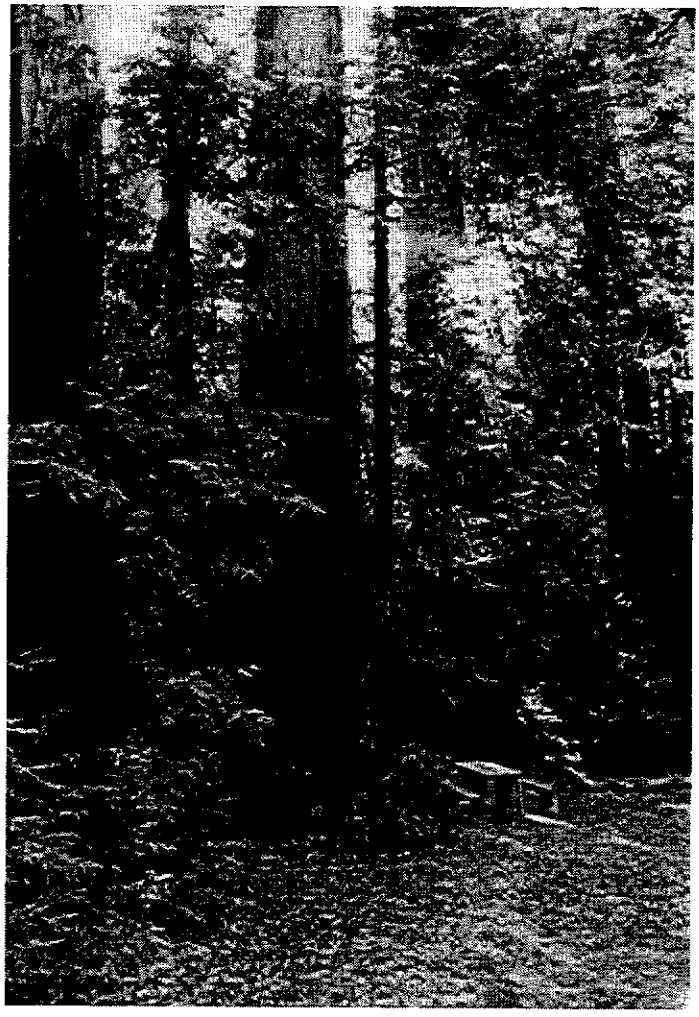
UNIT 448

PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK

GENERAL PLAN
(CEQA review only)

October 1999

Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park



General Plan

CEQA Comments and Responses

October 1999

Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park General Plan

October 1999

APPENDIX A

Outside Comments to the Preliminary General Plan, and DPR Staff Responses to Those Comments

A published General Plan for a unit of the California State Park System is deemed to be a project report for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) if the following two items have been prepared, published and made readily available:

1. A chapter or element in the plan itself describing the potential environmental impacts that would be caused by the implementation of the proposed general plan; and
2. The comments of other agencies and of the public, made in response to the preliminary general plan document; also, the department's staff's responses to those comments.

These two items do not have to be located in the same document.

In the case of the October 1999 *Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park General Plan*, the first item described above has been published as a part of the general plan document itself. It appears as that plan's Environmental Impact Element, found on pages 55 - 65 of the plan.

The second item listed above is this 16-page booklet. It contains the CEQA-generated review comments made in response to the preliminary general plan document, dated May 1999. This review process is administered by the State Clearinghouse, located in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The State Clearinghouse number assigned to this general plan document was 98062020.

This booklet also contains the Department's staff's specific, written responses to the CEQA-generated review comments. This booklet, in effect, constitutes the actual Appendix A of the approved *Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park General Plan*.

Copies of this booklet will be available at a number of Departmental locations, at appropriate field offices and at records depositories situated at its Sacramento headquarters.

Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park Preliminary General Plan Comments and Responses

The Pfeiffer Big Sur 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 Monterey County Herald. Although not a 'legal' newspaper, notice was also sent to the Big Sur Round-up, a local Big Sur community newsletter. Copies of the Plan were available at the Big Sur Multi-Agency Facility/Big Sur Station; the local Big Sur library; Big Sur's Henry Miller Library; Monterey City Library and at the State Parks, Monterey District office in Monterey. District staff held numerous small group meetings with local Big Sur residents. An open and publicized public meeting was held at the Big Sur Grange on June 3, 1998. Staff presented a synopsis of the Plan at the Big Sur Council public meeting held on July 9, 1999, where additional copies of the Plan were distributed to the public and written comments requested by the August 2, 1999 public comment deadline. In addition, the Preliminary General Plan was sent to:

