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## INTRODUCTION

This report identifies key issues to consider during the update of Humboldt County's Local Coastal Plans (LCP's). These issues will help guide the revisions to the plans and proposed plan policies.

Planning staff conducted a comprehensive review of the existing plans in order to identify these issues. The revisions focused on updates due to: physical changes, regulatory changes, land use changes, out of date text, and policy clarifications and refinement. The Issue Identification Report provides a written summary that outlines these key issues in order to begin a dialog with the public to address the necessary policy revisions within the LCP's.



## BACKGROUND

The Coastal Act of 1976 required the County to have a Local Coastal Program certified by the State Coastal Commission. The Coastal Act's policies guide coastal zone conservation and development decisions to protect California's coastal resources and provide for their wise use. These state policies call for:

- ☛ Providing for maximum public access to and recreational use of the coast, consistent with private rights and environmental protection.
- ☛ Protecting marine and land resources-including wetlands, rare and endangered habitats, environmentally sensitive areas, tidepools, and stream channels.
- ☛ Maintaining productive coastal agriculture lands.
- ☛ Directing new housing and other development to urbanized areas with adequate services rather than allowing a scattered, sprawling, wasteful pattern of subdivision.
- ☛ Protecting the scenic beauty of coastal landscape.
- ☛ Locating any needed coastal energy and industrial facilities where they will have the least adverse impact.

Humboldt County's Local Coastal Plans were developed in the early 1980's with implementing regulations approved in 1985. To date, no comprehensive updates have been undertaken (the McKinleyville, Humboldt Bay and Eel River Plans were reviewed and partially updated during the preparation of the 1992 Beaches and Dunes Management Plan). The County is currently in the process of revising the inland portion of the General Plan (last revised in 1984). The Board of Supervisors and the Coastal Commission agreed that the time was ripe for integration of the coastal plans with the Framework Plan.

The County recently received a coastal planning grant in February of 2002 from the Coastal Commission to help fund the update of the LCP's. The first phase of the grant consisted of a comprehensive review of the plans in order to identify key issues. These issues would be contained in a draft report available to the public for review and comment. The final report would then be used to guide research and draft the necessary amendments to the LCP's.

## KEY ISSUES

County staff reviewed the six area plan's (Figure 1) and Coastal Zoning Regulations, analyzing potential update and amendment issues. The 14 Coastal Act policy groups in the Commission's LCP Manual were utilized as a guide for policy review, as well as other relevant Commission publications and policy rulings. County staff also met with Coastal Commission staff to help scope out the issues needing to be addressed.

The key issues identified in this report include:

- **Access inventories** for each plan need updating to reflect physical changes to the shoreline, implemented improvements, changes in State and federal land management, and changes in land use.
- A systematic program for accepting **OTD's (offers to dedicate)** of coastal accessways needs to be developed. The access issues of the Trinidad geographically disapproved area must also be addressed.
- **Visitor serving uses** and policies need to be updated to reflect recent changes in State and federal land ownership and management policies.
- Review and determine consistency with the new **non-point source regulations**, and address recent Coastal Act regulations regarding water quality.
- New **federal coastal monument regulations** must be consistent with plan policies.
- **Wetland use types** and definitions may need revision to be consistent with the State's interpretation of Coastal Act regulations.
- Review **Agricultural land conversions** to determine if these conversions have been consistent with Coastal Act policies. Also, **compatible uses**, should be reviewed to determine if plan amendments are desirable.
- **Shoreline erosion** issues must be addressed, in particular, the Shelter Cove and Big Lagoon uncertified area.
- **Visual resource and community character** policies need to be updated to reflect new public acquisitions. Amortization of billboards will also be considered.

- **Industrial and energy resource** policies need revision to reflect recent changes (in particular, the need for a referendum vote for any onshore support facilities for offshore oil & gas development).
- **New biological information and species listings** (such as snowy plover) must be reviewed and compared with current policies. Vegetated dune policies need revision.
- **Public services information** (in particular, water and sewer) must be updated in order to determine if urban limit lines and urban reserve areas are adequate.
- **Housing issues** identified in the 1998 and Draft 2003 Housing Elements should be reviewed and programs implemented to meet State mandated housing goals.
- Review of **vacant, unconstrained developable lands** should be conducted to determine if adequate supplies exist to meet the anticipated demand for new development

## ORGANIZATION

The report identifies ten topics for discussion. These topics included: access, recreation, water and marine resources, environmentally sensitive habitat areas (including wetlands), agricultural resources, hazards, visual resources, industrial and energy resources, available public services and housing and new development.

Each topic chapter includes the following items:

Description of the topic  
 Relevant Coastal Act policies  
 Location maps (when provided)  
 Summary of key issues (general)  
 Summary of key issues (for each planning area)

The report concludes with a section titled “Next Steps” that outlines the procedures for public involvement. The purpose of the report is not only to identify key issues, but to solicit public review and comments. These comments will be used to guide research and amendments to the plans. Ultimately, the amended plans will be presented to the decision makers for implementation.

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## I. ACCESS

A broad policy goal of the Coastal Act is to maximize coastal access to all people while protecting public rights, property rights and sensitive coastal resources. The Coastal Act requires that development not interfere with the public right of access to the sea (Section 30211); provides for public access in new development projects (Section 30212); addresses the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access (Section 30214); and ensures protection of environmentally sensitive habitats from incompatible uses (Section 30240).



The 1978 *LCP Issue Identification Report* states “in general, existing land use throughout Humboldt County provides pedestrian access to all significant Coastal areas.” Basically, this is still the case. More than twenty percent of the county land mass is protected open space, forests and recreation area, while 36% of the Coastal Zone in some sort of protected status.

The state and federal agencies have made great strides in Humboldt County during the past twenty years to expand public access to coastal resources through land acquisition and improvement of existing facilities. However, many of the entry points to these areas are unknown by both locals and tourists alike. In some cases, support facilities such as signs and improved parking could greatly enhance the access opportunities to coastal resources.

