

Mill Creek Watershed Addition to Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park

General Management Plan/General Plan Amendment State Parks and National Parks Staff Input Planning Workshop

January 9, 2008

9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Endert's Beach Environmental Education Center

Meeting Notes

Goal for today's meeting is to receive input from SP and NPS staff regarding the amendment to GMP/GP for the Mill Creek watershed addition to Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park. The meeting began with:

- A brief overview of the California State Parks Commission hearing process;
- Initial guidance was offered to help participants focus on developing a vision for the Mill Creek acquisition. Additionally, participants were asked to identify possible "management differences" between the Mill Creek acquisition and other units within the Redwood National and State Parks.
- Overall Question: What are the acquisitions "management sideboards" according to the property deed restrictions?
 - Look to Redwood Creek area as management model.
 - Mandates within the deed for Mill Creek call for restoration – this should be included as one of the main purposes right from the beginning.
 - Increased recreation opportunities should be within the context of restoration.
 - Opportunity for interpreting the restoration aspects of the addition.
 - Interim Management Plan process yielded strategies that can be a part of the amendment.
 - New heart of the Parks.
 - Natural resource protection
 - Road removal/landform restoration
 - If "last chance grade" fails, may require realignment (i.e., Wilson Creek Bypass) of State Route 101 through the acquisition. One of the three realignment alternatives goes through the acquisition. Deed language says State Park "would consider" an alignment through the acquisition. Department of the Interior would have to sign off.

Input Session

The following is a summary of input received from NPS and State Parks Staff during and interactive brainstorming workshop, loosely following the outline of the existing GPP/GP.

Management Zones

1. Consider a future development zone for potential long term development.

Natural Resource Management and Protection

1. Address Port Orford Cedar root disease and other unique vegetation conditions/situations as they relate to vegetation management and recreation development as addressed in Interim Plan.
2. Maintain old growth madrone stands to maintain biodiversity; this might require active management of the stands. There may also be maintenance issues with other old growth forest types, especially regarding returning fire to ecosystems or when fire is not feasible we need to find ways to mimic the role of fire.
3. Consider maintaining tan oaks at the site.
4. Consider a natural resource preserve designation for the fens and old growth stands and late seral habitat (George's Saddle, Paragon Grove, Hamilton Buffer, grove at NPS border to north etc.).
5. Consult with resource agencies (DFG/USFWS) regarding Hamilton Buffer Grove for marbled murrelet in planning; it is occupied habitat; riparian zone adjacent to Mill site should be expanded; if development at Mill site, only low impact development (i.e., employee housing and offices) should occur next to stream; lodge, campground etc. should be located further away to minimize conflict between resources and users.
6. No development within old growth grove, including trails; all of the groves are small and isolated. There is currently a trail (+/- 100' long) in Hamilton Buffer that should probably be maintained. It leads to a bench in the middle of some of the largest trees remaining in Mill Creek. There is also a road that goes through a corner of Hamilton Buffer that may stay.
7. Move roads out of/away from stream meander zones so stream can function naturally (e.g. West Branch Road).
8. Marbled murrelet needs to be considered during any plans for backcountry use.
9. Consider potential impacts to Mill Creek (an important coho stream).
10. Consider possible installation of permanent weirs to aid in anadromous fish restoration.
11. Regarding the possibility of a demonstration forest: this would be a commercial yield venue which is in conflict with public resources code for allowed uses in State Parks; cutting of trees can only be done for resource management purposes.
12. Consider moving roads/trails/facilities out of sensitive areas; some materials may need to be removed to restore alluvial floodplain.
13. At old Mill site, lots of fill has been placed into the confluence area of the branches of Mill Creek; this would be hard to remove. Some of the fill and paved area comes very close to the main stem. We may want to rehab a small strip to

