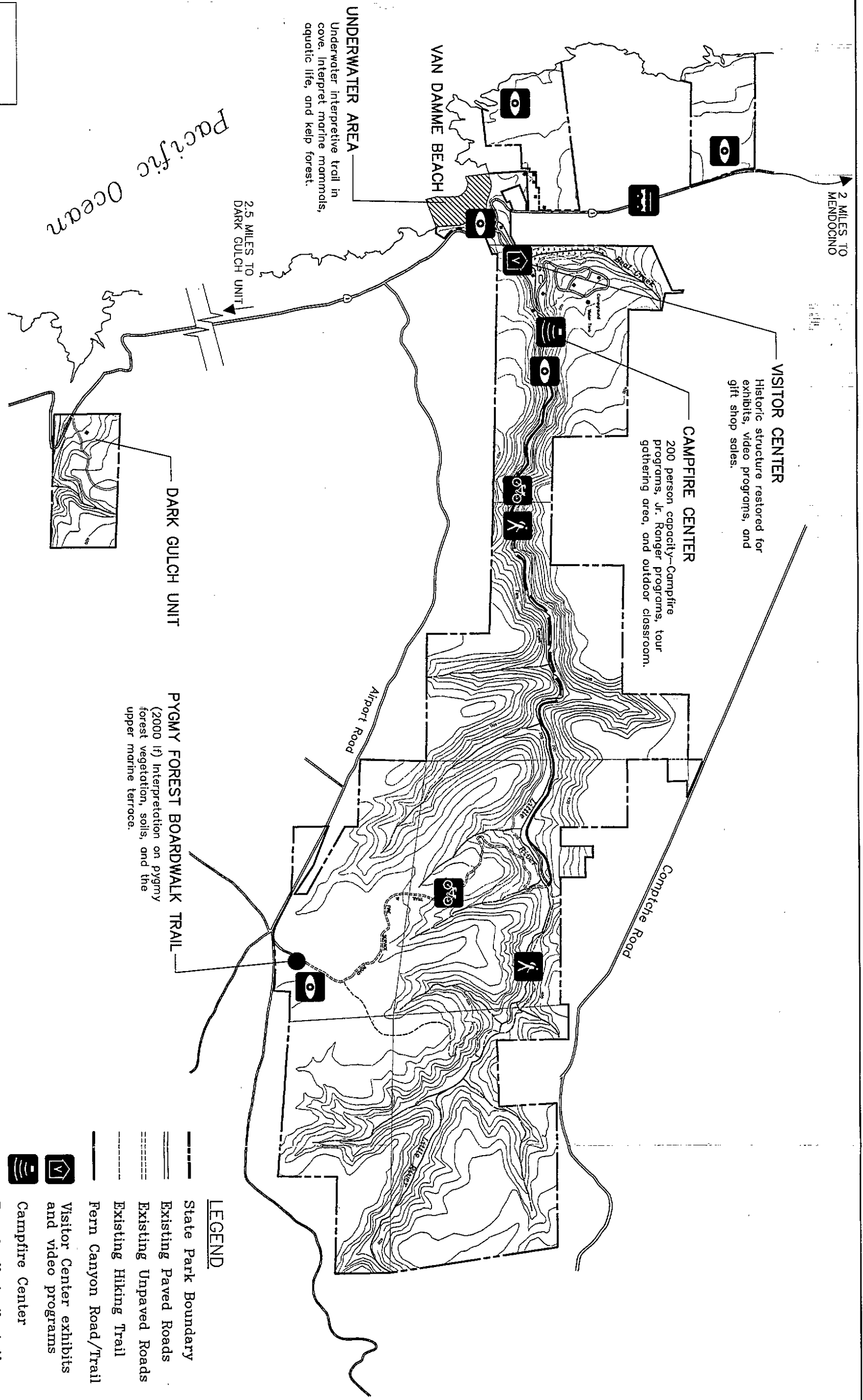
No order of priorities is implied in the following listings.

- Plan, fabricate, and install panels for the underwater trail;
- Plan, fabricate, and install panels for headlands interpretation;
- Renovate the interpretation of the Pygmy Forest Trail to emphasize ecological processes;
- Develop interpretation for the Fern Canyon Trail and the Bog Trail;
- Develop a self-guiding auto tour/district-wide brochure to interpret the highlights of the entire Mendocino Coast for motorists travelling on Highway 1;
- Develop and conduct interpretive bicycle tours along Fern Canyon;
- Conduct research to support interpretation of this unit's resources; and,
- Collect, organize, and curate appropriate interpretive objects, photographs, and references.





Van Damme State Park INTERPRETIVE PLAN

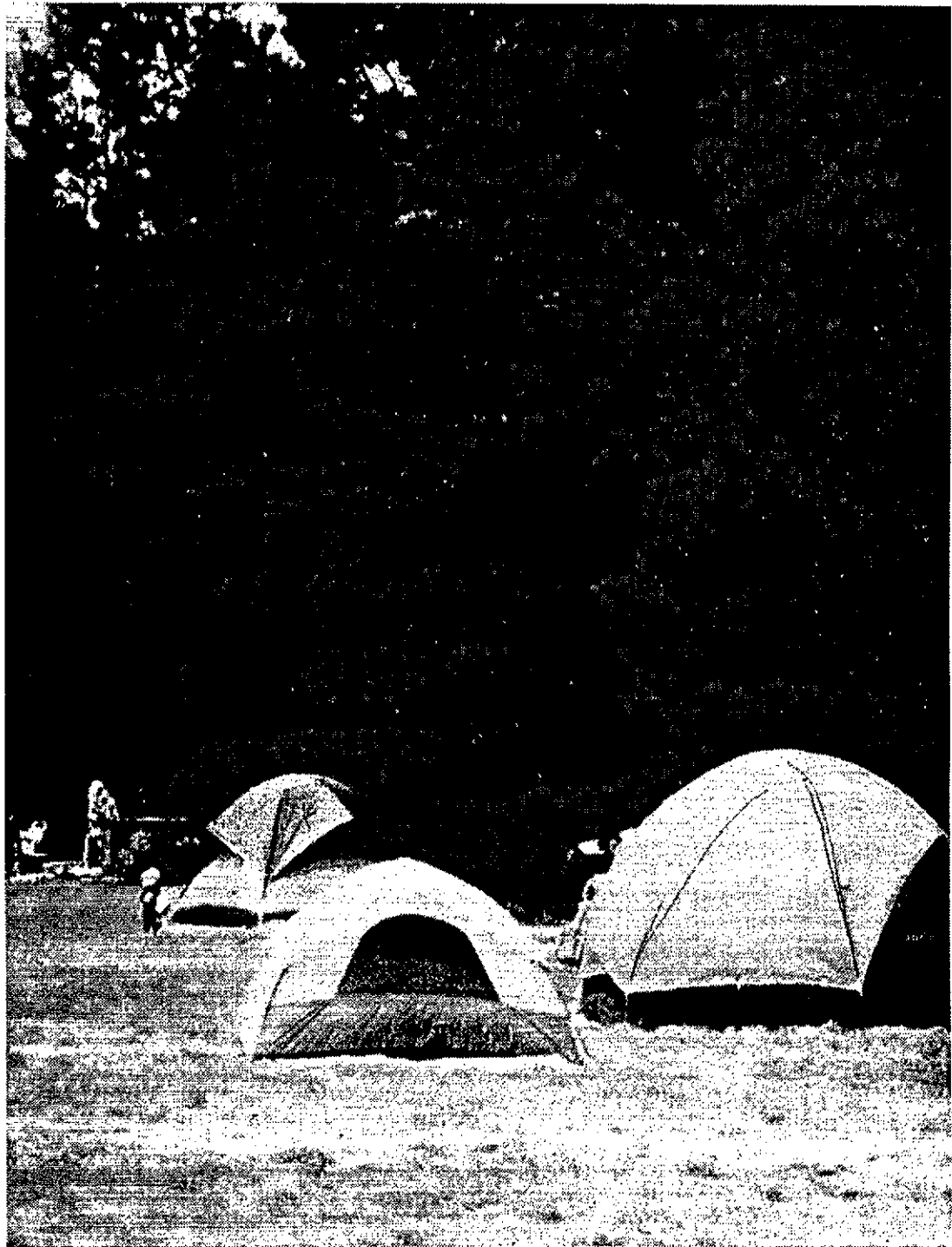


LEGEND

- State Park Boundary
- Existing Paved Roads
- Existing Unpaved Roads
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Fern Canyon Road/Trail
- Visitor Center exhibits and video programs
- Campfire Center
- Boardwalk trail at the Pygmy Forest
- Nature/Hiking trails
- Interpretive panels
- Self-guiding auto/bicycle tour

DRAWING NO. 26673	VAN DAMME STATE PARK INTERPRETIVE PLAN GENERAL PLAN - INTERPRETIVE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	REVISIONS	DATE	DESIGNED D. KECK
			APPROVED _____	DATE _____	DRAWN D. AMBAGIS CHECKED D. KECK

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Land Use Element



Land Use Element
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LAND USE ELEMENT

This Land Use Element describes the existing park areas and land use activities within and surrounding Van Damme State Park. It further identifies the park's problems, recreation deficiencies, resource sensitivities and physical site constraints. It also addresses the potentially conflicting goals of preserving resources while providing quality recreational experiences in the park.

From the above land use analysis a land use concept is developed, followed by goals and objectives for implementation. Proposed land uses are presented by specific area and major issues affecting the entire unit. The Proposed Land Use Plan portrays how lands will be used to achieve the harmony, or balance, between resource preservation and visitor use. It defines the pattern of appropriate human activity in a given area as well as non-use areas free from direct human influence. This Proposed Land Use Plan, combined with the Facilities Plan, determines the appropriate levels of use and park development, without adversely affecting its resource.

EXISTING LAND USE

Unit Description

Van Damme State Park lies on both sides of State Highway 1, approximately three miles south of the town of Mendocino. This unit includes approximately 2,150 acres, mostly upland forest, and 20 acres of an underwater area at Van Damme Beach, leased from the State Lands Commission. The unit extends about 3 miles inland encompassing nearly 55% of the Little River watershed. In addition, two separate parcels (80 acres each) exist north of the beach and west of the highway. The unit also includes an 80-acre wooded parcel 2-1/2 miles south of Van Damme Beach and east of State Highway 1 in Dark Gulch. Total ocean frontage in Van Damme State Park is 5,000 feet.

A complete description and evaluation of unit resources is provided in the Resource Element of this document. Refer to Table 3. (page 107) Summary of resources and a resource management outline for Van Damme State Park.

Recreational Use and Visitor Demand

Population Trends

The Population Projections of the California Department of Finance (DOF) forecast a 42% increase in the county's population, from 80,246 in 1990 to 113,945 by 2020. Because Mendocino County residents take advantage of the area's recreational opportunities, this will create a greater future demand for recreational facilities there. The DOF also projects that the combined populations of the San Francisco Bay Area and central Valley will increase 25% to almost 9 million. This growth can be expected to create an additional demand for development of recreational facilities on the Mendocino Coast.

Visitation

Van Damme State Park, one of the busiest units in the Mendocino District is enjoyed by more than 225,000 people each year. About 75% of these visitors are day-users at the beach parking lot, Chapman Point, and at the pygmy forest parking lot. These areas are used all year, but highest use generally corresponds with the abalone season and summer vacation periods.

FIGURE 3. Annual Visitor Attendance

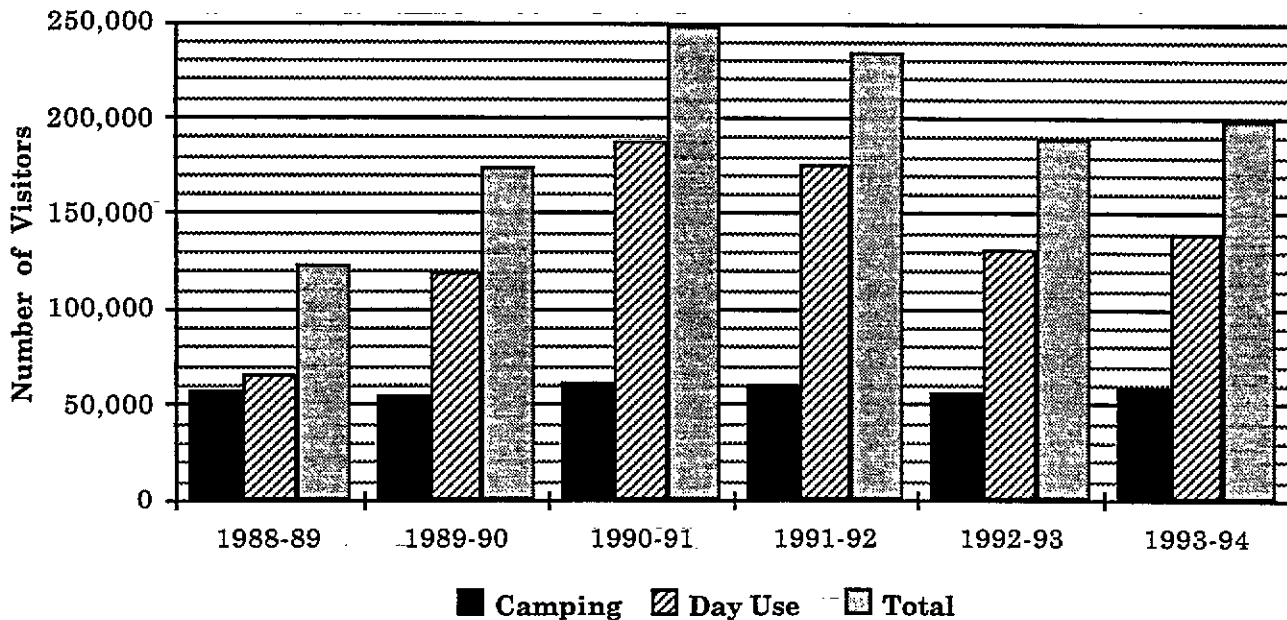
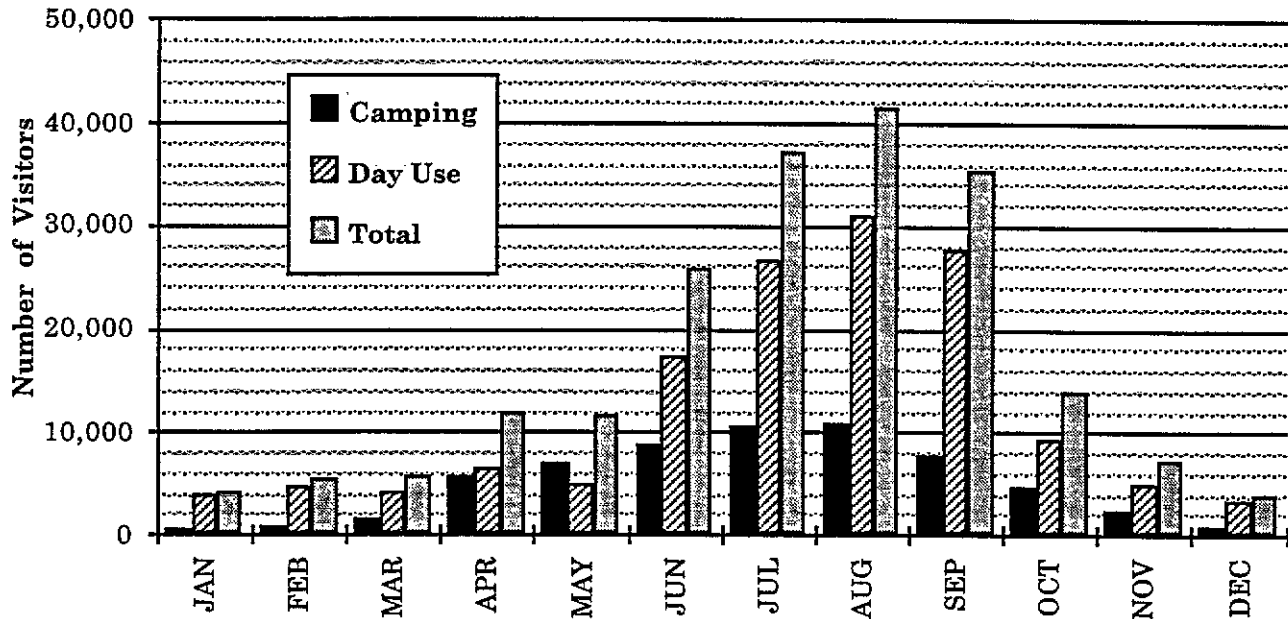


FIGURE 4. Monthly Visitor Attendance



Van Damme State Park has 74 campsites developed in three campgrounds: 13 campsites located near the visitor center; 7 campsites along the river; and 44 campsites in the Highland Meadow campground. These campsites accommodate tents or recreational vehicles and provide water, showers, and flush toilets. Campsites are available with wheelchair access and for group use. Day-use activities are associated with hiking trails, beach and near shore waters. The park is extremely popular with seasonal abalone divers who may occupy 90% of available campsites during the abalone season (April-June) (Aug-Nov). Beach parking is also full during these periods.

The Pygmy Forest is also a popular attraction for visitors to the Mendocino Coast. Visitors can either hike the Fern Canyon trail, or drive Airport Road, to a site within the park and walk among the dwarfed trees on a self-guided boardwalk trail. A variety of interpretive programs are also offered to visitors at the beach, the campfire center, and at the visitor center established in the old CCC-built recreation hall.

Access and Circulation

Regional Constraints

Access in this area is provided by Highway 1, which parallels the coast. The county Local Coastal Plan states "...it is the intent of the Legislature that State Highway Route 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone remain a scenic two-lane road" (Sec. 30254). Many visitors to the coast come from Highway 101 via Highway 128 along the Navarro River, or over Highway 20 through the mountains to Fort Bragg. Both of these are winding mountain roads. All of these routes constrain the amount and ease of travel to and on the coast.

The State Route 1 Capacity and Development Potential Study prepared by the county in 1990 estimates increasing future use and consequently lower levels of service for all segments of Highway 1 in the county. Because of the restrictive language in the Coastal Act, the study proposes only minimal improvements such as the installation of slow vehicle turnouts, passing and left-turn lanes, and signals at selected intersections (in Fort Bragg). It also calls for improved transit service along this corridor.

Another constraint on the growth of development for any purpose in the county is the lack of available water. As it relates to Van Damme State Park, this issue is discussed under "utilities" in the Facilities Element of this general plan.

Unit Access and Circulation

The entrance and primary access to Van Damme State Park is from State Highway 1 at the mouth of Little River. An entrance station is located 200 feet inland from the highway for visitor contact, information, and to confirm campsite reservations. Inland park roads lead to campsites along the river and to the upper meadow campground. The Fern Canyon trail provides access for hiking and bicycling on the paved portion of the old logging road deep into the canyon. This trail also provides walk-in access from the trailhead to environmental campsites (1.7 miles) and to the pygmy forest (3.5 miles).

The pygmy forest at Van Damme State Park is also accessible by vehicle, via Airport Road 1 mile south of the park entrance. The park access road branches off Airport Road 2.8 miles inland from Highway 1 a short distance past the county airport. A small parking lot and boardwalk serves visitors for self-guided tours of this area.

Existing park roads were established in 1937 and expanded during the 1950s and 1960s to meet increasing public demand. These existing routes followed original logging roads built in the 1860s and provide trail access along Little River and to the pygmy forest. Entrance and campground design stem from this original layout.

Beach access is located west of the highway, opposite the main park entrance. This day use parking is popular with recreation divers because of the calm waters, abalone habitat, and easy access for boat launching.

This state park also includes headlands parcels located at Peterson Lane and Chapman Road. Vehicle access is provided to an employee residence from Highway 1 via Peterson Lane, although private property restricts public access beyond this location. Random foot-paths provide the only visitor access to both state-owned parcels from a few informal parking locations along Highway 1.

Van Damme State Park — Spirit of Place

The "Spirit of Place" for Van Damme State Park is our perception of its uniqueness, its quality, and its intrinsic value as expressed both through nature and through human activity - past and present. What makes this place stand apart from all others? What values shall this general plan preserve?

Van Damme State Park exemplifies the spirit of the Mendocino Coast "diversity" - in recreation, outstanding scenic values, and significant natural and cultural features. The park offers visitor accommodations and opportunities to tent camp near the river - damp and cool, close to nature's sounds and smells; or in a sunny meadow campsite located higher in the mixed-pine forest, with an open grassy area and room for recreation vehicles, groups, or for children's play. Physical features provide easy beach access and calm waters for swimming, diving, or beachcombing. Hiking and bicycle trails offers family fun in the fern canyon and through the redwood forest. Interpretive programs present educational opportunities for school groups, campers, and day use visitors at the visitor center, and on the boardwalk through the pygmy cypress forest.

For many visitors to the Mendocino Coast, this place is known for the little giants — the pygmy cypress. Located on the upper terraces, the pygmy forest tells a story of geologic change — trees dwarfed by very old, impoverished soils. Away from the intense beach activity, visitors walk the Little River road now covered by a dense canopy of alders, Douglas firs, hemlocks, redwoods, and softened by fern canyon walls. Beyond the roadway, the trail climbs out of the canyon into a different landscape where the view is not through the forest but over the top of the aged dwarfed trees.

For some who venture through the Little River Canyon, in search of the "little giants", the excitement and adventure is diminished upon their arrival to the pygmy forest. At the end of the 3.5 mile trail is the park's "back door", with the service road access and view of the parking lot reducing its sense of discovery. Approaching the boardwalk, one may try to forget the man-made intrusions surrounding the site and look for the pygmy cypress; with some skepticism for the truth of their age, they begin to feel their strength and understand their sensitivity. The excitement of nature returns.

In this seemingly wilderness area, rich with abundant plant and animal life, a season occurs when the interest of nature gives way to the migration of abalone divers and underwater enthusiast. The park is then transformed from nature's campground into a hunting village, when after a successful hunt, divers pound the abalone generating rhythmic sounds that echo throughout the campground. One wonders if this modern day use doesn't in some way mimic its pre-historic use by Native Americans. This signals that time of year when Van Damme is occupied predominantly by recreation divers — wet suits, air tanks, and rubber boats dominating the scene. The diver's presence in the offshore underwater habitat and the park, overwhelms unsuspecting campers, and beach users who are unfamiliar with this seasonal sport. While the focus is offshore in the marine environment, the inland areas provide refuge for non-divers and a place of rest and gathering for groups and individuals sharing this common interest. As the crescendo subsides and the hunters migrate elsewhere, the village returns to normal, the park awakens and the spirit of nature emerges once again, until the next hunting season.

Little River Canyon



Existing Land Use Designations

State-owned properties at Van Damme State Park lie partially within the County of Mendocino Coastal Zone and classified by the county as *open space ; Lands not suited for development or lands most valuable in their undeveloped natural state*. Under the "State Park" classification, the Department's purpose is to preserve these outstanding natural, scenic, and cultural values, with improvements for the public's enjoyment and education, without major modification of lands, forest, or waters.

Much of Mendocino's undeveloped coastal zone provides habitat for diverse species of plants and animals, many of which are vulnerable to destruction or disturbance from human activities. The Local Coastal Plan provides specific policies and guidelines for appropriate land use and development of both public and private lands in the coastal zone. In state parks these resources are further protected by Department policies and specific resource management directives included in this general plan.

Van Damme State Park includes land uses which can be described by four different designations:

1. Natural Areas - occupies greater than 85% total park area.
2. Recreation Development - approximately 5% of the existing park.
3. Park Operations - (several locations) total less than 2% of park.
4. Education/Interpretive - (few locations) less than 1% of park.

These existing land use designations are described in greater detail below.

Natural Areas: (85%, approximately 1825 acres)

The predominant land use within Van Damme State Park is undeveloped natural areas; mainly open coastal terrace and upland forest, which accounts for 55% of the entire Little River watershed. The Department's primary objective in these areas is to preserve and protect the natural ecosystem processes, sensitive species, archaeological sites, and scenic values.

Natural Areas include:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| a. Underwater Area..... | 21 acres |
| b. Coastal Beach..... | 1700 feet, 5 acres |
| c. Coastal Bluff and Terrace..... | 200 acres |
| d. Riparian Areas and Wetland..... | 400 acres |
| e. Redwood, Bishop Pine, and Pygmy Forest..... | 1200 acres |

Recreational Development: (5%, 80 acres)

This designation includes areas with developed visitor facilities and provisions for recreation opportunities. This designation accounts for less than 10% of the total park area. However, recreation activity does occur on unit-wide trails and off-shore for water-oriented activities.

Areas developed for recreation include:

- a. Family and group campgrounds65 acres
- b. Environmental trail camps10 acres
- c. Day use picnic, parking, and restrooms5 acres

Park Operations: (<2%, 30 acres)

These small developed areas include facilities and services for park administration and maintenance. Includes of housing for park employees, and facilities for water treatment and solid waste disposal. Five acres of the Dark Gulch area, which includes one employee residence, is classified within this zone.

Areas developed for Park Operations:

- a. Administrative and Maintenance<10 acres
- b. Employee Housing3 locations, 15 acres
- c. Utilities<5 acres

Education / Interpretive Development: (<1%, 10 acres)

This designation recognizes facilities for education and interpretive services to the public. Interpretive panels and self-guided nature tours are also provided at the beach and the pygmy forest boardwalk.

Existing interpretive facilities include:

- a. Visitor CenterHistoric Building, 5 acres
- b. Campfire Center200 Persons, 2 acres
- c. Other3 acres

Access/ Circulation:

Provision for vehicular circulation, public and authorized vehicles, hiking and bike trails, and coastal access locations.

Existing conditions include:

- a. Paved roads: (visitor & non-visitor traffic)2.1 miles
- b. Unpaved roads: (bicycles, trail, non-visitor traffic) 1.4 miles
- c. Hiking trails: (hikers only) 2.3 miles

Non-park Lands:

This designation includes Mendocino County land use classifications for public and private lands located immediately outside this unit. The predominant land uses include:

- RR - Rural Residential
- FL - Forest Lands
- RL - Range Lands
- RMR - Remote Residential
- PF - Public / Semi-public Facilities

EXISTING CONDITIONS

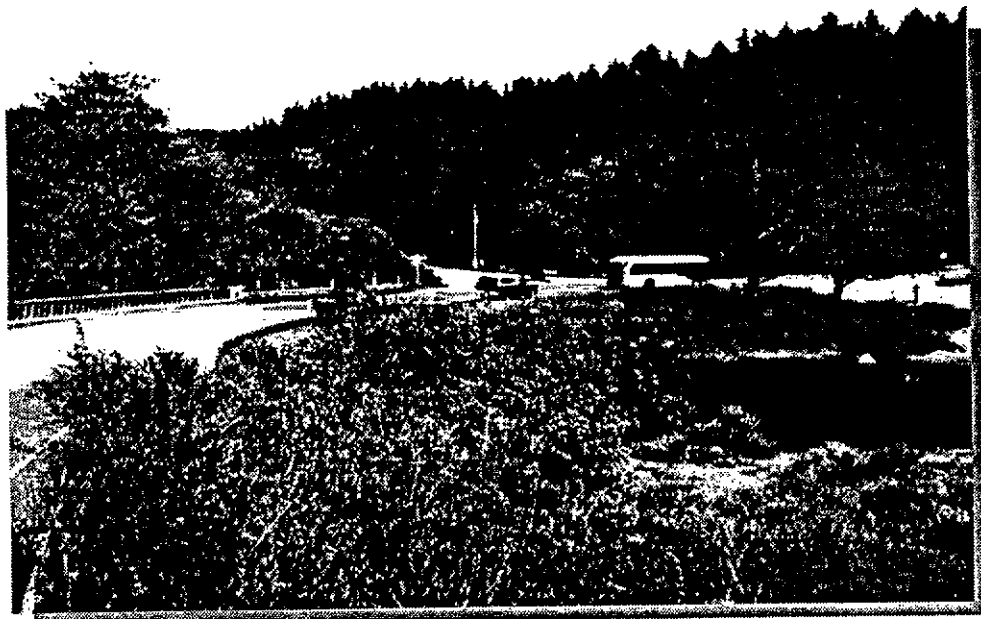
Park Areas

Apart from land use designations, the unit is also distinguishable by "Park Areas". These areas are defined by their geographic location or physical site characteristics, and/or the type of visitor activity which occurs. *For example:* The main park entrance and beach combined, sets the visitor's "first impression" - where visitor and local activities influence site planning, design, operations, and future considerations; as such the entrance and the beach are considered one "Park Area" for discussion throughout this general plan.

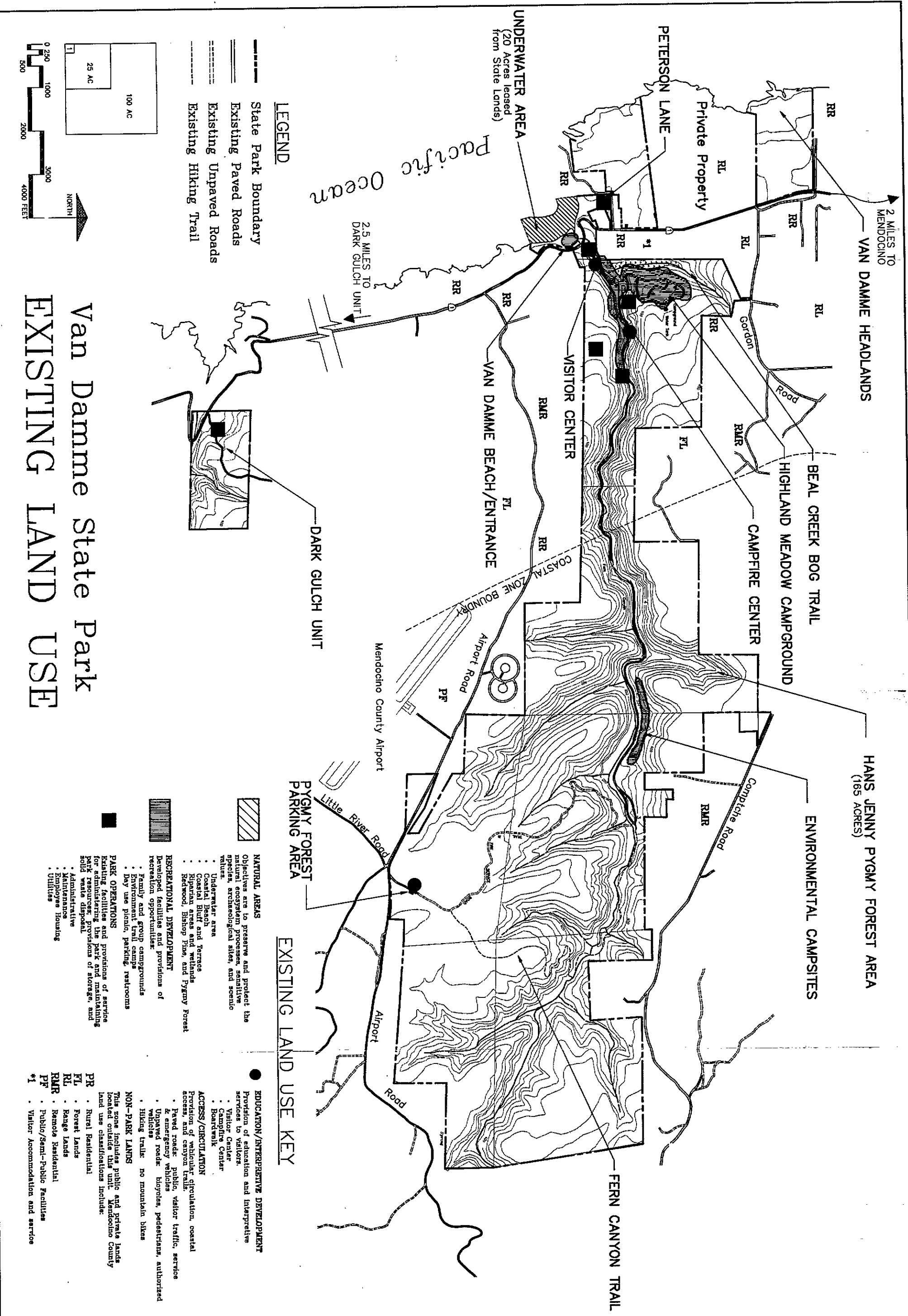
Van Damme State Park is divided into seven separate Park Areas. This section describes each area and presents an analysis of existing conditions, problems, and opportunities for each. These areas are listed below and identified on Map 12, Page 147.

Park Area Listing

- Area 1. Van Damme Beach and Entrance
- Area 2. Lower Little River Canyon
- Area 3. Highland Meadow Campground
- Area 4. Upper Little River Canyon
- Area 5. Pygmy Forest
- Area 6. Van Damme Headlands (Chapman Point & Peterson Lane)
- Area 7. Dark Gulch

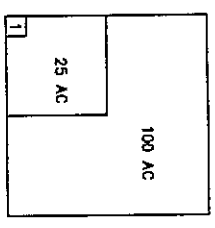


Main Park Entrance from Highway 1 at the mouth of Little River



LEGEND

- State Park Boundary
- Existing Paved Roads
- Existing Unpaved Roads
- - - Existing Hiking Trail



**Van Damme State Park
EXISTING LAND USE**

EXISTING LAND USE KEY

- NATURAL AREAS**
Objectives are to preserve and protect the natural ecosystem processes, sensitive species, archeological sites, and scenic values.
 - Underwater area
 - Coastal Beach
 - Coastal Bluff and Terrace
 - Riparian areas and wetlands
 - Redwood, Bishop Pine, and Pygmy Forest
- RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
Developed facilities and provisions of recreation opportunities.
 - Family and group campgrounds
 - Environment trail, camp
 - Day use picnic, parking, restrooms
- PARK OPERATIONS**
Existing facilities and provisions of service for administering the park and maintaining solid waste disposal.
 - Administrative
 - Maintenance
 - Employee Housing
 - Utilities
- EDUCATION/INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT**
Provision of education and interpretive services to visitors.
 - Visitor Center
 - Campfire Center
 - Boardwalk
- ACCESS/CIRCULATION**
Provision of vehicular circulation, coastal access, and canyon trails.
 - Paved roads: public visitor traffic, service & emergency vehicles
 - Unpaved roads: bicycles, pedestrians, authorized vehicles
 - Hiking trails: no mountain bikes
- NON-PARK LANDS**
This zone includes public and private lands located outside this unit. Mendocino County land use classifications include:
 - PR • Rural Residential
 - FTL • Forest Lands
 - RL • Range Lands
 - RMR • Remote Residential
 - RFR • Public/Semi-Public Facilities
 - *1 • Visitor Accommodation and services

2 MILES TO MENDOCINO

VAN DAMME HEADLANDS

BEAL CREEK BOG TRAIL

HIGHLAND MEADOW CAMPGROUND

CAMPFIRE CENTER

VISITOR CENTER

VAN DAMME BEACH/ENTRANCE

DARK GULCH UNIT

HANS JENNY PYGMY FOREST AREA (165 ACRES)

ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPSITES

FERN CANYON TRAIL

Mendocino County Airport

PYGMY FOREST PARKING AREA

EXISTING LAND USE KEY

**VAN DAMME STATE PARK
EXISTING LAND USE
GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE ELEMENT**

RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

DESIGNED D. KECK	DATE
DRAWN V. CLARKE	
CHECKED D. KECK	

DRAWING NO.
26047
MAP
11

AREA 1

Van Damme Beach & Entrance - *Existing Conditions*

The entrance to Van Damme State Park is located off Highway 1, south of the Little River bridge and directly across from the beach parking lot. In contrast to other Mendocino park units, the highway grade traverses down a 60-foot bluff from both north and south directions to the beach and park entrance at nearly sea level. The views are expansive, but driving this narrow winding road requires complete attention to the activities at the unit entrance and access to the beach parking lot. The close proximity of the Little River bridge to the park access and egress hampers easy traffic movement. Logging trucks, highway speeds, and increased visitor and local traffic compound this problem. The existing highway alignment, which has no left-turn or deceleration lanes, does however have good sight-distance in both directions. The obvious need for caution seems to promote safe driving by users of the area.

The entrance station for visitor contact and information is located 200 feet inland from the highway. This predominantly open space area includes paved roadways with a few parking spaces, a garage and mowed turf areas (previously developed with a ranger station and employee residences). This entrance zone bears little resemblance to the natural scenic beauty of the original Little River Mouth. The natural scene improves as the road progresses beyond the entrance station and connects with campgrounds and canyon trails. The vegetation thickens along the river and the canyon narrows the road corridor as it penetrates further into the park.

West of the highway is a small sandy beach adjacent to 1500 feet of rocky shoreline, a paved parking lot, and two small-scale restroom structures. This parking lot conveniently serves as a day use access for local and Bay Area recreation divers, as well as for campers staying in the park. This beach is one of the few locations where Highway 1 has close contact with the water for easy access of recreation divers. Small rubber boats are trailered here for easy access to the calm waters. Dive clubs often use this area for beginner's dive training. Although no picnic facilities are provided, highway travelers often stop at this beach parking lot to enjoy a picnic lunch and observe the beach activity. The demand of these two activities exceeds the current 70 car parking capacity during the peak abalone season and on fair-weather weekends. Currently, day-use parking and user fees are not collected at this location. This parking lot is also used for enroute camping during the off-season by self-contained recreational vehicles. These users are required to pay an overnight fee and to move from this space on the morning of the following day.