While the physical supply of access is a primary factor in assuring access opportunities, the Local Coastal Program cannot view the issue of supply in isolation of a number of other factors. These variables include the availability of transit to beaches, parking facilities, signs, and support facilities such as bathrooms and picnic areas. Impacts to any of these variables may ultimately affect the availability and use of all accessways. Therefore, managing and increasing coastal access involves not only the physical supply of access, but all of the other variables that contribute to ensuring maximum coastal access.

The Local Coastal Plans currently identify the coastal accessways and include suggested improvements. The development policies “mirror” the Coastal Act policies, with additional clarification on accessway improvements and funding. The Local Coastal Plans include regulations concerning prescriptive rights and dedication of coastal access for new developments. Also, locational maps are included at the back of each plan for identification of these accessways, along with a matrix summarizing the recommended improvements.

The access issues identified in the Issue Identification Report center around the changes in land management, land ownership, land use, bluff erosion and use by sensitive species. For many areas along the coast, the resources may be being “loved to death” by the public. Public access policies need to be reviewed to identify areas where conflicts may occur with Coastal Act

policies intended to protect sensitive species. Also, the development of a program or means of accepting offers to dedicate public access should be considered.

### **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Access**

- **Section 30210 Access; recreational opportunities; posting**
- **Section 30211 Development not to interfere with access**
- **Section 30212 New development projects**
- **Section 30214 Implementation of public access policies; legislative intent**
- **Section 30240 Environmentally sensitive habitat areas; adjacent developments**

### **Summary of Access issues**

#### **ACCESS ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Update access inventories for each local coastal plan to reflect changes based on physical changes to shoreline, implemented improvements and changes in land management, ownership and land use.
2. Establish a program for acceptance of offers to dedicate (OTD). Prioritize acceptance of outstanding OTD's.
3. Review access policies with respect to new information about snowy plover nesting and recovery program. Access to dune areas along the south spit and gravel bars along the Eel River may require closure if snowy plover status is listed as endangered.
4. Coordinate development of the Coastal Trail for the undeveloped areas within the County. Identify the existing trail and improvements and detail recommended improvements. Identify possible alternative routes and spurs connecting to existing trails or accessways. Explore possibilities of utilizing railroad ROW's.
5. Increase access opportunities for people with disabilities.
6. Update plans regarding use of access points for commercial and recreational off-road vehicle use.
7. The County is currently preparing a Master Plan for management of the Moonstone and Clam Beach areas. Policy review is warranted to determine consistency with Coastal Act policies prior to adoption.
8. Incorporate the Hammond Trail improvements into the Coastal Trail access inventory, (MKAP and HBAP).

## ACCESS ISSUES: NCAP

9. Update the NCAP access inventory and recommended improvements to reflect policy decisions established by the Redwood National Park General Management Plan. Identify areas where policy conflicts may occur.
10. Recreational off-road vehicles (as well as wood removal) are no longer allowed on the beach in RNSP. Commercial fisheries with direct access onto the beach is proposed to be phased out over time. Policy review is warranted.
11. Freshwater Lagoon Vista Point is currently located in RNSP boundaries, but it is unclear who actually owns this land or maintains it. The turnoff from Highway 101 poses substantial danger to those vehicles attempting to enter or exit the highway. Update improvement recommendations contained in the plan.
12. Identify possible improvements to the Coastal Trail along the levee or Hufford Road at Orick.

## ACCESS ISSUES: TAP

13. Address the access issues of the Trinidad geographically disapproved area.
14. Parking along Scenic Drive south of Trinidad has improved significantly; however, public access areas are poorly signed and need improving. Update improvement recommendations contained in the plan.
15. The 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Trail is difficult to locate and utilize. Update improvement recommendations contained in the plan.

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## ACCESS ISSUES: MKAP

16. Incorporate the Hammond Trail improvements into the Coastal Trail access information. Coordinate with the County Public Works Department for proposed development plans for the Hammond Trail (Coastal Trail), in particular, the Widow White Creek segment of the Hammond Trail.
17. Add Mad River Bluffs Recreation Area (McKinleyville Land Trust acquisition) to access inventory.
18. Add Hiller Park (McKinleyville Community Services District) to the access inventory.
19. Delete Clam Beach Ponds (Humboldt State University) from access inventory as they are no longer open to the public.

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## ACCESS ISSUES: HBAP

20. Add Lanphere Dunes Unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge to the access inventory.
21. Add Mad River Slough Wildlife Area, Fay Slough Wildlife Area, Elk River Wildlife Area, and Eel River Delta Wildlife Area, Ocean Ranch Unit (Department of Fish and Game acquisitions) to the access inventory.
22. Revise access maps to reflect recent purchase of the “Buggy Club” property by a public agency.
23. Review improvement recommendations for the access at the mouth of Jacoby Creek (Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge). Extremely hazardous ingress/egress conditions exist off of Highway 101.
24. Review improvement recommendations for the Bracut wetland restoration site (Coastal Conservancy). Deeded access through an industrial yard (which is closed on Sundays) services the site, and is very problematic.
25. Add Buhne Drive recreation area in King Salmon to the access inventory.
26. Add the visitor center and the boat launch at Hookton Slough (USFWS acquisition) at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge to the access inventory.
27. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has recently agreed to manage the Table Bluff Park and spit area. Policy review of interim management plan is warranted to ensure conformance with recent actions.

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## ACCESS ISSUES: ERAP

28. Add Eel River Delta Wildlife Area, Cock Robin Island Unit, (Department of Fish and Game acquisition) to the access inventory.
29. Recreational off-road vehicles are permitted on the waveslope area only on the North Spit of the Eel River. Commercial wood removal is by permit only from DFG. Access areas are closed during snowy plover nesting season. Review for closure of ORV access to allow for snowy.
30. River conditions at the Singley Hole access area has changed. Improvement recommendations should be consistent with current conditions and evidence of public use.
31. Explore the possibility of deleting the public access on the north side of Fernbridge at the County gravel yard, as the use conflicts with the removal of gravel from the site.
32. Consider the deletion of the public access site at Barber Creek as this undeveloped access poses extreme conflicts with agriculture.