- provide a greater stream buffer. This would be expensive but let's leave it open as an option.
14. Identify sensitive resources for avoidance and establish spatial and temporal buffers around these resources (e.g. avoidance of area during critical breeding period, riparian setbacks, buffers around sensitive habitats and plans); these restrictions should serve as sideboards for planning.
 15. Consider oak/grassland knoll preservation.
 16. Consider road maintenance costs during restoration – look at balance between need for access to restoration/vegetation management and costs for upkeep (i.e. economic analysis, life cycle analysis of roads/restoration and vegetation management).
 17. Consider adjacent old growth when considering vegetation management (fire management in particular).
 18. Consider fire management plan policy.
 19. Utilize prescribed fire in an effort to return a natural fire regime to the site.
 20. Identify and remove non-native plants – identify key species in acquisition area that have the potential to spread explosively.
 21. Define sensitive resource areas – look at Interim Management Plan, plus use updated information (i.e. road data has been revised).
 22. Be careful to not be too restrictive with policy in GPA.
 23. Continue forest restoration including reforestation and thinning where feasible throughout the acquisition.
 24. Continue instream restoration projects.
 25. Develop and implement a watershed monitoring plan (address temperature, turbidity, embeddedness etc.).
 26. Evaluate potential management actions to retain or recruit northern spotted owls (barred owls are replacing them right now).
 27. Picnic area along West branch with open grassland should be maintained for elk habitat. This was probably grassland historically, but it may be worth maintaining anyway. Access may become difficult since Picnic Road will be difficult to maintain and will likely be removed.

Cultural Resource Management and Protection

1. Identify important cultural areas.
2. Minimize access to important cultural sites, including ethnographic village sites
3. Previous investigations completed at the site didn't comply with Federal guidelines; potential for new knowledge and information.
4. There could be additional resources related to Native American use of the site and historic resources related to logging operations (e.g. RR).
5. Amendment must comply with NHPA.
6. Need to formally consult with Native Americans.
7. Consider interpretive messages focused on cultural resources.
8. Address needs of SP to manage archives.
9. Consider scientific research and collection streamlined permit process.
10. Note: We do not have a lot of cultural resource information for the acquisition area.

Relationship with American Indians

1. Recognize permit process for tribal gatherings.
2. Consult with tribes for place naming.
3. Acquisition area is a boundary area between the territories of the Yurok and Tolowa tribes; mostly in Tolowa territory, Damnation Creek is considered the boundary.
4. Consider potential interest of local tribe for management of traditional use species such as bear grass and tan oak.
5. Discuss potential vegetation management for traditional uses.

Education and Interpretation

1. Consider messages discussing restoration, mosaic landscape, sensitive area protection, sensitive species and other unique features of the acquisition.
2. Don't repeat the redwood story – this is covered well in other parks within the District.
3. Consider messages about the Coastal Range, from the coastline inland.
4. Unique opportunity because this site has vistas and is close to town, unlike other sites with vistas in RNSP; maintaining these vistas would entail tree removal in the long term; Child's Hill has the best views, but there are many potential spots. At some point we will have to narrow the selection to a few that we will maintain. We should probably consider where are the best views, how big of an area needs to remain tree free to keep the view and where it would affect sensitive areas etc.
5. Unique opportunity for Biosphere Reserve interpretation and views into southern Oregon.
6. Consider messages about the Klamath Knot and the diversity of conifer species found on this formation.
7. Consider cultural resource interpretation.
8. Consider fisheries theme, including hydrology, geomorphology, etc.
9. Consider global climate change messages, increased fire hazards.
10. Consider messages about the fen; one is present right off Child's Hill Road.
11. Consider messages about serpentine areas and Port Orford cedar.
12. Consider messages about freshwater mussels as indicators of excellent water quality; mussels are unique to this watershed.
13. Visitor/Information Center – identify opportunities and needs (research station, NPS has learning centers that are magnets for research and education, environmental education, etc.)
14. Consider moving Howland Hill Outdoor School from NPS area north of the acquisition to this site, combine with other potential uses (research, lodging, etc.).
15. Consider message about history of the property (logging, preservation, why the stream is so pristine now-unique geology played a role).
16. Consider story of the preservation of redwoods (i.e., this is where the fight happened in the 40s to 60s).
17. At the visitors center explain importance of cultural and natural resources and why they are protected and being restored.
18. Consider messages about stewardship.