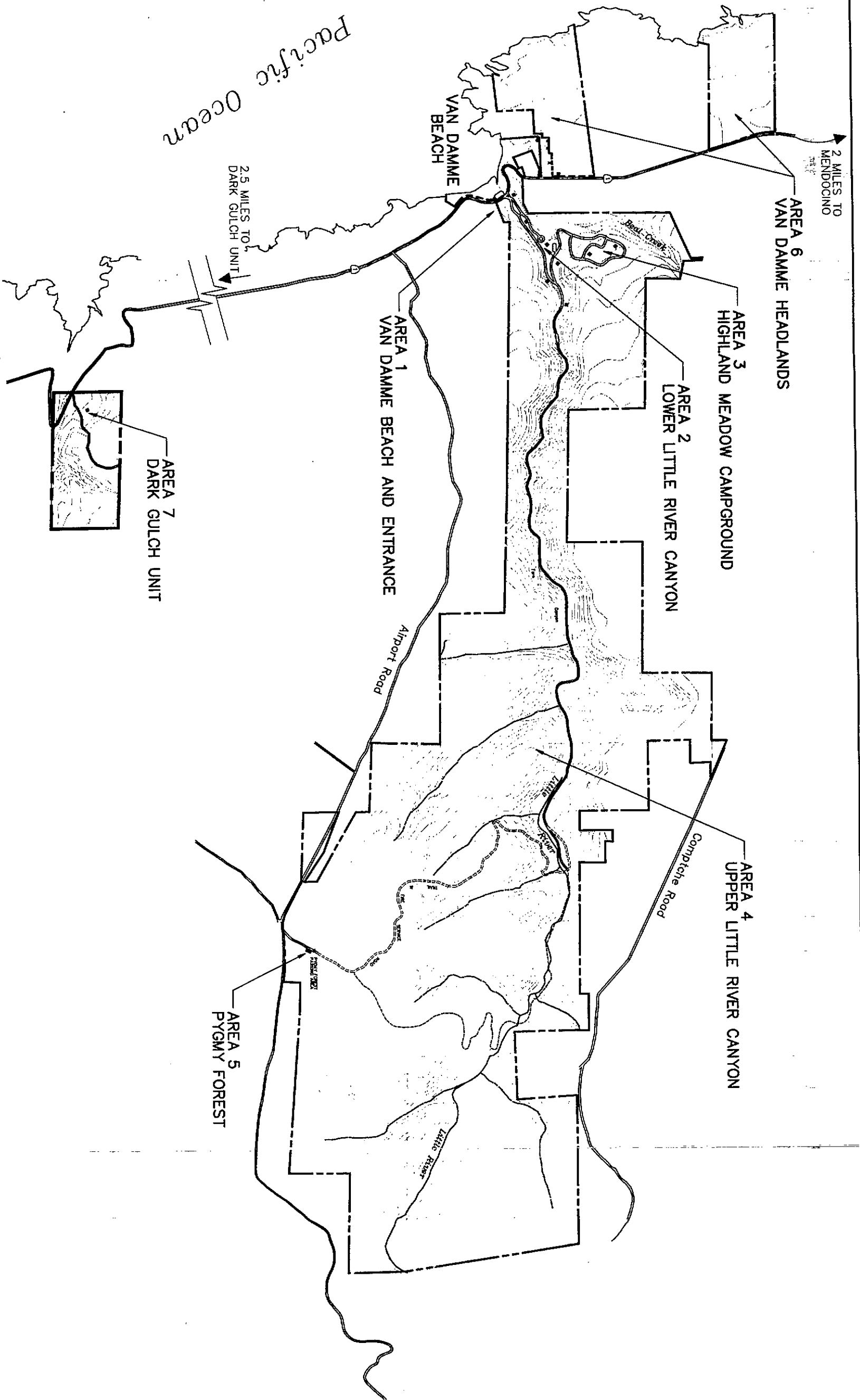
Highway 1 is designated a two-lane scenic highway along the Mendocino coast. Increased use, with larger recreation vehicles, high-speed traffic and logging trucks, reduces the visitor enjoyment of the ocean view and its scenic beauty. The Van Damme State Park entrance and beach parking lot remains open at all times, with no gate closures or restricted after-hours use. Vehicle access is provided directly from Highway 1 where there is no deceleration lane, or turning lane, for southbound traffic. Highway improvements are being made in specific locations north and south of Van Damme State Park to accommodate safer traffic movements for an increasing number of cars and recreation vehicles. The visual impact of more asphalt pavement and vegetation loss as a result of highway improvements is a major concern, and necessitates design criteria for new roadway construction, particularly through park areas.

A comprehensive development plan has not been done for the park entrance since the early 1930s. Years of changing uses and construction projects has left the existing entrance poorly designed and inadequate to meet the visitor and operational needs.

The beach parking lot receives heavy use, with peak use occurring during the summer months. The parking and traffic situation is sometimes aggravated by cars and trailered vehicles, RV's, and pedestrians all crisscrossing the highway between the park entrance and the beach. The logistics of enroute campers leaving and day use vehicles entering activities often presents a problem. The recreation vehicles occupy several car spaces and the campers want to stay and enjoy the day-time beach activity presenting a parking space management problem.

The entrance road and parking lot design was restricted by the Little River bridge location and the existing highway alignment. It has not been possible to provide left-turn lanes or signal devices within the existing Caltrans right-of-way and in the short distance between the bridge and park entrance. To meet Caltrans standards for a highway intersection of this type would require widening the bridge and roadway, with highway encroachment into park property. The short length of the entrance road between the highway and existing contact station also does not allow sufficient space for the back-up traffic during visitor contact and campsite registration.

The mouth of the Little River is a significant natural and visual resource, impacted by previous park and highway development. Land use and development objectives, in addition to the resource management directives established by this plan, should include visual enhancement of the park entrance and beach corridor, as well as improved circulation. To meet these objectives, this general plan will establish



Van Damme State Park
PARK AREAS

- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - ==== Existing Paved Roads
 - Existing Unpaved Roads

DRAWING NO. 26766	VAN DAMME STATE PARK PARK AREAS GENERAL PLAN - RESOURCE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION APPROVED _____ DATE _____	REVISIONS	DATE	DESIGNED D. KECK
					DRAWN D. AMBAGIS
					CHECKED D. KECK

guidelines for future highway improvements, designated pedestrian routes, parking, signing, vegetative screening, and facilities for visitor contact and public information.

The main planning issues discussed in this plan for Area 1 include:

- (a) Maintaining safe and easy vehicle access.
- (b) Accommodating recreation divers and park visitor needs.
- (c) Protecting and restoring natural resource and scenic values.

AREA 2

Lower Little River Canyon - *Existing Conditions*

Area 2 includes the Beal creek wetlands, the visitor center, and the campsites located in the riparian zone up to the first river ford and trailhead parking lot. The Fern Canyon Road and Little River physically separate the different activities within Area 2. However, most facilities are close together and visible to each other, and they are generally perceived as one larger area.

Visitor Center & Campsites #1-13

This area includes the visitor center and vicinity, with campsites located along the Beal Creek and Little River corridors. Within this 20 acres, there is a little of everything — a visitor center, family and group camps, employee housing, a campfire center, historic sites and features, wetlands, trails — all situated along the Little River and connected by a paved road and bridges. This mixed land use and diverse recreation activity reflects the typical visitor use occurring at Van Damme and other Mendocino state parks. Activities such as hiking, diving, and bicycling are popular with as families and groups, or by individuals exploring and enjoying the inland trails and offshore marine area.

This area also has historic and cultural resource value. It is the site of a lumber mill, built in 1864, and later the recreation hall which was built by the CCCs in 1940 and has now been restored for use as a visitor center. No physical features remain from the earlier mill operation. The CCC built roads, trails, and campgrounds on Little River during the 1930s, and established much of the facility layout and visitor use patterns that presently occur.



Family campsites located across from the Visitor Center

Located beyond the entrance station is a two-way road which provides access to the Visitor Center parking lot and campground. A loop at the end of this 650 foot roadway provides for a vehicle turnaround and access to the restroom building. A footbridge across the Little River provides pedestrian access to this restroom for the nearby group camp. When exiting this area, most visitors choose to use a short road parallel to the main entrance road, through the trailer dump-station.

The few campsites (#1-13) in this area are desired by some campers because they are centrally located, warmer, and are situated near park facilities and a mowed grassy area. This campground however, resembles a group camp. Because of its openness there is little privacy, and exposed to the heavy and the busy activity associated with the day-use parking for the visitor center. The large percentage of abalone divers who cluster tents and large numbers of people in family campsites increase this activity level.

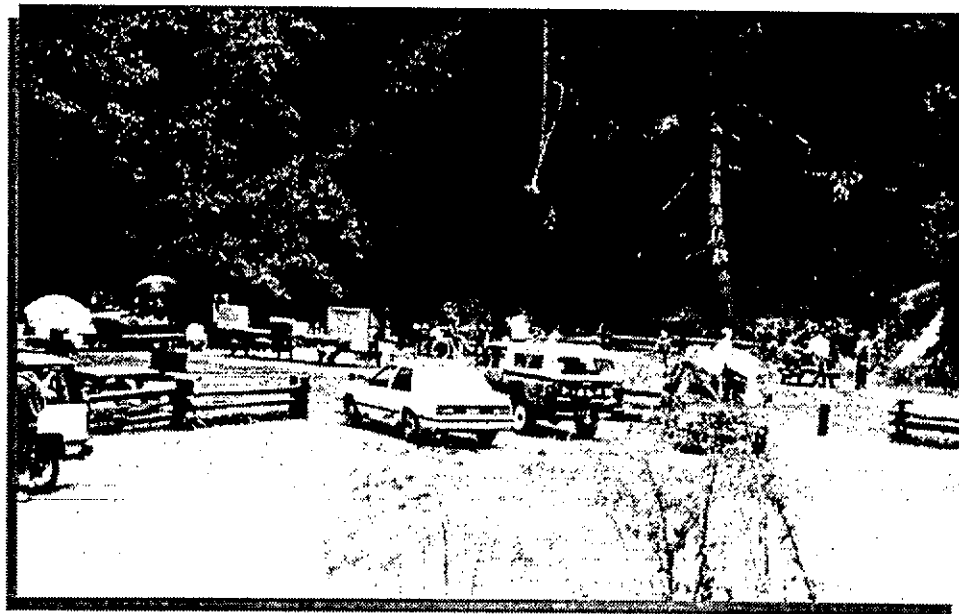
Campsites #14-30 - Existing Conditions

Along the main park road, beyond the visitor center, are 17 family campsites situated within the Little River corridor. All sites are accessible from the main road and situated close to the river bank. Campsites located before the first river bridge are in open view from the adjacent group camp and nearby employee residence, while others are situated in the thick riparian vegetation under the forest canopy.

Fern Canyon Road (main park road) parallels the Little River and crosses back and forth at several locations. Vehicle turnaround is impossible beyond the restroom until you reach the trailhead parking lot. Campsites are located in the riparian zone where the road corridor widens enough to accommodate a parking spur and tent site. These few sites offer greater privacy from neighboring campers and easy trail access. However, the day-use traffic on this road (hikers, vehicles, and bicycles) all impact the wilderness camping experience and damper conditions prevail for campsites located near the river and under this tree canopy. Resource concerns have caused park management to increased the monitoring of campsite use and its effect on both the rate of riverbank erosion and also the potential impact on the Little River plant and aquatic habitats.

Group Camp - *Existing Conditions*

The existing group camp is located off Meadow Road directly across from the employee residence where Little River and Beal Creek meet. With a 40-person capacity and large open parking lot, the group camp will accommodate either tents, tent trailers, recreation vehicles, or combination of all three. The Little River footbridge on the Bog Trail connects the group camp with a combination restroom and shower building a short distance away. This facility is shared between this group camp and campsites (#1-13) located near the visitor center.



Abalone divers enjoy the group camp facilities

During the construction of new entrance facilities and the addition of a trailer sanitation dump station, the group camp was relocated to this site from the entrance area. The existing site is the only developed group camp in the park and is popular with dive clubs, as well as recreation vehicle clubs.

The group camp parking lot is in full view from the surrounding area, especially from Meadow Road which comes down from the highland meadow campground. This lot filled with cars or recreation vehicles distracts from the park's natural beauty. The house located directly across the road is also in direct view from the road and campground and has a visual impact on this natural setting. The scenic values of the Little River canyon and Beal Creek would be greatly enhanced with additional vegetative screening of these facilities, or their removal. The areas visual setting improves on weekdays and during the off season, when fewer numbers of people and cars are present.

Employee Residence #7 - Existing Conditions

This residence is located across from the group camp on Meadow Road. The house was built by the CCCs for the San Francisco World's Fair and moved to this site in 1940. Subsequent land acquisition and park development has placed this residence somewhat in the center of the public use area, surrounded by campgrounds and visible from the park road and adjacent group camp. The house is considered architecturally and historically significant, as an example of the CCC's typical construction style of that period. It is currently occupied by a park employee and has been maintained to prevent deterioration of the historic fabric, but is not completely restored.

The current use of the house for an employee residence is historically correct, and the resident can provide area surveillance and quick response during park emergencies. However, the house and related activities are highly visible at this location which detract from the "Spirit of Place" in this otherwise natural park setting. Overnight and day use recreation facilities occupied this site since the 1930s, along with other CCC buildings and structures long since removed. Public use of existing buildings is generally more acceptable to park visitors than use as an employee residence, with exceptions for providing camp security, law enforcement, and a ranger contact during emergencies. Appropriate adaptive uses for this building include: unit office, "park host", hostel, environmental education programs, docent office, or storage.

AREA 3

Highland Meadow Campground - *Existing Conditions*

This 44 site campground is the largest at Van Damme State Park, and is named for its location 200 feet above the canyon floor. The campground access (Meadow Road) is a two-lane road which follows the contours above Beal Creek looping around the campground perimeter. The campsites are situated in Bishop pine forest, with a central grassy area dotted with a few trees. Two restroom buildings are located in the campground, one with showers.

This campground, in contrast to the Little River campsites, has sparse tree cover, with greater open space and warmer site conditions. Site drainage has not been a problem, and resource values are not as sensitive as in the other campgrounds located near the wetlands and in the riparian zones.

Dive groups utilize the open space to cluster tents and share individual campsites with friends. The sunny location also helps divers dry out their dive gear at the campsite. Abalone is cleaned near the water source at the roadside and debris deposited in trash containers, which are deodorized and picked up on a frequent basis. Extra vehicles and boat-trailer parking can become a problem when the campground is filled at capacity.

A few hiking trails originate from this campground, with connections to the Bog trail, campfire center, and into the forest at higher elevations to the north and east.



Highland Meadow Campground

AREA 4

Upper Little River Canyon - *Existing Conditions*

This area includes the Little River canyon and forest areas between the trailhead parking lot and pygmy forest. Steep terrain with Douglas fir and redwood forest on both sides of Little River and Bishop pine on the drier, upper slopes characterise this area. Fern Canyon Road parallels the Little River 3.5 miles to the pygmy forest. This road was built during the 1930s to serve logging activities, and later was improved by the CCCs for public recreation purposes. Visitor traffic is presently restricted beyond Ford No. 1 and the trailhead parking lot. An 8 car paved parking lot served both day use hikers and also campers walking in to ten environmental/trail camps located one mile beyond the vehicle gate. Ford No. 1 has been removed and temporary parking is provided at nearby campsite locations, until a vehicle bridge can be constructed. The park water supply and treatment facility is also located at this trailhead.

The road continues (unpaved) 1.4 miles beyond the trail camps from 200 ft. to the 600 ft. elevation. Once an old logging road, it presently serves as a fire and service access road to the pygmy forest and is used by some equestrians and mountain bike enthusiasts.

The fern canyon nature trail begins at the end of the paved road, and continues 2.3 miles to the pygmy forest boardwalk and parking lot. This trail, designated for hikers only, follows up the river canyon, ascending moderately 200 feet to the edge of the pygmy forest.

AREA 5

Pygmy Forest - *Existing Conditions*

Van Damme State Park includes one of the most popular scenic attractions on the Mendocino coast, *the Pygmy Forest*. This is not the only occurrence of Mendocino pygmy cypress forest on the Mendocino coast, or even the most spectacular. However, this particular site is easily accessible by car from the main highway and county road, to a 35-car parking lot inside the state park. Volunteers built a raised boardwalk for guided and self-guided tours of this area. This allows a large number of visitors to see the dwarfed trees, without trampling this sensitive resource area. The boardwalk also provides for disabled access.

A gated fire/service road continues from the Pygmy forest parking lot 1.4 miles to the paved Fern Canyon Road at the Little River. Mountain bikes and equestrians occasionally use this service road for access to the river. The fern canyon nature trail also links the pygmy forest to the river on an alternate trail route for hikers only.

Currently, the access from Airport Road to the Pygmy Forest parking lot is uncontrolled, other than occasional ranger patrols. A day-use fee is not collected and no restrooms or water facilities are provided. The parking lot is also used as a trailhead for day use hikers and can not be closed until the staff is sure that all persons have left park trails.

AREA 6

Van Damme Headlands - *Existing Conditions*

The Van Damme headlands lie north of the main entrance and west of Highway 1. The state owns two parcels on the headlands, located between Peterson Lane and Chapman Road. These two parcels are divided by a privately-owned parcel, the 160-acre Spring Ranch, which has been recently considered for state acquisition. The total acreage, including Spring Ranch, is approximately 420 acres, with 6,000 feet of ocean frontage. Footpaths lead from the highway for a half-mile across public and private lands to the rocky shoreline where views open up from 180 to 360 degrees. The headlands provide a pleasant transition between the highway noise and sounds of ocean waves, wind, and shorebirds. This area is mainly enjoyed by divers, nearby residents, and visitors to the local inns. Presently, there are no day-use facilities developed on the headlands. Access is limited by the few parking spaces available along the highway shoulder.

The existing land uses within the Highway view corridor are comprised mainly of agriculture, grazing, rural residential, and open space. The topography varies and the vegetation of the headlands ranges from dense to open, with ocean views partially obscured from the highway. Highway 1 at Little River is a two-lane scenic highway with driveway access to both commercial and residential properties. The scenic quality of the Little River community represents a typical rural-residential scene on the Mendocino coast. Although development and human influences have altered the natural landscape across state-owned and private properties, the headlands retains its inherent scenic beauty and spirit of place. Such visual resources are protected within the Mendocino coastal zone through the county's local coastal plan policies.

Peterson Lane and Chapman Road currently provide public and private vehicle access to the headlands from Highway 1. However, these roads become private roads for bluff-top residences a short distance from the highway. There is limited visibility for safe access and egress at some locations along the highway due to the changing topography.

The Mendocino County Local Coastal Plan (LCP) policy calls for State Parks to provide day use parking and develop coastal access at this location. The private property inholdings and non-contiguous state ownership presents an obstacle to implementing this policy direction. However, this general plan process evaluates opportunities and potential impacts of encouraging greater public use, with trail and facility construction on the headlands. The protection of coastal resources, scenic values, and concern for public trespass onto adjacent private properties are primary planning considerations.

The existing land use activities are destination oriented for divers, and scenic open space enjoyed by the Little River community. The passive (low intensity) recreational use of the headlands is partially due to the lack of developed public facilities. This may be considered to be its inherent quality and spirit of place that should be preserved. On the other hand, land use potential may be greater than its present use, with new opportunities to increase coastal access and to accommodate the recreation needs of visitors from outside this area.

Site features such as the gentle terrain and easy access to the bluff and shoreline at specific locations contributes to the existing use patterns on the headlands. Also, the non-native vegetation types and wildlife do not include widespread rare and endangered species, thus the existing grassland management has been more conducive to human use rather than treating it as a protected natural area.

Other site features, or conditions that presently limit public use include the existing private residences, property fences and gates, steep bluffs, Native American sites, lack of existing utilities, narrow highway shoulder, lack of beaches, and no formal public access and parking.

Peterson Lane - Headlands

This state-owned parcel includes portions of the property between Peterson Lane and Spring Ranch. Peterson Lane, a county road, provides vehicle access to both state and private-owned properties located on the headlands. The portion of this road beyond the ranger residence is a gated private road for the Little River Headlands Estates. Currently, no legal public access is provided beyond this point from Peterson Lane

towards the bluff and state park property to the north. However, informal trails and footpaths have been established between the private residences towards the open space on the bluff. A beach access trail located on state property leads down the cliff from Peterson Lane. This trail is used by local divers for access to a remote beach area sometimes inaccessible from the day use parking lot across the Little River Mouth.

The topography between Peterson Lane and Spring Ranch is relatively flat, with clusters of pine, cypress, and eucalyptus trees and mowed grassy meadows. The gentle terrain and short distance (half-mile) between the highway and bluff offers a pleasant walk, separating the visitor from the highway noise and impacts from surrounding development; while enticing them with the discovery of the outstanding ocean and shoreline views in a relatively remote setting. Most visitors are unaware that the headlands are a part of the park because of its proximity to private homes. There is little signing, little fencing, and no public parking, so the area receives low to moderate use, which is mostly by the local community and guests of the nearby inns.

Chapman Road - Headlands

This area is located north of the Spring Ranch property and south of Chapman Road. The site includes 80 acres of gentle coastal grasslands with sparse tree cover and excellent views in all directions. A high knoll, central to the site, affords a view for miles up and down the coast and inland across the coastal highway. During the abalone season Chapman Point is a popular destination for local recreation divers. No state park facilities are currently provided and day use is limited by the parking capacity along the highway shoulder.

Mendocino County owns approximately the first 100 feet of Chapman Road off Highway 1, with an easement provided into the state park property. A private road provides access beyond this location to a few residences on Chapman Point. Existing trees and shrubs partially screen the view of the headlands from the highway and adjacent private property. The vegetation also provides valuable wildlife habitat. This parcel contrasts with the Peterson Lane area because of its open and expansive views. The straight pathways crossing the site between the highway and shoreline indicate that present visitor use is primarily destination oriented for diving and for tidepool and marine life exploration.



View of the Headlands trail near Chapman Point

Spirit of Place

These headlands withhold a secret from the passing motorists: concealed from view and set aside from the park proper, the headlands and their surroundings offer both peace and excitement. A place that comes alive when wind and waves unleash their energy against the bluff, creating forever changing rock sculptures and sea caves. On the terrace, tree masses are contained by the annual mowing practice of the grassland, leaving open meadows linked together by footpaths from the highway. A succession of open space and tree-sheltered areas provide an easy transition between the bluff and the highway - separating sight and sound, the influence of man and the power of nature, while each turn in the path captures a different view. Van Damme, the visitor's first opportunity to experience the bluff edge north of the Navarro River - most are unaware.

Adjacent Private Property - Spring Ranch

On private property (Spring Ranch) a few barn structures remain on the open terrace and grazing sheep are still visible from the highway. These features reflect the picturesque rural setting of a fading agricultural scene, that once represented the Mendocino Coast. Historically, most of the coastal terrace was open grassland with few native trees and ranching was the prominent land use. Few changes have occurred at this site, and Spring Ranch still contributes to the scenic beauty of the entire headlands. Although no public access is provided through this portion of Spring Ranch, the visual connection between state and private parcels enhances the open space and total quality visitor experience. Bluff trail connections between north and south park areas are desirable considerations.

The main planning issues for this area focus on the shoreline and bluff trail access; visitor parking; and compatibility of public use with the surrounding residential community.



View of the coastal bluff on the Spring Ranch property

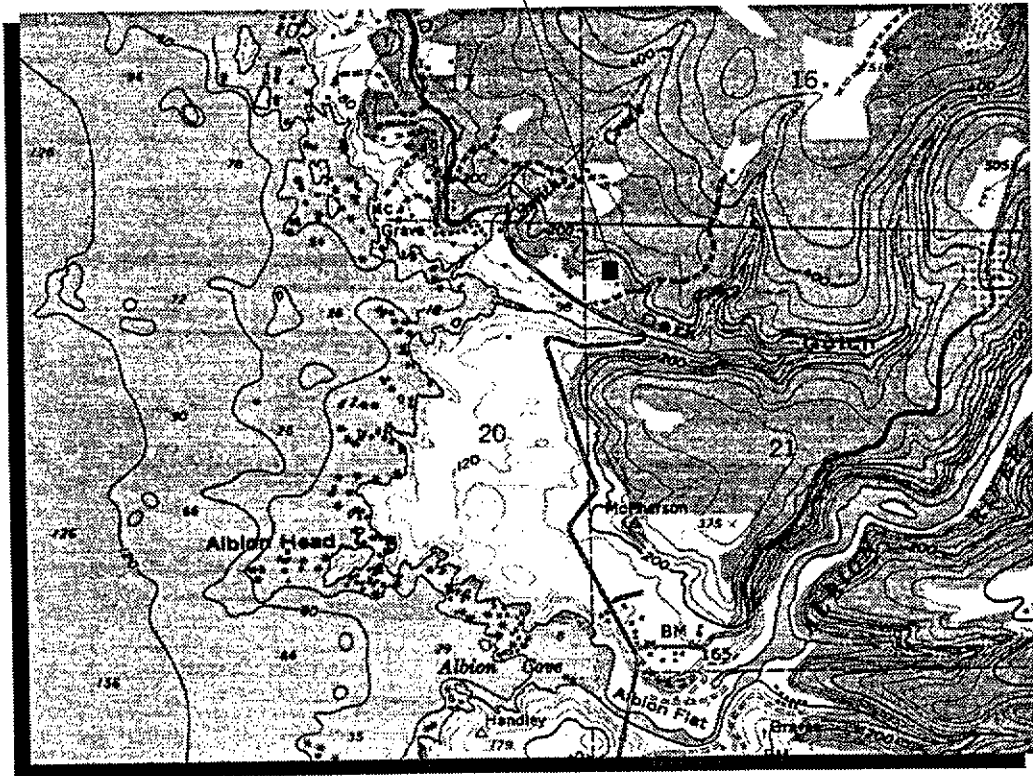
AREA 7.

Dark Gulch - Existing Conditions

Dark Gulch is an 80-acre wooded parcel located 2.5 miles south of the Van Damme entrance and east of Highway 1. Vehicle access is provided from Highway 1 to an employee residence on this parcel, with a right-of-way easement developed to a private residence further inland.

Since this parcel is separated from the park and has no outstanding scenic or recreational value, public facilities were not developed. The winding highway alignment and high traffic speeds through this area also make public access difficult.

*Employee residence located on
an 80 acre parcel in Dark Gulch*



CARRYING CAPACITY

The Public Resources Code requires that the carrying capacity of a park be established as a part of the general plan process, and that subsequent attendance at the unit be held within the limits established by the General Plan. The carrying capacity for recreation lands is defined in this plan as the number of people a recreation resource can accommodate and "still maintain a desirable landscape quality" for a given recreational experience.

This concept assumes that there is an optimum or desirable combination of users, activities, density of use, timing of use, and management of resources and users. Theoretically, it assumes that it is possible to match demand to supply, and produce the sustained product service — the park recreation experience.

From a park planning and management viewpoint, this concept is important to:

- prevent deterioration of resources and overuse
- protect visitor safety
- provide visitor satisfaction
- allow for multiple use where appropriate
- classify/zone park lands for visitor use
- analyze environmental impacts of visitor use
- prepare park master plans and detail site design
- manage visitors

When applied to a state park, where the emphasis of planning and management is on preservation of natural resource values, the concept of carrying capacity implies that the natural processes and characteristics of an area are of primary importance, and form the basis for planning, design, and management. The importance and sensitivity of park resources are major planning factors, and the primary factors in determining a park's carrying capacity. Unfortunately, there is neither a scientific nor magic formula for determining the carrying capacity of a natural area. As a means of establishing carrying capacity, therefore, two methods of determining future levels of visitor use at Van Damme State Park have been established: (1) allowable use intensity and (2) visitor capacity.

Allowable use intensity graphically illustrates areas in which resource sensitivities and constraints will affect facility planning, correlating resource sensitivities with certain types and intensities of use. A discussion of allowable use intensity follows in the next section. Visitor capacity is the number of park visitors that can be accommodated in the park based on the capacity of the park's existing and proposed facilities and development, and is discussed in the context of the Facilities Element. (See page 227)

A necessary third component involved in determining carrying capacity is monitoring. As facilities are incorporated into the park and as visitor use increases, it will be essential to periodically assess the ability of the resources to absorb the use they are receiving, and to adjust use and facility capacities and proposals to adequately protect resource values.

Allowable Use Intensity

Allowable use intensity determinations establish the limits of development and use an area can sustain without adversely affecting the character and value of the scenic, natural, and cultural resources, and establishes limits that maintain the desired quality of experiences that the character of the park provides. Determinations are based on analysis and integration of three interdependent components:

1. ***Resource management objectives***
What is the purpose of the unit as identified in its classification? What specific policies for its management are contained in the Resource Element?
2. ***Visitor perceptions and attitudes.***
This is sometimes referred to as the "social carrying capacity." It involves, among other things, what recreationists perceive as an acceptable recreational environment; what degree of isolation or crowding is acceptable; what amount of site deterioration is acceptable; and other perceptions and attitudes pertaining to visitors' quality of recreational experience gathered from public input during the planning process, and through recreation planning research. Although difficult to quantify, this component is extremely important.
3. ***Impact on resources.***
What will be the impact of visitor and operational activities on the scenic, natural, and cultural resources? The potential impact of recreational development and use on natural, cultural, and scenic resources is assessed through ecological and cultural sensitivity and physical constraints analyses. This is perhaps the most important component in determining allowable use intensity.

Resource *constraints* are factors that would identify visitor use or facility development as unsafe, economically impractical, or undesirable. They are determined by evaluating such factors as the erodibility and compaction potential of soils, geologic hazards, slope stability and relief, hydrologic conditions, the potential for pollution of surface waters, and flooding. (See Map 4, page 35)

Sensitivities are conditions, locations, or values of resources that warrant restricted use or development to protect resources. Sensitivities are evaluated by considering such factors as the ability of the ecosystem to withstand human impact (ecological sensitivity), not only in the short term but also over a more extended time span; the fragility and significance of archeological and historical resources; vegetation characteristics such as durability, fragility, and regeneration rates; and wildlife considerations such as population levels, stability, and tolerance to human activity. Sensitivities may also include scenic resources; rare, threatened, or endangered plants, animals, and habitats; unique or scientifically important ecosystems and botanic features; and examples of ecosystems or other resources of regional or statewide significance.

Departmental experience and observations of recreation impact on sites, plus available research results indicate that sensitivity is correlated to a great extent with certain types and intensities of use. Resource sensitivity and its approximate correlation with types and intensities of recreational uses at Van Damme State Park are shown on the Allowable Use Intensity Map 13, page 165.

Other factors such as land use, socioeconomic considerations, and design criteria may indicate that a higher or lower use intensity is desirable in particular areas. If appropriate mitigations are feasible and can be incorporated in the planning process, higher use intensities may be acceptable. Conversely, if monitoring indicates that unacceptable resource damage is occurring, use intensities may be lowered.

Low Use Intensity - Category I

Areas include all of the marine environment, as well as areas severely constrained by soil conditions such as slope, dunes, beaches, and bluff faces; those with certain hydric conditions such as wetlands, seasonally flooded areas, and within 100-year flood and tsunami zones; and / or those with geologic hazards such as fault zones or landslides.

The low use intensity category also encompasses areas with high ecological sensitivities such as rare and endangered flora, rare natural communities, threatened and endangered wildlife and aquatic life and important habitats for these species. Areas with high cultural resource sensitivities such as Native American and important historic sites and features are included in this category.

In the low use intensity category, appropriate facilities include trails and existing roads monitored to avoid unacceptable damage to important resources. Facilities and uses associated with the Lower Little River campground will be carefully monitored to evaluate the condition and status of the Little River habitat. Sightseeing, beachcombing, hiking, nature study, picnicking, and primitive hike-in camping are representative of appropriate activities for this category.

Moderate Use Intensity - Category II

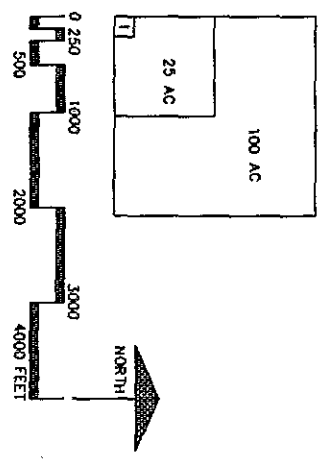
Areas include those moderately constrained by soil conditions such as slope, slow percolation, shrink-swell potential, and dusty conditions when exposed; hydric conditions such as high water table, seasonal flooding, and/or geologic hazards. Ecologically sensitive areas in this category are those with native plant communities that help define the character of the unit, and that provide habitat for native wildlife, and spot locations of sensitive flora and fauna. Moderately sensitive cultural resources such as historic features of undetermined importance are included in this category also.

Appropriate facilities in the moderate use intensity category are trails, roads, and buildings designed to withstand hazards associated with physical constraints, and to avoid or minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources. All other uses and activities compatible with Category I areas are appropriate here.

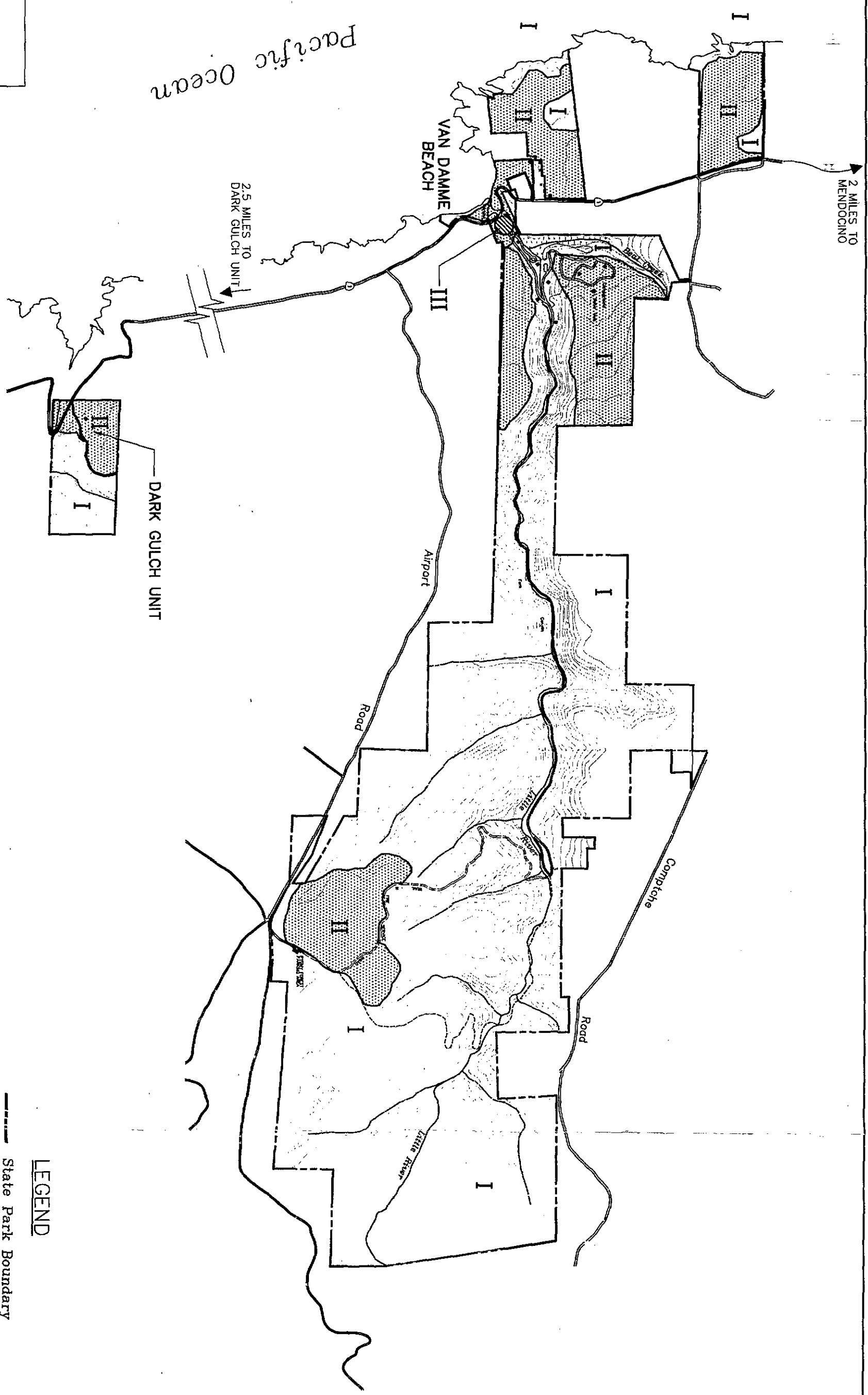
High Use Intensity - Category III

Includes lands that are not, or only slightly, constrained by soil conditions, hydric conditions, or geologic hazards, although seismic activity and severity are difficult to predict. In this category are areas with slight ecological sensitivities but that still contribute to the general character and appeal of the unit, such that large-scale disturbance in these areas would appreciably diminish the attractiveness and ambience of the unit as a whole. Slight cultural resource sensitivities to known sites and features are included, as long as no major resource modifications are undertaken. Appropriate facilities in the high use intensity category are trails, roads, and buildings designed to blend esthetically with scenic, natural, and cultural features, and to avoid large-scale disturbance and minimize impacts. Group activities, family camping, and all other compatible uses identified with Category I and II areas are appropriate in Category III.