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## ACCESS ISSUES: SCAP

33. Add Lost Coast Headlands Recreation Area (Bureau of Land Management acquisition) to the access inventory.
34. The four vertical access points deeded by the Zanone family in a 1978 out of court settlement between Singley Creek and McNutt Gulch are difficult to locate. The property owner has had numerous problems with trespass and has recently fenced the area and posted “No Trespassing” signs along the roadway. The plaintiffs in the 1978 agreement were responsible for posting locational signs at each of the access ways. This has not occurred to date. In order to prevent further altercations between the public and the landowner, the access ways should be identified and posted. Update improvement recommendations contained in the plan.
35. The Bureau of Land Management has acquired properties in the Shelter Cove area for public access to the beach, and improved many of the existing access points. The access inventory should be amended to reflect these changes.
36. The trail to the beach at Chemise Creek no longer exists due to hazardous geologic conditions. An alternate trail has been developed by the BLM from Wailaki Lost Coast Trail which links south to Sinkyone Wilderness State Park meets the ocean at Whale Gulch Creek.
37. BLM acted to close the Black Sands Beach area (and areas north) to vehicular use. The Coastal Commission affirmed the action with a consistency determination. Consider deleting vehicle use description for this area.

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## II. RECREATION

Along with protecting public access, the Coastal Act seeks to provide maximum recreational opportunities in coastal areas to all people while again protecting public rights, property rights and sensitive coastal resources. The Coastal Act encourages the provision of lower cost visitor and recreational facilities (Section 30213); specifies the need to protect ocean front land suitable for recreational use (Section 30221); gives priority to the use of land suitable for visitor-serving recreational facilities over certain other uses (Section 30222); requires protection of upland areas to support coastal recreation (Section 30223); and encourages recreational boating use of coastal waters (Section 30224).



Humboldt County has a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities available in areas of incomparable value and unsurpassed beauty. More than 20% of the county's 2.3 million acres are protected open space, forests, and recreation areas. Within the county boundaries, there are four federal parks and beaches, ten state parks, sixteen county parks and beaches and over 338,000 acres of national Forestland.

Land in the Coastal Zone accounts for less than one-twentieth of the County's total unincorporated acreage, but provides a large proportion of the recreational opportunities. Approximately 113,000 acres of the 2.3 million acres in Humboldt County are located in the Coastal Zone. Of the 103,000 acres located within the unincorporated Coastal Zone boundary, approximately 46% is in either public ownership or tribal lands (Figure 8).

The natural qualities of Humboldt County attract a great many people from outside the county. The tourism industry in Humboldt County has increased 5.1% since 1992 according to the State Department of Commerce. According to the California Division of Tourism, there were 1.5 million recreational trips to Humboldt County in 1997 (*Prosperity!*, 10).

Adequate support facilities exist within the incorporated cities; however, recreational support services are limited in the State and National Parks. The Redwood National and State Parks General Management Plan has indicated that no additional camping facilities will be provided within the State and National Park boundaries, and some existing camping facilities are proposed to be phased out over time, providing few accommodations for the over 800,000 visitors annually to the parks (2002 Redwood National Park Statistics). Additional private camping facilities have been developed in the Trinidad area since the approval of the 1984 North Coast Area Plan. However, it is not known if many of the recreational users of the north county area find adequate accommodations or must travel outside the County to find recreational support facilities.

While the County has many park and recreation resources, funding from the County General Fund had decreased steadily over the past ten years, while revenues from park attendance have

increased indicating greater use of existing parklands. Despite increases in use and demand on park facilities, the number of County park employees has remained constant. Park revenues indicate a steady increase in demand for park resources with a near doubling in park fees collected in just ten years.

Humboldt Bay is a recreational resource utilized increasingly by both local and visiting recreational boaters. "Water trails" programs are growing in popularity around the County. "Water trails" are routes that have been mapped out to provide educational and scenic experiences for recreational canoers and kayakers. Some of the trails are simple day paddles, while others stretch for hundreds of miles. There currently is little information readily available for Humboldt Bay recreational boaters about trip planning, water safety and wildlife viewing protocol. Recreational support facilities needed for water trails include small boat launches, boat ramps, shore access and overnight camping facilities.

The Local Coastal Plans currently provide a brief description of the recreational opportunities established in the Planning Areas. The land use maps identify areas near the shoreline that are prioritized for commercial and recreational activities. Visitor serving uses are considered the principally permitted uses for these areas, and the Plans contain development policies identify the types of recreational uses and the findings that must be made for each type of recreational facility (recreational vehicle parks, Bed and Breakfast Establishments, etc.).

The Local Coastal Plans were written in the early 1980's. Since that time, many changes have occurred in the recreational opportunities for each of the planning areas. Recreational issues identified in the report include updating the plans to reflect changes in recreational facilities due to land acquisition and changes in land management. Review of existing facilities may warrant the need to provide additional recreationally zoned land.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Visitor Serving Facilities**

- **Section 30212.5 Public facilities; distribution**
- **Section 30213 Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities; encouragement and provision; overnight room rentals (part)**
- **Section 30220 Protection of certain water-oriented activities**
- **Section 30221 Oceanfront land; protection for recreational use and development**
- **Section 30222 Private lands; priority of development purposes**
- **Section 30223 Upland areas**
- **Section 30224 Recreational boating use; encouragement; facilities**
- **Section 30250 Location; existing developed area (part)**

## **Summary of Recreation issues**

### **RECREATION ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Assess the need to provide addition recreationally zoned land for support services.
2. Review the Recreation Element of the existing General Plan and the Background Studies for the proposed General Plan Update to access the future needs for local and regional parks.
3. Investigate the institution of “homestays” as a compatible recreational use in the areas planned for Agriculture Exclusive.