19. Use land as an education laboratory and as a new way to serve a growing population.

Public Use, Recreation, and Visitor Safety

1. Consider new entrance to Mill Creek Campground within the acquisition.
2. Water supply is an issue; need to avoid adverse effects on stream flows; there is a reservoir on site that could be used, but it needs to be evaluated for safety; earthen dam might not be stable; water quality might be an issue as well.
3. Evaluate options for wastewater disposal
4. Consider dispersed camping, use forest service model; this would need to carefully evaluated in terms of resource damage (i.e. Pacific torrent salamander and potential impacts to water quality and temperature)
5. Provide lookouts/cabins on ridgetops near vistas; this would need to carefully evaluated in terms of resource damage (i.e. Pacific torrent salamander and potential impacts to water quality and temperature), Need to evaluate seismic design for ridgetop structures as they are vulnerable in earthquakes.
6. Picnic sites near creek are o.k. in upper watershed; less of a water quality concern there; this would need to be carefully evaluated in terms of potential adverse effects on resources as well.
7. Look into potential emergency use of roads in acquisition area in the event of State Route 101 closure.
8. Consider trail that would connect Jed Smith CG and Mill Creek CG.
9. Look at road and trail plan connectivity potential.
10. Look at existing National Park Trail Plan to be coming out soon to consider larger trail planning framework.
11. Identify and maintain vistas (e.g. ridges) – great views are close to community.
12. Consider new model for getting people into the property (e.g. fewer autos in the park, shuttles – possible concession) and how it influences uses (e.g., education, lodges, etc.)
13. Consider Coast-to-Crest trail.
14. Address that fishing is regulated by DFG.
15. Talk to CDF about fire management.
16. Consider relocation of some or all of Mill Creek CG to non- or less-sensitive areas; based on current information, the West branch of Mill Creek supports higher numbers of coho.
17. Look at suitable opportunities and needs for new CG facilities (Wilbur Spur area, Mill site).
18. Consider unique accessibility issues.
19. SP is moving toward alternative camping and RV sites with hookups.
20. Consider use of reservoir for water supply to CG and other facilities.
21. Water supply is a significant limiting factor to future development. Consider a hydrologic study (surface and groundwater supply/demand and impact). Look at non-anadromous streams.
22. Consider wastewater issues.
23. Consider several small campgrounds (i.e. 20-40 sites).
24. Consider cabins on ridge tops.

25. Consider access to adjacent park areas from acquisition area (Jed Smith, Little Bald Hills via Bummer Lake Road Lake on USFS land; connection to Rattlesnake Ridge is not desirable.
26. Consider visitor center/research hub with satellite campground areas.
27. Consider careful siting of day-use and overnight facilities to avoid sensitive resources.
28. Concessions opportunities – shuttle/transportation, mtn. bike rental, horse packing, interpretive (e.g. eco-tours), education (e.g. workshops).
29. Need to consider potential safety hazards from asbestos from serpentine on east side of Rock Creek.

Visitor Access and Circulation/Roads

1. Consider new entrance to Mill Creek Campground within the acquisition off of Hamilton Road.
2. One point of entry for overnight and day use would be good.
3. Provide ADA access/trails/facilities/opportunities wherever possible.
4. NP uses road though the Mill Creek Acquisition to access to the Little Bald Hills.
5. Look at roads summit info from previous planning efforts.
6. Identify roads in relation to sensitive habitats and impacts.
7. Earlier discussions with County about opening Rock Creek/Child's Hill Road loop would require 83 gates and upgrading of the roads if two-way traffic is desired; loop might only be suitable for one way traffic.
8. Ideas about alternative transportation – shuttle system with drop-off points.
9. A concession/shuttle service from town might be more feasible.
10. Rock Creek Road loop to provide access for multiple uses.
11. Consider Coast-to-Crest trail in road planning.
12. Consider working with (i.e., partnership) the County or other entity (e.g. under a MOU) for maintenance of select roads in the acquisition area. SP would need to retain control of management of roads (e.g. design standards, maintenance standards).
13. Address needed repairs to Hamilton Road or other ongoing road maintenance issues.
14. Minimize/consolidate access points.
15. Address potential for State Route 101 reroute through the acquisition area.
16. Use existing permit process for aerial/flyover/landing zones; marbled murrelets are supposed to have a quarter mile aerial buffer for new structures and a half mile buffer for new trails per USFWS and DFG recommendations.
17. Address existing landing areas based on CDF criteria for backcountry rescue/aerial extraction – discuss maintenance of these areas.
18. Consider development of segregated single use only trail system.
19. Get info/input from SP following meeting with OHV scientist regarding potential OHV access – consider suitability for OHV use.
20. Consider connection/linkages to Smith River NRA.
21. Identify need for road and trail plan.
22. Consider linking Smoke House Rd. to Sec. 1 Road.
23. Consider power line access for maintenance the utility companies.