Not all areas in a category share the same characteristics or are affected in the same way by the conditions that may influence them. Therefore, the Allowable Use Intensity Map is useful only for general planning purposes. When site-specific proposals for land uses or facilities are to be prepared, the proposed location will be checked for resource constraints and sensitivities and site-specific investigations may also be necessary. Visitor capacities are discussed in the Facilities Element following the list of existing and proposed park facilities. (See page 227)



Van Damme State Park ALLOWABLE USE INTENSITY



- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - I Low Use Intensity Areas
 - II Moderate Use Intensity Areas
 - III High Use Intensity Areas

DRAWING NO. 26767	VAN DAMME STATE PARK		RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA	REVISIONS	DATE	DESIGNED D. KECK
	ALLOWABLE USE INTENSITY		DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION			DRAWN C. HARRIS
	GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE ELEMENT		APPROVED _____			CHECKED D. KECK
MAP						
13						

PROPOSED LAND USE

The purpose of this section is to outline the findings, recommendations, and proposals for future land uses at Van Damme State Park. For some park areas, proposals are better described through a description of proposed facilities and improvements discussed in the Facilities Element of this plan.

Van Damme is classified a state park, encompassing large acreage with significant natural features. The beach, rocky shoreline, and canyon trails, with outstanding scenic and natural values, offer diverse recreation opportunities.

The current recreational use at Van Damme State Park is near its highest level that is consistent with resource management objectives. The park has minimum potential for expanding park facilities, without resource impacts and new land acquisitions.

The land use goals and objectives for Van Damme State Park are described below, followed by a land use concept established for this unit.

Land Use Goals and Objectives

1. Preserve and interpret this unit's outstanding cultural, natural, and scenic resources. Establish greater resource protection of the Pygmy Forest. Restore Little River habitat.
2. Enhance recreation opportunities or experiences, and maintain the appropriate level of park visitor use.
3. Improve public access and vehicle circulation. Maintain bicycle and pedestrian access into Fern Canyon.
4. Preserve and interpret the historic structures and features at this unit. Enhance district-wide interpretive exhibits and programs.

Land Use Concept

The Land Use Concept established for Van Damme State Park will remain generally the same as the present, with percentages of the park's natural and development zones remaining consistent with existing land use classifications.

Recreation and interpretive activities will continue at their present level of land use intensity. Expansion and/or relocation of recreation facilities may be considered. Coastal Access will be improved, and vehicle and trail access will be maintained through natural areas, with certain limitations imposed by operations and resource management directives.

Administrative and maintenance facilities will be kept to a minimum, satisfying daily unit needs. The unit's main operation functions will continue from a facility outside this unit, presently located at Russian Gulch State Park.

Sensitive resource areas in the unit (bishop pine, redwood, and pygmy forest areas) were closely evaluated for inclusion in a Natural Preserve. Planning considerations included specific areas, such as the Pygmy Forest, Little River watershed and riparian habitats, with provisions for maintaining existing trails and appropriate recreational activities. The marine resources offshore from this unit were also considered for preserve status.

Natural Preserves

The upper watershed of Van Damme State Park is biologically important due to a high density of sensitive plant species (6), three rare plant communities *including Mendocino pygmy cypress forest*, the existence of the northern spotted owl, and functioning anadromous fisheries with both steelhead and Coho salmon. The Pygmy Forest occurs on soils up to half a million years old and are highly sensitive to disturbance. Also, the redwood forest is approaching an old-growth condition and, as such, would be of great regional importance.

The Pygmy Forest at Van Damme State Park is designated a Significant Natural Area by the Department of Fish and Game. Also, the values of these ecosystems have been previously recognized by other land management agencies. Located adjacent to the unit's north boundary at Comptche Road are pygmy forest areas managed by the Nature Conservancy and under the U.C. Reserve System ownerships, named the Hans Jenny Pygmy Forest Reserve. In October 1992, the Department resolved that the Pygmy Forest and transition redwood forest lands on the north border of the unit be named the Hans Jenny Pygmy Forest Area. (See Appendix C)

The State Park classification, in itself, with certain physical constraints, such as soils and topography, provide a high level of resource protection for this unit. The Resource Element of this general plan establishes specific management directives for sensitive resources and that future management plans be prepared to ensure their long-term protection.

Through this general plan process, as much as 1500 acres of State Park lands were considered suitable for Natural Preserve sub-classification. Recreation and scenic values along Little River are significant as well. These natural areas extend beyond the Pygmy Forest, to include most of the Little River watershed, redwood forest, and riparian corridors at Van Damme State Park.

Public access to pygmy forest on the Mendocino coast is presently limited to Van Damme State Park with a parking lot and boardwalk; and the Ecological Staircase trail located at Jug Handle State Reserve. These areas have special biological interest and are managed for protection from off-site influences and impacts from inappropriate activities.

Selection Criteria

The intent of a Natural Preserve is to communicate natural resource values to the public, and also better define resource management objectives in the park neighborhood and the larger coastal Mendocino region. In those areas where interpretive objectives can be accomplished on-site and through continued park programs, preserve status may be unnecessary for resource protection.

Currently, resources within the Little River watershed are largely protected, and user impacts do not immediately threaten significant resources at Van Damme State Park. The unit does, however, contain sensitive pygmy forest, that may be threatened and warrant a higher level of preservation status.

The Little River Canyon is also enjoyed by a visiting public with diverse interests. User enjoyment has come from years of hiking and bicycling on the canyon trail. The paved road makes the canyon accessible for all visitors, including those with bicycles, or wheelchairs; also for maintenance and emergency vehicles.

The following criteria is provided from the Public Resources Code and Resource Management Directives for designating specific lands with *Natural Preserve* status. Please refer to the "Classification" section in the Resource Element (page 57) for definition of unit and sub-unit classifications.

Preserve Criteria:

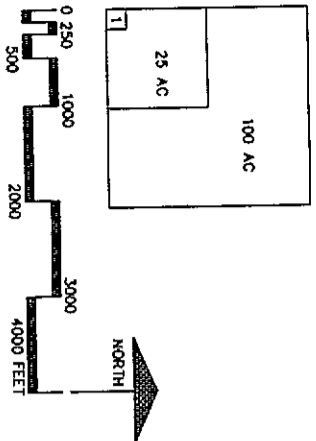
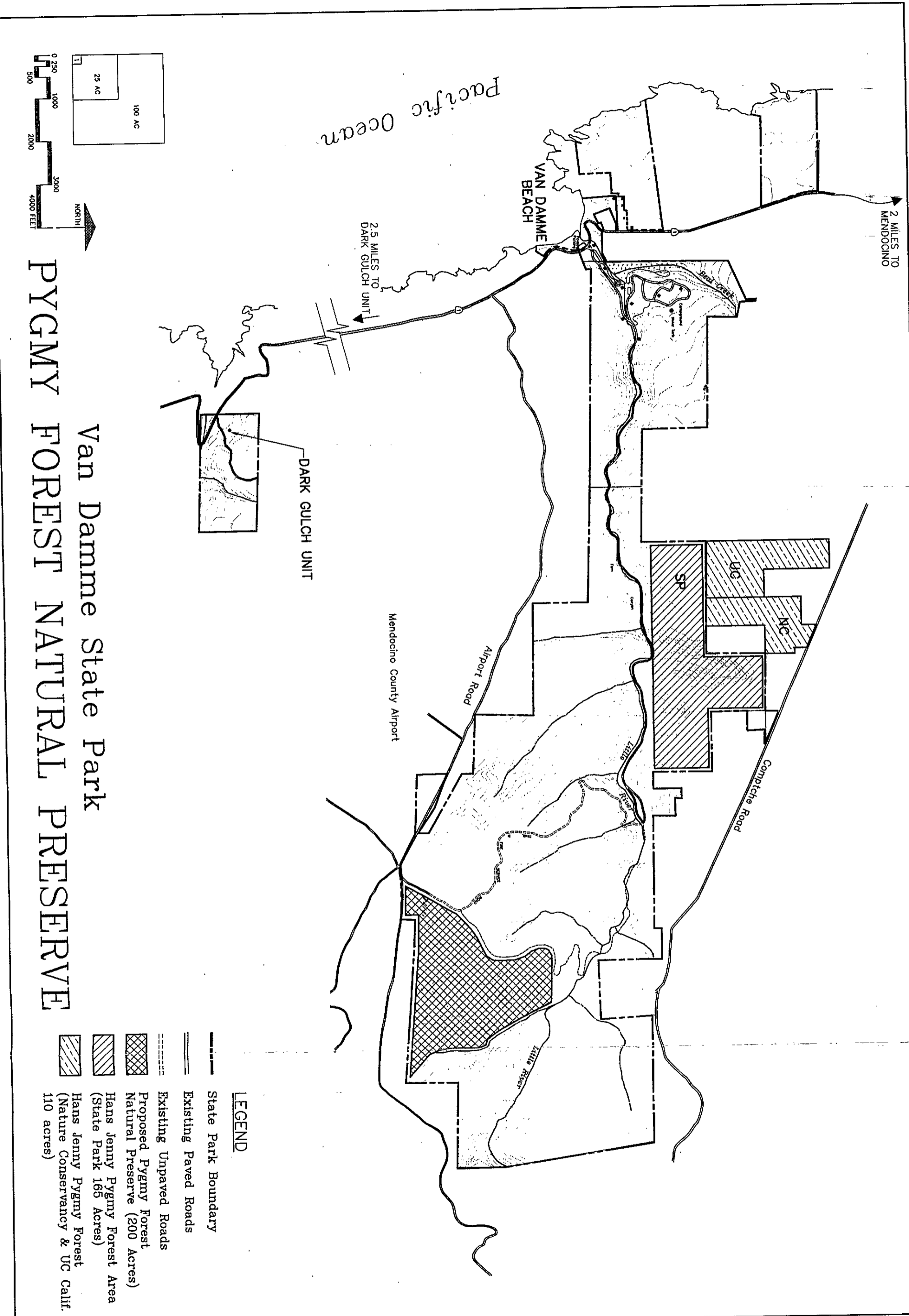
1. Distinct areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance.
2. Preserves rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystem.
3. Sufficient size to allow natural dynamics to interact - manageable ecologic unit.
4. Characterized by wildness in the sense of integrity rather than spaciousness.
5. Protects environmental and ecological integrity in relation to watershed influences.

Proposed Natural Preserve - Pygmy Forest

This general plan recommends classifying 200+ acres of Mendocino Pygmy Cypress Forest as a Natural Preserve. This area is described below and illustrated on the proposed land use plan (map 15, page 181).

Beginning at the intersection of Airport Road and the park road, the proposed Natural Preserve boundary would include the approximate area east of the service road and fern canyon trail, to a point 5,000 feet to the north. The northern limits would extend 1,000 feet eastward to Little River; the eastern boundary extends south 4,000 feet, parallel to an intermittent stream, to Airport Road. The southern boundary will follow the road 5,000 feet back to the intersection.

The proposed Natural Preserve will exclude the existing parking lot. New day use facilities will be constructed outside this designate preserve area, west of the existing service road, and shall be designed to avoid run-off into the Pygmy Cypress Forest.



Van Damme State Park PYGMY FOREST NATURAL PRESERVE

- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - Existing Paved Roads
 - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - ▨ Proposed Pygmy Forest Natural Preserve (200 Acres)
 - ▧ Hans Jenny Pygmy Forest Area (State Park 165 Acres)
 - ▩ Hans Jenny Pygmy Forest (Nature Conservancy & UC Calif. 110 acres)

VAN DAMME STATE PARK PYGMY FOREST NATURAL PRESERVE GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	REVISIONS _____	DATE _____	DESIGNED D. KECK
	APPROVED _____ DATE _____	_____	_____	DRAWN C. HARRIS CHECKED D. KECK
DRAWING NO. 26768	MAP 14			

Preserve Alternatives:

Several alternatives were considered for preserve status during this planning process; some with broader objectives and different priorities. Certain possibilities were considered for designating forested areas with large acreage and included existing facilities. These areas were not selected because they would severely restrict the current level of recreational use at this unit. However, regardless of boundary selection, resource protection and management programs shall be extended to non-preserve areas. *All resources shall be protected.* Other Natural Preserve alternatives which were considered in this planning process but not selected can be found in the Appendix A.



The marine resources offshore were also considered for preserve status

Land Use Proposals

AREA 1

Van Damme Beach & Entrance - Proposed Land Use

The main entrance to Van Damme State Park provides direct access from Highway 1 to inland roads, campgrounds, and trails. The new (1991) entrance station, paving, and utility upgrades presently serve the immediate operational and visitor needs. However, to achieve long-range park objectives the general plan presents a comprehensive look at this area's circulation, resources, aesthetics, and visitor activities, and provides the following recommendations:

1. Improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation at the Highway 1 entrance to Van Damme State Park. Provide design guidelines and make recommendations to Caltrans for bridge widening and highway modifications at Little River.
2. Maintain beach parking and improve small boat access. Increase beach picnicking, shoreline access for disabled persons.
3. Prepare an Area Development Plan for the entrance area to include Highway turning lanes, new location for contact station, longer entrance road for vehicle stacking, entry parking and turnaround, pedestrian trail and road crossings, and restoration of the riparian corridor.
4. Preserve and restore aquatic habitat, and enhance the scenic values at the mouth of Little River.

AREA 2

Lower Little River Canyon - Proposed Land Use

The Little River corridor has experienced decades of human activity and abuse; from the early settlement period with heavy logging, to campground development with roads, and trails located in the riparian and wetland habitat areas. Negative impacts on the flora and fauna are evident and intensive restoration programs have been initiated. Inventories of this area indicate that resource impacts are not irreversible. The Little River watershed and forest in the state park are protected and will sustain an appropriate level of public access and continued recreational use.

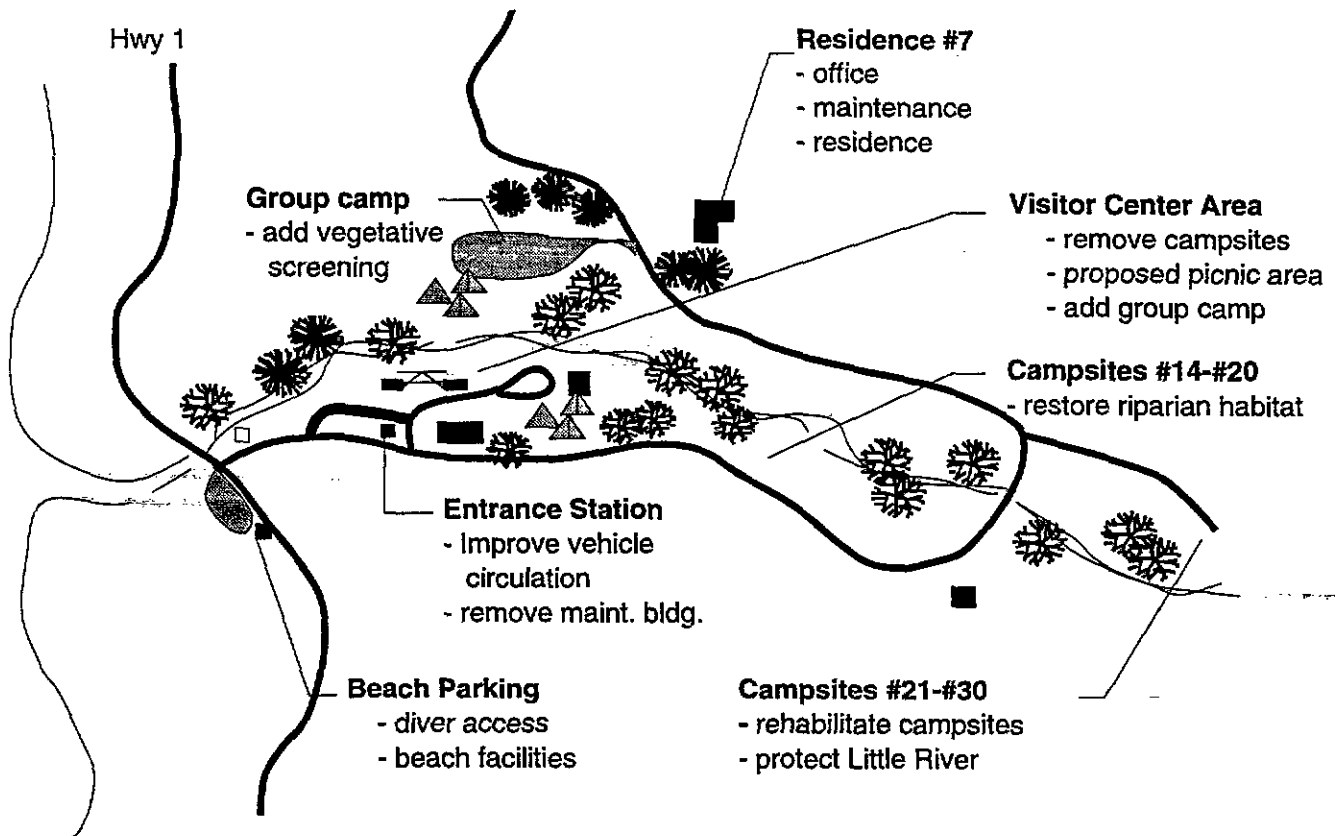


FIGURE 5. LOWER LITTLE RIVER CANYON - AREA 2

Generally, overnight and day use activities will continue in developed areas and on existing roads and trails. The number of family campsites in the lower river canyon will be reduced slightly, to minimize the impacts of erosion and compaction along the riverbank.

Visitor Center and Campsites #1 - 30 - Proposed Land Use

The area surrounding the visitor center will be designed for day use, with a second group camp developed in place of existing individual family campsites. The existing group camp across the river will remain.

The visitor center area will continue to provide interpretation through videos, publications, and exhibits for park visitors, as well as adequate parking for the visitor center and day use picnic area. Campsite parking and layout will change slightly for group camp and the conversion of family campsites to a picnic area that can double for enroute recreation camping vehicles.

Landscape maintenance and revegetation efforts will focus on restoring the riparian habitat and on increasing the amount of vegetative screening between visitor use areas.

Employee Residence No. 7 — *Proposed Land Use*

This house is considered historic and architecturally significant and shall remain at this location. The building's exterior will be preserved and the house interior and garage may be modified for appropriate adaptive use. Appropriate uses may include, but are not limited to: employee residence, hostel, park office, camp host, docent room, or garage storage for unit maintenance and housekeeping supplies.

The outdoor area surrounding this house is within critical view of the campgrounds and main park road. Outdoor activities, vehicle parking, and material storage shall be restricted, or screened, so they do not impact surrounding areas.

AREA 3

Highland Meadow Campground - *Proposed Land Use*

The existing Highland Meadow Campground will be retained for tent camping, with additional walk-in campsites proposed to the north. An improved access trail/service road is proposed to the new walk-in campground, with visitor parking established in the Highland Meadow campground.

During this planning process, other campground proposals were evaluated as alternatives include: environmental campsites and new trails; campground requiring new road and bridge construction; and additional group camps north and east of the existing Highland Meadow Campground. The extent of this new development was considered too costly, or potentially damaging to Bishop Pine forest and, therefore, was not included in this plan. The location proposed for group camps was also considered too close to the existing campground and adjacent private properties. It was determined that the higher noise level could disturb nearby residents and individual family campers.

AREA 4

Upper Little River Canyon - Proposed Land Use

The Fern Canyon Road provides a two-mile scenic trail along Little River, accessible to pedestrians and bicyclist during periods of low water flows. Hikers and mountain bike users have an additional 3.5 miles of trail (2.1 miles are open to hikers only) on alternate routes to reach the Pygmy Forest. The existing trailhead parking lot, located near the water treatment facility, is presently closed for public use. Vehicle access is no longer possible since the first ford was removed in a continuing program to restore fish migration upstream. Temporary parking is provided in nearby campsites until a seasonal bridge is constructed at this location. Recreational access will be maintained through the Little River Canyon. However, footbridges will be required after portions of the river fords are removed for fish habitat restoration. The river road/trail and new bridges should accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, wheelchairs, and small "Gator" or "Mule" type utility vehicles.

Additional hiking trails are proposed, with new access into the south and the east forested areas of the park. These trails will provide a connection to natural features like a waterfall, and also establish a loop trail system through different terrain. A 1 1/2 mile loop trail segment of the new forest trail should be made accessible for wheelchairs from the Pygmy Forest parking lot along the ridge to a canyon vista point above the Little River.

The existing environmental/trail camps located along the river road will remain, so long as the use of each campsite does not generate any adverse environmental impacts. Since the river fords are being modified downstream, an alternate vehicle access is necessary for camp facility maintenance. This access will require a vehicle bridge crossing the Little River, connecting the Fern Canyon Road to the service road, leading to the Pygmy forest parking lot.

The Resource Element and Facilities Element of this general plan directs specific actions to mitigate the potential impacts from continued recreational use of Fern Canyon Road and park trails. The Department should continue coordination with the Department of Fish and Game, and others with current programs in preparing an Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Management Plan for the Little River. This plan should include designs and criteria for river crossings and access guidelines.

Interpretive and informational signing will help inform visitors about the natural and cultural resource values and direct appropriate visitor use. Resource directives restrict equestrian use in the unit and limits the use of mountain bikes to paved and unpaved roads only.

AREA 5.

Pygmy Forest - Proposed Land Use

The pygmy forest is a popular visitor attraction, as well as a highly sensitive resource area. Resource management programs shall continue for protection of rare or endangered plant species, and additional interpretive programs designed to bring greater public awareness to the resource sensitivity. This plan proposes that 200 + acres of the pygmy forest be sub-classified as a Natural Preserve. This represents the major portion of the total Mendocino pygmy cypress forest located in this unit.

The existing boardwalk will remain with improved interpretive signing, and the day use parking capacity will double to support the projected level of visitor use. A small picnic area parking and restroom facility are proposed near the existing parking lot opposite the preserve. The day use area will serve as a trailhead and connection to new forest trails in adjacent areas. (See Concept Plan, Figure 9, page 215)

AREA 6

Van Damme Headlands - Proposed Land Use

State park property on the headlands is divided by privately-owned lands, prohibiting bluff trail and beach connections between Chapman Point south to the Little River Mouth.

The Mendocino County Local Coastal Plan presently calls for State Parks to develop day-use parking and coastal access trails at Van Damme State Park. This general plan includes land use objectives and recommendations to satisfy coastal access requirements and to address resource management and future recreation needs. The Land use recommendations for this area include:

1. The highway viewshed is an important visual resource to the community and visiting public that should be protected. State Parks should work closely with Caltrans and the county to see that highway improvements, corridor maintenance, and park facility construction projects will not negatively impact the esthetic quality and scenic resources of Little River and the Van Damme Headlands.

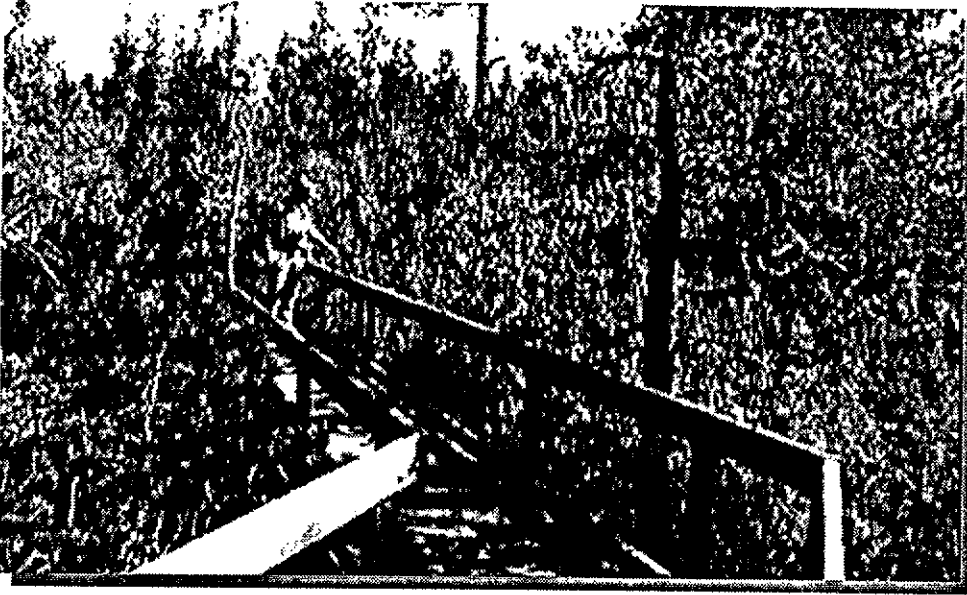
2. Significant site and ocean views shall be preserved and enhanced through vegetation management and restoration programs. New development should be screened from the highway, coastal bluffs, overlooks, and adjacent private residences.
3. Coastal access and day-use parking should be developed near Chapman Point. In addition, our Department should work with private land owners and others to establish bluff trail connections between Chapman Road and Peterson Lane.
4. Vegetated buffer zones should be established and maintained between state park facilities and adjacent private residences.
5. Construction of some day-use and overnight use facilities may be developed upon completion of new land acquisition with more detailed site plans and environmental review.

AREA 7.

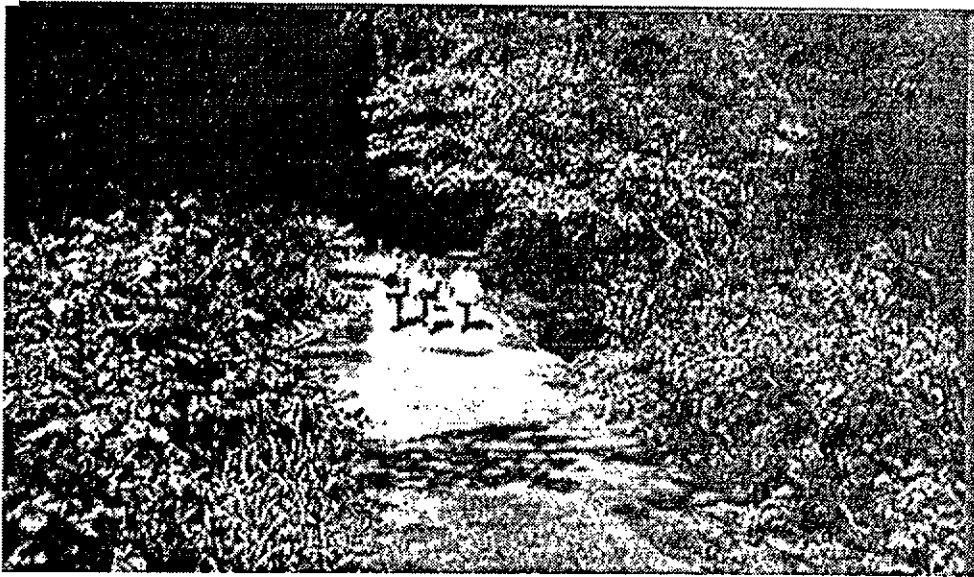
Dark Gulch - Proposed Land Use

This 80-acre parcel was gifted to the Department in 1975 for addition to Van Damme State Park and is currently used for employee housing. Access from Highway 1 is shared with a private resident, who has a legal right-of-way easement across state-owned property. The present use may continue and/or allow for expansion of operations or maintenance facilities. Potential uses may include: equipment, vehicle, or material storage, unit office, or bike hostel.

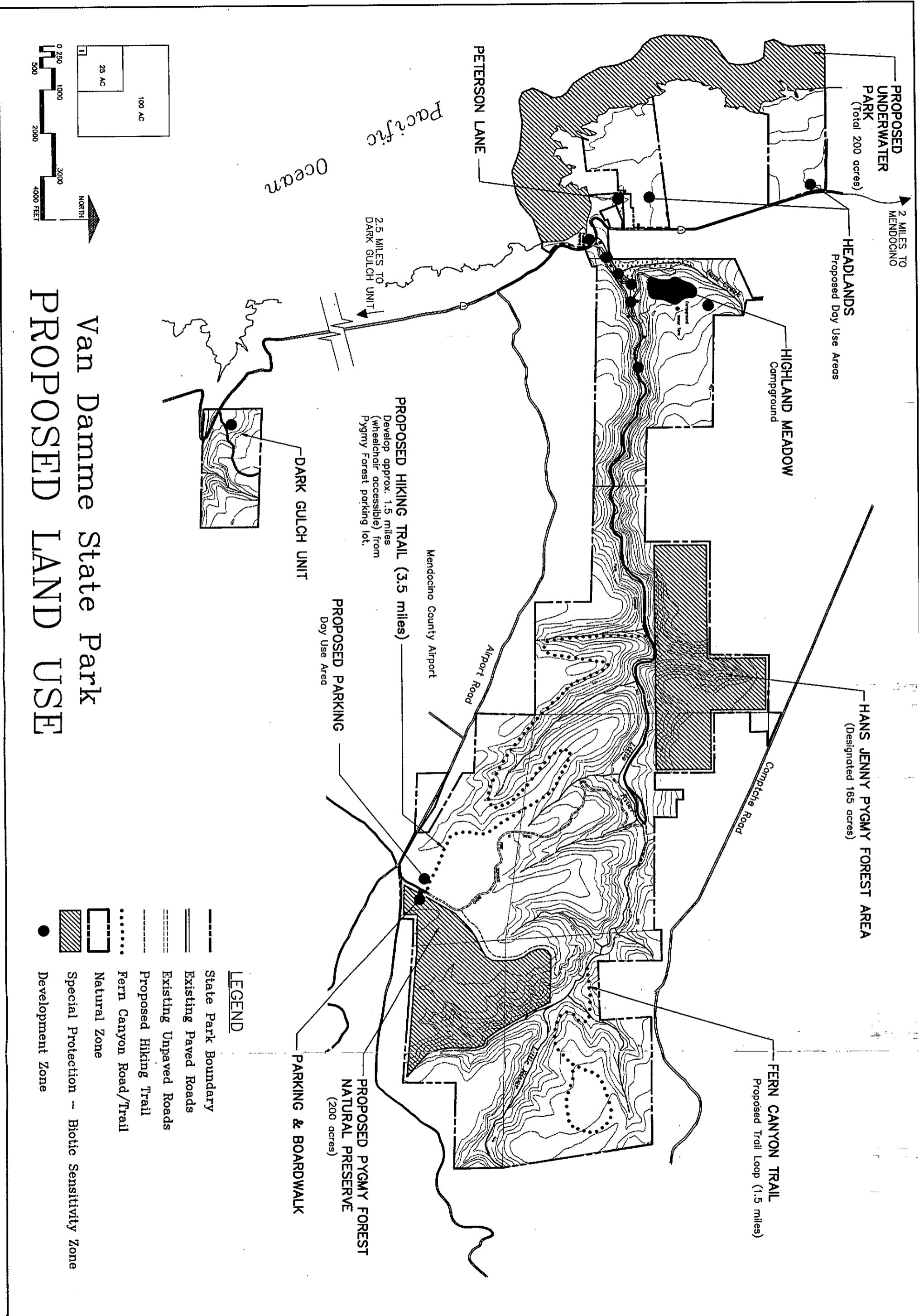
This parcel is 2.5 miles south of the entrance to Van Damme State Park and is non-contiguous to other park properties. Future acquisition is not likely to connect this parcel with public lands or increase its size to support visitor recreation facilities. Costly highway improvements may be required to develop safe public access. Dark Gulch parcel may also be considered for surplus / land exchange, if no longer needed for employee housing.



Boardwalk through the Van Damme Pygmy Forest



Fern Canyon Road - Trail along Little River



Van Damme State Park PROPOSED LAND USE

VAN DAMME STATE PARK PROPOSED LAND USE GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION APPROVED _____ DATE _____	REVISIONS _____ _____ _____	DATE _____	DESIGNED D. KECK DRAWN V. CLARKE CHECKED D. KECK
DRAWING NO. 26674	MAP 15			

APPROPRIATE LAND ADDITIONS

The land use proposals of this plan are not dependent on new land acquisition. This section, however, includes discussion about non state-owned properties; their resource values, and the possible effects that some privately managed lands within the same watershed could potentially have upon resources at Van Damme State Park.

The following discussion and all other comments regarding land acquisition are intended for long-range planning purposes only, and do not represent a commitment for acquisition. Acquisition of these lands depends on many factors, including the availability of funds and the willingness of the owner to sell. In most areas, through proper enforcement of existing county planning and zoning regulations, private lands can be privately managed in harmony with the neighboring state park lands.

Private and public lands in the vicinity of Van Damme State Park may contribute to the problems encountered in resource management or park operations; as well, private management of these properties may compliment current park programs and/or provide needed recreational services in the area. Therefore, nearby lands with an influence on the park property is of management concern and may be the subject of future investigations.

These areas may include the following properties:

Coastal properties having significant natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation values. Such properties may offer some protection to sensitive resources, or provide good potential for improved coastal access, with possible day use and/or overnight use facilities. Current land use is either undeveloped open space or rural residential.

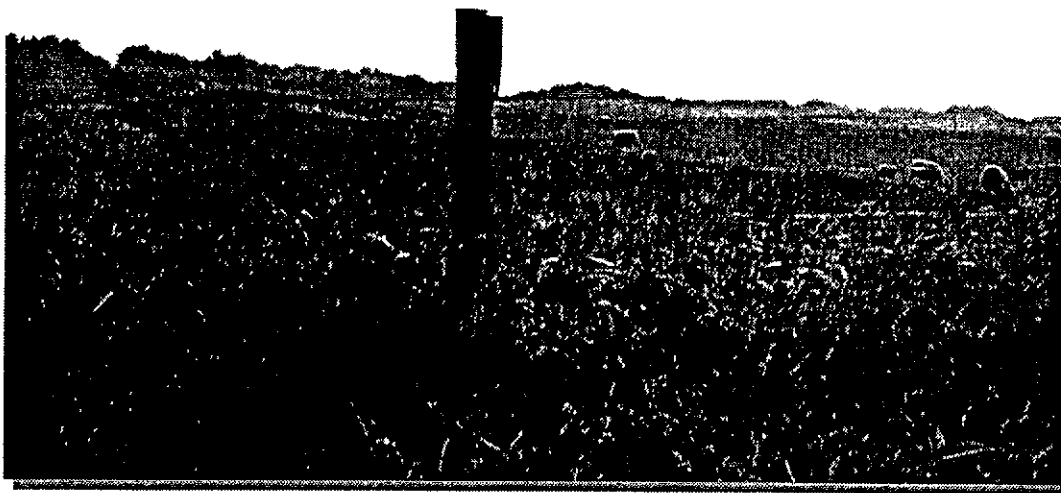
Private inholdings, right-of-ways, or utility easements, which may affect or potentially affect the management and protection of the environmental, cultural, or recreation resources. These properties may increase public access potential or management capabilities, within watershed boundaries or plant and wildlife habitats.

Private and public lands in the vicinity of Van Damme State Park, which have similar characteristics and resource values as currently found in the state park, potentially could become a part of the State Park System. Shared management or

operating agreements are alternative methods used to increase management opportunities for scenic, natural, or cultural resource preservation. In addition, the responsibility for providing visitor services and satisfying recreational needs extends beyond the state park and requires the coordination between public and private businesses and regional recreation providers. These nearby lands may be worthy of consideration as an appropriate park addition, if initial investigations find significant resource values and a need for greater protection; or has development potential for necessary state park operations or needed public recreation facilities.

The Spring Ranch property (as shown on the Concept Map, Figure 10, page 220) is a 160-acre parcel offered for sale to the state in 1989. It was the owner's desire that this property become part of Van Damme State Park. However, no state funding was available to acquire the property at that time. The Department still considers this potential acquisition a "High Priority" project if funds were made available for this purpose.

This private-owned parcel lies between two state-owned parcels west of Highway 1. The site has flat to mild slope, and has 3500 feet of ocean frontage with exceptional views. Originally, this site was open coastal prairie, but the present use is agricultural; grazing for sheep and hay production. Structures include a few historic farm buildings; also Native American sites have been identified.



Spring Ranch property looking south from Chapman Road parcel



Coastal access and parking are not developed for the headlands

State efforts are continuing, in order to secure adequate funding in the 1994-95 fiscal year. The California State Coastal Conservancy has acquired an "option to buy" this property by 1995 and is working closely with our Department to obtain the funds needed to acquire this land.