### **2.1 RECREATION ISSUES: NCAP**

4. Update the NCAP to reflect policy decisions established by the Redwood National Park General Management Plan regarding recreation facilities and demand for services. Identify areas where policy conflicts may occur.
5. Update the NCAP to reflect policy changes for the Humboldt Lagoons State Park (formerly Stone Lagoon State Park).
6. Update NCAP to reflect changes in private visitor-serving recreational facilities, in particular, the Redwood Trails RV park south of Orick.
7. Update the NCAP to reflect the ownership changes of the Redwood Creek Picnic Area and Freshwater spit.
8. Update the NCAP regarding improvements to Big Lagoon County Park.
9. Consider additional areas zoned for Commercial Recreation in the Orick area to provide overnight facilities for users of Redwood National Park.

10. Consider economic incentives to private developers of Commercial Recreation facilities in and around Orick.
11. Consider additional areas for commercial recreation in the Big Lagoon area.

## **2.2 RECREATION ISSUES: TAP**

12. Update the TAP to reflect ownership changes to Trinidad Head. Discuss management options.
13. Update the TAP to reflect policy changes and infrastructure improvements for the Patrick's Point and Trinidad State Parks.
14. Re-evaluate maintenance requirements and jurisdictional responsibilities of Patrick's Point Drive and Stagecoach Drive.
15. Re-evaluate policy 2.13 regarding commercial recreation facilities within Urban Limit Lines.
16. The County is currently preparing a Master Plan for management of the Moonstone Beach area. Policy review is warranted to determine consistency with Coastal Act policies prior to adoption. Strong support for bathroom facilities at Moonstone Beach is warranted.

## **2.3 RECREATION ISSUES: MKAP**

17. Re-evaluate the Parkland Dedication requirement for subdivision activities.
18. Update MKAP to reflect the acquisition of the Mad River Bluffs and improvements to Hiller Park. Coordinate with the McKinleyville Land Trust during the preparation of the Mad River Bluffs Management Plan to ensure consistency with the MKAP.
19. Evaluate the land area designated "Commercial Recreation" to determine adequacy for future needs.
20. Update the MKAP to reflect policy changes for the Little River State Park.
21. Review impacts of Hammond Trail to determine if support services are needed.

## **2.4 RECREATION ISSUES: HBAP**

22. Update HBAP to reflect the acquisition of Mad River Slough, Fay Slough and the Elk River Wildlife Areas by the Department of Fish and Game.

23. Review impacts of the proposed Samoa Town Master Plan on recreational facilities.
24. Update the HBAP to reflect the management and ownership changes of the Manila Community Center (formerly Redwoods United). Consider revising land use designation to reflect proposed recreational uses.
25. Update the HBAP to reflect the management and ownership changes of the BLM Recreational Area, including information regarding Coast Guard station. Consider revising land use designation to reflect proposed recreational uses.
26. Update the HBAP to reflect the management and ownership changes of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Area. Consider revising land use designation to reflect proposed recreational uses.
27. Revise the HBAP to support visitor-serving uses in the King Salmon/Fields Landing area.
28. Update the HBAP to support the development of a water trails system in and around Humboldt Bay.

## **2.5 RECREATION ISSUES: ERAP**

29. Review areas designated Commercial Recreation within the ERAP to determine adequacy of total land area. Identify areas where policy conflicts may occur.
30. Update ERAP to reflect the acquisition of Cock Robin Island and the Eel River Delta and Elk River Wildlife Areas by the Department of Fish and Game. Policy review is warranted to determine consistency with Coastal Act policies prior to adoption.
31. Investigate the institution of “homestays” as a compatible recreational use in the areas planned for Agriculture Exclusive.
32. Investigate the establishment of “water trails” within the Eel River Delta.

## **2.6 RECREATION ISSUES: SCAP**

33. The BLM is currently preparing a Master Plan for management of the Kings Range National Conservation area. Policy review is warranted to determine consistency with Coastal Act policies prior to adoption.
34. Review recreational needs of the Shelter Cove area in relation to geologic stability of the area and planned land use.

35. Update the SCAP to reflect recreational facilities provided by the BLM in the Shelter Cove area.
36. Update the SCAP to reflect acquisition of the Lost Coast Headlands by the BLM and recreational facilities provided.
37. Review service capabilities for the Shelter Cove Community Service District and determine compliance with visitor serving policies of the SCAP.

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### III. WATER AND MARINE RESOURCES

The California Coastal Act sets out a series of policies to protect and enhance land suitable for aquaculture, fisheries and environmentally sensitive habitat in the coastal zone. Streams and associated riparian habitat are protected in order to maintain the biological productivity of coastal waters. Section 30231 requires that natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats are maintained, and that the alteration of natural streams be minimized. Section 30236 limits channelizations, dams, or other substantial alterations of rivers and streams to only three purposes: necessary water supply; protection of existing structures where there is no feasible alternative; or improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.



Marine resources are protected not only to sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters, but also to maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms. Section 30230 requires that marine resources be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Uses of the marine environment must provide for the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of marine organisms. Section 30233 provides that the diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, or estuaries may only be permitted where there is no less environmentally damaging alternative and restricted to a limited number of allowable uses.

Finally, the Coastal Act requires that the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters be protected. Section 30231 requires that the use of means, including managing waste water discharges, controlling runoff, protecting groundwater and surface water, encouraging waste water reclamation, and protecting streams, in order to maintain and enhance water quality.

#### ***CURRENT WATERSHED CONDITIONS***

Humboldt County is part of the Klamath-North Coast Hydrologic Basin Planning Area, which includes all basins draining into the Pacific Ocean from the Oregon border southerly through the Russian River Basin. Ten of Humboldt County's twelve planning watersheds each drain to a single stream or river, all of which either drain directly or indirectly into the Pacific Ocean. Eureka Plain and Trinidad watersheds are drained by many smaller streams, which terminate in Humboldt Bay or the Pacific Ocean, respectively.