Resources Agency/State Clearinghouse
Monterey County and Building Inspection Department
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
California Department of Transportation, District 5
California Native Plant Society
California State Park Rangers Association
Ms. Jeanine DeWald, California Department of Fish and Game
Friends of California Parks
Save-the-Redwoods League
Mr. Don Gruber, Sierra Club
Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of Interior, Ecological Services
The Honorable Fred Keeley, Member of the Assembly
The Honorable Bruce McPherson, Member of the Senate
Dave Potter, Monterey County Supervisor
Monterey Peninsula Herald
Carmel Valley Branch Library
Monterey City Library
Henry Miller Library, Big Sur
Monterey County Library, Big Sur
Multi-Agency Facility/Big Sur Station
Dan Priano & James Derryberry, Big Sur Lodge (park concession)
Big Sur Round-up (local Big Sur newsletter)
U.S. Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest

Quarterly Big Sur Multi-Agency Council pubic meeting held at Big Sur, July 9, 1999:
Ken McKowen and Tom Moss attended the regularly scheduled this Big Sur community "town hall" style meeting. Tom provided a short overview of the plan. Ken solicited written comments and provided additional copies of the plan, which were taken by attending public participants. There were no substantive comments about the plan.

Barbara Voyt, the Council's community representative, applauded the positive changes that were made in the current Plan from the original Plan's efforts that were first introduced about 10 years ago.

The Preliminary General Plan, including the Environmental Analysis, the Comments and Responses 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 the approval of the General Plan.

Written comments were received by the end of the public review process on August 2, 1999 from:

Save the Redwood League
California State Park Rangers Association
State Clearing House

Following each comment letter are the responses (if needed) to the comments. In addition, Staff identified corrections/clarifications are included following the public comments and staff responses.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Governor's Office of Planning and Research

State Clearinghouse

Gray Davis
GOVERNOR

STREET ADDRESS: 1400 TENTH STREET ROOM 222 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CA 95812-3044
916-445-0613 FAX 916-323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov/clearinghouse.html

Loretta Lynch
DIRECTOR

August 3, 1999

Robert Ueltzen
Department of Parks and Recreation
1725 23rd Street
Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816

Subject: PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK GENERAL PLAN
SCH#: 98062020

Dear Robert Ueltzen:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named environmental document to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on August 2, 1999, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the eight-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts

Terry Roberts
Senior Planner, State Clearinghouse

State Clearinghouse Data Base

SCH# 98062020
Project Title PFEIFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK GENERAL PLAN
Lead Agency Parks and Recreation, Department of

Type eir Draft EIR
Description GENERAL PLAN FOR PFIEFFER BIG SUR STATE PARK

Lead Agency Contact

Name Robert Ueltzen
Agency Department of Parks and Recreation
Phone 916-323-0975 **Fax**
email
Address 1725 23rd Street
Suite 200
City Sacramento **State** CA **Zip** 95816

Project Location

County MONTEREY
City Big Sur
Region
Cross Streets
Parcel No.
Township T19S **Range** R2E **Section** **Base** MDB&M

Proximity to:

Highways 1
Airports
Railways
Waterways BIG SUR RIVER, PACIF
Schools
Land Use Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

Project Issues Archaeologic-Historic; Flood Plan/Flooding; Forest Land/Fire Hazard; Geologic/Seismic; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian; Wildlife

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; California Coastal Commission; State Coastal Conservancy; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Caltrans, District 5; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 3; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission

Date Received 06/18/1999 **Start of Review** 06/18/1999 **End of Review** 08/02/1999

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.

Save-the-Redwoods League

114 Sansome Street, Room 605, San Francisco, California 94104-3814
Telephone (415) 362-2352 · Facsimile (415) 362-7017
e-mail: saveredwoods@igc.org

July 27, 1999

Mr. Ken McKowen
Monterey District
Department of Parks and Recreation
2211 Garden Road
Monterey, CA 93940

Dear Mr. McKowen:

We have reviewed the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park as requested and are pleased with the planning efforts underway. We were particularly satisfied with the restoration plans for Main Camp; restoring the redwood grove is essential to its health and longevity.

The long-term vision laid out in this plan is articulate. The League remains committed to the growth and maintenance of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. We look forward to seeing this project unfold and look to support you in any way that we can. Keep up the excellent work.