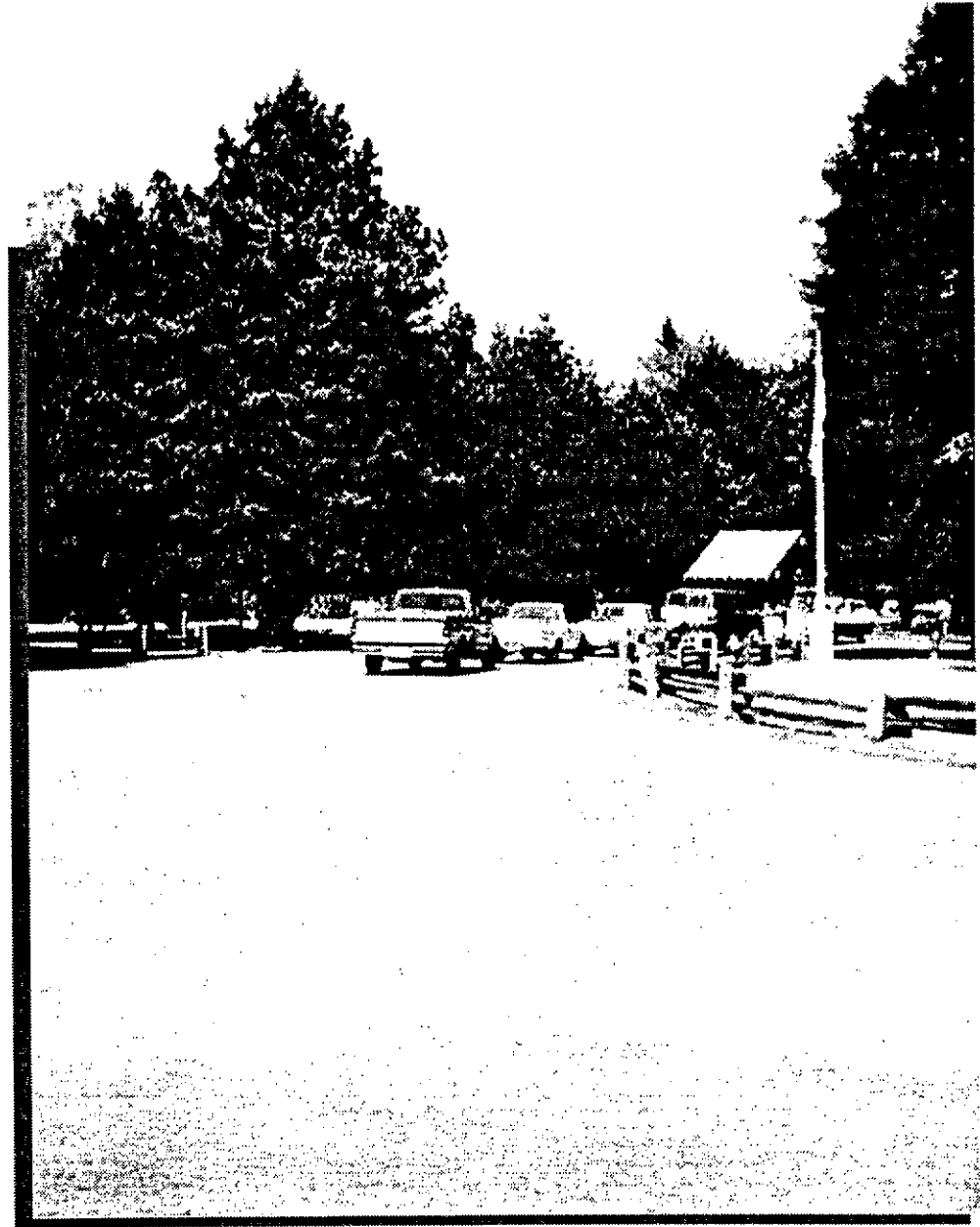
Public meetings held during the preparation of this general plan generated a great deal of public interest, with support and concerns for the possible acquisition of the Spring Ranch property. Open space protection, resource management, and potential development issues related to this property were discussed along with the alternatives for adjacent state-owned properties. Most agreed that this property is outstanding for its park values and potential visitor access and should be acquired if funds were to become available. Appropriate facilities and public use may include trails, day use parking and picnicking, potential camping, resource education and interpretation, and predominantly open space preservation.

In 1992 the Mendocino County Local Coastal Plan was amended for rezoning the Spring property which included the 160-acre portion west of Highway One, from Rangeland to Open Space, subject to specific conditions: that no permanent or temporary dwelling would be allowed and the site would be used for park purposes and open space preservation.



VAN DAMME STATE PARK

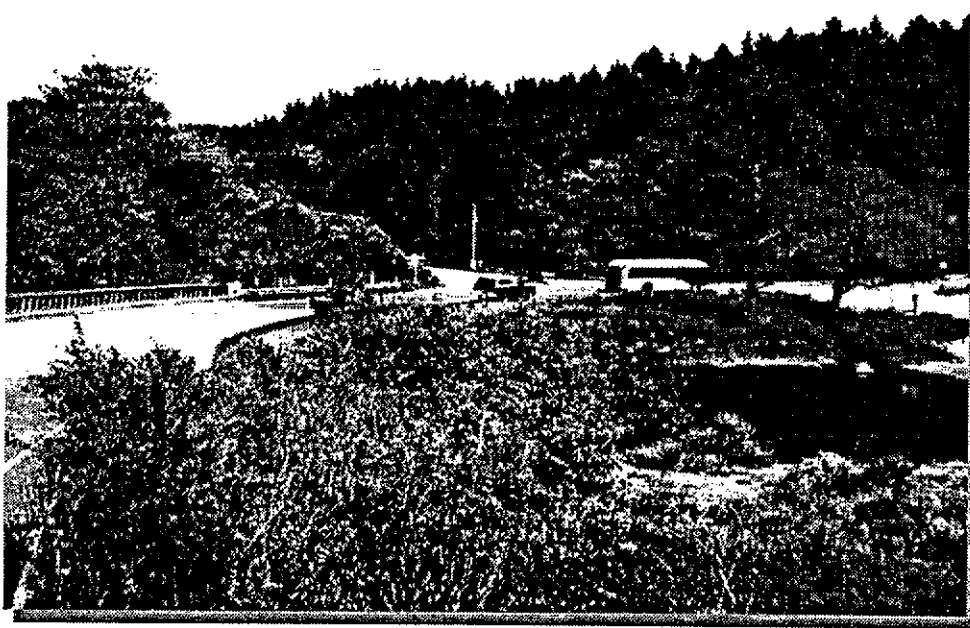
Facilities Element



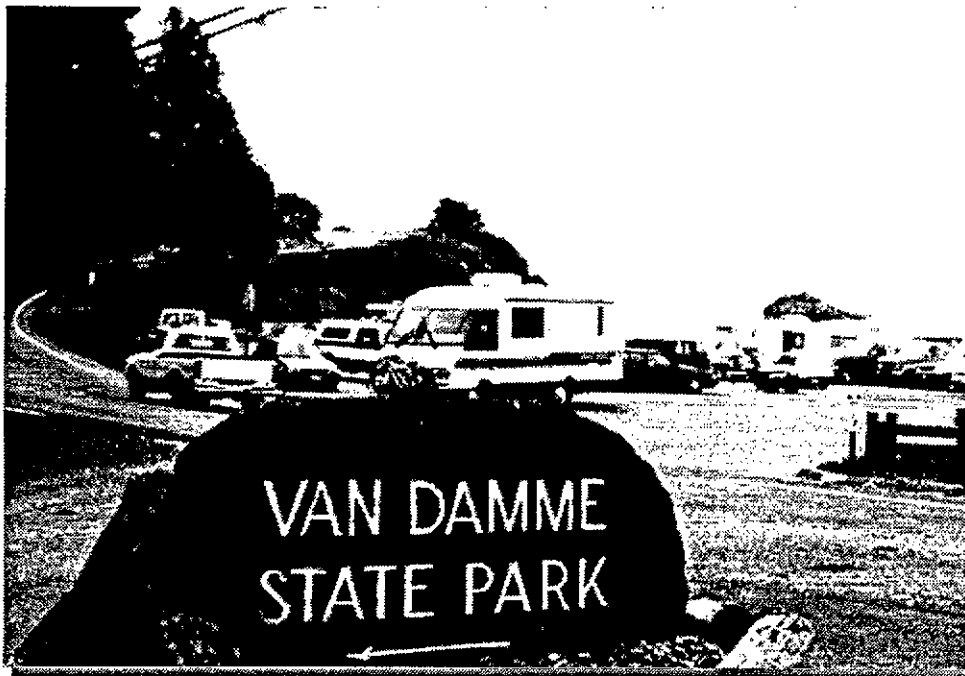
Facilities Element
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AREA 1 Van Damme Beach and Entrance



View of the beach parking lot during a summer weekend

EXISTING AND PROPOSED FACILITIES

The Facilities Element describes existing park facilities and makes recommendations for new construction as well as the removal or enhancement of existing facilities. These recommendations are designed to resolve problem issues previously identified in the Land Use Element, and to fulfill park needs in accordance with plan concepts and objectives. Park facilities are described for each "Park Area", with a comparable summary of existing and proposed facilities shown on Table 4, page 224.

This section also includes an engineering analysis, with discussion on park roads, water, and sewer systems. Architectural and landscape design criteria are also included, to help guide future planning and design of facilities during implementation. Recommendations for phasing implementation are also included.

AREA 1

Van Damme Beach & Entrance

Unit Entrance - Existing Facilities

The entrance sign easily identifies the main access to Van Damme State Park from Highway 1. This sign is located in a small traffic island, separating vehicle lanes for access and egress to the park. Facility improvements include road widening, sewer rehabilitation, and construction of a new contact station, built in 1991 to replace the old kiosk. This new entrance facility includes an employee restroom connected to the park sewer system, two parking spaces, and a public telephone at the roadside. No day-use picnic area, parking, or public restrooms are developed in this area.

The unit's maintenance garage is located at the entrance, surrounded by a large turf area and three employee parking spaces. A small garage building is all that remains of a former residence which existed before the unit became a part of the State Park System.

- Entrance station w/ restroom (1990)
- Trailer sanitary dump station
- Unit maintenance bldg.(1967 garage)
- Employee parking (3 spaces)
- Day use picnic (2 tables)

Unit Entrance - Proposed Facilities

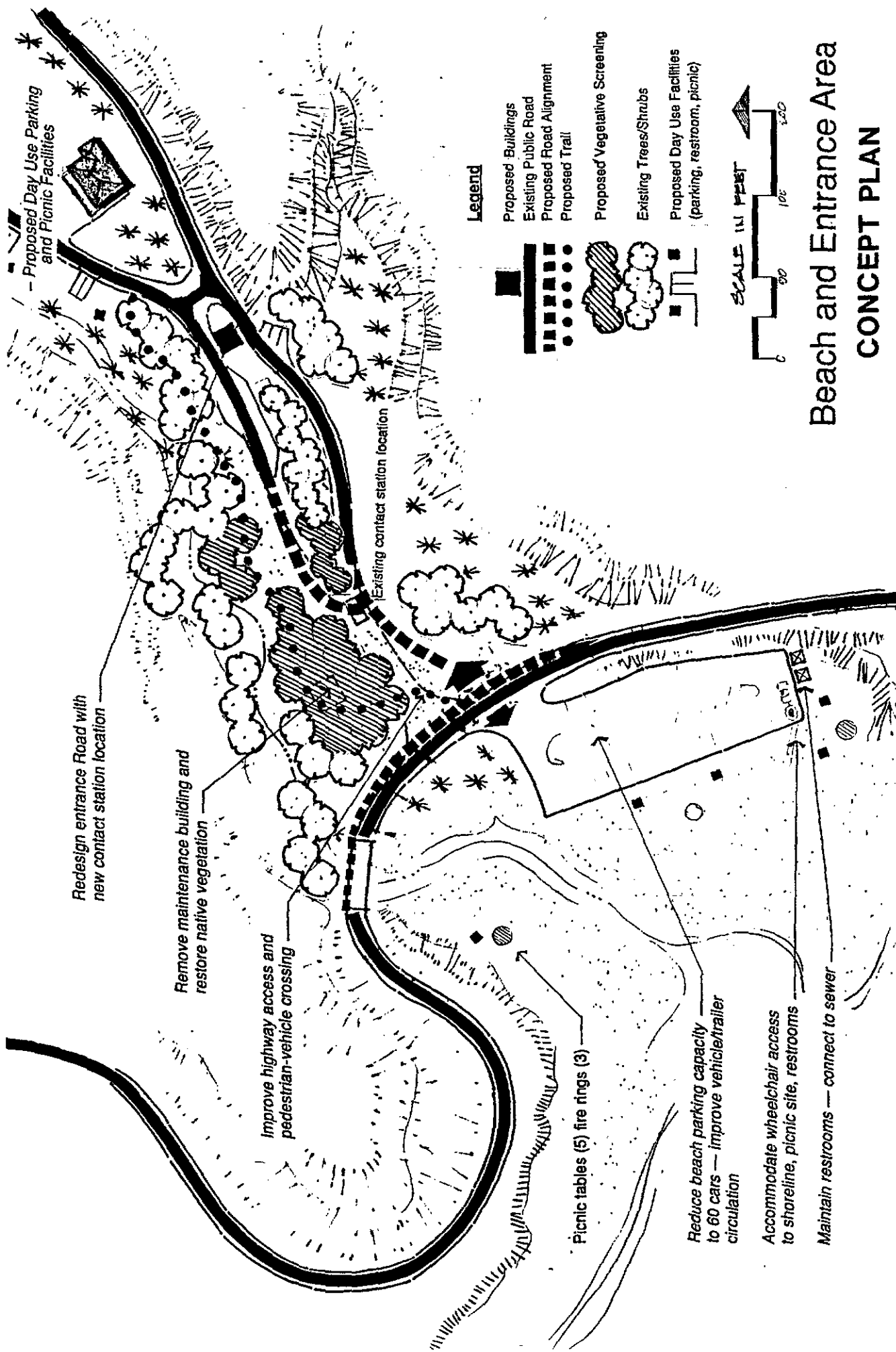
Objectives for this area include safer and easier traffic movement at the unit's entrance from Highway 1, at the contact station, and through the trailer sanitation station. Preserving natural values in this area will enhance the visitor's entry experience and first impressions. Coordinating design and development efforts between our Department and Caltrans is essential for successful highway improvements. An Area Development Plan that would include a traffic engineering study and resource management plan, should be prepared for the entrance.

The following changes are recommended for the unit entrance:

1. Coordinate with Caltrans, to provide safe and easier access from Highway One.
 - (a) Widen highway bridge and develop left-turn pocket
 - (b) Realign main entrance with beach parking access
 - (c) Improve highway acceleration and deceleration lanes
 - (d) Establish highway pedestrian crossing
 - (e) Improve entrance signing

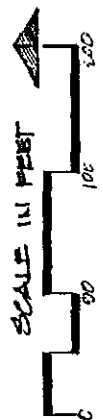
2. Improve the entrance road and vehicle circulation.
 - (a) Provide for one-way vehicle traffic (split traffic lanes)
 - (b) Design narrower road widths and signed intersection to campground and visitor center/day use area.
 - (c) Develop entrance station, parking, and turnaround, with adequate stack lanes for camper arrivals.
 - (d) Improve design efficiency of the existing trailer sanitation dump station.

3. Enhance the park entrance environment.
 - (a) Remove maintenance building and restore riparian vegetation, providing a natural area transition between the highway and entrance station.
 - (b) Develop pedestrian trail connection between park facilities and beach parking lot.



Legend

- Proposed Buildings
- Existing Public Road
- Proposed Road Alignment
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed Vegetative Screening
- Existing Trees/Shrubs
- Proposed Day Use Facilities (parking, restroom, picnic)



**Beach and Entrance Area
CONCEPT PLAN**

Figure 6

Redesign entrance Road with new contact station location

Remove maintenance building and restore native vegetation

Improve highway access and pedestrian-vehicle crossing

Picnic tables (5) fire rings (3)

Reduce beach parking capacity to 60 cars — improve vehicle/trailer circulation

Accommodate wheelchair access to shoreline, picnic site, restrooms

Maintain restrooms — connect to sewer

Existing contact station location

Proposed Day Use, Parking and Picnic Facilities



Van Damme Beach and day use parking lot



Highway 1 looking south from the main park entrance

Van Damme Beach - Existing Facilities

This small beach is popular with divers and park visitors for water oriented type activities. Day use facilities include a paved parking lot for 70 cars, two restrooms, and space for small boat access to the water. The beach parking lot is also used for enroute camping (overnight stay for self-contained recreation vehicles) throughout the year, and absorbs some of the overflow from the campground during the busy season. Fire rings, and a cold-water shower are provided for beach users, but no picnic tables.

The beach restrooms are small wood-framed structures, with a deck and wheelchair ramp for easy access from the parking lot. Located at the base of the bluff, these structures do not obstruct ocean views, but are subject to damage during a major storm event. They are situated on pump-out type vaults not connected to the park's sewer system. All beach facilities lying below the 25 ft. above mean sea level are considered temporary, or "expendable".

- Beach parking (70 cars) paved
- Restrooms (vault type) rustic wood
- Interpretive panels (2)
- Outdoor shower (concrete pad)

Van Damme Beach - Proposed Facilities

Conditions can be improved for beach recreation and existing day use facilities. This plan recommends that parking, boat access and vehicle circulation be improved for safety and quality, and that day use facilities be included with provisions for disabled use. The following recommendations are made for the beach area:

1. Improve parking efficiency and shoreline access.
 - (a) Reduce parking lot capacity to 60 cars
 - (b) Restrict use by large motorhomes and RV's
 - (c) Improve boat launch capabilities (drop-off area)
 - (d) Design for wheelchair shoreline access
 - (e) Provide 5 picnic tables and 3 fire rings

2. Upgrade beach restroom and picnic facilities.
 - (a) Retain restroom facilities at the beach location and upgrade as needed.
 - (b) Provide low-flush toilets with park sewer connection
 - (c) Expand use interpretive and information panels
 - (e) Develop handicapped picnic site with access to restrooms
 - (f) Consider warm showers and wetsuit changing area

The beach parking lot is considered a "bonus" at this unit, providing an extremely popular facility for abalone divers and beach users for several years. However, it occupies a beach site where it must be considered "expendable", giving way to the natural forces of the ocean and sandy beach. Structural protective measures are not consistent with the general resource management objectives for this unit. Therefore, in considering storm-damage repairs for the parking lot, the department shall also consider restoration of the natural values related to mouth of Little River as a top priority. Limited parking should be considered on a site north of the existing entrance station if parking relocation becomes necessary.

AREA 2

Lower Little River Canyon

Visitor Center & Campsites # 1-13 - *Existing Facilities*

The visitor center is one of the few remaining historic structures at this unit, built by the CCCs. Originally constructed in 1940 as a recreation hall, this building currently serves as the interpretive facility for this unit. Its exterior was restored, as close as possible, to its original appearance and the interior has been refurbished for interpretive exhibits, video presentations, and publication sales. Visitor parking is provided at the building entrance for 5 cars plus 1 disabled parking space and public restrooms are provided on the east side. The porch was reconstructed, with a wheelchair ramp on the west side of the building.

Thirteen campsites are located near the visitor center, situated between a looped road and the Little River. A new (1991) restroom building with showers was constructed at the end of the loop, which also serves the adjacent group camp. The "Bog Nature Trail" begins at this point, crossing the Little River footbridge to a 1/3-mile loop trail around the Beal Creek wetlands.

This campground is popular because of its sunny location, large grassy play area, and because these campsites are closer to the beach than others in the park. The camp host trailer pad is currently located directly east of the visitor center in view of the entrance road and surrounding campsites. The Little River and its riparian vegetation physically separates this campground from the main road and other areas. However, the deciduous trees and shrubs at times leave campsites open and visible.

- Historic building 1940's CCC recreation hall
- Restored for interpretive exhibits (1989-90)
- Visitor parking (5 cars + 1 handicapped) paved
- Restrooms (side of bldg. w/ outside access)
- 13 campsites (No's 1-13)
- Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1990)
- Restroom also serves adjacent group camp
- Camp host (trailer pad) phone
- Bog trail (.33 mile) access bridge

Visitor Center & Campsites #1-13 - *Proposed Facilities*

The visitor center exhibits and programs are operated by the Van Damme Docent Council through the Mendocino Area Parks Association, a non-profit organization. This general plan supports the continued use of this building as a visitor center. Interpretive exhibits and programs are considered an appropriate adaptive use of this historic building and compatible with park objectives and surrounding land uses. The building's exterior shall be maintained in its historic appearance and interior exhibits will be maintained so long as it does not degrade the building's architectural or historic integrity.



Existing campsites #1-6 - Proposed day use picnic area

It is expected that an increased number of travelers and campers from other parks will visit this visitor center, increasing the demand for day use parking and picnic facilities.

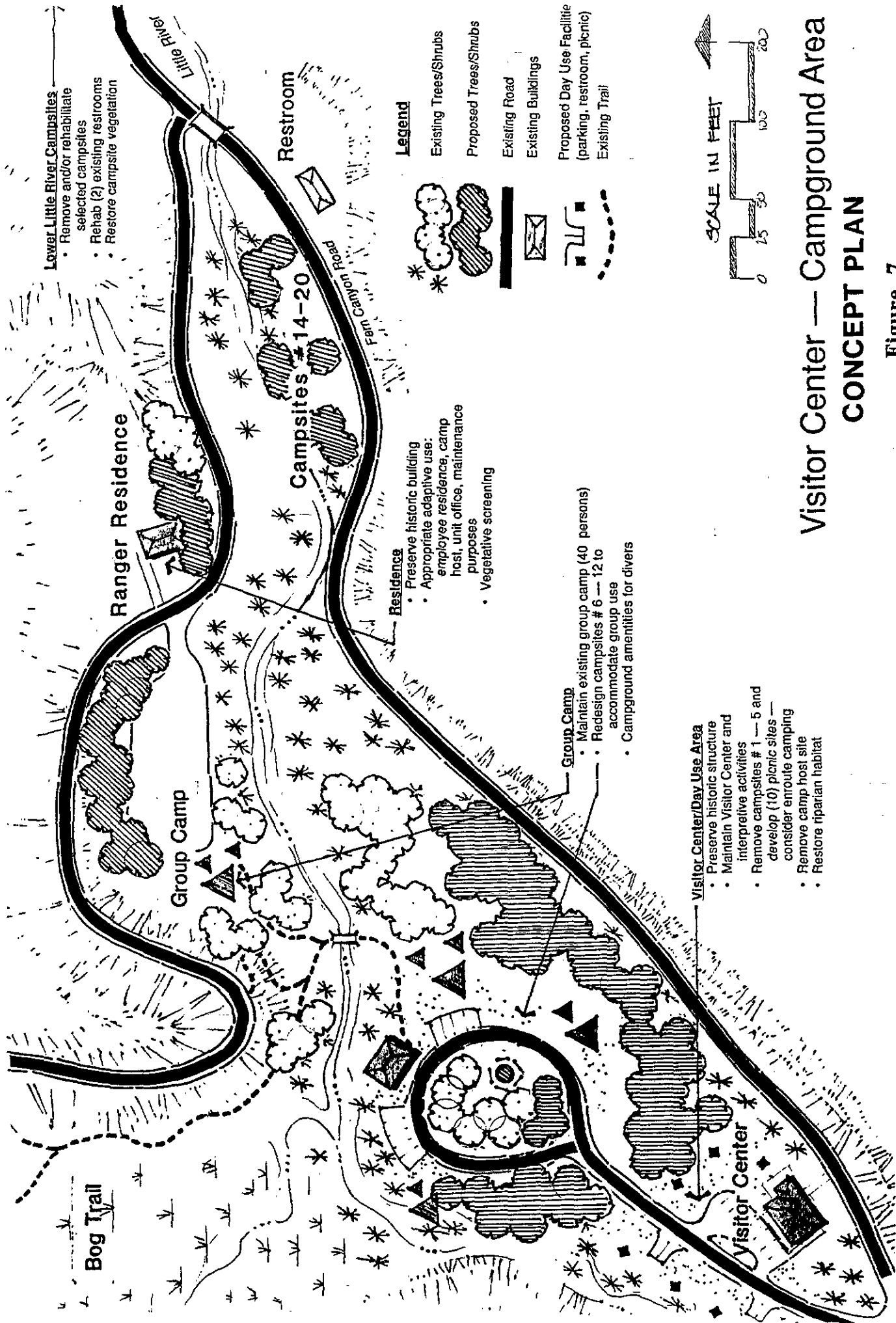
Proposed facilities and improvements recommended for Area 2 are as follows:

1. Preserve historic building and enhance interpretive programs.
 - (a) Preserve historic structure for adaptive use.
 - (b) Maintain Visitor Center & interpretive activities.
 - (c) Maintain and enhance Bog Trail for nature walks.
2. Develop day use picnic facilities and additional parking.
 - (a) Remove existing campsites No's 1 - 5 and provide picnic tables, BBQs, and parking (max. 10 sites).
 - (b) Accommodate recreation vehicle parking.
 - (c) Use day use parking at picnic area for overnight use by enroute campers.
3. Make provisions for group camp accommodations.
 - (a) Redesign campground layout (campsites #6-13) to accommodate group use (parking, campfire, tables).
 - (b) Restore vegetative screening from main park road.
 - (c) Consider dive gear wash facility, trailer parking, and abalone cleaning station.

Campsites # 14-30 - Existing Facilities

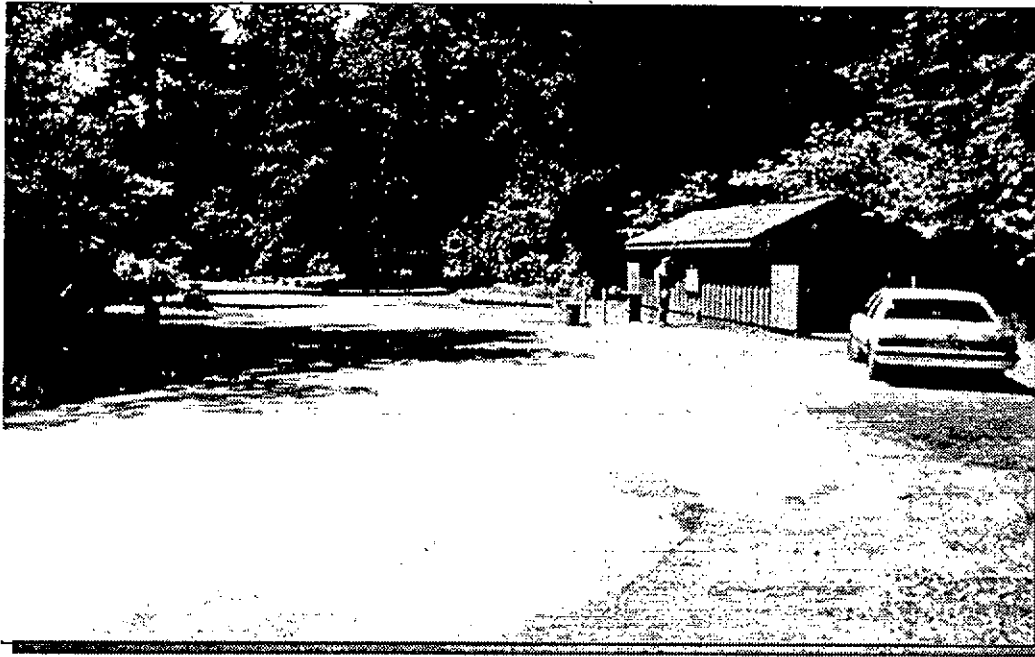
These campsites are located along the main park road past the visitor center, to the first ford at the trailhead parking lot. Family campsites are situated within the riparian corridor in open view from the main park road. These sites are located on the sunny side of the river and are kept clear of riparian vegetation by continual maintenance. Campsites #14-20 are surrounded by mowed grasses, split-rail fencing, and have minimal shrub planting between them. The restroom/shower combination building serving these campsites was constructed in 1951 across the road west of the first vehicle bridge. This facility, like all other restrooms, except those at the beach, are connected to the unit's main water and sewer system.

Campsites #21-30 and the comfort station beyond the river bridge were built in 1951. Most campsites located along the Little River are subject to seasonal flooding. The park has improved paving and furniture in one campsite for wheelchair access and one site is designated for a hike & bike camp.



Visitor Center — Campground Area CONCEPT PLAN

Figure 7



Fern Canyon Road - Restroom & shower building (built 1951)



Campsite #30 located on Fern Canyon Road along Little River

Existing Facilities Include:

- (6) creekside campsites (No's 14-20)
- Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1951)
- (9) creekside campsites (No's 21-30)
- (1) campsite (wheelchair accessible)
- Restroom (1951)
- Hike/Bike camp (1)

Campsites #14-30 - Proposed Facilities

The resource directives outline for the Little River indicate that certain campsites are having a negative effect on resources at the edge of Little River and should be removed. In order to preserve and protect ecosystem processes and elements, individual campsites #21-30 shall be continually evaluated to determine resource impacts and appropriate action; such as campsite removal and site restoration, design changes, or other measures to satisfy resource objectives and still continue some visitor activities.

Recommendations for overnight use facilities include:

1. Rehabilitate existing campsites #14-20
 - (a) Restore riparian vegetation between campsites and river for improved river habitat and erosion control.
 - (b) Rehabilitate campsite surfacing for improved drainage.
 - (c) Remove grass areas between campsites and revegetate for visual screening.
 - (d) Rehabilitate/ or replace restroom/combination building.

2. Rehabilitate appropriate campsites #21-30 and/or preserve ecosystem processes and elements.
 - (a) Remove individual campsites if determined they are negatively impacting the Little River.
 - (b) Rehabilitate campsite surfacing for improved drainage and erosion control.
 - (c) Remove two existing campsites and develop trailhead parking (8 spaces).
 - (d) Replace existing restroom with a 200-series comfort station, to serve both campers and day-use hikers.

Group Camp - Existing Facilities

Van Damme currently has only one group camp, which is extremely popular with dive clubs and recreation vehicle campers. This camp lies within the flood plain at the confluence of Little River and Beal Creek and is visible from the park road and nearby employee residence. The group camp will accommodate 40 persons, and 15 cars on a graveled parking lot. Group campers must use the restroom facilities located at the adjacent family campground (campsite #11).

- Group camp (40 person capacity)
- Parking lot (15 cars) gravel

Group Camp - Proposed Facilities

The existing group camp shall remain at this location, with accommodations for 40 persons and parking for 15 cars. The shared use of the existing restroom should satisfy future visitor needs. Additional restroom facilities will not be constructed in the flood plain. The protection of the riparian and wetland habitat remains the primary consideration in this area. Native shrub planting is proposed, to screen the large parking area from Meadow Road.

1. Maintain existing group camp (40 persons - 15 cars)
 - (a) Provide shrub planting, to screen the large parking area
 - (b) Consider lockable storage units for dive gear or bicycles.



View of the group camp parking lot from Meadow Road



Historic Res. No. 7 visible from park road and adjacent campsites

Employee Residence No. 7 - Existing Facilities

This residence is located across from the group camp on Meadow Road. It includes a single story wood frame house and detached garage. This house was built in 1939 for the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, and subsequently dismantled and moved to this location in 1940. It is considered a good example of the Park Rustic style of architecture, typical of that period.

- Residence NO. 7 (Structure moved to site in 1940)

Employee Residence No. 7 - Proposed Facilities

This residence is situated near the center of the park's visitor use area. It has been a single family residence since its relocation to this site in 1940. The building's historic significance and resource values are described in the Resource and Land Use elements of this document. The recommended uses and disposition of the building is discussed below.

The Lower Little River Canyon Area is the primary visitor use area, where campsites and the visitor center are located. The house and garage are highly visible from the adjacent group camp and nearby family campsites. This present use is not in direct conflict with the surrounding recreation activities, but does have a negative influence on the visitor experience and spirit of place. The continued use of this residence for employee housing has merit to support operational needs and visitor safety concerns as stated in the Department's 1991 Housing Study. However, given the potential for visitor uses vs. employee housing, the selections may vary over time between short-term and long-range park objectives.

Ideally, this site in the center of the public use area would not be chosen for new building construction or a residence. However, since it does exist and with significant historic resource value, it should remain. How long, and for what purpose it will serve, may vary depending on the future changes in recreational needs and the Department's future housing policies.

The Department should periodically evaluate the essential housing needs at this unit and compare findings against appropriate public use benefits. Alternative uses for this house, garage and yard should be considered and implemented, so long as the historic integrity of the structure is preserved and the site activities do not adversely affect resource values and park visitor experiences. The Department may consider relocating this building once again, to a more appropriate location, possibly with others at Russian Gulch State Park.

Proposals for Residence No.7 and site include:

1. Preserve building's architectural and historic integrity.
 - (a) Preserve building exterior and maintain interior for residence, or adaptive uses.
2. Reevaluate continued use for employee housing and consider public use alternatives, consistent with the Department's Housing study/policies. Appropriate adaptive uses include: camp host, unit office, hostel, interpretive/education, or storage for housekeeping supplies.
3. Plant native shrubs and trees to screen vehicles and activities from park road and campsites.

Campfire Center - Existing Facilities

This campfire center is located along the Fern Canyon Road, between the first bridge and the trailhead parking lot. It is easily accessible from this road and adjacent trails and will accommodate 200 persons, with parking for 10 cars . This facility has been upgraded with improved, utilities, production screen and stage, bench seating, and access for wheelchairs.

- Constructed 1959-61 (200 person capacity)
- Gravel parking (10 cars)

Campfire Center - Proposed Facilities

The campfire center shall remain in its current location and continue to serve campers from both Van Damme and Russian Gulch State Parks. This facility shall be maintained and improved as needed to satisfy park visitor services and interpretive program requirements.

1. Maintain existing campfire center and parking.
2. Provide concrete pad for two picnic tables, with a walkway for wheelchair access from the parking lot.



Existing Campfire Center

AREA 3

Highland Meadow Campground - *Existing Facilities*

This campground is located at the higher elevation away from the river and day-use traffic and activities. It includes 44 campsites on a looped campground road, with two restrooms (one with showers). Each campsite is designed with two parking spurs, fire pit, table, food locker, and tent site. The road surrounds an open meadow with few trees, which easily accommodates tent clustering for larger groups of people.

- 44 campsites (Nos 31-74)
- Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1961)
- Restroom bldg. (1961)
- Water storage tank

Proposed Camping Facilities

Improvements range between upgrading existing facilities to developing new walk-in campsites. Within the existing campground, one campsite near the existing combination building can continue to be used for a year-round camp host. Two campsites should be designed with paved surfaces for wheelchair accessibility. Camp provisions may be provided for washing off wetsuits and dive gear and cleaning/pounding abalone.

Ten walk-in campsites are proposed in a forested area located approximately 300 feet north of the Highland Meadow campground at a higher elevation. A new access road/trail would extend beyond the campground loop for service access to these walk-in sites. Restroom facilities will be provided and connected to the existing water and sewer systems.

Campground Proposals for Area 3 include:

1. Maintain 42 campsites in Highland Meadow Campground.
 - (a) Rehabilitate, or replace existing comfort station and construct new restroom, with showers at same location.
 - (b) Maintain a camp host site with telephone.
 - (c) Rehabilitate 2 campsites for wheelchair accessibility.
 - (d) Consider camp provisions for divers: abalone cleaning and dive-gear washing areas.



Vehicle access to the Trailhead Parking lot was affected by the removal of the first river ford



Backpackers returning from the Environmental - trail camps

2. Develop walk-in campsites (10 sites)
 - (a) Construct small restroom (rustic), with water & sewer connections.
 - (c) Develop 6 parking spaces in existing campground.
 - (d) Develop service road/trail access to new campsites.

AREA 4

Upper Little River Canyon - *Existing Facilities*

Existing facilities developed in the Upper Little River Canyon include mostly trails, environmental campsites, and trailhead parking along Little River. The unit's water supply and treatment facility is also located at the trailhead parking area. Trails at Van Damme State Park include nature trails, and old logging roads (paved and unpaved) which provide hiking and bicycling opportunities for individuals, families, mountain bike enthusiasts, and some equestrians.

Existing Trailhead Parking

Located on Fern Canyon Road, across the first river ford, is a paved parking lot that will accommodate 8 cars and space for vehicle turnaround. This trailhead parking lot serves both the day-use hikers and overnight users of the environmental-trail camps located one mile inland; also, for maintenance vehicle parking and access to the adjacent water treatment facility.

This trailhead parking lot is presently closed for visitor use, due to the removal of the river ford. Nearby campsites are being used for temporary parking until a vehicle bridge is constructed. The roadway is gated beyond the parking lot, restricting vehicle traffic through the canyon. New pedestrian bridges will allow continued recreational access for hikers and bicyclist, as river crossings are modified during the fish habitat restoration program currently underway.

Existing Environmental/Trail Camps

Ten environmental trail camps are currently located near the end of Fern Canyon Road, one mile inland from the trailhead parking lot. These campsites are situated in an area where the road corridor widens a short distance from the river, with individual campsites spaced approximately 150 feet apart and 50 feet from the road. Two portable toilets are provided for overnight are also used by day use hikers. This combined use of these facilities increases the need to pump more frequently.

Generally, the environmental campsites are not heavily used. Most visitors are unaware that they exist, or they are not clear what accommodations are provided at "environmental" camps. The term "trail" camp is more widely used at this unit.