Evidence that watershed conditions are declining in at least some areas can be found in the 303(d) List update recommendations. While three rivers in Humboldt County are recommended for new listings, and three more are recommended for placement on watch lists, there is no mention of de-listing any Humboldt County waterways. For a water body to be de-listed, it must

be demonstrated that objectives are being met or revised, and beneficial uses are not impaired, or are protected by control measures.

Sedimentation and water temperature are the chief watershed management issues in Humboldt County.

- **Sedimentation** is a natural process but can be greatly accelerated by land use activities which modify drainage patterns or remove vegetative cover in highly erosive areas. Increased erosion and sedimentation may alter runoff characteristics and destroy aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat. Stream sedimentation from various activities limits coldwater aquatic uses—including the migration, spawning, reproduction, and development of cold water fish—and can contribute to flooding.
- **Temperature** is a vital factor for coho and chinook salmon, and steelhead, characteristically known as “cold water fish.” Many physiological processes of salmon are affected by subtle temperature changes including metabolism, food requirements, growth rates, developmental rates of embryos and young, sensitivity to disease, and the timing of life-cycles such as adult migration, emergence from gravel nests, and proper life stage development. . In general, the types of effects are usually divided into lethal and sub-lethal effects. These effects are relevant for all the life stages of salmon.

### **GROUNDWATER CONCERNS**

The Eel River, Humboldt Bay, Trinity River, and Klamath River Watershed Management Areas all list groundwater contamination as a primary water quality issue. Potential ground water contamination from nutrient loading via ground water to streams is of concern. Pesticide and herbicide applications on private and public lands are also of concern. Use of pesticides and herbicides along roadways, in agricultural operations, in urban areas, and in lily bulb farming and forestlands in Watershed Management Areas poses a threat to ground and surface waters.

To protect water resources within a watershed context, a mix of point and nonpoint source discharges, ground and surface water interactions, and water quality/water quantity relationships must be considered. These complex relationships present considerable challenges to water resource protection programs.

### **STORMWATER CONCERNS**

Stormwater is an important factor in the distribution of sediments, chemicals, and other natural and human-produced compounds throughout a watershed. Runoff from heavy rains picks up these potential pollutants and carries them downstream, where they may be deposited or remain suspended in sensitive ecological areas. With Humboldt County’s wet climate and large amount of land dedicated to timber production and agriculture, pollution due to stormwater runoff is of particular importance.

### **NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION**

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, also known as polluted runoff, is the leading cause of water quality impairments in California and the nation. Nonpoint sources, including natural sources, are the major contributors of pollution to impacted streams, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, marine

waters, and ground water basins. Unlike pollution traceable to a single location or “point” (such as a sewage treatment plant), NPS pollution comes from many diffuse sources, and is principally caused by stormwater, snowmelt, or agricultural runoff moving across and diffusing into the ground. The runoff picks up natural and human pollutants and deposits them throughout the natural watershed (in rivers, lakes, coastal areas, and aquifers).

### ***LOCAL WATER QUALITY REGULATIONS***

In May 2002, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted ordinance revisions dealing with grading, erosion control, geological hazards, streamside management areas, and related ordinance revisions. This action completes efforts to codify and implement comprehensive provisions for dealing with grading, erosion control and potential impacts to streamsid es. It has the benefit of addressing nonpoint source pollution from runoff water as well.

The ordinance revisions have a number of critical benefits for water and marine resources including:

- implementation of various General Plan elements including water quality, biological resources, critical and sensitive habitats, geologic hazards, open space, conservation, and erosion and sedimentation control.
- additional guidance on the application of erosion and sediment control measures to various developments.
- enhancement of existing zoning regulations which conform to all local, state, and federal requirements to protect property rights, sensitive habitats, and coastal and other sensitive resources.
- management of risk in geologically unstable areas and improvement of erosion control regulations.

The revisions were submitted to the Coastal Commission staff on July 10, 2002 for review and certification. No action has been taken by the Coastal Commission to date. The amendments will become effective upon certification by the Coastal Commission.

### ***STREAMSIDE MANAGEMENT AREAS***

The County maintains Streamside Management Areas (SMAs) to protect sensitive fish and wildlife habitats and to minimize erosion, runoff, and other conditions detrimental to water quality. These areas are corridors paralleling blue line streams identified on USGS topographic maps and significant drainage courses identified under CEQA. Streamside Management Areas were included in the original LCP’s, and have just recently been incorporated the Framework Plan as a part of the Open Space Element.

The width of the SMA depends on whether or not the stream is perennial or intermittent and whether the area is inside or outside of Urban Development and Expansion Areas. In urban areas, the SMA width is 50 feet on each side of perennial streams and 25 feet for intermittent streams; outside of urban areas, the width is 100 feet for perennial streams and 50 feet for

intermittent streams. Development within the SMAs is very restricted and is subject to implementation of numerous mitigation measures designed to protect the habitat quality of the SMA

The main water and marine resource issues identified in the report focus on reviewing these new water quality regulations to ensure consistency with the LCP's and the intent of the Coastal Act.

### **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Water and Marine Resources**

- **Section 30230 Marine resources; maintenance**
- **Section 30231 Biological productivity; water quality**
- **Section 30236 Water supply and flood control**
- **Section 30240 Environmentally sensitive habitat areas; adjacent developments**

### **Summary of Water and Marine Resource Issues**

#### **WATER AND MARINE RESOURCE ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Update the Local Coastal Plans to include new non-point source pollution issues. This will include:
  - a. Compare each plan for similarity and differences, and unify into one set of regulations. Maintain special protection sections for each plan.
  - b. Compare the protection measures provided in each plan and incorporate the May 2002 Erosion Control Ordinance revisions. Determine if adequate protection exists with the merger of these regulations.
  - c. Incorporate the County Road Maintenance Plan by reference into the LCP's.
2. Incorporate Natural Resources and Hazards Report, Volume II ("Detailed Watershed Characteristics and Regulatory Framework Analysis") into the LCP's regarding water resources analysis. Review policy recommendations provided in the Report.
3. Review new coastal monument regulations regarding off-shore rocks and determine consistency with LCP policies.