Interdependence of Parks and Communities

1. Management should be similar to existing GMP/GP.
2. Consider viewshed management to preserve historic landscapes.
3. Consider lodge at Mill site.
4. Lodge at Mill site might not be a good idea, economic development is needed right in the communities.
5. Address power line maintenance access.
6. Implement permit process for any resource gathering by community.
7. Consider emergency response linkages with the community (e.g. Mill site as gathering point for tsunami).
8. Potential concessions: transportation, mtn. bike rental, horseback riding, ecotours, seminars, training for wildlife identification.
9. Consider expansion of “Natural Heritage Corridor” – currently mostly in Humboldt County.

Administrative Facilities

1. Mill site options – remove it, museum, lodge, education center, research facility, housing, offices (resource management), charter school.
2. Research facility will require office space, lab space, 1-2 lecture rooms, storage space and associated housing;
3. Should seek partnerships with UC, Humboldt State University, U.S. forest service Pacific Southwest Research Station Redwood Science Lab and interested non-profits in establishing the research facility.
4. Joint NPS/SP “supercenter” or regional center.
5. Provide a learning center – like NPS at Pt. Reyes or Crater Lake- with residential program for scientists.
6. Consider designating a “development zone” because this plan will be in place for a long time and things that are infeasible now might become feasible later.
7. Identify sites for communications towers.
8. Consider salvaging materials in the Mill site buildings for new facilities.
9. Mill site buildings may be used for large interpretive exhibits (e.g. logging museum, history of the site museum, natural heritage corridor museum); many of these may be found unsafe.
10. Mill site buildings and related infrastructure need to be evaluated (NHPA) for historic significance.
11. Evaluate mill site buildings and other infrastructure (e.g. asphalt paving) for potential future uses.
12. A large percentage of concrete/pavement could be removed and still leave enough room for various developed sites.
13. Identify opportunities and needs for permanent and seasonal staff housing (single family and dorms), resource management/visitor services/ranger/interpretive/administrative offices, etc.
14. Consider siting of an entrance station.

15. Consider improving lighting for safety.
16. Consider siting for waste material storage (e.g. scrap and culverts from backcountry).
17. Need environmentally sensitive fire range for multi-agency use.
18. Need to have stringent trash control; avoid increasing population of ravens and stellar's jays which would be harmful.

Land Acquisitions

1. Consider acquisition of small (40 acre) State Lands Commission parcel (shows as little gray square on LSEP maps).
2. No other changes are necessary at this point.

Boundary Map Adjustments

1. Address adjustment to Congressional boundary for Redwood National and State Parks.

Wilderness

1. not applicable

Others

Centennial Initiative

1. Considering a regional multi-agency visitor center.

Global Climate Change

1. Interpretive opportunity.

Cool Parks Initiative

1. Interpretive opportunity.

Carbon Sequestration Study

1. Interpretive opportunity.

OHV Use

1. Addressed above.

Attendees

State Parks Staff

Jeff Bomke
Bruce Lynn

Brett Silver
Brian Merrill
Valerie Gizinski
Amber Transou
Steve Horvitz
Susan Doninger
John Orozco
Greg Collins
Roger Goddard
Ilijana Asara

Additional input provide by Jay Harris, Patrick Vaugh, and Lathrop Leonard upon review of the meeting minutes

National Park Staff

Terry Hofstra
Keith Bensen
Rick Nolan
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