Sincerely,

Kate Anderton

KA/mlh

california state park rangers association

p.o. box 292010, sacramento, ca 95829-2010 (916) 558-3734 fax (916) 387-1179

July 27, 1999

Mr. Ken McKowen
Monterey District
Department of Parks and Recreation
2211 Garden Road
Monterey, CA 93940

Subject: Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

Dear Mr. McKowen:

The California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) is an organization of park professionals dedicated to advancement of the highest principles of public service, and established to support, protect, and defend the integrity of California State Parks for present and future generations. We have reviewed the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and have the following comments:

Issue IV identified on page 35 addresses the need for accommodating overnight needs of neglected population segments. CSPRA supports the concept of addressing the two additional levels of service identified, but is concerned that this will only address the needs of those who wish a more comfortable experience and does not address the need for lower cost and more "rugged" camping experiences. We recommend that you consider inclusion of environmental camping or other lower cost alternatives in addition to the hookups and non-camping overnight facilities.

The Declaration of Purpose on page 39 is very good and we support the declaration as the guiding principle for the park's planning. There are two corrections that we feel should be made: 1) in the second paragraph, change "the California State Park System" to "California State Parks" to more consistently reflect the way we refer to state parks; and 2) in the same paragraph, change "interpretative" to "interpretive," since this seems to be the intended word choice."

The Natural Process Management identified on page 40 states "Where they have been altered or interrupted by human influence, attempts...." We suggest that this be changed from "human influence" to "post-European human influence." We support the use of prescribed burns as part of the natural resource management program and view the goal to be the restoration of natural processes that existed during Native American occupation and not those that preceded Native Americans.

One of the goals defined for Unit-Wide Management of Natural Resources on page 42 is to "identify and measure camping and day-use impacts to resources." While those are the most significant impacts, we feel it would be better to simply state "identify and measure impacts to the resources." With this statement, as new uses beyond camping and day-use develop, monitoring programs will measure the impact of these future uses as well.

We support the interpretive themes and believe that their inclusion in the general plan process is essential. We are concerned with the use of the past tense in referring to the Esselen people on page 44. It is probable that descendants of the Esselen still reside in the area and the interpretation should describe Native Americans as a current population while referring to their past use of the land.

We support the entire Specific Area Guidelines from pages 48 to 54. We feel that the guidelines support the purpose of state parks and the Declaration of Purpose for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. We specifically support the guidelines identified for the Redwood Grove and Park Entrance and Lodge Management Areas. We feel that these two areas are vital for the long term resource preservation and visitor enjoyment of the park.

In the Environmental Analysis there is no discussion about addressing light pollution. The Big Sur Coast area is remarkably free from light pollution and light scatter. This enhances the visitor experience by providing an opportunity to see the stars and night sky in a way usually unfamiliar to the visitor. We would like to see a discussion about the potential impact of any new lighting and mitigation addressing the use of low intensity, downward directed lighting as recommended by the International Dark Skies Association.

CSPRA supports the proposed alternative as outlined in the Environmental Analysis. We do not support the Recreation Enhancement Alternative or the No Project Alternative.

Thank you for providing us the opportunity to review the Preliminary General Plan and Draft EIR for Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. If you have any questions, I may be reached at (415) 435-1563 or by e-mail at nfranco@jps.net.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Franco, President

Comments from the California State Park Rangers Association

2.1 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-35) Recommend inclusion of environmental camping or other lower cost alternatives to the recommended addition of hook-ups or other noncamping facilities.

RESPONSE: Specific types of alternative accommodations and the numbers and types of campsites that will be incorporated under the auspices of this General Plan will be addressed in detail in the subsequent planning effort that is identified as being required. However, Issue IV does neglect to mention the current hike and bike campsites located near the entrance to Main Camp. That specific oversight will be corrected by acknowledging the current existence of the park's hike and bike camps. Further, hike and bike camps will be included in the text under the *Specific Area Guidelines, South Valley Overnight Management Area.*

2.2 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-39) Change 'California State Park System' to 'California State Parks.'
RESPONSE: Change will be made.

2.3 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-39) In the Declaration of Purpose correct 'Interpretative' to 'Interpretive.'
RESPONSE: Correction will be made.

2.4 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-40) Change "Where they have been altered or interrupted by human influence, attempts..." to "...post-European influence...."
RESPONSE: This statement will remain as is. It is felt that to impose a resource management program based on any specific culture's management of natural processes is not in the best interest of Pfeiffer Big Sur's natural resources. Our intent is to reintroduce as closely as possible natural redwood forest and riparian ecosystems.

2.5 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-42) Change *"...identify and measure camping and day-use impacts to resources..."* to *"...identify and measure ~~camping and day-use~~ impacts to resources...."*
RESPONSE: It is not felt that any change is required. Because the park lies within an almost completely protected watershed, easily the most significant impacts are from day-use and camping activities that occur inside the park. Once baseline information is established, other types of impacts, should they become measurable, will be identified and any needed corrective actions taken.

2.6 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-44) Change "The Esselen *were* a people..." to "The Esselen *are* a people..."
RESPONSE: The Esselen Nation has not been officially recognized by the federal government, but because there are Esselen living who are actively seeking such official recognition the change will be made, along with associated grammatical changes.