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#### IV. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITAT AREAS

One of the chief objectives of the Coastal Act is the preservation, protection and enhancement of coastal resources, including land and marine habitats. The rarest and most ecologically important habitats are identified and protected from development. Within the Coastal Zone, Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs) are designated, pursuant to the California Coastal Act. Section 30107.5 of the Coastal Act defines an ESHA as “any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments.”



In addition to the policies protecting coastal waters, the Coastal Act requires the protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas against any significant disruption of habitat values. Section 30240 requires that no development (with the exception of uses dependent on the resources) is allowed within any ESHA. This policy further requires that development adjacent to a sensitive habitat area is sited and designed to prevent impacts that would degrade the habitat area. Finally, development adjacent to parks and recreation areas must be sited and designed to prevent impacts.

Humboldt County ESHAs include: anadromous fish streams, sand dunes, rookeries and marine mammal haul-out areas, wetlands, riparian areas, areas of pygmy vegetation which contain species of rare or endangered plants, and habitats of rare and endangered plants and animals. Each Plan contains a description of the “current conditions” of the natural resources and identifies the ESHA within the planning area, including wetlands and wet areas. Development policies outline allowable uses within ESHA, required setbacks for development and identified restoration areas and mitigation requirements.

Included within the Issue Identification Report is the need to review the state and federal endangered species listing for both plant and animal species and compare with the LCP resource protection policies and maps for accuracy (a complete list of federal and state listed species for the County can be found in Appendix A). In particular, the recent listing of the snowy plover and the potential conflict with access and recreational uses are proposed for review. Also, recent changes in Coastal Commission policy decision regarding wetlands and definitions of wetlands will also need to be reviewed.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Environmentally Sensitive Habitat**

- **Section 30240 Environmentally sensitive habitat areas; adjacent developments**

## **Summary of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area Issues**

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITAT AREAS ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Review Local Coastal Plan Policies for compliance with recent decisions and listings of threatened and endangered species.
2. Update Resource Protection Maps to reflect changes in the listing of threatened and endangered species and protected habitat areas including but not limited to: snowy plover, vegetated dunes and other listed plant species.
  - b. Review vegetative dunes as an ESHA to possibly distinguish between native and non-native habitats.
3. Review Wetland Resource Protection Maps for compliance with jurisdictional wetlands map. Update the Local Coastal Plan Maps and policies to reflect changes.
4. Review “Pocket Marsh Policies” included in the HBAP to determine applicability with other Plans. Review the most recent Coastal Commission wetland guidelines for compliance.
5. Update wetland buffer policies for conformance with recent actions by the Coastal Commission.
6. Update plans to include definitions of wetland types (such as “estuarine” and “riverine”) and provide policies for protection.
7. Review Transitional Agricultural policies and definitions found in the NCAP, MKAP, HBAP and ERAP. Determine applicability for the SCAP and the TAP.

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## V. AGRICULTURE

The protection of agriculturally productive lands is a very high priority in Coastal Act policies. Section 30241 requires that the maximum amount of agricultural land remain in agriculture to protect the agricultural economy, and to minimize conflicts between agriculture and urban uses, thus preventing premature conversion of agriculturally productive lands. Section 20242 provides for the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses only when continued operations are not feasible and the conversion would preserve existing prime agricultural lands by concentrating development adjacent to existing urban areas.



Agriculture is an important element of Humboldt's economy and identity, sustaining hundreds of farm and ranch families and workers. Over 25% of the land is in some form of agriculture. Agricultural products (excluding timber) had a market value of approximately \$110,000,000 in 2001<sup>1</sup>. Numerous factors contribute to the economic value of agriculture in Humboldt County, including soil quality, climatic conditions, irrigation availability and practices, farming costs, and agricultural policy.

The majority of prime agricultural lands in the County are located in the coastal zone (Figure 9). The highly productive delta soils of the Mad River and the Eel River, north and south of Humboldt Bay respectively, provide the basis for significant agricultural resources. Agricultural operations in these regions include dairies, livestock grazing, nursery operations (in particular, Sun Valley Bulb Farm) and row and field crops. The main towns were settled on these flats near Humboldt Bay. The cities of Arcata, Fortuna, and Ferndale, and the unincorporated area of McKinleyville, are all located on prime agricultural soil.

For over 20 years the County has had land use policies that at their core reflected the desire to conserve agriculture land; however, agricultural land is still being converted at a rate many determine to be too fast. Flexible interpretation of agriculture land preservation policies and the drive for economic maximization of land value lead to more agriculture land conversion than is desirable. A recent local study found that the agricultural lands protected by the stricter Coastal Act policies remained for the most part in agricultural production; most of the conversion occurred in the inland grazing and timberlands where numerous tracts of rural "ranchettes" have been created<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Humboldt County Department of Agriculture, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Michael Smith & Deborah Giraud; *Traditional Land Use Planning Regulations and Agricultural Land Conversion: A Case Study from a Rural Northern California County*; Paper presented at the 63<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting of the rural sociological society in Washington D.C., August 13-17, 2000; 20 p

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Certain policies of the Coastal Act apply to “prime farmlands” in particular. Since extensive soil surveys have not been conducted in Humboldt County and prime soils have not been identified, it can be difficult to apply these policies.

The original 1965 survey utilized the Storie Index Rating classification, which does not rate soils as “prime”. The survey area covered about 125,000 acres of alluvial and terrace lands primarily located around Humboldt Bay. The majority of the mountainous portions of the County were not surveyed.