Existing facilities for Area 4 include:

- Environmental Trail Camps (10) - Portable toilets (2)
- Trailhead parking (8 cars) paved (1 handicapped site)
- Water treatment facility (1991)
- Fern Canyon Road/trail (gated) 2.1 miles paved
- (2) Vehicle bridges (9) river fords (1951)
- Unpaved Service road (1.4 miles)
- Fern Canyon trail (2.3 miles)

Upper Little River Canyon - Proposed Facilities

Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained through the Little River canyon along existing trails and roads, although river crossings will be modified, and foot bridges constructed to protect both the aquatic habitat and cultural features. New trails are also proposed, to expand the hiking experience for visitors with all levels of ability. Day-use parking will continue at the existing trailheads, with some modifications recommended below.

This plan recommends that the existing environmental/trail camps remain at their present location, so long as a vehicle access can be established across Little River from the unpaved service road and that no adverse environmental impacts occur.

Park Trails

In the Upper Little River Canyon, the existing paved and unpaved roads serve as the primary access routes for pedestrians and bicycles. Vehicle access will be eliminated, or substantially reduced through this area. Therefore, road maintenance will focus primarily on preventing soil erosion and enhancing the trail corridor with sensitive vegetation management, in order to protect resources and to ensure public safety.

Volunteer trails presently extend beyond the roadway into sensitive plant and animal habitats. As Directed in the Resource Element, page 65, "*all unauthorized trails shall be abandoned and restored to natural contours and conditions*". Public

2 MILES TO MENDOCINO

CHAPMAN ROAD
Trailhead Parking

COASTAL ACCESS
Bluff trail is shown across private property. North-South connection would require state purchase, or an agreement to establish public right-of-way.

Spring Ranch
(Private Property)

PETERSON LANE
Trailhead Parking

VAN DAMME
VAN BEACH

Pacific Ocean

2.5 MILES TO DARK GULCH UNIT

Trailhead Parking

Fern Canyon Road

PROPOSED HIKING TRAIL (3.5 miles)
Develop approx. 1.5 miles (wheelchair accessible) from pygmy forest parking lot.

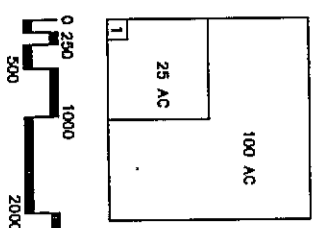
PYGMY FOREST
Boardwalk and Trailhead Parking

DARK GULCH UNIT

Airport Road

Comptche Road

FERN CANYON TRAIL
Proposed Trail Loop (1.5 miles)



Van Damme State Park

TRAILS PLAN

- LEGEND**
- State Park Boundary
 - ==== Existing Paved Roads
 - - - - Existing Unpaved Roads
 - Existing Hiking Trail
 - Proposed Hiking Trail
 - Fern Canyon Road/Trail
 - Proposed Bluff Trail

DRAWING NO. 26676	VAN DAMME STATE PARK TRAILS PLAN GENERAL PLAN - FACILITIES ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION		DESIGNED D. KECK
		APPROVED _____	DATE _____	DRAWN C. HARRIS
MAP 16			REVISIONS	CHECKED R. ACREA

awareness of the potential damage to these areas is important. Signing, revegetation, and sometimes trail realignment is needed to alter current visitor use patterns. The Trails Plan, Map 16, illustrates which trial routes are considered appropriate, or "Authorized" by this plan, including both new trail routes and existing trails to remain. Design criteria has been established for new trail development at this unit. (See page 232)

Trail capacities are limited partially by their physical characteristics, such as trail width, grades, and type of surfacing. Trailhead parking, another limiting factor, is presently available for day-use activities, although most trail users camp inside the park. The parking lot capacities will generally remain the same at existing locations, with some increase parking at the proposed pygmy forest day-use picnic area.

Existing Trails:

1. Paved canyon road/trail.....	2.1 miles
2. Fern Canyon Trail.....	2.3 miles
3. Unpaved road/trail.....	<u>1.4 miles</u>
<u>Total Existing Trails</u>	5.8 miles

Proposed Trails:

1. Fern Canyon Trail (extension).....	1.5 miles
2. Upper Little River Canyon Trail.....	3.5 miles
3. Coastal bluff access trail.....	<u>1.5 miles</u>
<u>Total Proposed trails</u>	6.5 miles

Total Trails 12.3 miles

Little River Crossings

One of the highest priorities of this plan is to restore the Little River Aquatic Habitat, secondly, to maintain trail access into the Little River Canyon. Resource directives, as stated in this plan, require that restoration work for the Little River fisheries shall: "remove or modify the existing man-made barriers and also consider habitat needs for other native aquatic or terrestrial organisms". Approximately eight pedestrian bridges will be needed to maintain seasonal access.

The following recommendations are made for river crossing, road maintenance, and new trail development:

1. Fern Canyon Road should be retained as a primary hiking and bicycle trail to the pygmy forest.
2. The asphalt road pavement should be maintained, to accommodate moderate to high-intensity visitor use within the existing road corridor. Soil erosion and drainage problems shall be eliminated.
3. Public vehicle access should be provided to the existing trailhead parking lot. River crossings should be designed for use by pedestrians, bicycles, small utility vehicles, and for wheelchair access to the end of the paved road.
4. Authorized vehicle access will be maintained on the unpaved portion of this road between the Pygmy Forest and the Little River. In addition, an improved river crossing should be designed and constructed for vehicle access from this service road to the environmental camps. This road corridor will generally serve as a hiking and bicycle trail connection through this unit.
5. Each river crossing will be specifically evaluated, to determine the degree of modification necessary to restore fish habitat and protect cultural features. Interpretive trail brochures and other methods should be used to emphasize the historical background of early logging activities, CCC construction, and significant natural values in the Little River watershed.
6. New trail development shall follow accessibility guidelines referenced in the appendix, and guided by the design criteria included in this plan.

AREA 5

Pygmy Forest - *Existing Facilities*

This pygmy forest has become a popular visitor attraction and destination area on the Mendocino Coast. An existing paved parking lot (150 cars) and boardwalk are developed for self-guided interpretive walks and viewing the dwarfed cypress trees. No restroom facilities are provided.

- Day use parking (15 cars) paved
- 1200 feet of boardwalk (self guided nature walk)

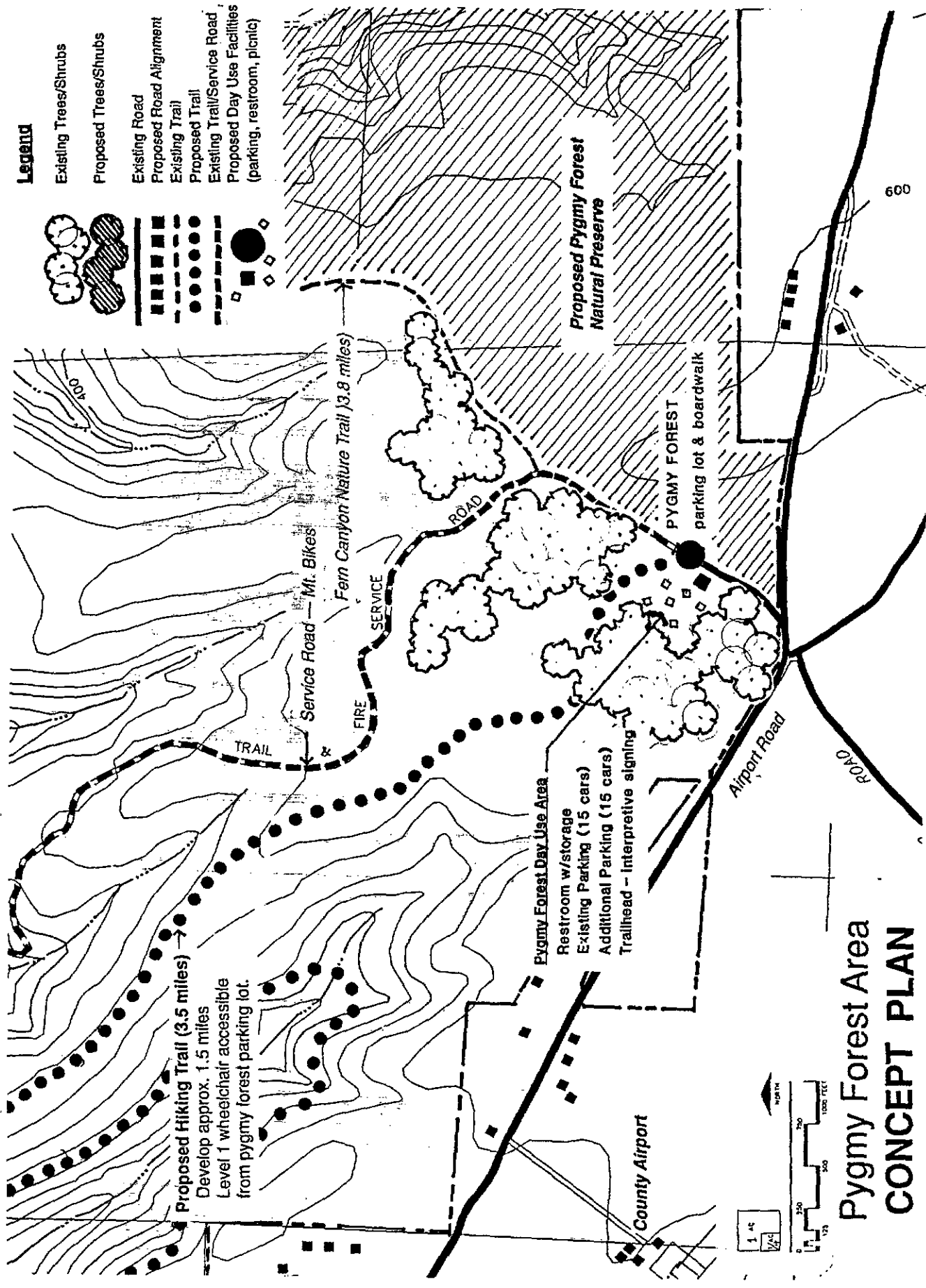


Figure 9

Pygmy Forest - Proposed Day Use Facilities

The pygmy forest and its surroundings will be managed and protected as a natural preserve, and visitors to this area will continue using the existing parking lot and boardwalk. Additional facilities are proposed, to enhance support services for visitors and hikers to the pygmy forest. Restrooms are proposed and will be located opposite the parking lot and outside the new preserve boundary, with picnic sites developed nearby. This day-use facility will be designed to accommodate wheelchairs and provide access to new trails. Low-profile interpretive signs will also be added.

The resource values are significant and trenching for underground utilities and septic systems could have adverse impacts on the soils and pygmy cypress trees. The soil type has poor septic leaching capabilities and the nearest existing utilities are located one mile from this site and costly to develop. Therefore a pump-out vault type system for restrooms will be considered in the design of new facility construction. Alternate routes for power and water supplies should also be considered.

Summary of Area 5 Proposed Facilities:

1. Maintain existing parking lot (15 cars).
2. Construct unisex, vault-type comfort station with storage room.
3. Enhance boardwalk and picnic trailhead area with low-profile interpretive panels.
4. Develop day use picnic area (5) sites and additional parking (15 spaces).
5. Develop all facilities for barrier free accessibility
6. Develop utilities where economically feasible and environmentally safe (water, power, vault-type septic system).
7. Construct entrance sign for *Pygmy Forest Natural Preserve*

AREA 6

Van Damme Headlands - Existing Facilities

No day use or overnight use facilities are currently developed on the headlands. An employee residence is located at Peterson Lane, with trail access to the beach. Public access and use on state-owned parcels at Chapman Road and Peterson Lane are also discussed in the land use section of this general plan.

Peterson Lane - Proposed Facilities

The existing employee residence and much of the surrounding park lands were acquired in 1975. Several private residences have also been constructed nearby along Peterson Lane and on the Little River Headlands. This park residence is considered an appropriate land use and may continue at this location, to serve for essential employee housing.

Recreational use at Peterson Lane should be limited to a beach and bluff trail because of the potential conflicts with due to the surrounding residential land use. A small graveled parking area currently located between the employee residence and Highway 1 will continue to serve the existing number of vehicles (6 cars) used for beach access.

A simple information/interpretive panel would help provide information on trail locations and a brief history about the Randlett Hotel and Peterson Shipyard sites.

Proposals at Peterson Lane:

1. Retain existing building for employee residence
2. Coordinate with private residences, to secure public right-of-way for bluff access trail
3. Enhance existing parking (6 spaces), through vegetation management, vehicle barriers, and signing
4. Construct information/interpretive panel with trail map
5. Improve beach access trail
6. Develop bluff trail, with overlooks

Park Property North of Peterson Lane - Proposed facilities

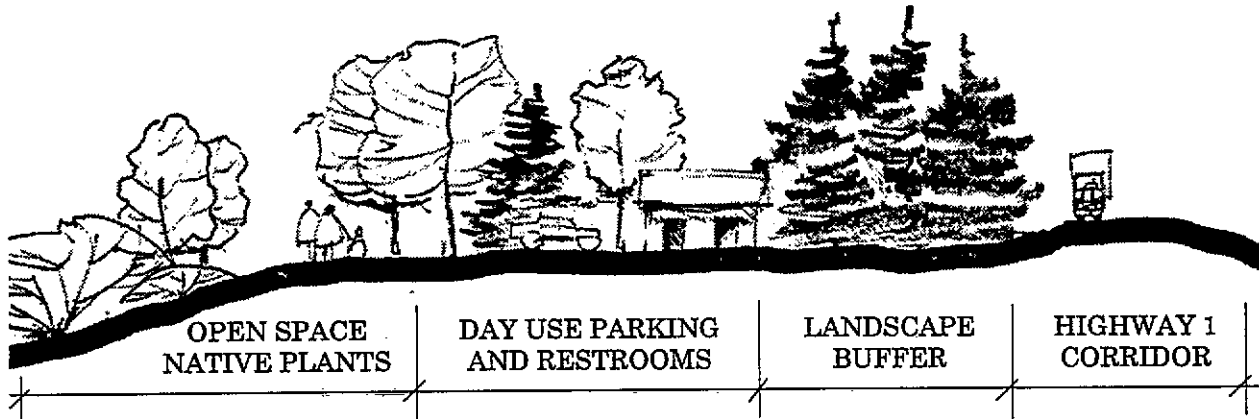
Proposed facilities at this location are intended to serve the visitor demand for day-use picnicking, parking, and coastal access. Vehicle access to the day-use parking lot could be developed off Highway 1, or through the Spring Property, if acquired by the State. Presently, the Van Damme headlands does not have water and sewer utilities in place, to serve new development near Peterson Lane or Chapman Road. Therefore, the initial cost of improvements may limit development and require phasing plan until such utilities can be provided.

FACILITIES ELEMENT

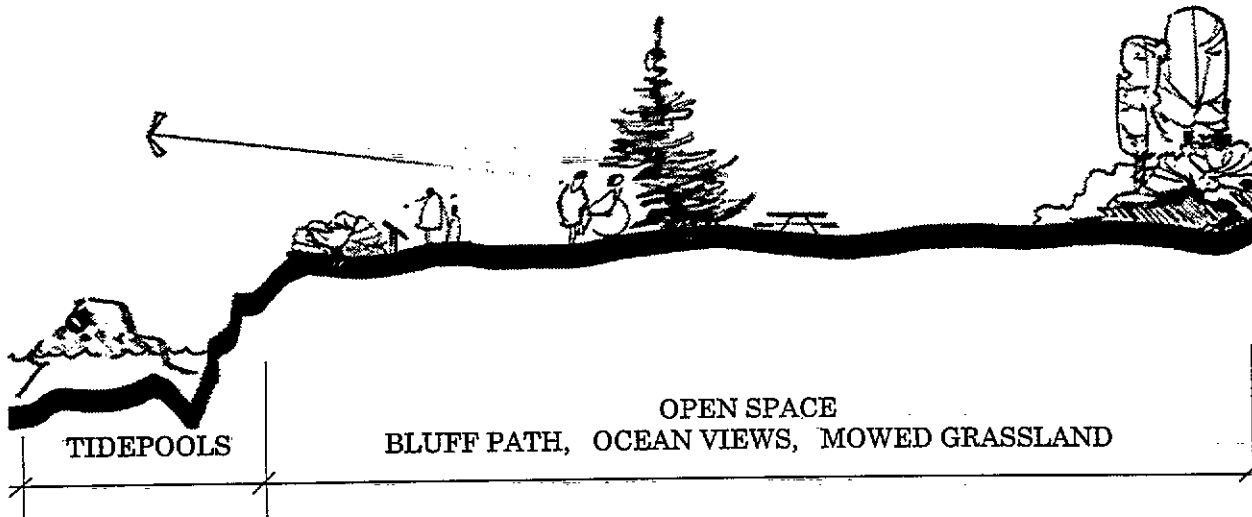
A detailed resource management plan and Coastal Development Permit will be required for facility development. Private property owners and residents of the Little River Headlands Estates and Peterson Lane shall be consulted during the future design process, in order to review specific project alternatives and site mitigation measures.

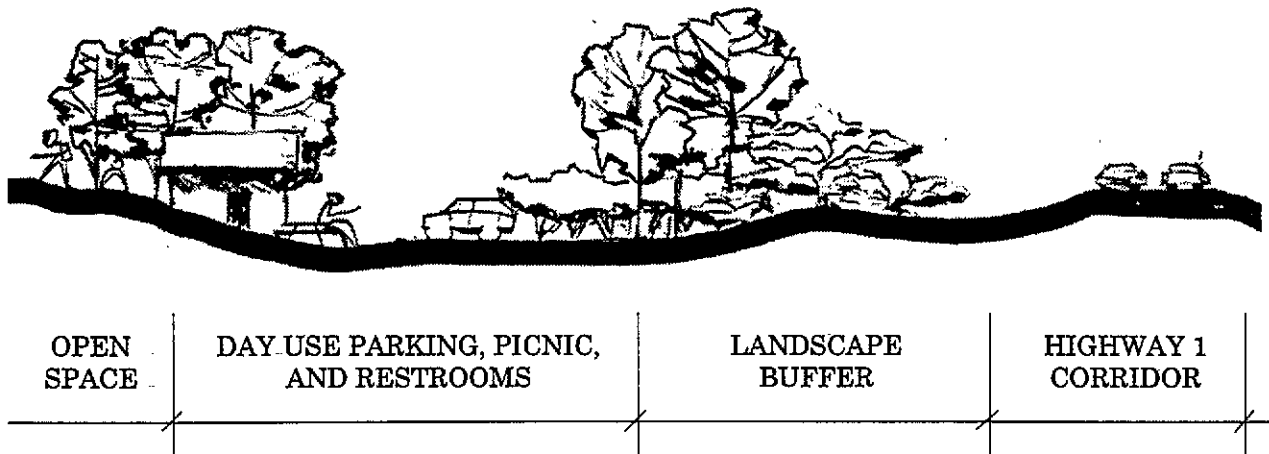
Proposals for the area north of Peterson Lane:

1. Develop vehicle access road off Highway One.
2. Develop 30 car paved parking lot.
3. Construct a 100-series comfort station.
4. Develop picnic area with 5 sites, table and barbecue.
5. Develop underground utilities (water, power, sewer).
6. Develop trailhead and bluff trail.



PROPOSED LAND USE
VAN DAMME HEADLANDS - NORTH OF PETERSON LANE





CHAPMAN ROAD
POTENTIAL LAND USES

Chapman Road - Proposed Facilities

A new day use parking and picnic facility is proposed at Chapman Road. This facility is intended to serve visitors for off-highway parking and shoreline access, as well as help satisfy increasing visitor demand for picnic facilities at this unit. The highway shoulder parking should be discontinued and the trailhead should be located and signed for convenient public use. Ultimately, this access may serve as the trailhead for a bluff trail connection south to Peterson Lane and Van Damme Beach.

New parking and restroom facilities shall be screened from highway view. Additional native shrub planting may be necessary to establish an effective buffer between new facilities and the highway as well as Chapman Road. Vehicle access to the day use parking lot is proposed from Chapman Road. The Department shall coordinate with Mendocino County and Caltrans to establish appropriate entrance and highway access requirements, signing, easements, and public right-of-ways.

Topographic surveys, with soils and leach test will be needed to help determine the appropriate design for paved surfaces, site drainage, utilities, and building locations. A more detailed resource inventory and analysis should also be done, in order to establish adequate setbacks and buffer for the protection and management of fresh water seeps as well as other sensitive resources.

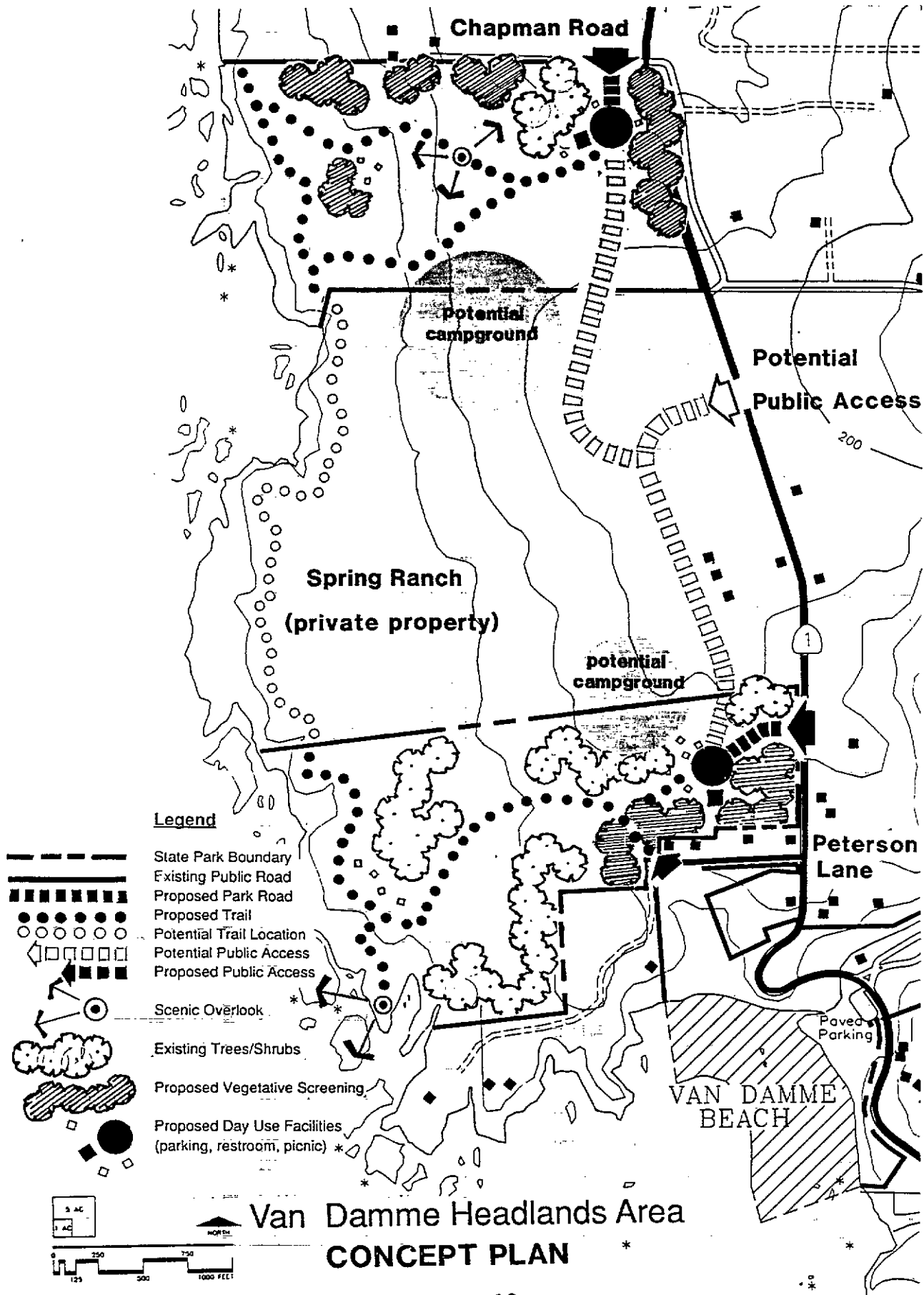


Figure 10

Proposed Facilities at Chapman Road:

1. Gated vehicle access from Chapman Road.
2. Paved day use parking lot for 30 cars.
3. 100-series restroom with maintenance storage.
4. Provision of an outdoor shower and wetsuit changing area.
5. Picnic area with 5 sites, table, bbq, and potable water.
6. Information and interpretive panels.
7. Facilities designed with barrier free accessibility.
8. Trail from the parking lot to the bluff/beach with overlook.
9. Trail signing, benches, and informal picnic area.

AREA 7.

Dark Gulch - *Existing Facilities*

Employee Residence #8 - *Existing Facilities*

The Dark Gulch area includes 80 acres of land that is located 2.5 miles south of the main park entrance. The only facility developed in Dark Gulch is a single-family residence presently used for employee housing. Highway access is poorly designed and would not meet highway standards for public use; or for daily use by park maintenance and ranger vehicles. Also, a right-of-way easement exists on the roadway crossing state property, to a private residence further inland from Highway 1. Therefore, due to the site constraints and separation from the main park, the development potential of this property for public use, is limited. The most appropriate use for this property is for park employee residential purposes.

Dark Gulch - *Plan Proposals*

This house and the surrounding land will remain in use as a employee residence, or be considered for storage of equipment, vehicles, or materials. Resource values shall be protected and managed in accordance with the Resource Element. Structural improvements, road maintenance, and upgrades of the water and utility systems will be necessary.

The Department may also consider this parcel for surplus, or exchange, if park needs can be satisfied elsewhere.

PARK UTILITIES

The following section describes existing park utilities, with an engineering analysis of roads, water, power, and sewer systems at Van Damme State Park. This section is intended to provide the reader with a simple overview of the park's utility and road systems, with an understanding of the limitations and need for future improvements and potential expansion. Additional soils surveys, leach test, and traffic studies are needed to determine future system capacities, site limitations, and actual designs for improvement projects of this type.

Water System

Van Damme State park has a stream collection system on the Little River, with a water treatment plant. Water is pumped through a single high pressure water line (about 110 psi) to a water tank located above the Highland Meadow campground. Several pressure reducing valves are necessary in order to distribute water to existing park facilities. The engineering analysis suggests that new low-pressure water lines be installed from the water tank to reduce the high maintenance cost at this park.

A large water treatment building with booster pumps was constructed in 1991 at the Fern Canyon trailhead parking lot. This water source and new treatment facility is sufficient for existing uses, but remains under continuous scrutiny for its potential impact on Little River fisheries through stream diversions. Alternatives to stream inlets are new wells and should be further investigated.

Water is not currently provided to the Pygmy Forest or Van Damme headlands. New water wells would also be necessary to develop facilities in these areas.

Power

Pacific Gas and Electric provides all electricity to this unit, and others on the Mendocino coast. Overhead powerlines parallel Highway 1 and county roads surrounding the unit. Generally, utilities are placed underground along road corridors through open, visible, park locations such as the main park entrance and in campgrounds. However, powerline easements do exist along the park boundary and penetrate into some forested areas. These powerlines present a visual impact on natural areas and generates unauthorized trails.

Developed park areas have existing power supplies, with no apparent problems associated with this service. Developing future power in the vicinity of the Pygmy Forest parking lot may be costly, due to the distance, the county airport. Overhead power may be the most economical from the nearest source, and cause the least soil disturbance and environmental impact. Location of powerline easements would follow roadways, either underground; or overhead, through non-sensitive resource areas.

Sewer System

Van Damme State Park has a sewer system and leach field that adequately serves existing park facilities. Since buildings and campgrounds are not spread throughout the park, the sewer line distances are not extensive and required pumping lift-stations are minimal. In remote areas, sanitary facilities are pump-out type, or portable toilets where no leaching into the environment occurs. This type of service exists at the beach and at environmental trail camps, and pygmy forest.

Additional campground facilities would exceed current sewer capacity and require extending leach lines, or an additional leach field site. Available leach sites are severely limited within the unit. Drainage and soils suitability for sewage systems at Van Damme State Park is extremely poor in areas with seasonally-high ground water table, or sensitive pygmy soils. Physical constraints for utilities must be determined before detailed project design and development can occur.

Beach sanitary facilities may be added to the sewer system, with low-flow type toilets, an underground tank and pump for distribution across Highway 1.

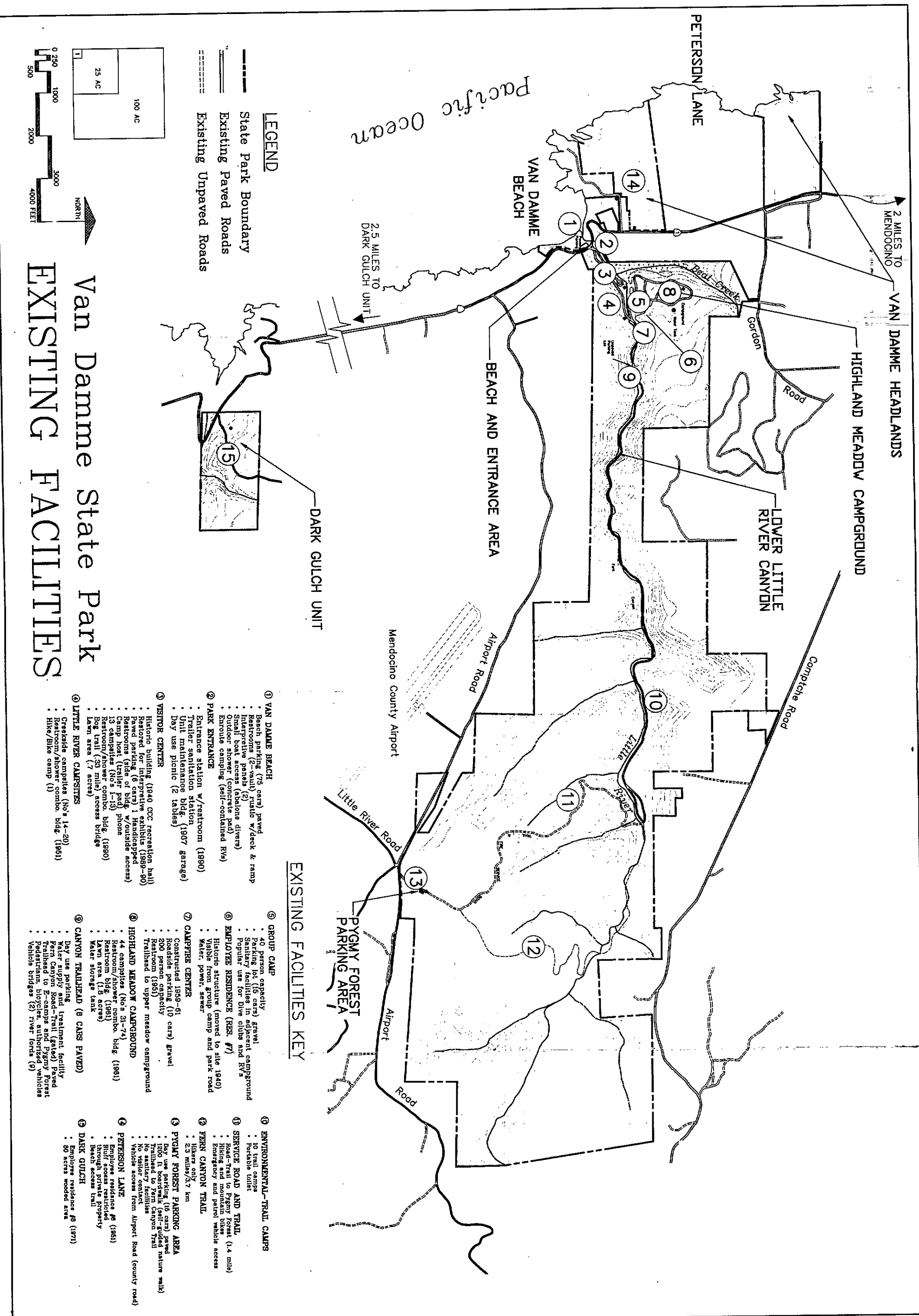
Development at the Pygmy Forest parking lot would require an independent leach field test at a location across the park roadway. The soils in the Pygmy Forest vicinity are slow to leach, indicating that a mounding or electrolysis system should be investigated. Pump-out type toilets are another alternative.

Development on the headlands will require a separate sewer system. It appears that adequate space is available, and the existing private houses surrounding the park suggest that a leach field is possible. However, the existence of seeps at various locations implies a high water table. Any leach field proposal should be supported by very solid geotechnical/hydrologic information.