2.7 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: (p-48 to 54) Support for entire section.
RESPONSE: None required.

2.8 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: Environmental Analysis: No discussion of light pollution. Would like to see such added, as per recommendations made by International Dark Skies Association.
RESPONSE: Staff, as well as Big Sur area residents and businesses are well aware of this issue. The issue of down-cast lighting and lighting issues in general will be addressed where it is found to be most appropriate in the final General Plan. It is most likely to also be addressed when Monterey County updates its Local Coastal Program.

2.9 COMMENT SYNOPSIS: CSPRA supports the proposed alternative as outlined in the Environmental Analysis. It does not support other alternatives.
RESPONSE: None required

General Plan Team Corrections/Clarifications

1. (Page 7): Under 'Location,' Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park currently consists of 962 acres, not 964 as stated.

2. (Page 10): One of the bullets (Interpretation) is repeated.
Final will omit "A unit-wide interpretive plan."

3. (Page 16, 6th paragraph): Staff will modify "Fire in the Park" section to provide a more complete overview and explanation. Paragraph will be changed to read:
Plant communities in the park and on adjacent lands have evolved with fire, both natural and human-caused. Wildfires were most often started by lightening in the late summer and early fall. Native Americans used fire for clearing brush and as a plant management tool to promote the reproduction and growth of native food sources. European settlers used fire for many of the same purposes. Today, most wildfires occurring in the Big Sur area are set deliberately by arsonists or accidentally by careless visitors.

   (The following paragraph will also be added):

   Alteration of the natural fire regime can result in significant impacts to the native plant communities. Fire exclusion favors more shade tolerant species and communities, decreasing the diversity of vegetation and wildlife habitat and increasing fuel buildup. Conversely, frequent fires can result in increased erosion, river sedimentation, and major shifts in vegetation type. Fire should be controlled and used as a tool to restore species composition and maintain plant communities.

4. (Page 17, 7th paragraph, 2nd sentence): Staff will modify the paragraph, adding additional species to further clarify difference in the plant community. It will be changed to: Its dominant species of coyote brush, California sagebrush, monkey flower, black sage and poison oak are ...

5. (Page 19, last paragraph): Staff will replace paragraph as follows to give more complete background on reasons for environmental sensitivity status:
Because of their limited distribution in Monterey County or on a statewide basis, the riparian plant communities that occur in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, including riparian redwood forest, central coast cottonwood-sycamore riparian forest and central coast riparian scrub, are considered by the California Department of Fish and Game and the County of Monterey to represent environmentally sensitive habitats. Therefore, their preservation should be a high priority in vegetation management.

6. (Page 23): Under 'Historic Structures' the identified "original Pfeiffer camp cabin" is serving as a maintenance office, not a paint storage shed. Change will be made in text.

7. (Page 24): Existing Facilities: Under #8, there are 61 rental units, not 65. Change will be made in text.

8. The following are important overall resource management goals that are not stated specifically elsewhere in plan. They will be included in Unit-Wide Management of Natural Resources, under the Goals section (page 42):
   - ❖ Vegetation in the park, particularly in the undeveloped areas, should be managed to achieve a natural condition with a minimum of disruption to natural processes. A secondary objective is to perpetuate and restore the composition and structure of the native plant communities that would prevail in the absence of human influences.
   - ❖ Protect special plants and special plant communities within Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and manage for their perpetuation in accordance with the Big Sur Coast Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan and with state law (PRC, Division 2, Chapter 10, Section 1900).
   - ❖ Implement a long-term program of control and/or eradication to prevent the establishment and spread of non-native species. Priority for control efforts should be given to those species most invasive and conspicuous in the park.

9. (Page 43, 5th bullet): Staff will add the following sentence in order to provide more flexibility for alternative development of overnight accommodations or other needed development, especially as related to the Log Deck area:
   At a minimum, new development should be fully screened by dense vegetation or other appropriate visual barriers.

10. (Page 46, 2nd paragraph): To help clarify, staff will add 'South Camp' to one sentence to read:
    ...portions of Wayland Campground and South Camp, which are retained....

11. (Page 50): Staff will add the following guideline to the Cottage Management Area so that it complements the related recommendation in Park Entrance and Lodge Management Area and is consistent with the General Plan Team's recommendation:
    7. Provide for cottage administration and registration in the Cottage Area (relocated from the Lodge).

12. (Page 51): Staff will correct the first sentence in the South Day Use/Skunk Hollow Management Area Guideline #1: Relocate North Day-Use family picnic.... To: Relocate South Day-Use family picnic....