The NRCS is currently in the process of mapping the soils in Humboldt County to a USDA Land Capability Classification System with a projected target completion date of 2008. As of December, 2002, approximately one-third of the County has been mapped (Azan, 2002). Staff from the NRCS has indicated that site specific mapping information will be released as it is generated; however, this information will be released on a “provisional” basis only. Coastal land use designations may need to be revised as a result of the updated soils survey.

The primary program the County offers to help prevent the premature conversion of agricultural lands is the Williamson Act. The Act provides an arrangement where private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open space uses under a contract with the County, known as a Land Conservation Contract. Property owners wishing to receive a tax break through the Williamson Act must follow an application process with the County and may need to form an Agricultural Preserve.

Williamson Act Preserve Contracts prepared pursuant to the Williamson Act have been scarce in the County’s coastal zone. The few existing preserves within the Coastal Zone occur in the Southcoast Planning Area. Land owners with prime agricultural lands in Humboldt County (primarily the dairies on the bottomlands in the coastal zone) have not historically utilized the tax reduction benefits of the Williamson Act.

The majority of coastal agricultural lands are located in the McKinleyville, Humboldt and Eel River Planning Areas (the Trinidad Area Plan has no identified agricultural areas and therefore, does not contain any development policies regarding agricultural uses). Each Plan identifies the areas identified for agricultural uses and outlines development policies within these areas based upon whether the agricultural land is prime or non prime. Each Plan details the compatible uses allowed in the agricultural areas, with the underlying requirement that the use will not impair the economic viability of the agricultural operation.

Although there are many factors contributing to the profitability of agriculture and the sustainability of Humboldt’s agricultural economy, only a few can be controlled or manipulated through planning. These include policies that provide protection of farmland, regulation of the amount of farmland lost to rural and urban development, insurance that subdivision of farmland will not adversely effect agricultural production, and prevention of land use conflict.

The issues identified in this report focus on policy options and programs that could help keep the agricultural industry thriving, and prevent premature conversion of agricultural lands.

## Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Agricultural Resources

- **Section 30241 Prime agricultural land; maintenance in agricultural production**
- **Section 30241.5 Agricultural land; determination of viability of uses; economic feasibility evaluation**
- **Section 30242 Lands suitable for agricultural use; conversion**

## Summary of Agricultural Issues

### **AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Review Plan designations to reflect new mapping information regarding soils information collected by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
2. Review conversion of agricultural areas located in the Coastal Zone Boundaries and determine cause. Review policies to determine if adequate protection measures are available to ensure conformance with the Coastal Act.
3. Review recent public acquisitions and possible effects on overall agricultural production. Review ERAP Policy 3.34(D) for possible inclusion in other LCP's containing large agricultural areas.
4. Review compatible uses in agricultural areas to determine if this section needs to be updated with new industries compatible with agricultural production (i.e. homestays, cottage industries, portable timber processing equipment, etc.).
5. Investigate the possibilities of establishing intensive agricultural operations on reduced parcel sizes on prime ag lands within the coastal zone.
6. Review current urban limit lines to determine if adequate areas have been set aside for future urban development. "Buffer areas" may also be inadequate to protect viability of surrounding agricultural areas.
7. Investigate the use of conservation easements and policies to support the use of easements as a method of protecting agricultural lands.
8. Coordinate LCP Policy Updates with the General Plan Update to help eliminate conflicting or confusing agricultural policies that lead to leapfrog development.
9. Investigate the promotion of the Williamson Act program for agricultural operators within the coastal zone, particularly those in prime agricultural areas, and determine if policy revisions are necessary in the LCP's.

## **5.1 AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: NCAP**

10. Review current urban limit line serving the Orick community to determine if adequate areas have been set aside for future urban development.

## **5.2 AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: TAP**

11. Review potential agricultural lands in the Trinidad area identified in the background studies for the general plan update to determine if agricultural protection policies need to be included in the TAP.

## **5.3 AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: HBAP**

12. Update HBAP resource maps to reflect new soils survey. Review urban limit lines and buffer areas and coordinate with General Plan Update policy revisions to prevent conflicting policies.
13. Review Table Bluff land division policies to determine adequate protection of resource lands.

## **5.4 AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: ERAP**

14. Review new regulations for the construction of manure ponds for water quality purposes on dairies. Identify areas where policy conflicts may occur.
15. Review Table Bluff land division policies to determine adequate protection of resource lands.
  - a. Review requests for lot divisions in the Loleta area.

## **5.5 AGRICULTURAL ISSUES: SCAP**

16. The BLM is currently preparing a Master Plan for management of the Kings Range National Conservation area. Coordinated effort with the BLM is needed to determine consistency with Coastal Act policies prior to adoption.
17. Review public acquisitions of agricultural lands and determine if additional protection policies are needed.

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## **VI. HAZARDS**

Under the Coastal Act, development is required to be sited and designed to minimize risks, assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion or require the construction of protective devices along the bluffs (Section 30253). Section 30235 of the Coastal Act allows the construction of shoreline protective devices where existing development is threatened from erosion (and designed to eliminate or mitigate impacts on the resources). The Coastal Act also provides that development damaged or destroyed by natural disasters can be rebuilt in the same location under certain conditions.



Natural hazards in Humboldt County's coastal zone are the result of floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, wildland fires, landslides and bluff erosion. Following is a brief description of each of these natural hazards.

### ***SEISMIC AND SOIL STABILITY***

Humboldt County is located within a seismically active area of California. It is in the two highest seismic risk zones of the Uniform Building Code, and Cape Mendocino (located offshore in the southern portion of the County) experiences the highest concentration of earthquake events in the continental United States. In addition to causing ground shaking, an earthquake can trigger other natural disasters such as fire, landslides, and flooding, resulting in loss of life and extensive property damage. Seismic hazards in the county include earthquake ground shaking, surface fault rupture, liquefaction, and tsunami potential in the coastal zone areas. Geologic hazards not specifically related to earthquakes include landslides and soil stability.