Table 4

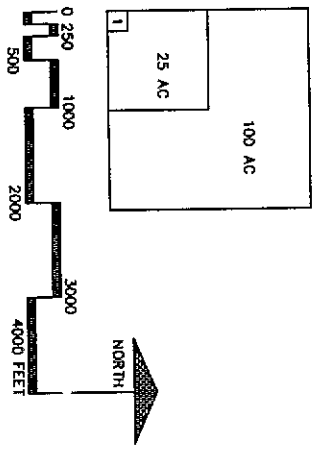
FACILITIES SUMMARY

<u>Facilities</u>	<u>Existing</u>	<u>Proposed Increase</u>	<u>Total</u>
CAMPSITES			
Family Campsites	74 sites	(-10) sites	64 sites
Group Camps	1 camp	1 camp	2 camps
Trail or walk-in Campsites	10 sites	10 sites	20 sites
PICNIC SITES			
Day Use Picnic sites	2 sites	(-2) 30 sites	28 sites
PARKING			
Beach Parking	70 cars	(-10) cars	60 cars
Canyon Trail Pkg.	8 cars	0	8 cars
Pygmy Forest Pkg	15 cars	15 cars	30 cars
Chapman Rd. Pkg.	0	30 cars	30 cars
Peterson Lane Pkg.	6 gravel	0	6 cars
North of Peterson Lane	0	30 cars	30 cars
Visitor Center. Pkg.	6 cars	10 cars (picnic)	16 cars
Campfire Ctr. Pkg.	<u>8 cars</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8 cars</u>
Total Parking:	113 cars	+ 75 cars	188 cars
TRAILS			
Hike/Bike Trail (road)	2.1 miles	0	2.1 miles
Fern Canyon trail	2.3 miles	1.5 miles	3.8 miles
Trail / Service road	1.4 miles	0	1.4 miles
Forest trail	0	3.5 miles	3.5 miles
Coastal Access trail	<u>0</u>	<u>1.5 miles</u>	<u>1.5 miles</u>
Total Trails:	5.8 miles	6.5 miles	12.3 miles
STRUCTURES			
Restroom w/showers	3 bldgs.	2 bldgs.	5 bldgs.
Restroom CS (sewer)	2 bldgs.	(-2) 1 bldgs.	1 bldgs.
Restrooms (pump-out)	2 (beach)	1 bldgs.	3 bldgs.
Portable toilets	2 (trail camps)	2 toilets	4 toilets
Emp. Residence No. 6	Peterson Ln 1951	Retain for emp. housing	
Emp. Residence No. 7	Meadow Rd. 1940	Maintain historic/arch. integrity	
Emp. Residence No. 8	Dark Gulch 1971	Retain for housing surplus/exchg.	
Entrance Station	w/ restroom 1990	Construct at new location	
Maintenance Building	garage /1940	Remove building	
Campfire Center	200 persons	Retain for current use	
Camp Host Sites	2 locations	Relocate away from Visitor Center	
Water Treatment Fac.	Canyon Rd. 1991	Maintain for unit water system	



LEGEND

- State Park Boundary
- ==== Existing Paved Roads
- Existing Unpaved Roads

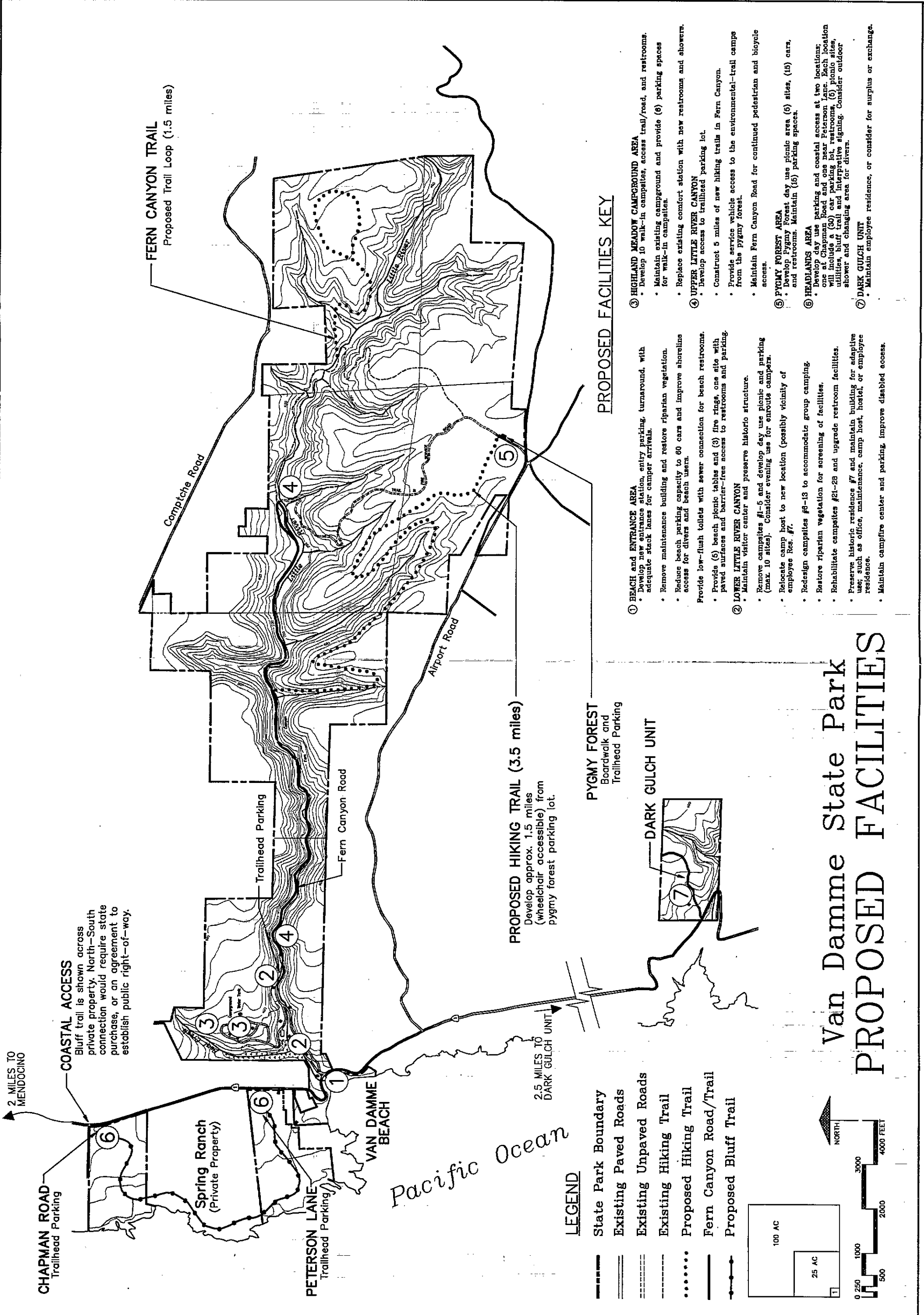


**Van Damme State Park
EXISTING FACILITIES**

EXISTING FACILITIES KEY

- ① **VAN DAMME BEACH**
 - Beach parking (75 cars) paved
 - Restrooms (2 - vault) rustic w/deck & ramp
 - Interpretive panels (2)
 - Small boat access (abalone divers)
 - Outdoor shower (concrete pad)
 - Enroute camping (self-contained RVs)
- ② **PARK ENTRANCE**
 - Entrance station w/restroom (1990)
 - Trailer sanitation station
 - Unit maintenance bldg. (1907 garage)
 - Day use picnic (2 tables)
- ③ **VISITOR CENTER**
 - Historic building (1940 CCC recreation hall)
 - Restored for interpretive exhibits (1989-90)
 - Paved parking (6 of bldg w/outside access)
 - Restrooms (trailer pad) phone
 - Camp trailers (No's 1-13)
 - Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1990)
 - Bog trail (2.5 miles) access bridge
 - Lawn area (.7 acres)
- ④ **LITTLE RIVER CAMPSITES**
 - Oriskanda campsite (No's 14-20)
 - Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1991)
 - Hike/bike camp (1)
- ⑤ **GROUP CAMP**
 - 40 person capacity
 - Parking lot (15 cars) gravel
 - Sanitary facilities in adjacent campground
 - Popular use for dive clubs and RV's
- ⑥ **EMPLOYEE RESIDENCE (RES. #7)**
 - Historic structure (moved to site 1940)
 - Visible from group camp and park road
 - Water, power, sewer
- ⑦ **CAMPERS CENTER**
 - Constructed 1959-61
 - Roadside parking (10 cars) gravel
 - Restroom (1951)
 - 200 person capacity
 - Trailhead to upper meadow campground
- ⑧ **HIGHLAND MEADOW CAMPGROUND**
 - 44 campsites (No's 31-74)
 - Restroom/shower combo. bldg. (1981)
 - Restroom bldg. (1981)
 - Lawn area (1.8 acres)
 - Water storage tank
- ⑨ **CANYON TRAILHEAD (8 CARS PAVED)**
 - Day use parking
 - Water supply and treatment facility
 - Fern Canyon Road-Trail (gates) Paved
 - Trailhead to E-camps and Pygmy Forest
 - Pedestrians, bicycles, authorized vehicles
 - Vehicle bridges (2) river fords (9)
- ⑩ **ENVIRONMENTAL-TRAIL CAMPS**
 - 10 trail camps
 - Portable toilet
- ⑪ **SERVICE ROAD AND TRAIL**
 - Road-Trail to Pygmy Forest (1.4 mile)
 - Hiking and mountain bikes
 - Emergency and patrol vehicle access
- ⑫ **PEERN CANYON TRAIL**
 - Hikers only
 - 2.5 miles/0.7 km
- ⑬ **PYGY FOREST PARKING AREA**
 - Day use parking (15 cars) paved
 - 1900 ft boardwalk (self-guided nature walk)
 - Trailhead to Peern Canyon Trail
 - No sanitary facilities
 - No visitor contact
 - Vehicle access from Airport Road (county road)
- ⑭ **PETERSON LANE**
 - Employee residence #8 (1961)
 - Bluff access restricted
 - through private property
 - Beach access trail
- ⑮ **DARK GULCH**
 - Employee residence #9 (1971)
 - 50 acres wooded area

DRAWING NO. 26048	MAP 17	VAN DAMME STATE PARK EXISTING FACILITIES GENERAL PLAN - FACILITIES ELEMENT	RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	DESIGNED D. KECK	DATE
			APPROVED _____ DATE _____	DRAWN V. CLARKE	
			REVISIONS	CHECKED D. KECK	



FERN CANYON TRAIL
 Proposed Trail Loop (1.5 miles)

Comptche Road

Airport Road

Fern Canyon Road

PETERSON LANE
 Trailhead Parking

Spring Ranch
 (Private Property)

CHAPMAN ROAD
 Trailhead Parking

COASTAL ACCESS
 Bluff trail is shown across private property. North-South connection would require state purchase, or an agreement to establish public right-of-way.

2 MILES TO MENDOCINO

Pacific Ocean

PROPOSED HIKING TRAIL (3.5 miles)
 Develop approx. 1.5 miles (wheelchair accessible) from pygmy forest parking lot.

2.5 MILES TO DARK GULCH UNIT

PYGMY FOREST
 Boardwalk and Trailhead Parking

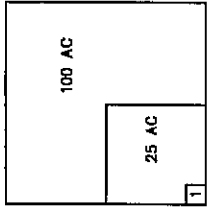
DARK GULCH UNIT

PROPOSED FACILITIES KEY

- ① **BEACH and ENTRANCE AREA**
 - Develop new entrance station, entry parking, turnaround, with adequate stack lanes for camper arrivals.
 - Remove maintenance building and restore riparian vegetation.
 - Reduce beach parking capacity to 80 cars and improve shoreline access for divers and beach users.
- ② **LOWER LITTLE RIVER CANYON**
 - Maintain visitor center and preserve historic structure.
 - Remove campsites #1-5 and develop day use picnic and parking (max. 10 sites). Consider evening use for enroute campers.
 - Relocate camp host to new location (possibly vicinity of employee Res. #7).
 - Redesign campsites #8-13 to accommodate group camping.
 - Restore riparian vegetation for screening of facilities.
 - Rehabilitate campsites #21-28 and upgrade restroom facilities.
 - Preserve historic residence #7 and maintain building for adaptive use; such as office, maintenance, camp host, hotel, or employee residence.
 - Maintain campfire center and parking, improve disabled access.
- ③ **HIGHLAND MEADOW CAMPGROUND AREA**
 - Develop 10 walk-in campsites, access trail/road, and restrooms.
 - Maintain existing campground and provide (6) parking spaces for walk-in campsites.
 - Replace existing comfort station with new restrooms and showers.
- ④ **UPPER LITTLE RIVER CANYON**
 - Develop access to trailhead parking lot.
 - Construct 5 miles of new hiking trails in Fern Canyon.
 - Provide service vehicle access to the environmental-trail camps from the pygmy forest.
 - Maintain Fern Canyon Road for continued pedestrian and bicycle access.
- ⑤ **PYGMY FOREST AREA**
 - Develop Pygmy Forest day use picnic area (6) sites, (16) cars, and restrooms. Maintain (16) parking spaces.
- ⑥ **HEADLANDS AREA**
 - Develop day use parking and coastal access at two locations: one at Chapman Road and one near Peterson Lane. Each location will include a (30) car parking lot, restrooms, (6) picnic sites, utilities, bluff trail and interpretive signage. Consider outdoor shower and changing area for divers.
- ⑦ **DARK GULCH UNIT**
 - Maintain employee residence, or consider for surplus or exchange.

LEGEND

- State Park Boundary
- Existing Paved Roads
- Existing Unpaved Roads
- - - Existing Hiking Trail
- Proposed Hiking Trail
- Fern Canyon Road/Trail
- Proposed Bluff Trail



Van Damme State Park
PROPOSED FACILITIES

VISITOR CAPACITY

Visitor Capacity refers to the maximum number of visitors that can be accommodated in the park, based on the estimated capacity of the park's existing and proposed facilities. Visitor capacity figures, combined with the Allowable Use Intensity designations from page 162, form the basis for discussion of land carrying capacity. Table 5 on page 228 indicated both instantaneous and daily capacities for each developed area in Van Damme State Park.

As indicated by Table 5, implementation of development proposed by this general plan would result in a 11% increase of the park's total visitor capacity. A 37% increase would occur in the total capacity, if additional lands were acquired and developed for public use. An actual decrease is proposed for overnight use in the Little River Canyon; while day-use activities would increase near the visitor center and on the headlands.

These figures are not absolute limits or desired goals, nor should they be considered as land carrying capacities. They can be used, however, as a starting point from which future studies can evaluate physical damage resulting from actual use. Through research and regular site monitoring, practical management measures will be developed to maintain use levels within the desired limits. Other factors used to determine allowable use intensity will also help in determining acceptable limits for facility development. If design criteria and appropriate mitigations are incorporated into the planning process, higher use intensities may be acceptable in certain park areas.

The numbers of people indicated in Table 5, are based on the estimated capacity of existing and proposed facilities. For day-use facilities, the instantaneous capacity equals the number of parking sites, multiplied by a factor of 3.2, which is the State Park System standard for the average number of visitors per vehicle. This figure is multiplied by a turnover factor of 2.0, to determine the maximum daily capacity for each day-use area. The number of campsites were multiplied by a factor of 8, representing the maximum number of visitors allowed per campsite; except for the group camp, where maximum capacity is limited to 50 persons.

Table 5

VISITOR CAPACITIES
(Number of People)

PARK AREA	INSTANTANEOUS CAPACITY		DAILY CAPACITY	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Van Damme Beach	225	200	450	400
Main Park Entrance	20	30	80	120
Van Damme Headlands	40	190	80	380
Visitor Center Parking	20	20	80	80
Little River Picnic Area	5	40	10	80
Campfire Center Parking	30	30	60	60
Fern Canyon Trailhead	25	25	50	50
Pygmy Forest Trailhead	50	100	100	200
Highland Meadow Campsite	350	375	350	375
Little River Campsites	240	120	240	120
Little River Group Camps	50	100	50	100
Fern Canyon Trail Camps	30	30	30	30
Enroute Camping	60	20	60	20
Total Number of People	1,145	1,280*	1,640*	2,015*

*The total number of people, or unit capacity, would increase as result of new land acquisition and future development.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The purpose of establishing design criteria is to provide guidelines for the appropriate design for all facilities, keeping them environmentally compatible with the park resources. Harmony between human use and preservation of the resources is the ultimate goal. The following criteria will establish the parameters for ensuring that improvement projects demonstrate general plan intent and reinforce a proper spirit of place.

Site Accessibility - Design Criteria

1. Eliminate physical barriers

The goal for future site planning and park facility design is *barrier-free design*. The purpose is to provide equal accessibility to all programs and facilities and reduce the number of special treatments which become necessary, to accommodate people with special needs.

The use of curbs along roads, walks, and parking lots is discouraged, unless otherwise required for critical drainage control, or barriers to sensitive resource areas.

Design for campsites and picnic areas should consider firm surfacing, furniture clearances, and parking widths adequate to accommodate all intended users. Vehicle barrier or tire stops, if used shall not obstruct the continuous path of travel.

2. Preserve resources & optimize park experience.

Whenever a field condition poses a conflict between *preservation* and *accessibility*, the primary objective should be to preserve resources, while also ensuring that all visitors are given reasonable access and the opportunity to enjoy an optimum park experience.

The concept of *Levels of Accessibility* has been established: from Level 4 designation intended for independent use by the majority of people with disabilities - through level 1, which may be highly challenging, even inaccessible, for persons with some disabilities. These guidelines are presented in the document titled Access to Parks, on file in the Human Resources office of our Department. Additional State and Federal guidelines may also apply.

Architecture - Design Criteria

New buildings in the park will be designed as contemporary structures. In terms of architecture, building materials and color, they should convey a rustic simplicity in harmony with the primitive and natural character of the park. Compatibility with existing buildings, such as the visitor center and structural design typical of the CCC's and park development of the 1950s would be most appropriate.

Preliminary site plans shall be prepared for all park structures, considering critical views within and outside the park, desired circulation patterns and connections, topography, solar orientation, as well as landscape and forest composition. The varied terrain at Van Damme State Park will result in different architectural design solutions.

Accessibility and energy-efficiency are also essential characteristics, that will be guided by Departmental standards and state guidelines.

Landscaping and Irrigation - Design Criteria

Landscaping in the state park consists primarily of restoring natural systems and revegetation of impacted areas with native plant species. The Department's resource management policies and directives shall guide these ongoing and future planting efforts. In developed areas, landscape plans involve site planning, planting and irrigation, and circulation design objectives for satisfying visitor and operational needs.

Landscape plans for buildings and future site development projects shall include a detailed site analysis with design alternatives. Site plans must demonstrate that the built-environment will not alter natural processes; improvements respect long-range management and site preservation goals; and that design solutions are not excessive or understated, generating new problems and impacts on natural conditions.

Site grading desirable for screening facilities shall respect the natural contours and be kept to a minimum. Irrigation systems should be used only for establishment of new landscape planting. Post-construction evaluations should be performed for completed projects, to insure that irrigation and drainage systems, and erosion control measures are successful.

Signs - Design Criteria

The following criteria are general guidelines for the design and placement of signs at Van Damme State Park:

1. Keep signs to a minimum, to maintain the natural park character. When possible, gather signs together into unified systems - avoid sign clutter in the landscape.
2. Uniform style, materials, and sizes, suitable to the natural character and spirit of place, should be established and used consistently throughout the park.
3. Information signs should be placed in areas accessible by all visitors, and included into the design of site furniture and buildings when possible.
4. Lettering styles and graphic symbols, color schemes, and materials used are subject to Department standards for specific design purposes and site conditions. Whenever possible, the use of materials native or indigenous to this area, e.g. stone and wood, is encouraged. Entrance and park area identification signs are major elements in the landscape, and their design shall depict the spirit of place and established architectural theme of the area.

Roads- Design Criteria

Park trails and roadways are designed and built with specific users in mind. Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists of different types and numbers use existing routes throughout the park. Resource impacts may result from over-use, or poor design. However, it's often the negative visual impact on the natural setting, which results from a road poorly designed and located. Design criteria for park development will help guide established grades, width, and surfacing for each route, in order to achieve the desired function and durability, and maintain esthetic quality.

The following design criteria are established for all park roads open to visitor traffic:

- a. Maintain two-lane road width and two-foot graveled shoulders on main park road. Where possible, single lane one-way traffic separated with vegetative screening is desirable, to minimize visual impact of road and vehicle traffic.
- b. Campground roads should remain two-lanes non-striped without shoulders, or a single-lane paved road designed for one-way traffic.

- c. Asphalt surfacing, without curbs or barriers is recommended for all public roadways. Road shoulders, when necessary, shall be gravel, or compacted native soil, or soil additive combinations.

Trails - Design Criteria

Existing trail routes through Van Damme State Park include paved and unpaved roads, nature trails, and informal pathways. The following design criteria shall guide improvements to existing trails, and the development of additional hiking and coastal access trails proposed by this plan.

- a. Nature trails are designed for pedestrians and hikers only. Mountain bikes and equestrian use are prohibited. Fencing, barriers, and signs to restrict vehicle access shall be kept to a minimum. The trail routes shall follow natural contours and minimize potential soil erosion and loss of native vegetation. Trail surfacing shall be firm compacted native soil, with stabilizers when necessary.
- b. Trails shall be designed at accessibility levels for persons with a wide range of abilities. Trail information shall be made available in park literature and on trailhead signs. Trail description, distance, and accessibility level are some important information to be provided. See Appendix B.
- c. Asphalt roadways, used for bicycle and pedestrian trails, should be maintained free of "pot-holes" and loose surface material. An average trail width of 8 feet is desirable, with 6 feet as a minimum clearance on footbridges.

Road-trails and footbridges should be designed for a continuous path of travel, without grade change or obstructions that would prevent wheelchair, or bicycle use. (See Appendix B for Accessibility guidelines)

PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The general priorities established in this section are intended to guide future planning, research, and budget decisions in order to accomplish important actions at the earliest opportunity. The criteria used for establishing this importance includes visitor health and safety, the protection of park resources, and public access and enjoyment. Development phasing should improve high-use areas first, with programs for better resource management and protection.

Summary of Priorities

Priority I actions are those that should occur soon and are changes needed to protect visitor health and safety, remedy or prevent problems that lead directly to resource impacts, or must be accomplished in order to implement Priority II or III actions. Some of these are relatively minor changes to existing conditions and will require little or no additional park staff to operate and maintain.

In review of the following list of proposals and priorities, the highest priority for Van Damme State Park would be resource protection, interpretation, and provisions for coastal access and day-use facilities. Rehabilitation of existing campsites and trails development are also significant improvements for continued services and resource management purposes.

The establishment of the proposed Natural Preserve and the expansion of the Underwater Marine area will encourage and enhance resource protection and management programs in these sensitive areas. Little River restoration efforts will stimulate research and development of both cultural and natural resource protection plans, while preserving trail access into the canyon.

The Department should continue efforts to acquire Spring Ranch property, as identified in this plan, and develop public access and day-use parking facilities north of Peterson Lane. These new facilities would help satisfy the visitor recreation demands in this area, and provided for visitor health and safety.

The availability of staff, or funds, and the passage of time may alter priorities. As each phase of work is accomplished, it would be prudent to evaluate how the completed facilities are being used and to examine the appropriateness of the next phase. The following is a list of general plan proposals, with suggested priorities for plan implementation.

Table 6

Van Damme State Park General Plan
Priorities for Implementation

<u>General Plan Proposal</u>	<u>Suggested Priorities</u>			<u>Primary Purpose</u>
	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	
Establish Natural Preserve	X			Resource Protection
Expand Underwater Area	X			Resource Protection
Little River Fisheries	X			Resource Protection
Cultural & Historic Features	X			Resource Protection
Vegetation Management Plans		X		Resource Management
Wildlife Management Plans		X		Resource Management
Interpretive Programs	X			Education/Res. Mgmt.
 <u>Area 1 — Van Damme Beach and Entrance</u>				
Beach Parking & Access	X			Visitor Services
Beach Restroom Facility		X		Facility Rehab.
Entrance Road/Hwy. Access		X		Access & Circulation
Remove Maintenance Shop			X	Resource Protection
New Entrance Facilities			X	Visitor Services
 <u>Area 2 — Lower Little River Canyon</u>				
Develop Day-use picnic area		X		Visitor Services
Group camp provisions		X		Visitor Services
Campsite Rehabilitation	X			Facility Rehab.
Replace Restroom Facility		X		Visitor Services
Alternative Public Use — Res. #7		X		Visitor Services
 <u>Area 3 — Highland Meadow Campground</u>				
Combo. Bldg. to replace Comf. Station			X	Visitor Services
New Walk-in campsites		X		Visitor Services

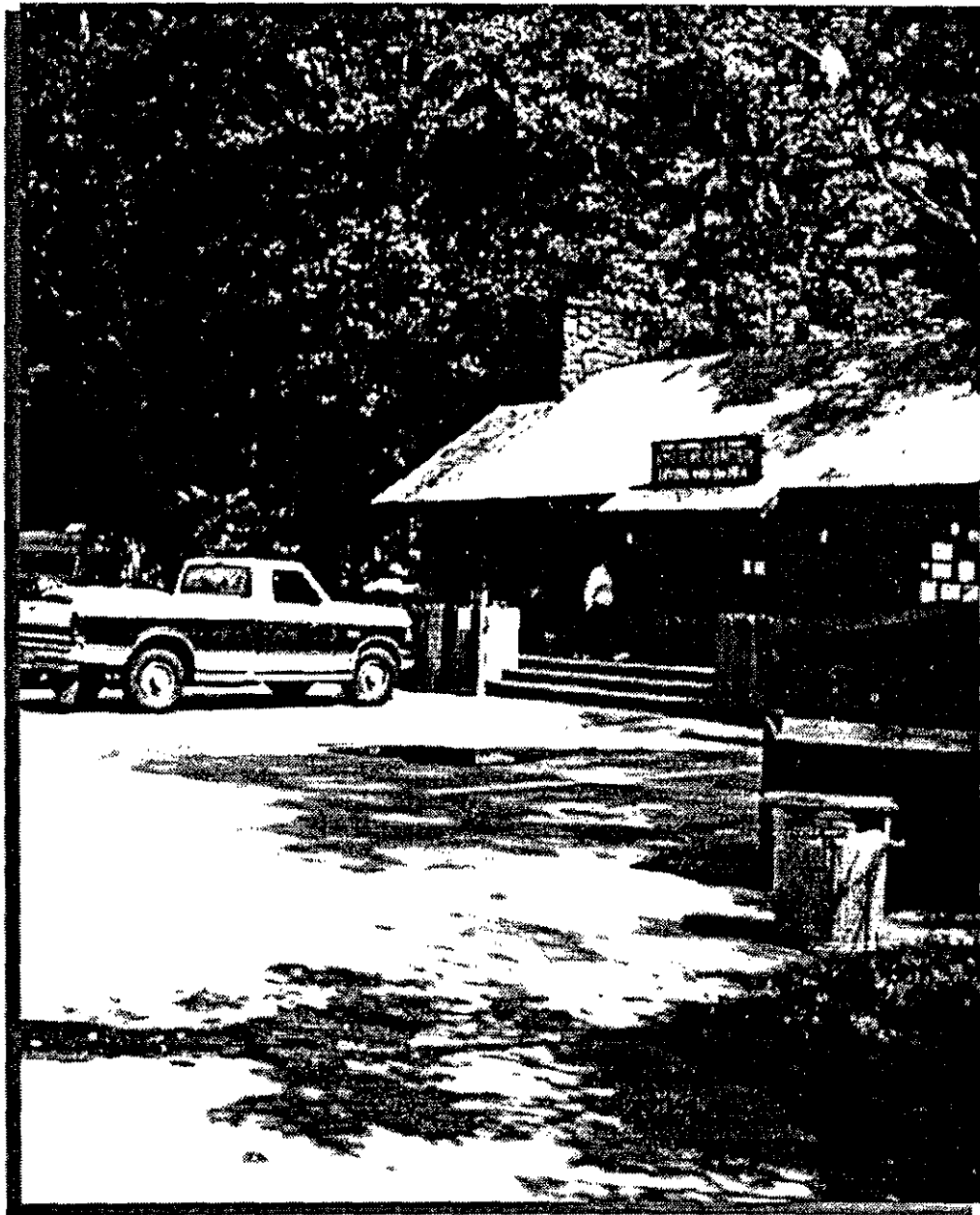
Priorities for Implementation continued:

<u>General Plan Proposal</u>	I	Suggested Priorities		III	Primary <u>Purpose</u>
		II			
<u>Area 4 — Upper Little River Canyon</u>					
Construct new hiking trails		X			Visitor Services
Construct pedestrian bridges	X				Visitor Services
Little River Vehicle crossing	X				Park Services
Cultural & Natural Features	X				Resource Protection
<u>Area 5 — Pygmy Forest</u>					
Establish Natural Preserve	X				Resource Management
Interpretive Panels — Signing	X				Visitor Services
Day-use Parking (+ 15 Signing)				X	Visitor Services
Restroom Facility				X	Visitor Services
Picnic Area (5 sites)				X	Visitor Services
Hiking / interpretive Trails		X			Visitor Services
<u>Area 6 — Van Damme Headlands</u>					
Spring Ranch Acquisition	X				Public Access & Use
Bluff trail & overlooks	X				Visitor Services
Highway 1 Access	X				Visitor Services
Interpretive signing	X				Visitor Services
North of Peterson Lane					
Parking (30 cars)	X				Visitor Services
Restroom & Utilities	X				Visitor Services
Picnic sties (5)	X				Visitor Services
Chapman Road Day-Use Area					
Parking (30 CARS)		X			Visitor Services
Restroom & Utilities		X			Visitor Services
Picnic Sites (5)		X			Visitor Services

Area 7 — Dark Gulch

No new facilities are proposed for this area

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Concessions Element



Concessions Element
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CONCESSIONS ELEMENT

Concession operations within Van Damme State Park are governed in part by the Public Resources Code, Section 5080.02 and by the policies of the California State Park and Recreation Commission (especially Policy No. 19).

General Definition

A concession is defined as authority to permit specific use of the State Park System lands and/or facilities for a specified period of time. The intent is to provide the public with goods, services, or facilities which the Department cannot provide as conveniently or efficiently and that are not reasonably available outside the unit, or to permit limited uses of State Park System lands for other purposes compatible with the public interest, and consistent with the Public Resources Code.

Purpose and Compatibility

It is the Department's policy to enter into concession contracts for the provision of services, products, facilities, programs, management, and visitor services which will provide for the enhancement of visitor use and enjoyment, as well as visitor safety and convenience. Such concessions should not create added financial burdens on the State, and wherever possible, shall reduce costs and/or generate revenues to aid in maintaining and expanding the State Park System.

Concession development, programs, or services must be compatible with the unit's classification and the objectives and provisions in the general plan.

Concession opportunities are considered at all stages of planning and operation.

General Concession Policies

Regarding concessions, it is the policy of the Department of Parks and Recreation:

1. To study the economic feasibility of proposed concessions to determine viability, as well as contract terms and conditions. Final approval for development and operation of a proposed concessions will be made by the director of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

2. To cultivate and encourage small business and ethnic minorities as concessions.
3. To avoid entering into convenience-type concession agreements for facilities, programs that are adequately provided within a short distance outside unit boundaries, when such travel will not unduly endanger or inconvenience visitors, or lead to unreasonable consumption of transportation fuels.
4. Concessions shall provide facilities, products, programs, or services at prices competitive with similar businesses outside State Park System units.

Limitations

Appropriate concessions activities for Van Damme State Park are limited to:

1. Special Events.
2. Commercial/retail-type concessions for which there is a need.
3. Concessions that enhance the state park's themes and policies.

Existing Concessions

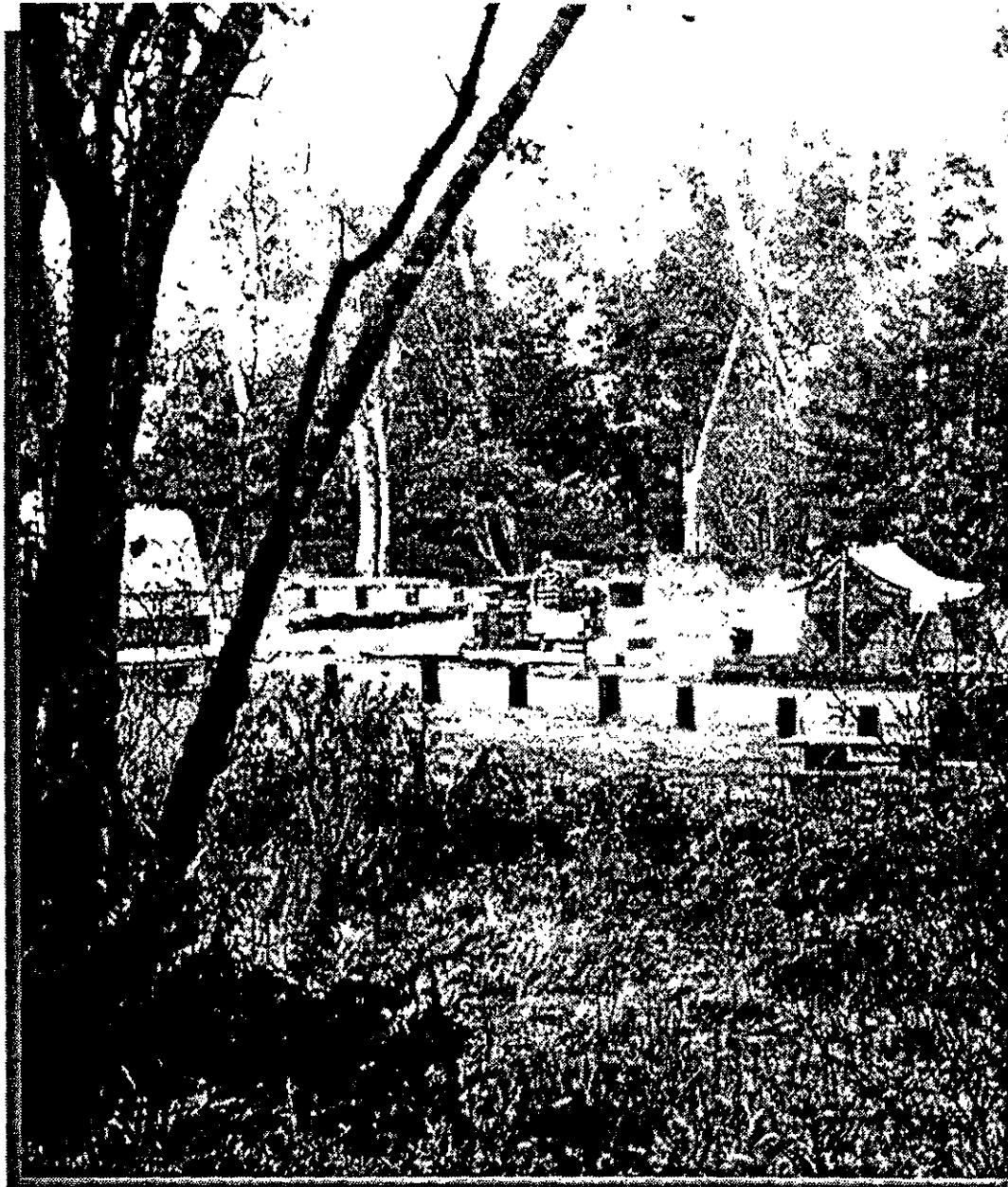
There are no concessions at Van Damme State Park at this time, and little need is foreseen for concessions in the near future.

Volunteers from the Van Damme Docent Council (part of the MAPA non-profit organization) operate the visitor center, interpretive programs, exhibits, and publications sales. The nearby towns of Little River and Mendocino provide the necessary goods and services for the comfort and convenience of park visitors.

Proposed Concessions

Future concessions may be appropriate at Van Damme State Park, to maintain the current level of visitor services and/or to enhance the recreational use and enjoyment of this unit. Concession proposals should be considered on a case-by-case basis at that time. One potential concession would be pay (hot and cold) showers for campers and divers. Changes in existing facilities and new development, to accommodate a new concession may require an amendment to this general plan.

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
Operations Element



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OPERATIONS ELEMENT

This Operations Element describes how the department operates this park in carrying out their responsibilities, to protect the resources, serve park visitors, provide interpretive opportunities, enforce park rules and regulations, and maintain facilities. Operational issues and concerns are identified, with goals and strategies presented on how to deal with future changes as a result of general plan implementation.

Existing Operations and Facilities

The Deputy Director of Park Stewardship oversees the Department's field operations. Van Damme State Park falls under the jurisdiction of the Mendocino Satellite District, which is part of the Russian River/Mendocino District. The district is under the authority of the Deputy Chief, Northern Division, who reports to the Deputy Director of Park Stewardship.

The Mendocino Satellite office is headquartered at Russian Gulch State Park, about four miles north of Van Damme State park. Facilities include an administrative office building and large maintenance complex, storage yard, employee housing, and work center for the California Conservation Corps (CCC).

Visitor services and maintenance at Van Damme State Park are provided daily by unit personnel consisting of a park ranger and maintenance worker, supported by district seasonal staff. These duties are performed either at the district office or from the park's entrance station. Van Damme does not have a park office for unit operations. A small garage located at the park entrance is presently used for storage of small tools, equipment, firewood, and housekeeping supplies.

Administration

General park administrative tasks are the responsibility of the Mendocino Satellite administrative staff. These duties include public information, community relations, operations and maintenance and minor capital outlay budgeting, program and personnel management, defensive planning, time and fiscal accounting, document management, monitoring of concessions operations, and special event scheduling. The large amount of public contact includes providing information via the telephone and over the counter. The current dispatch center provides dispatch for the entire Mendocino Satellite area and the southern portion of the North Coast Redwoods District.

Resource Management Responsibilities

Resource management programs are guided by the Department's Resource Management Directives. Specific programs are directed by a variety of documents, including the Department's Tree Hazard Control Manual, Pesticide Use Manual, and Prescribed Fire Management Policy and Procedures document. Resource Specialist in the District are assisted by the unit's ranger, maintenance, and seasonal staff in implementing resource programs. Technical Specialist in the Service Center and Headquarters also assist field staff. Ongoing resource management programs in the Mendocino Satellite District include prescribed burning, exotic plant control, tree hazard control, tidelands and submerged lands protection, and aquatic habitat restoration and management. These programs are undertaken with assistance of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the Department of Corrections (CDC) labor crews.

Concerns continue for protection of Salmon and Steelhead runs in the Little River, impacts on the underwater resources offshore at Van Damme State Park from both sport and commercial harvesting of targeted species, and preservation of rare or endangered flora and fauna in the pygmy and redwood forest areas. Preservation of the archaeological Native American sites and remaining historic features are other resource management issues at this unit.

Visitor Services

The district's ranger staff is responsible for all park functions involving contact with the visiting public. These include entrance station operations, campground registration, information and interpretation, patrol and law enforcement, and medical emergencies. The ranger staff is assisted by seasonal park aids, who are used primarily for entrance station operations during the peak season and on weekends during the off-season to register campers. An iron ranger is also provided at the entrance for fee collection during the off season; there is no fee collection at the beach or pygmy forest parking lots.

The visitor center is staffed by volunteers from the Van Damme Docents, a group from the Mendocino Area Parks Association (MAPA). During the summer, the visitor center is open daily. Interpretive programs are also offered at the campfire center weekly, which draws additional attendance from Russian Gulch State Park. Nature walks are conducted an average of twice weekly by seasonal interpretive staff. Park staff and volunteers also run a Junior Ranger Program 4-5 times each week depending on staff availability.

Public Safety and Law Enforcement

The greatest frequency of law enforcement and public safety protection activities coincides with the highest period of park visitation and the opening of abalone season, from April through November. The main enforcement problems are thefts and auto burglaries, vandalism, noise and disturbances of the peace, fish and game violations, unleashed dogs, vehicle code violations, off-road vehicle use, illegal camping, and fires.

Van Damme beach is small, but popular for snorkeling and scuba diving activities. Northern California's cold ocean temperatures discourage ocean swimming, so not much swimming occurs, therefore lifeguards are not provided. Surfing is rapidly growing in popularity and water-related accidents do occur. The department continues to monitor aquatic recreation activity and determine the appropriate safety services needed, consistent with the department's Aquatic Safety Task Force Report (September 1988). Assistance is often requested from the U.S. Coast Guard for beach, swimming, and cliff accidents.

Beach parking is provided on state property, accessible directly from Highway 1. This parking is presently available for day use, without a fee, and generates a high number of traffic related problems and vehicle code violations. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Department and California Highway Patrol may assist the unit's ranger staff for law enforcement.

Other uncontrolled access points are Peterson Lane and the road to the pygmy forest parking lot where enforcement can be difficult because it is used for trailhead parking. Routine patrols and citizen reports have helped to control problems of illegal camping and trespass, off-highway vehicle use, vandalism, and resource damage.

Three state employee residences are located in the park: one located at Peterson Lane, one residence at Dark Gulch, and one residence located on Meadow Road near the Little River campsites. All three provide opportunities for park surveillance, and quick emergency response, and public contact as necessary, to provide visitor services and ensure public safety.

Maintenance Services

The maintenance staff is responsible for ensuring that all park facilities are kept in a clean and functional condition. Routine duties include housekeeping, garbage collection, carpentry, plumbing, heavy equipment operation, equipment maintenance, water treatment, and sewage treatment. The maintenance staff is augmented during the summer months with a seasonal staff that performs most routine duties, such as housekeeping and trash collection.

All sanitary facilities at the unit require daily cleaning, while the two Shasta type toilets at the environmental camps require cleaning twice weekly. The beach requires litter pick-up two to three times per week during the summer, as does the Fern Canyon and pygmy forest parking lots.

Regular maintenance responsibilities at Van Damme State Park also include upkeep and repair of all the park's facilities, including signs, gates, fencing, campground tables and stoves, comfort stations, combination buildings, water treatment plant, water systems, and road surface. Brush clearing on trails and in campsites, landscape maintenance and mowing are also performed.

Agency Coordination

Fire and Public Safety Agencies

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFFP) has the primary responsibility for fire protection in most rural State Park System units. The CDFFP Woodlands facility on road 408 responds to fires at Van Damme State Park and is assisted by the volunteer fire and rescue department of Mendocino and Albion. Ambulance service is provided by the Fort Bragg Community Hospital.

In conjunction with the California Department of Corrections, CDFFP provides the park with an inmate fire crew that performs resource and maintenance related tasks on an occasional basis.

Law Enforcement Agencies

Concurrent law enforcement jurisdiction includes the Mendocino County Sheriff's Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The response time to emergencies at Van Damme State Park can increase, if a shortage of enforcement personnel occurs. The unit ranger is also occasionally called upon to assist at vehicle accidents along Highway 1, and to back up sheriff and CHP officers.

Volunteerism

The Mendocino Area Parks Association (MAPA) is a non-profit park cooperative association whose purpose is to assist the district through a variety of programs. The Van Damme Docent Council which is an affiliate of MAPA operates the visitor center

and assists in interpretation, conducting walks and tours, and giving talks. MAPA provides and sells brochures, publications, interpretive clothing, and firewood to park visitors in the Mendocino district. Proceeds from its fund-raising pay the salaries of three Interpretive Specialists (districtwide) during the summer, and is used in the development of interpretive information, exhibits, and displays.

Van Damme State Park utilizes two volunteer campground hosts, supplied through the Department's Camp Host program. One camp host site is located in the Upper Meadow campground and the other site is near the visitor center. In general, the presence of a camp host is effective in reducing campground thefts, vandalism, and other illegal or undesirable activities, thereby releasing both maintenance and ranger personnel for more critical operational functions. The camp hosts at this unit operate the visitor center and assist with housekeeping responsibilities. While working, they receive the use of a centrally located campsite with trailer hookups.

Visitor Use

Van Damme State Park is one of the busiest units in the Mendocino District. The campground operates at capacity on weekends from April through mid-October, and weekdays from mid-June through Labor Day. The beach parking lot is used for enroute camping throughout the year, and absorbs some of the overflow from the campground during the busy season. There is a large amount of free day use in Van Damme State Park. The free day use areas include: the beach parking lot, Pygmy Forest parking lot, and Chapman Point. These areas are used all year, but most attendance generally corresponds with the abalone season.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Operations Facilities

Currently there is no ranger station at Van Damme State Park. This function is currently operated from the park office at Russian Gulch State Park. A unit office would provide a place to store all files and records unique to the unit and would provide more of a staff presence during the off season.

The existing maintenance facility located at the park entrance is a converted two-car garage. One half of this building is currently used to store firewood, with the remaining area for maintenance equipment. This facility is too small for both functions.

Public Safety

One of the public safety concerns at this unit is State Highway 1. This highway separates the beach and beach parking lot from the main park area. The highway has steep grades and sharp turns both south and north of the park entrance, with no turn lanes provided. There is a great deal of pedestrian and vehicle traffic crossing the highway back and forth from the beach and main park area.

Another safety concern is having bicycles and pedestrians on the same trail. A small percentage of bicyclists ride recklessly and at excessive speeds, and some riders ignore signs posted on trails closed to bicycles.

Presently, there is not enough staff to adequately patrol trails to enforce park rules and regulation. Most patrols are done by vehicle along the Fern Canyon Road (trail) and service Road to the Pygmy Forest.

Aquatic Safety

Inherent in all coastal State Park System units are aquatic hazards. Van Damme State Park is a very popular scuba and free diving park. Throughout the abalone season, large numbers of snorkelers and scuba divers enter and exit the ocean at this beach. Spear fishing is also popular at this unit. Many divers launch inflatable boats trailered to the beach, and with this large number of boats and divers accidents do happen. Fortunately, no serious injuries have occurred.

The Chapman Point area is a rocky shoreline with steep bluffs. This area draws not only divers, but rock fisherman. The rocky exposed shoreline causes rough and dangerous ocean conditions. Deaths have occurred from diving accidents and fisherman washed off of the rocks by large waves.

Aquatic Hazards

The following aquatic hazards are common at Van Damme State Park:

1. Cold Water — A wet suit is required to safely enter the water.
2. Variable Surf Conditions — Ocean conditions range from flat crystal-clear water to moderate swells with good visibility, rough water with poor visibility, and the hazards of major Pacific storms. Conditions can change quickly from small surf to heavy storm-driven waves.

3. *Congestion of boats and divers* — On a busy weekend there are many divers in the waters of Van Damme Bay. There are also many motorized boats operating in the same waters.

Aquatic Hazard Mitigation

In response to aquatic hazards, current park operations include the following mitigation to safeguard visitor safety:

- Informal handouts are given to boat operators.
- Outreach services such as junior ranger, campfire programs, school and group talks, and district newspapers emphasize aquatic safety.
- Permanent staff are all trained in first aid and CPR.
- Seven well-trained and equipped volunteer fire and rescue departments are available to the district.

Wildfire

During the summer, wildfire is a potential threat at this unit. The upper campground surrounds a large grassy field and bordered on two sides by undeveloped forest with plentiful fuel. The environmental campsites are also in an area of plentiful fuels. Wildfires in either of these areas could progress quickly enough to present a significant fire hazard.

Offshore Oil Drilling

Offshore drilling is a potential threat to the scenic and ecological integrity of the unit. Potential hazards and environmental impacts are described in the Resource Element page 83.

Off-highway Vehicle Use

Off-highway vehicle activity in the park is of minor importance. Most access areas are well signed and gated. Occasionally motorcycles will enter the pygmy forest gate, or four wheel drive vehicles will drive out onto the beach. The high visibility of the beach area makes enforcement contacts relatively quick in this area. Contacts are more difficult in the pygmy forest area, but occurrences are also rare.

Trespass

Rural residential and commercial development surrounds Van Damme State Park. This close relationship causes occasional trespass from access roads and with unauthorized tree removal.

Easements

A variety of easements exist in the park, although most have little impact on the unit's operations and resources.

Jurisdictions

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) exercises jurisdiction over sport and commercial hunting and fishing in California, including the State Park System. The regulation of marine resources by DFG permits commercial collection and harvesting of seaweed and sea urchins in the offshore waters of this unit. This action conflicts with our department's mission to preserve and protect these park resources, particularly in the designated underwater park area. Collection activities may threaten or damage other park resources.

OPERATIONAL GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the units' operational problems will be resolved or reduced as result of general plan implementation. Some problems will remain outside the ability of the Department to resolve, and new problems may arise. Impacts of general plan implementation on park operations have been anticipated, and general operational goals and strategies for dealing with them are discussed below.

Operational Goals

Facilities

Goal: Provide unit storage for maintenance, interpretive, and operational materials.

A storage facility for firewood is needed for the unit. The existing maintenance building used for this purpose is in poor condition and should be removed. If the Spring Ranch property is acquired by the Department, the existing farm structures should be evaluated, along with other alternatives, to determine if they could be a suitable location for maintenance or interpretive purposes.

A park office would increase ranger presence in the park and allow for much needed storage of interpretive and operational material that pertains to Van Damme State Park. The existing Residence No. 7 could serve this purpose.

Administration

Goal: Coordinate park planning with other agencies and local community.

Future planning of park activities and development must be carefully coordinated between our Department, other public agencies, and the local community. Future planning and design shall address all public concerns, with assurance that park objectives are being met.

Resource Management

Goal: Protect resources and ensure proper park use.

Van Damme State Park is noted for its Redwood Forest, lush canyon and river, the Pygmy Forest, a protected beach and bay with a rich abalone habitat, wildlife, and historic features. It is the declared purpose of the department to provide protection as appropriate and necessary to maintain and perpetuate their value. As long as special programs and events can be conducted without compromise to the perpetuation of park features, they should be encouraged.

The department's responsibility to protect park resources and ensure proper park use can sometimes make it difficult to maintain "good neighbor" relationships, especially in situations where trespass or private encroachment damages park resources. Whenever possible, park staff shall attempt to educate others to the value of park resources and the continuity of natural system processes. Nevertheless, park lands are to be protected from trespass or unauthorized private use or encroachment. Unauthorized private access ways over park lands shall be eliminated. Written approval from the department is required for exclusive private use or access over state park property.

Visitor Services

Goal: Encourage recreational activities without compromising park resources.

This unit does not have extensive enforcement problems. However, common problems such as illegal parking, and excessive noise are a result of overcrowding in this unit. These problems are of particular concern because they directly threaten the park's resource values, and appear to be getting worse as visitation pressure continues to increase. To counter these problems, regular and careful patrols are needed to establish a basic law enforcement presence. Wise management and general plan implementation may also reduce these problems. Enforcement of Fish and Game regulations is an ongoing activity throughout the abalone season. It is important that staff be kept at an adequate level to devote time to these regulations.

Public recreation use at this unit has included camping, scuba diving, hiking, biking, nature observation, beachcombing, sunning, and other such compatible activities. To the extent that such activities may be permitted without compromise to the park's historical and natural resource values they shall be encouraged. Park staff shall seek to identify methods to reasonably facilitate compatible general public recreational use. Recreational activities sponsored by individuals, groups, or organizations may be considered by special event permit and may be approved if the activities are not in conflict with this general plan and the purpose of state park rules, regulations, policies, or orders.

For continued visitor protection, the application of aquatic hazard mitigation will be expanded to meet increases in visitation. In addition, some district staff should be trained in rescue boat operation.

Maintenance Services

Goal: Maintain high-quality standards for park facilities and maintenance services.

Facility maintenance shall continue as appropriate; to meet standards for public health and safety, to maintain public and department expectations for cleanliness and appearances, to meet security requirements, and to extend the life span of facilities, tools, and equipment. In addition, facility maintenance shall be consistent with design criteria established in the Facilities Element of this General Plan, when applicable.

The Visitor Center building, which is identified as historically significant, will be repaired and maintained utilizing aged or similar materials to the extent practical, and in accordance with the federal standards for Historic Preservation Projects. Significant repairs or proposed alterations to such historic facilities are to be described in writing, reviewed by the District Superintendent and forwarded for appropriate reviews as required by the department and the California Environmental Quality Act or other provisions of law.

Coordination with Other Agencies

Goal: Maintain a cooperative relationship with other enforcement agencies.

Unit and district staff will continue to assist county, state, and other law enforcement agencies. Cooperative effort should result in clear understanding by all law enforcement personnel of their responsibilities and jurisdiction with respect to protection of the park's prime resources. The department and district staff shall participate with the Department of Fish and Game in resolving the conflicts of jurisdiction which permit commercial removal of the marine resources within the park.

Volunteers

Goal: Support and encourage volunteer programs and services.

Volunteers in parks help meet several objectives by increasing public awareness of park values and features, and developing ways to make those features and resources more accessible to the public. This public service is to be fully supported by the district. To encourage volunteer effort, park and district staff shall work closely with individuals and their organizations to assist with training and to provide the direction and supervision necessary to ensure efficient and effective interpretive programs and public service.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT OF GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the general plan will present a significant increase in responsibility for park staff. New and expanded park facilities will be provided, requiring maintenance and operation. Park boundaries may be expanded, adding new lands that require patrol and protection. The need for additional space for park office functions, maintenance work, and storage will grow.

Ideally, the necessary administrative, maintenance, and storage needs can be accommodated within the unit as identified in the Facilities Element, easing current and projected operational problems associated with visitor control and contact, and facility maintenance. Improved and/or redesigned use areas are intended to minimize or eliminate resource problems related to visitor use. Nevertheless, the operational responsibilities associated with increased visitation, development, and programs, therefore will grow beyond the ability of the existing staff to handle. As the general plan's recommendations are implemented, it will be the responsibility of the District Superintendent to recommend to the department appropriate future increases in staffing, equipment, and operational expenses necessary to fulfill operational responsibilities at Van Damme State Park.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

The Van Damme State Park Preliminary General Plan was circulated for public review in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. Notice of Availability was published in the Ukiah Daily Journal and the Mendocino Beacon. Copies of the Plan were available for public review at the Fort Bragg Branch of the Mendocino County Library, Russian River-Mendocino District Office, and Mendocino Sector Office at Russian Gulch State Park. The Preliminary General Plan was sent to:

- Resources Agency
- California Coastal Commission
- Coastal Conservancy
- Department of Conservation
- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Water Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Regional Water Quality Control Board - North Coast Region
- Native American Heritage Commission
- State Lands Commission
- Mendocino County Council of Governments
- Mendocino County Planning and Building Services Department
- Sierra Club State Park Task Force
- Mendocino Area Parks Association
- Glendeven Inn Gallery
- Little River Headlands Mutual Water Company
- Honorable Liz Henry, Supervisor, Mendocino County
- Ms. Rachel Binah, Rachel's Inn
- Mr. Robert and Lois Raymond
- Mr. Glenn and Cora Spring

Written comments were received by the end of the public review on December 2, 1994 from:

- District 1 - Department of Transportation
- Ms. Rachel Binah
- Ms. Patricia M. Bauer
- Ms. Patricia Howard
- Mr. John V. Frank

The Preliminary General Plan including the Environmental Impact Element, the Comments and Response to Comments constitutes the Final Environmental Impact Report for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CCR Section 15132) and will be presented to the State Park and Recreation Commission for their consideration in approval of the General Plan.

Following the comment letters are the responses to the comments.

October 10, 1994

Telephone call from Rachel Binah of Rachel's Inn

Comments

1. The proposed day use area, parking, and campground could visually intrude upon the users/visitors and operation of her inn at the corner of Peterson Lane and Highway 1.
2. The visitors to the day use area will use her parking area for access to the State Park lands and use the inn's facilities (restrooms, trash disposal) to the detriment of her visitors and operation.
3. The location of the headlands area entrance should be as far north as possible to avoid congestion on Highway 1 south of Peterson Lane. Preferably, the entrance should be located on the Spring Ranch parcel.

Memorandum

To : ROBERT UELTZEN
Northern Service Center
Department of Parks & Recreation
P. O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Date : November 18, 1994

File No. : 1-Men-1-48.03
Van Damme State
Park Gen Plan
SCH #94103047

From : DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - District 1
P. O. Box 3700, Eureka, CA 95502-3700

Subject : Van Damme State Park Preliminary General Plan/DEIR

We have reviewed the Van Damme State Park Preliminary General Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the development and expansion of the existing State Park facilities, located approximately two miles south of Mendocino on both sides of Route 1, and offer the following comments:

4 | The concept for this segment of Route 1 is a two-lane conventional highway with 12-foot lanes and four-foot shoulders. We recommend that the final EIR adopt the Caltrans highway concept for this segment of Route 1.

5 | Caltrans' right of way adjacent to park lands consists of a range of ownership including prescriptive rights, easements and fee title. We recommend a setback of 50 feet as measured from centerline for this segment of Route 1. Such a setback is consistent with the route concept and the Highway Design Manual for two-lane highway widths. The setback would allow for work on the State highway, including the development of four-foot shoulders (primarily for bicycle and pedestrian use), minimize the chance of disrupting property improvements, and help protect the improvements from adverse highway impacts such as dust and noise. Improvements within the setback should not include required parking areas. It appears that the setback will not impact the "Day Use Facilities" on the Concept Plan (page 220).

6 | The General Plan identifies a proposed access to Route 1 north of Peterson Lane (post mile 48.43), includes development of a 30-car parking lot and picnic area (page 218). We are in support of the development of this access.

7 | The Concept Plan (page 220) identifies a "Potential Public Access" to Route 1 on Spring Ranch (private property), at approximately post mile 48.78, which would apparently link two 30-car parking areas. We recommend that this proposed access be moved north to post mile 48.92, west of the Route 1/Gordon Lane intersection. This access location will benefit both Gordon Lane and the new access to the park by consolidating turning movements on Route 1. Because this segment of Route 1 is access controlled, a request to access Route 1 west of the Route 1/

Robert Ueltzen
November 18, 1994
Page 2


Gordon Lane intersection will require the approval of Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission.

8 We recommend against establishing a pedestrian crossing on Route 1 at the entrance to the park (page 192, 1(d)). As Dave Carstensen of my staff discussed in a phone conversation with you, pedestrians may experience a false sense of security when using a crosswalk on a rural two-lane highway. As an advisory, you may wish to consider using a pedestrian walkway under the Little River Bridge as an alternative to a crosswalk.

9 Any new proposed accesses to Route 1 should be built to Caltrans' current public road approach standards (in accordance with Chapter 400, Index 405.7 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual). Any work within the State highway right of way as a result of this project will require an encroachment permit from Caltrans (per 1991 Statutes relating to the California Department of Transportation, Chapter 3, Articles 1 and 2). The encroachment permit application submittal must include a copy of the lead agency's conditions of project approval. Provisions for adequate sight distance and turning geometrics are the responsibility of the applicant. Early consultation on engineering plans and drainage plans that affect State highway right of way is recommended. Requests for encroachment permit application forms can be sent to Caltrans District 1 Permits Office, P. O. Box 3700, Eureka, CA 95502-3700, or requested by phone at (707) 445-6390.

10 We suggest the final EIR state that the recommended changes for the unit entrance "to provide safe and easier access from Highway One" (page 192), will be mitigated/funded by the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

We would appreciate receiving a copy of the final environmental document, and any conditions of approval and required mitigations. Should you have any questions, please call Dave Carstensen at (707) 441-5813.


CHERYL S. WILLIS, Chief
Transportation Planning and
Public Transportation Office

cc:Michael Chiriatti
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

11/12/94

Robert Acrea, Senior Landscape Architect
Northern Service Center
1725 23d Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, Calif. 95816

Dear Mr. Acrea:

I have had a chance to go over the PRELIMINARY GENERAL PLANT FOR VAN DAMME STATE PARK, Little River, Calif. Overall, I find most of the plan quite good. However, there is a point of major concern to me.

The proposal to move the Lower Campground Host to another location. I feel that this is a very poor plan for the following reasons:

1. Having the Host site located next to the Visitors Center protects the center from vandalism during off season and at night. The Host has a phone in their trailer and can call for aid if necessary.

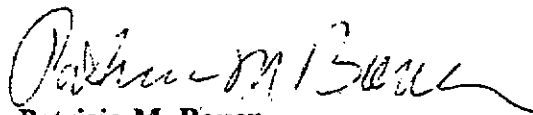
2. Another reason to keep it near the Visitors Center is as a contact point when the park entrance Kiosk is unattended and someone coming from the beach needs assistance. They would come to the visitors center and if it were closed would go to the Hosts trailer for help - again the Host has a phone and can call for assistance if necessary.

I think that the protection of the Visitors Center by having the Host site where it is, really is the most important factor here.

Another item of concern is why two group camp sites? I have camped with groups using group sites and/or individual sites - 2 cars to a site and I find the latter preferable. It is so nice to be able to not be in close proximity with the whole gang. It is nice to be able to retreat to your own site.

I am a member of Van Damme State Park Docent Council and also Vice Chairman of the Mendocino Area Parks Assn. Board so I have a strong interest in what happens to our parks.

Sincerely yours,



Patricia M. Bauer

P.O. Box 344

Little River, Calif. 95456

November 19, 1994

Robert Acrea
Senior Landscape Architect
Northern Service Center
California Department of Parks & Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Re: Van Damme State Park Preliminary General Plan

As a member of the Van Damme Docent Council and a board member of the local chapter of CNPS, I have read with interest the Van Damme State Park Preliminary General Plan and I agree for the most part with recommendations for the protection and use of resources. There are however several comments or suggestions that I would like to make.

13 On page 43 of the Resource Element and page 99 (Table 1), you may wish to add Pygmy Manzanita, *Arctostaphylos mendocinoensis* (CNPS List 1B, 1994 ed.), to the Sensitive Plants list as one that potentially may occur in the Pygmy Forest. While I have not myself seen it in Van Damme, I have talked to other people who believe that they have.

14 I also urge that German Ivy, *Senecio mikanoides*, be added to the list of Plants of Management Concern in Table 1. From what I have read and what I see while driving along the coast, this plant is becoming an increasingly serious problem on the North Coast. There is a sizeable invasion just inside the entrance to Van Damme, both along the Little River and in the traffic island east of the entrance station.


15 The Land Use Element talks of setting the visitor's "first impression" (p. 141). I would like to comment that my "first impression" of Van Damme, especially when approaching the park from the north, is the view as seen through waving plumes of Pampas Grass, *Cortaderia selloana*. While many people find this plant beautiful, I do not. The Unit Entrance section of the Facilities Element (p. 192) says "Preserving natural values in this area will enhance the visitor's entry experience and first impressions." Among the recommendations for changes, I hope that you will encourage CalTrans to establish a control program for this plant along its right-of-way.

Page 2
November 19, 1994

so that Pampas Grass will not continue to seed into the Van Damme beach and bluff areas.

16 While removal of the Camp Host Site adjacent to the Visitor Center is not included in the recommendations for the Visitor Center & Campsites # 1-13 section of Area 2 (p. 198), the accompanying Concept Plan (Figure 7) does show its removal. I urge that this camp host site not be moved, since it serves two important functions: 1) security for the Visitor Center and 2) emergency contact person for park visitors whenever the entry station is not staffed.

Sincerely,



Patricia Howard

**THE
BURTON D. MORGAN
FOUNDATION**

November 28, 1994

Northern Service Center
California Dept. of Parks & Recreation
P. O. Box 942896
Sacramento, California 94296-0001

RE: Van Damme Park General Plan

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen:

I own property at 45300 Headlands Drive, Little River, which starts at the west end of Peterson Lane.

Under the preliminary general plan, it is proposed to develop day use parking adjacent to Peterson Lane, to which I have no objection; however, there is a big problem with Peterson Lane.

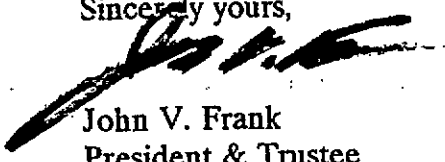
The road has been in use for 50 or more years, but the County of Mendocino disclaims any ownership or responsibility for maintenance; moreover, the property owners association that owns Headlands Drive cannot maintain the road, to avoid the liability problem.

17

If you are going to encourage and provide additional parking along Peterson Lane, then the state should maintain the road. If the parking is to be developed, and the entrance is off Peterson Lane, then it would be unfair to encourage more traffic on Peterson Lane without providing for continued maintenance. Peterson Lane does have some sight obstructions which are on private property and it might be more desirable to have a separate entrance for the parking lot off of Route 1 and put a stockade fence along Peterson Lane. I might also point out the District Superintendent of Parks' home is located on the western end of Peterson Lane.

It would be greatly appreciated if someone in the Parks department can respond to this letter.

Sincerely yours,


John V. Frank
President & Trustee

JVF:gp

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Rachel Binah, Rachel's Inn

1. The general plan proposes vegetative screening as a landscape buffer between new day use facilities, the highway, and nearby private properties.

As stated in the general plan (p. 218): "private property owners and residents of the Little River Headlands Estates and Peterson Lane shall be consulted during the future design process, in order to review specific project alternatives and site mitigation measures."

2. New day use facilities are proposed at this location, to accommodate park visitors who desire coastal access. Currently, it's the lack of public facilities that presents potential problems with our increasing visitor demands. New facilities would include parking, restrooms, trails, and a separate vehicle access from Highway 1.

See response #1 above.

3. The concept plan for the Van Damme Headlands Area shows a proposed access location at the northern edge of the state park property, as well as an alternative potential public access further north, if the Spring Ranch property is acquired by the State. Any park development and proposed access to Route 1 will require coastal permits and approval from Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission (see Caltrans comments).

Department of Transportation

4.-5. Our Department supports the two-lane scenic highway concept, although potential resource impacts from development and maintenance of four-foot shoulders adjacent to park lands is a concern. Both natural and cultural resource management programs are given primary consideration. Our Department will coordinate with Caltrans in designating appropriate pedestrian and bicycle routes along Highway 1. Park development will maintain the recommended setback of 50 feet, or greater, to serve as a landscape buffer or screening for specific park areas.

6.-7. Proposed access locations are conceptual and subject to potential park acquisition and planning of the Spring property west of Highway 1. Our Department will consult Caltrans during the early planning and design of any development proposals on the headlands, and submit access plans to Caltrans for approval.

8. The Little River Bridge, as it is presently situated, does not provide sufficient clearance for a pedestrian underpass. This concept, however, may be considered at the time of future area development plans or bridge modifications.

9. Our Department will consult with Caltrans on engineering and drainage plans, and submit an application for encroachment permit for any work within the state right-of-way.

10. It is not the purpose of the General Plan or the EIR to determine the source of funding for future development.

Patricia M. Bauer

11. Our Department agrees that providing a contact point for visitors, surveillance of the visitor center, and having a phone available for emergencies are important in this vicinity. The camp host is only one method of providing this service. Other possibilities include staffing the entrance station, ranger patrols, residence & unit office, or building security systems. Our Department must also consider the natural, cultural, and recreational values in maintaining, or relocating the operations functions (including camp host) within the park.

12. Redesign of the existing campsites is not intended to duplicate the existing group camp, but to provide greater flexibility for group use, as well as family campers when not reserved. This design could include two-car spaces and more vegetative screening between tent sites, while offering such items as a group campfire and food preparation area.

Patricia Howard

13. Pygmy manzanita (*Arctostaphylos mendocinoensis*) will be added to the Plant and Communities of Special Management Interest table as a species that may occur in the unit.

14. German ivy (*Senecio mikanoides*) is an invasive alien species and will be listed in the general plan as a plant of management concern.

15. The Department maintains an informal dialogue with CalTrans in Mendocino County regarding management of alien species, including pampas grass. The Department will continue to suggest removal of invasive alien species and provide expertise where needed.

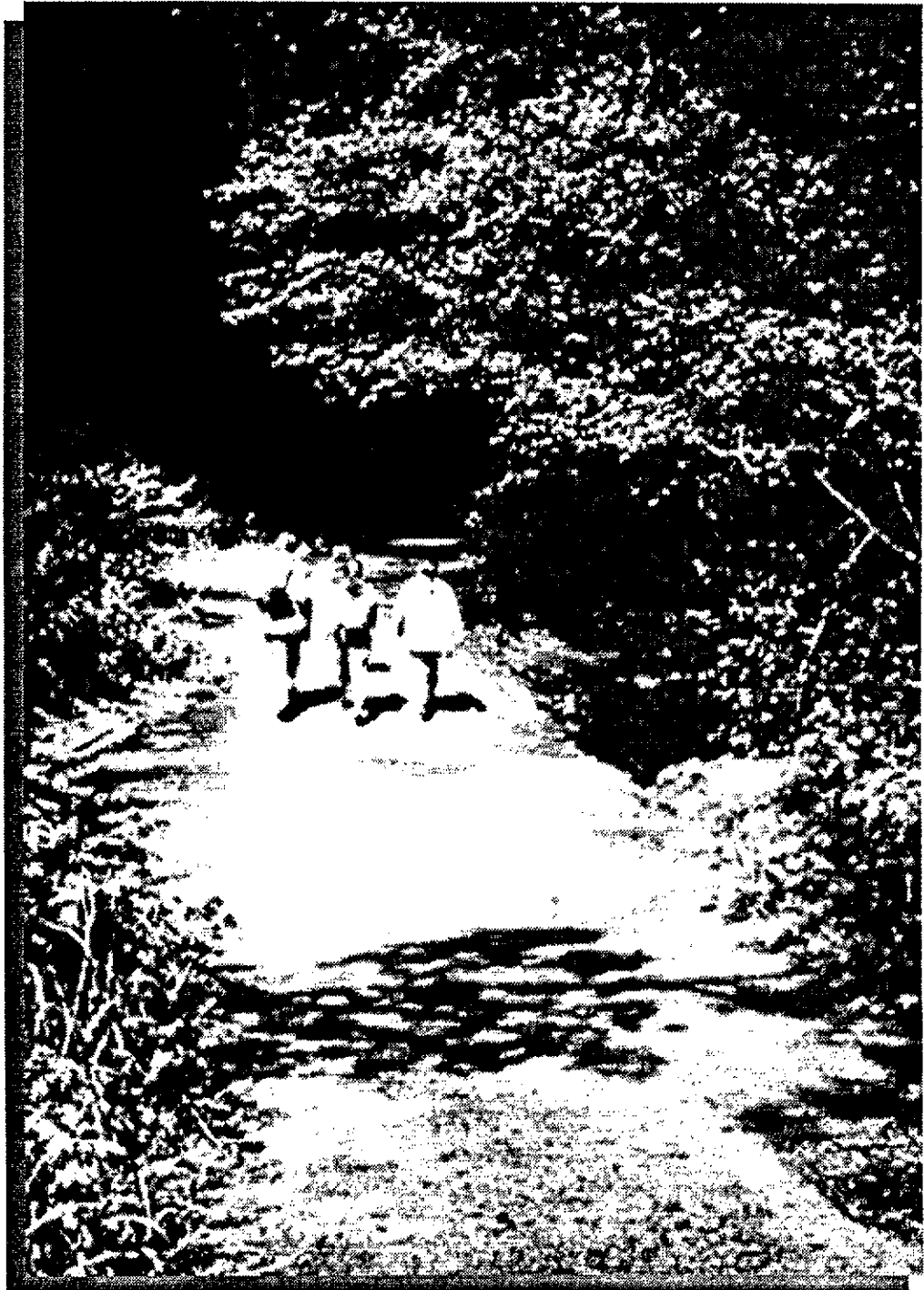
16. See response # 11.

John V. Frank

17. The General Plan does not propose additional day use parking adjacent to Peterson Lane. However, the plan does propose a 30-car parking lot on state-owned property north of Peterson Lane. Your suggestion for a separate access from Route 1 is desirable, and is shown on the Headlands Area concept plan, page 220 (see comments from the Department of Transportation #6, and #7).

VAN DAMME STATE PARK

Environmental Impact Element



**Environmental Impact Element
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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ELEMENT

Summary

The General Plan, with all its elements, constitutes an environmental impact report (EIR), as required by Public Resources Code Sections 5002.2 and 21000 et seq. This EIR is for the approval of the General Plan. Site specific development and resource management projects for this unit will be subject to subsequent CEQA compliance as they are proposed. The discussion of impacts is commensurate with the level of specificity of the plan.

The General Plan proposes facilities changes, resource management proposals and classification recommendations. A summary of the proposals is provided on pages 12 through 14. Impacts are those commonly associated with visitor use and facility development. The mitigation proposed requires resource specialists to review and select sites avoiding or reducing potential impacts.

Project Description

The Resource, Land Use, Facilities, Interpretive, Concession, and Operations Elements in the General Plan propose development, operation, designate appropriate land uses, resource management, etc. These elements constitute the project description.

Description of the Environmental Setting

The Resource Element and Resource Inventory are incorporated by reference. The Land Use and Facility Elements also describe the existing environment in terms of development.

Air Quality

The Mendocino coast is within the North Coast Air Basin. Air Quality data for the North Coast Air Basin were reviewed from the 1988 Summary of Gaseous and Particulate Pollutants by the California Air Resources Board, Technical Support Division. Pollutants were monitored at several stations, mostly in the populated areas. There were no monitoring stations for gaseous pollutants along the Mendocino coast; one station along the coast, at Fort Bragg, monitored particulates.

Air quality along the Mendocino coast is generally good due to the inflow of clean air from the Pacific Ocean, and should be superior to that at most of the monitoring stations. The monitoring stations in the air basin did not record any days where the gaseous pollutants exceeded state or federal standards. There were 25 days when particulate samples exceeded state standards and 3 days when federal standards were exceeded.

Traffic

There are currently three access points to Van Damme State Park: (1) the beach parking access on the west side of Highway 1, (2) the access to camping and day use facilities on the east side of Highway 1, and (3) the access to the Pygmy Forest off Little River Airport Road. According to CalTrans 1992 Traffic Volumes on California State Highways, the peak hour traffic was 780 vehicles per hour, and the peak month and annual ADT are 8300 and 6800 respectively.

Significant Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project

1. The alteration of the CCC-constructed fords will remove a portion of the historic fabric. The fords hinder the passage of anadromous fish, and, therefore, have an adverse environmental impact if retained.
2. There is the potential for loss of threatened and endangered plant species through the construction of facilities and trails, maintenance activities, vandalism, and the inadvertent destruction by visitors. Locations, tolerance and habitat requirements are not precisely known. Two of the special plant species listed by the Department of Fish and Game are found in the Pygmy Forest; two others are found in the red alder riparian forest and the coastal flats.
3. Construction of the bluff trail could accelerate bluff erosion, and slope failure, and expose visitors to a geologic safety hazard.
4. The construction of the bluff trail may impact archeological sites. The introduction of visitors to the vicinity of the sites may lead to vandalism .
5. Approximately three acres will be cleared to construct the 6.5 miles of proposed trail. Soils in the unit are generally highly erodible. The potential for soil erosion is high.

Mitigation Measures

1. The alteration or removal of any historic features will be subject to PRC 5024 review requirements. A Departmental Historian will record the structures prior to removal or modification.
2. Prior to construction of facilities and trails, areas of potential sensitive plant species will be surveyed by a Departmental resource specialist to determine the presence of known sensitive plant species. Trail alignments and facility sites will be selected to avoid direct impacts to any sensitive plant species. The Department will consult with the Department of Fish and Game if there is a potential for the direct take of special species.
3. Prior to construction of the bluff trail, the alignment will be reviewed by a Departmental Geologist to select a route to reduce the potential for slope failure.
4. The bluff top trail alignment will be reviewed by a Departmental Archeologist to select an alignment avoiding culturally-sensitive areas. Beach and bluff erosion are natural processes. Facilities should be sited with sufficient setback to accommodate these processes within the lifetime of the facility, designed to be easily moved, or recognized as temporary and constructed accordingly.
5. Trails will be designed and maintained to reduce soil erosion. Standard erosion control features (i.e. maximum slope, waterbars, etc.) will be employed.

Unavoidable Environmental Effects that Cannot be Avoided if the Project is Implemented

The loss of historic fabric and integrity by the removal or modification of the CCC fords is an unavoidable impact if the project is implemented. Mitigation should reduce the impact to a non-significant level, but will not completely avoid impact. Facilities and trails can be removed and sites restored to an essentially pre-project condition if necessary.

Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Alternatives considered in the General Plan preparation are listed in Appendix A. Basically, these various alternatives can be grouped into two broad categorical alternatives: (1) resource protection priority, and (2) visitor use priority. Consideration of a no project alternative is required under CEQA. The environmentally-preferred alternative would be the Resource Protection Priority Alternative; however, this alternative does not fully meet the goal of enhancing recreation opportunities.

1. No Project Alternative

The unit would be maintained with its existing facilities and resource management would continue in its present form. The passage of anadromous fish in Little River would continue to be hindered by the maintenance of the fords. The intrusion of the maintenance building into the riparian area would remain. Recreational use would be curtailed by the lack of access development near Chapman Road and Peterson Lane, and the limitation of trails to the existing level of accessibility. Degradation of plant habitats may occur without the reintroduction of fire. Pygmy forest vegetation apparently is adapted to fire; Bolander pine and pygmy cypress both have serotinous cones, a characteristic desirable for successful reproduction in regularly-burned plant communities. The No Project Alternative is considered unacceptable because the opportunities for improved resource management and recreation enhancement are not realized.

2. Resource Protection Priority Alternative

Existing facilities would be reduced to ameliorate visitor impacts to the resources. The coastal bluff trail and access would not be constructed to avoid geologic hazards and impacts to archeological sites. The Pygmy Forest day use area would not be developed to discourage increase visitor use of the sensitive Pygmy Forest habitat. The Natural Preserve classification would cover 1400 acres. Mountain bike and equestrian trail use would be prohibited in the Preserve. Beach parking capacity would be reduced. Recreational opportunities would be reduced.

3. Visitor Use Priority Alternative

Visitor-serving facilities would be expanded to the maximum level possible to encourage and accommodate recreational use. Additional campground development could occur in the forested area beyond the Highland Meadow campground.

Beach parking capacity would be maintained. Impacts to resources would result from the increased intensity of use. The development of a campground in the Bishop pine forest could increase wind throw through direct root damage, compaction of the soil weakening the root system, and opening the forest canopy. Preservation of natural and cultural resources may be lost.

Relationship Between Local Short-term Uses of the Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity

The proposed short-term uses, recreation and resource protection, should not affect the long-term productivity of the unit. The protection and preservation of the resources will not diminish any potential productive use; however, these resources were not acquired for their potential production, conversion or harvesting for marketable products. Should Spring Ranch be acquired, grazing may be prohibited; 160 acres would be removed from agricultural production.

Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes if the Project is Implemented

The removal or modification of the CCC-constructed fords is an irreversible destruction of historic fabric. The structures could be restored to their historic configuration; however, the original material would be lost. The impact can be reduced to a non-significant level with mitigation.

Growth-Inducing Impact of the Proposed Project

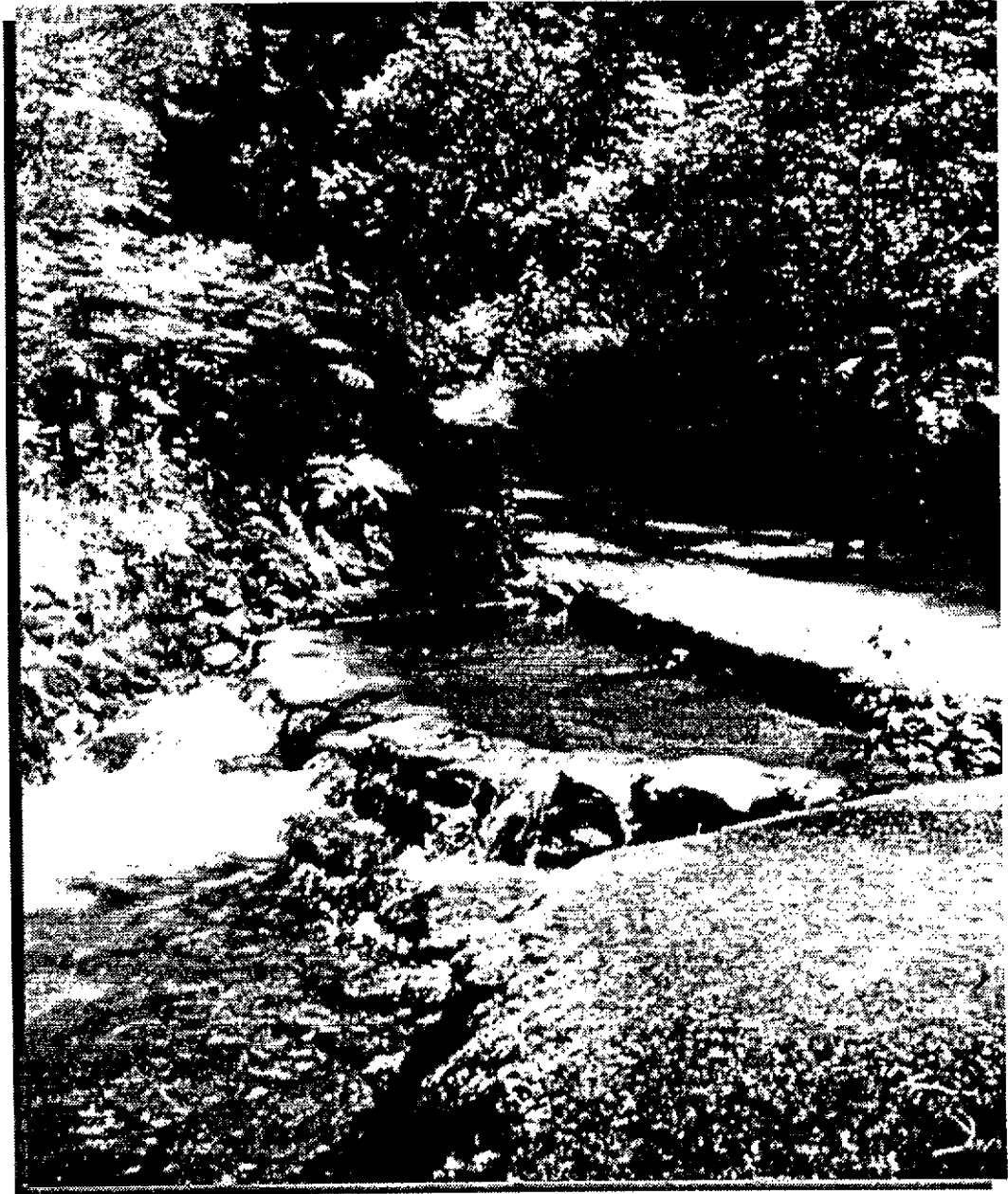
The proposed project may have a minor cumulative impact on growth inducement in the area. Any improvement or increase in capacity can encourage increased use which translates into additional tourism and its attendant demand for services.

Effects Found Not to be Significant

1. The potential increase in traffic was not considered significant because the increase in visitor capacity facilities is not substantial. Improvements to the entrance could reduce traffic problems.
2. Estimated water consumption is an extremely small proportion of the watershed flow.
3. Sewage requirements are not projected to increase substantially. The unit has sewer system and leach field that adequately serves existing facilities. Pump out or vault toilets will be used where it is not feasible to connect the sewer system (i.e. the headlands or Pygmy Forest area).
4. Air quality will not significantly deteriorate as a result of project implementation. No substantial use in visitation, and, therefore, traffic-generated pollutants is expected. Prescription burning will be conducted in accordance with the air basin requirements.

VAN DAMME STATE PARK

Appendices



Appendices
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Appendix A

Alternative Plan Considerations

(Prepared for public meeting discussion and consideration in developing a single plan for Van Damme State Park.)

INDEX:	KEY:	C — Facility/Area/Issue
		2 — Alternative/Option
E	Entrance Station	
C	Campgrounds	
B	Beach Parking - Day use facility	
R	Employee Residence	
P	Natural Preserves	
H	Headlands	

Entrance Station

Alternative E1 This alternative utilizes existing facilities, recently improved, with additional improvements for vehicle circulation and entry parking.

- Retain entrance station in existing location
- Improve turnaround and entry parking
- maintain visual surveillance of beach parking

Alternative E2 This alternative includes total redesign of entrance road and visitor contact facilities.

- Construct new entrance station near access to visitor center
- Develop improved intersection to campgrounds and visitor center - Design new entrance road and restore native vegetation

Campgrounds

Alternative C1 This alternative retains existing overnight facilities with campsite rehabilitation for esthetics and use.

- Retain existing campsites #1-74
- Rehabilitate campsite parking, site drainage, and furniture
- Consider electrical hookups and designated handicapped sites
- Restore native vegetation for campground screening
- Maintain open space (lawn areas)
- Rehabilitate or replace existing restrooms (incl. showers)

Alternative C2 This alternative exchanges five existing campsites for increased day use parking and picnic facilities.

- Remove campsite spurs #1-5
- Develop day use picnic area (10 sites)
- Expand visitor center parking for day use (20 cars)

Alternative C3 This option is similar to C2 but gives priority to developed picnic sites and possible enroute camping.

- Convert campsites #1-5 to day use picnic area
- Design double parking space at intervals between picnic sites
- Consider alternate use for enroute or overflow camping
- Maintain visitor center parking (6 cars)

Alternative C4 This alternative proposes group camp with provisions to accommodate dive clubs and recreation vehicles.

- Redesign existing campsites #6-13 for group use (40 persons)
- Consider dive suit wash area, drying racks, abalone cleaning station, and boat trailer and recreation vehicle parking
- Revegetate open areas for campsite screening and buffers

Alternative C5 This alternative proposes new campground construction in a forested area beyond the Highland Meadow campground.

- Road and bridge construction
- Extension of existing utilities
- Potential 50 campsites w/ restrooms
- Potential group camp 40 persons
- Proposed walk-in campsites
- Tree removal and site revegetation

Employee Residence No. 7

Alternative R1 This alternative retains building for appropriate adaptive use, with vegetation screening.

- Restore historic building exterior and modify interior for appropriate adaptive uses: ie. employee residence, camp host, unit maintenance office and/or storage facility
- Restore native vegetation for visual screening from surroundings
- Interpret historical significance (site panel or at visitor center)

Alternative R2 This alternative considers the potential site development for additional public use, if building was removed.

- Restore native vegetation
- Consider expansion of existing group camp facilities
- Consider relocating camp host to this site
- Develop site for overflow or RV camping, vehicle/ trailer parking

Beach Parking - Day Use Facility

Alternative B1 This alternative maintains existing facilities.

- Retain existing parking (75 cars)
- Design wheelchair access to shoreline
- Retain rustic restrooms and connect to sewer main
- Continue off-season use for enroute camping

Alternative B2 This alternative would focus on improved access and egress from HWY 1.

- Highway bridge reconstruction
- Left-turn and deceleration lanes
- Possible reduction in parking capacity

Natural Preserves

Alternative N1 This alternative would designate approximately 1500 acres of redwood forest, pygmy forest, wetlands, and riparian corridors, as the Van Damme Natural Preserve. It would offer the maximum resource protection status for the Little River watershed. However, the unit's State Park classification currently provides a

high level of resource protection to the riparian and redwood forests. Also, it would require removal of existing roads, campsites, and other facilities in this area, severely impacting the recreation opportunities at this unit.

Alternative N2 This alternative would give preserve status to 950 acres of redwood and pygmy forest north of the canyon road, beginning from the trailhead parking lot to the pygmy forest parking lot. This area encompasses most all pygmy forest within the unit and would maintain the interior road access. However, it is undesirable to consider each side of the river differently. The "State Park" classification is recognized as providing sufficient protection of the redwood forest. This alternative would compromise the integrity of the Little River watershed and preserve status itself, if it were not viewed in its entirety.

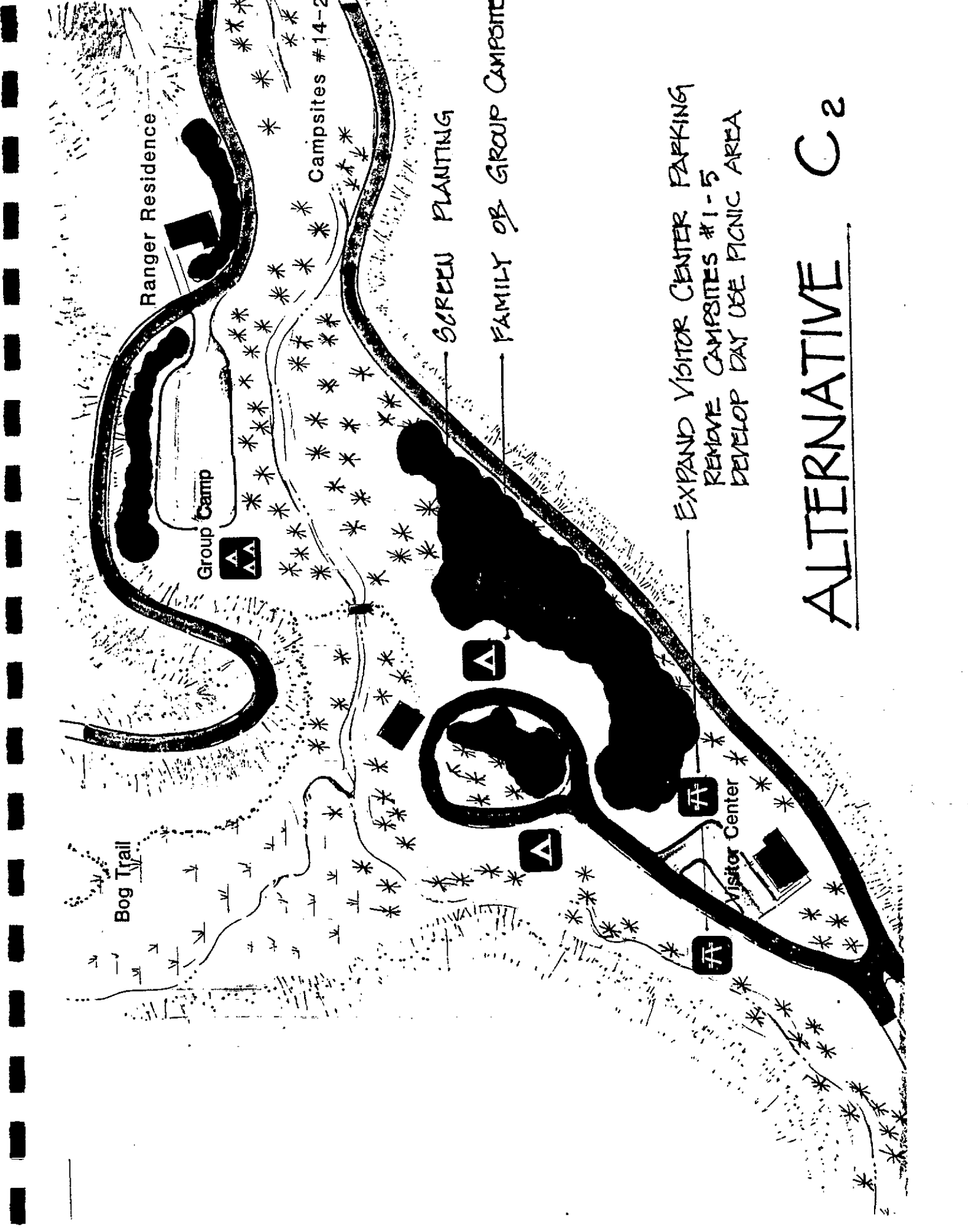
Headlands - Coastal Access

Alternative H1 This alternative proposes day use parking and coastal access trails.

- 20 to 40 car parking lot at Chapman Road
- 5 to 10 picnic sites, portable toilets
- Native plant restoration
- Screen planting along highway and Chapman Rd.
- Bluff access trails

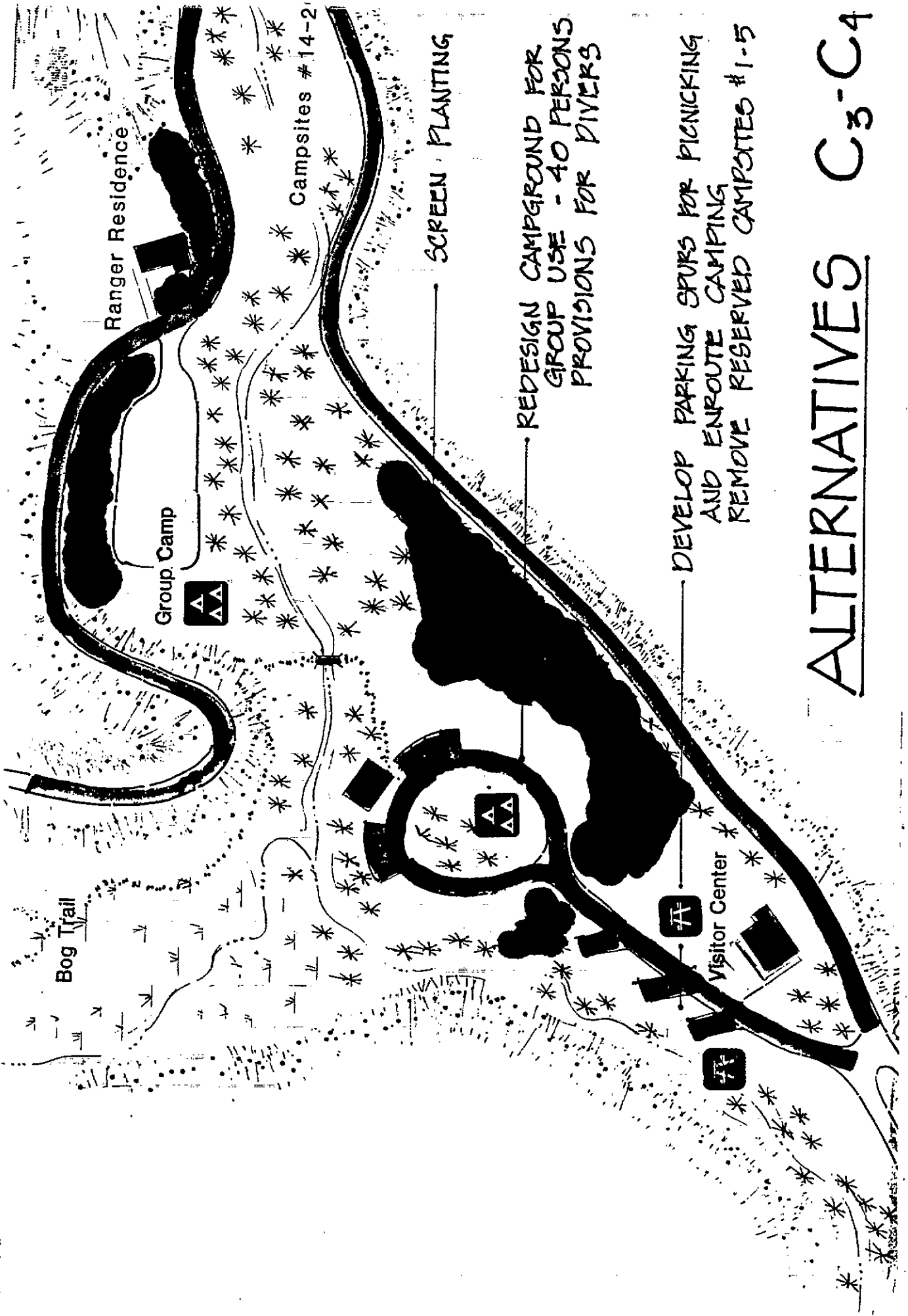
Alternative H2 This alternative describes site potential in addition to H1, if vehicle access was developed (via Spring Ranch addition)

- Spring Ranch potential land addition 160 acres (1990)
- Day use parking and picnic sites (north of Peterson Lane)
- Develop access road and new utility systems
- Headlands trail from beach to Chapman Point



EXPAND VISITOR CENTER PARKING
 REMOVE CAMPSITES #1-5
 DEVELOP DAY USE PICNIC AREA

ALTERNATIVE C2



SCREEN PLANTING

REDESIGN CAMPGROUND FOR
GROUP USE - 40 PERSONS
PROVISIONS FOR DIVERS

DEVELOP PARKING SPURS FOR PICNICKING
AND ENROUTE CAMPING
REMOVE RESERVED CAMPSITES #1-5

ALTERNATIVES C3-C4



Appendix B

Site Accessibility Guidelines

Policy Statement

"It is the policy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation to meet the recreational needs of all people of California, and to provide an accessible environment in which all visitors to units in the department are given the opportunity to understand, appreciate, to participate in, and to enjoy the state's cultural, historical, and natural heritage.

*Donald W. Murphy, Director
California Department of Parks and Recreation*

To actively promote this policy, the following goals were established:

1. To provide equal accessibility to all programs, including park interpretive programs, and to all facilities of the State Park System.
2. To provide equal employment opportunities in the State Park System.
3. To provide reasonable accommodation to employees and applicants with special needs.
4. To comply with all applicable standards and regulations.

The document "Access to Parks" * provides guidelines for access to the programs and facilities of this department, and describes how persons with disabilities can use and enjoy both the natural and man-made environments of our State Park System. It is not a building code, but a guideline; a companion document to the building code.

* Footnote: [Information obtained from a document titled Access To Parks prepared for the Department by Barrier-free Design Research Unit, Cal Poly S.L.O. draft January 1993]

natural surroundings. Level 2 facilities and sites shall be accessible by a continuous path of travel. Trails and paths may be impaired with more challenging lineal slopes. Edge conditions may not be clearly differentiated. Restrooms shall be accessible by wheelchair.

Level 1 Facilities and sites may have a discontinuous path of travel, or extreme conditions. These facilities may be highly challenging or even inaccessible for persons with some disabilities.

Resolution
adopted by the
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
October 10, 1992

WHEREAS, Dr. Hans Jenny worked with this Department on many projects of mutual interest over a period of many years, giving freely of his time and expertise whenever needed, and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jenny envisioned the Ecological Staircase at Jug Handle State Reserve, a concept which has become world famous and which has brought many international scientists to visit and study the Ecological Staircase; and

WHEREAS, without Dr. Jenny's research the story of the pygmy forests of Mendocino County would not be known; and

WHEREAS, the concepts developed by Dr. Jenny are now the main focal point for interpretive programs in Van Damme State Park and other State Park System units in the area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the pygmy forest and transition redwood forest lands on the north border of Van Damme State Park adjacent to lands of the University of California Pygmy Forest Reserve and The Nature Conservancy be named the Hans Jenny Pygmy Forest Area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the California Department of Parks and Recreation extends its deep gratitude and appreciation for the dedicated work of Dr. Hans Jenny.

Donald W. Murphy, Director
Department of Parks and Recreation

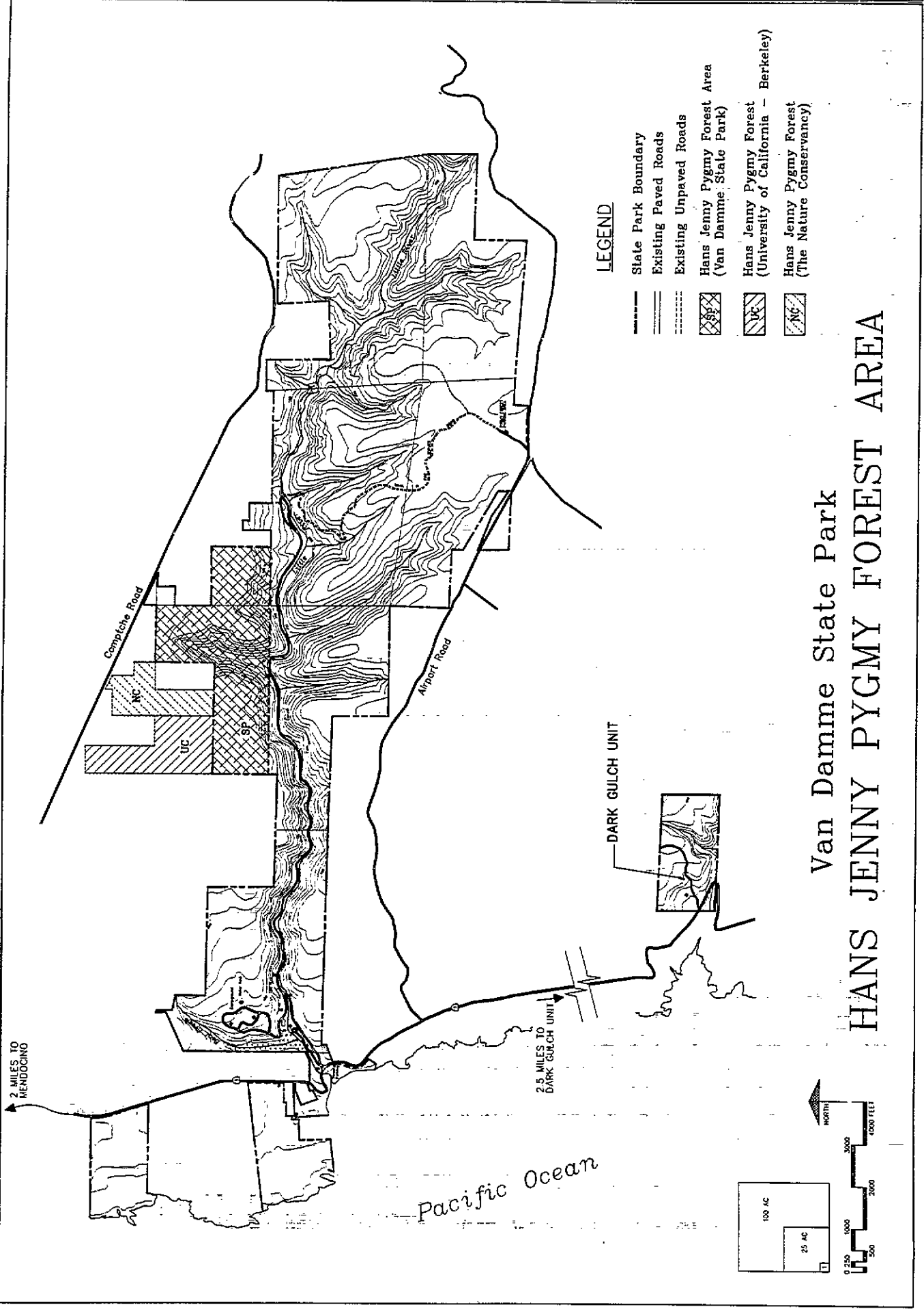
DESIGNED	DATE	REVISIONS
II. KERR		
DRAWN		
M. CLARK		
CHECKED		
R. ASPEL		

RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
 APPROVED _____ DATE _____

VAN DAMME STATE PARK
 HANS JENNY PYGMY FOREST AREA
 GENERAL PLAN - APPENDIX D

DRAWING NO.
 267770

MAP
 20



APPENDIX D

SUMMARY OF PERTINENT MENDOCINO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
COASTAL ELEMENT (LCP) POLICIES

Portions of county LCP policies applicable to Van Damme State Park are summarized in this appendix. For a context and more complete versions of the policies, consult the County General Plan.

3.1 Habitat for Natural Resources

3.1-1 The various resources designations may be overcome only with additional information that can be shown to be a more accurate representation of the existing situation, such showing shall be done in the context of a minor amendment to the land use plan.

3.1-2 Development proposals in environmentally sensitive habitat areas such as wetlands, riparian zones on streams, or sensitive plant or wildlife habitats shall be subject to special review to determine the current extent of the sensitive resource. Such development should be approved only if specific findings are made which are based on substantial evidence that the resource as identified will not be significantly degraded by the proposed development.

3.1-4 Development within wetland areas shall be limited. Development for nature study purposes is permitted.

3.1-7 A buffer area shall be established adjacent to all environmentally sensitive habitat areas to provide for a sufficient area to protect the environmentally sensitive habitat from significant degradation resulting from future developments. The width of the buffer area shall be a minimum of 100 feet. The buffer area shall be measured from the outside edge of the environmentally sensitive habitat areas and shall not be less than 50 feet in width. Developments permitted within the buffer area shall generally be the same as those uses permitted in the adjacent environmentally sensitive habitat area and must comply at a minimum with each of the following standards:

1. It shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas;
2. It shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas by maintaining their functional capacity and their ability to be self-sustaining and to maintain natural species diversity; and
3. Structures will be allowed within the buffer area only if there is no other feasible site available on the parcel. Mitigation measures such as planting riparian vegetation, shall be required to replace the protective values of the buffer area on the parcel, at a minimum ratio of 1:1, which are lost as a result of development under this solution.

3.1-10 Areas where riparian vegetation exists, such as riparian corridors, are environmentally sensitive habitat areas and development within such areas shall be limited to only those uses which are dependent on the riparian resource.

3.1-11 When development activities require removal or disturbance of riparian vegetation, replanting with appropriate native plants shall be required at a minimum ratio of 1:1.

3.1-12 Vehicle traffic in wetlands and riparian areas shall be confined to roads. Multi-use non-motorized trails and access to riparian areas are permitted if no long-term adverse impacts would result from their construction, maintenance, and public use. Trails should be made from porous materials.

3.1-20 Soil constraints to conventional septic tank and leachfield systems such as those on Noyo and Blacklock soils and similar soils shall be recognized and the use of alternative systems shall be encouraged. Water quality control regulations shall be enforced.

3.1-22 Mendocino County should support a brush management program to control gorse, scotch broom, pampas grass, and other introduced plant pests with emphasis on those areas where brush is a fire hazard. Fire and/or mechanical means of pest control shall be preferred.

3.1-23 The Mendocino coast is an area containing many types of marine resources of statewide significance. Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced and, where feasible, restored; areas and species of special biologic or economic significance shall be given special protection; and the biologic productivity of coastal waters shall be sustained.

3.1-26 In order to protect, enhance, restore, and preserve the quality of the coastal marine ecosystem, it is the policy of Mendocino County to oppose any exploration for or development of mineral resources, including petroleum products, offshore (of) Mendocino County.

3.1-30 Vehicle traffic shall be prohibited from all public beach areas except for emergency purposes and maintenance unless specifically designated for vehicular use.

3.1-31 Structures or projects involving a diversion of water from streams appearing as dotted or dashed blue lines on 7.5 minute USGS quadrangle maps shall be sited and designed not to impede upstream or downstream movement of native fish or to reduce stream flows to a level which will have a significant adverse affect on the biological productivity of the stream and its associated aquatic organisms.

3.4 Hazards

3.4-7 The county shall require that new structures be set back a sufficient distance from the edges of bluffs to ensure their safety from bluff erosion and cliff retreat during their economic life spans (75 years).

3.1-9 Any development landward of the blufftop setback shall be constructed so as to ensure that surface and subsurface drainage does not contribute to the erosion of the bluff face or to the instability of the bluff itself.

3.4-10 No development shall be permitted on the bluff face because of the fragility of this environment and the potential for resultant increase in bluff and beach erosion due to poorly-sited development. However, where they would substantially further the public welfare, developments such as staircase accessways to beaches may be allowed as conditional uses, following a full environmental, geologic, and engineering review and upon the determinations that no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative is available and that feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize all adverse environmental effects.

3.4-12 Seawalls, breakwaters, revetments, groins, harbor channels, and other structures altering natural shoreline processes or retaining walls shall not be permitted unless judged necessary for the protection of existing development or public beaches or coastal-dependent uses.

3.4-13 All new development shall meet the requirements for fire protection and fire prevention as recommended by responsible fire agencies.

3.5 Visual Resources; Special Communities and Archeological Resources

3.5-1 State Highway 1 in rural areas of the Mendocino County coastal zone shall remain a scenic two-lane road.

The scenic and visual qualities of Mendocino County coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas designated by the County of Mendocino Coastal Element shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

3.5-2 Communities including Caspar, Little River, Albion, Elk, and Manchester shall have special protection to the extent that new development shall remain within the scope and character of existing development by meeting the standards of implementing ordinances. The community of Westport shall be excluded from the requirements of this policy.

3.5-3 The visual resource areas listed below shall be designated as "highly scenic areas," within which new development shall be subordinate to the character of its setting. Any development permitted in these areas shall provide for the protection of ocean and coastal views from public areas including highways, roads, coastal trails, vista points, beaches, parks, coastal streams, and waters used for recreational purposes.

Portions of the coastal zone within the highly scenic areas west of Highway 1 between the Ten Mile River estuary south to the Navarro River with noted exceptions and inclusions of certain areas east of Highway 1.

New development west of highway 1 in designated "highly scenic areas" is limited to one-story (above natural grade) unless an increase in height would not affect public views to the ocean or be out of character with surrounding structures. New development should be subordinate to natural setting and minimize reflective surfaces.

3.5-6 Buildings or building groups that must be sited within the highly scenic area shall be sited near the toe of a slope, below rather than on a ridge, or in or near the edge of a wooded area. Development in the middle of large open areas shall be avoided if an alternative site exists.

Minimize visual impact of development on hillsides by (1) requiring grading or construction to follow the natural contours; (2) re-siting or prohibiting new development that requires grading, cutting, and filling that would significantly and permanently alter or destroy the appearance of natural landforms; (3) designing structures to fit hillside sites rather than altering landform to accommodate buildings designed for level sites; (4) concentrate development near existing major vegetation; and (5) promote roof angles and exterior finish which blend with hillside. Minimize visual impacts of development on terraces by (1) avoiding development in large open areas if alternative site exists; (2) minimize the number of structures and cluster them near existing vegetation, natural landforms, or artificial berms; (3) provide bluff setbacks for development adjacent to or near public areas along the shoreline; (4) design development to be in scale with rural character of the area. Minimize visual impact of development on ridges by (1) prohibiting development that projects above the ridgeline; (2) if no alternative site is available below the ridgeline, development shall be sited and designed to reduce visual impacts by utilizing existing vegetation, structural orientation, landscaping, and shall be limited to a signal story above the natural elevation; (3) prohibiting removal of tree masses which destroy the ridgeline silhouette.

3.5-5 Providing that trees will not block coastal views from public areas such as roads, parks, and trails, tree planting to screen buildings shall be encouraged. In specific areas, identified and adopted on the Coastal Element land use plan maps, trees currently blocking views to and along the coast shall be required to be removed or thinned as a condition of new development in those specific areas. New development shall not allow trees to block ocean views.

3.5-6 Development on a parcel located partly within the highly scenic areas shall be located on the portion outside the viewshed if feasible.

3.5-7 Off-site advertising signs, other than small directional signs not exceeding 2 square feet, will not be permitted in designated "highly scenic areas." Direction, access, and business identification signs shall minimize disruption of scenic qualities through appropriate use of materials, scale, and location. Appropriate handcrafted signs should be encouraged.

3.5-8 Power transmission lines shall be located along established corridors. Elsewhere, transmission lines shall be located to minimize visual prominence. Where overhead transmission lines cannot be located along established corridors, and are visually intrusive within a "highly scenic area," the lines shall be placed underground west of Highway 1 and below ridgelines east of Highway 1 technically feasible.

3.5-9 The location of all new access roads and driveways in rural areas shall ensure safe location and minimum visual disturbance. Direct access to Highway 1 shall not be permitted where it is feasible to connect to an existing or proposed public road or to combine access points for two or more parcels.

3.5-10 Prior to approval of any proposed development within an area of known or probable archeological or paleontological significance, a limited field survey by a qualified professional shall be required.

3.6 Shoreline Access

3.6-1 State Parks and Recreation and other appropriate agencies shall be requested to initiate a public relations program for the protection and enhancement of coastal resources, particularly coastal access.

3.6-6 Shoreline access points shall be at frequent rather than infrequent intervals for the convenience of both residents and visitors and to minimize impacts on marine resources at any one point. Wherever appropriate and feasible, public access facilities, including parking areas, shall be distributed throughout the coastal area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social or otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.

3.6-14 New and existing public accessways shall be conspicuously posted by the appropriate agency and shall have advance highway signs. Additional signs shall designate parking areas and regulations for their use, and shall include regulations for protection of marine life and warning of hazards, including high tides, that extend to the bluffs.

All accessways shall be designed and constructed to safety standards for their intended use. Hazardous blufftops shall be marked or, if lateral access use is intended, shall have a cable or other clear barrier marking the trail or limit of safe approach to the bluff edge.

3.6-15 The Department of Fish and game, department of Parks and Recreation, and appropriate county departments and agencies should be requested to monitor public access to sensitive coastal resource areas such as wetlands, dunes, riparian areas, tidepools, rocky intertidal areas, and other wildlife habitats. DFG should, in consultation with the operating agency at each access point, prepare regulations governing use which shall be prominently posted. DFG should determine whether use of specific access points should be controlled to avoid degradation and allow resource recovery by limiting the number of users, by requiring supervision of users, or by closing the access point seasonally or periodically.

3.6-16 Access to the beach and to blufftop viewpoints shall be provided for handicapped persons where parking areas can be close enough to beach or viewing level to be reachable by wheelchair ramp. The wheelchair symbol shall be displayed on road signs designative these access points where the means of access ins not obvious from the main road.

3.6-18 Along sections of the highway where development intensity will result in pedestrian use, or where this is the siting of the county designate coastal trail, a 15-foot accessway measured from the right-of-way of Highway 1 shall be offered for dedication as a condition of permit approval if the topography is deemed suitable for pathway development.

3.6-19 Along intensively developed sections of Highway (such as between Cleone and Albion or in Gualala), Caltrans shall be requested to build a separate pedestrian, equestrian path parallel to the highway where pedestrian traffic warrants and physical conditions permit.

3.6-20 Paved 4-foot shoulders should be provided by Caltrans along the entire length of Highway 1 wherever construction is feasible without unacceptable environmental effects.

3.6-21 The County of Mendocino coasta trail shall be integrated with the coastal trails in the cities of Fort Bragg and Point Arena, and with Humboldt County to the north and Sonoma County to the south so as to provide a continuously identifiable trail along the Mendocino County coast.

3.6-26 Prior to the opening, advertising, or use of any accessway, the responsible individuals or agency shall prepare a management plan for that accessway, which is acceptable to the County of Mendocino, sufficient to protect the natural resources and maintain the property.

3.7 Recreation and Visitor Serving Facilities

3.7-1 The County Coastal Element land use plan designates the existing visitor serving facilities and reserves appropriate sites for future or potential visitor serving facilities.

3.7-2 Because unrestricted development of visitor facilities would destroy those qualities that attract both residents and tourists, limitations on visitor facilities by type and location shall be as set by Policy 3.7-1 and illustrated by Table 3.7-2 which reflects a tabulation based on land use maps to avoid highway congestion, degradation of special communities, and disruption of enjoyment of the coast.

3.7-3 Precise intensity of visitor accommodations and development standards shall be specified by zoning regulations so the developments will be compatible with the natural setting and surrounding development.

3.7-4 Any visitor serving facility not shown on the LUP maps shall require LUP amendment.

3.7-6 The Department of Parks and Recreation is requested to complete all funded acquisitions.

3.7-7 Within two (2) years of the certification of the Local Coastal Plan, the State department of Parks and Recreation shall develop a comprehensive land use plan and management program for their lands on the Mendocino coast prior to any additional development or relinquishment of DPR lands. Such plan shall include a tree removal program on all Department of Parks and Recreation lands where so designated on the LUP maps. Exempted from this requirement for a development plan is any development necessary to ensure the health and safety of the general public.

LAND USE PLAN: Specific Land Use Policies Governing Mendocino Coast State Park Units.

Van Damme state Park

Policy

4.7-11 DPR shall prepare a General Plan to include parking, day-use facilities and shoreline access on the two northern parcels.

4.7-12 An easement across private property between the two northern parcels shall be obtained to provide a continuous loop hiking trail connecting with the Brewery Gulch Road trail. No bluff-top trail until agricultural land use changes.

Improvements to curve at Dark Gulch would improve safety conditions of Highway I.

4.8-1 Since DPR proposes to relocate the group camp to a site near Comptche Road, the general plan shall protect residents of Gordon Lane and Comptche Road from potential adverse effects resulting from relocation of the group camp.