Slope stability, which refers to the susceptibility of slopes to landslides, is a major concern in the county. Heavy rains, grading, or earthquakes can trigger landslides. Other contributing factors are type and structure of soils, slope steepness, water, vegetation, and erosion. Landslides resulting from ground shaking are most likely to occur on steep, unstable slopes.

In May 2002, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors adopted ordinance revisions addressing grading, erosion control, geological hazards, and streamside management areas. The amendments further implement the goals of minimizing risk in geologically unstable areas and improving erosion control regulations.

### ***TSUNAMIS***

A tsunami, or large sea wave, may be produced by movement of the ocean floor resulting from either a nearby or distant earthquake. Tsunamis have historically been rare in California. Since

1812, California has experienced fourteen tsunamis with wave heights greater than 3 feet; six of these were destructive. Ten of these were generated by distant earthquakes near Alaska, Chile or Japan. The worst damage in California resulted from the 1964 Alaskan earthquake, originating some 1500 miles away, which caused severe destruction and loss of life in the harbor area at Crescent City. The coastal area affected by a tsunami is called the tsunami “run-up zone.” These areas are currently being mapped by the Geology Department at Humboldt State University.

## ***BLUFF EROSION***

Bluff erosion is a natural process that occurs over time. Seismic activity, steep slopes and unstable soil conditions increase the rate of bluff erosion. The majority of residential development in the County’s coastal zone occurs around Humboldt Bay on relatively flat, stable soils. However, there are two residential developments in the County that have experienced a relatively high rate of bluff erosion: the Big Lagoon Park Subdivision in the north coast region, and the Shelter Cove subdivision, in the south coast region.

### **Big Lagoon Park Subdivision**

The residentially developed area of the Big Lagoon Park Subdivision is approximately 28 acres in size and is developed with 76 cabins. The majority of these residences were built in 1929, and are used as summer vacation homes. Some of the cabins are located near the coastal bluff and have undergone several catastrophic erosion events. Most recently, the bluff retreated 80 feet between 1983 and 1985.

A study conducted in 1985 identified the projected coastal bluff retreat rate to the year 2005. At that time, 23 relocation sites were approved. Several cabins were moved to safety on the same parcel between 1985 and 1995 under an emergency Coastal Development Permit. This study was updated two years ago to project bluff retreat to the year 2065. To date, coastal bluff retreat hazards on that property required the relocation of 14 cabins.

### **Shelter Cove Subdivision**

The Shelter Cove Sea Park Subdivision was originally planned in 1965 as a retirement community and area for second-home, recreational development. The initial subdivision of the area created 4,715 residential lots. Since that time, consolidations of lots and acquisitions by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have reduced the total number of lots of the original subdivision design. The subdivision map shows a land use pattern of about 4,800 residential lots (additional area has been annexed into the District), about 130 acres of scattered commercial sites, 35 acres for high density apartments, numerous parks and open space areas and some timberland areas.

The South Coast Area Plan indicated that in 1990, there were 62 dwellings in the Coastal Zone portion of the Shelter Cove Subdivision with two motels, two restaurants, a recreational vehicle park and a developing harbor under the control of the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District. Initial improvements to the harbor facilities have recently been completed and the Shelter Cove Harbor Planning Committee is presently working on a mooring program

and assessing needs for on-shore support facilities. Since that time, over 196 Coastal Development Permits have been issued for the Shelter Cove area for commercial, recreational and residential purposes. Approximately 140 of these were for new residential structures.

Bluff erosion is a concern mainly due to the relatively small size of the residential lots located adjacent to the bluff. Bluff retreat hazards diminish with distance from the bluff edge. Adequate setbacks may not be possible to mitigate for current rate of erosion due to sizes of some existing lots. At this time, all development along the bluff in the Shelter Cove subdivision is required to prepare a R-2 Geologic Hazards Report in order to design development that reduces risk of injury and increased bluff erosion. Consolidation of lots, in some instances, is necessary to accommodate development.

### ***FLOODING***

Flood hazards in Humboldt County are attributable to rivers, dam failure, and coastal high water hazards (tsunamis and flood tides), with river flooding by far the most prevalent. Flooding is an important concern for many waterways in coastal zone: the Eel River (including the Van Duzen and South Fork), the Mad River, the Eureka Plain (especially Freshwater and Jacoby Creeks) and Redwood Creek (around Orick). During the months of November to March, when seventy percent of precipitation in Humboldt County occurs, major floods have sometimes resulted from a succession of intense rainstorms.

One of the major issues in floodplain management and protection is how much urban encroachment should be allowed into 100-year flood zones. The closer to the river that development is sited, the higher a barrier to floodwaters will have to be erected. Type of development and land use is also an issue in flood zones.

### ***FIRE HAZARDS***

Subsequent to an evaluation by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), nearly three quarters of Humboldt County's land is identified as possibly containing substantial forest fire risks and hazards, pursuant to Section 4125 of the Public Resources Code. The areas not prone to fire risk are concentrated in coastal and estuary land and the high (eastern) Klamath-Trinity watersheds. Fire risk is being evaluated by the County in a separate study that will result in development of a new County Master Fire Protection Plan. This study is currently underway and has not yet been completed. Review of plan policies may be warranted to ensure that conflicts with Coastal Act policies do not occur.

The Local Coastal Plans include summary descriptions of the potential hazards within each planning area. The current development policies defer to the policies contained in the Seismic Safety Element and the Natural Hazards/Land Use Risk Rating Matrix of the Framework Plan (General Plan for the inland areas). Additional development requirements are imposed for those areas along unstable bluffs or cliffs, tsunami run-up areas and flood prone areas.

The Issue Identification Report recommends reviewing the hazard maps and updating the hazard policies with the best available information.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Natural Hazards**

- **Section 30253 Minimization of adverse impacts**

## **Summary of Natural Hazard Issues**

### **NATURAL HAZARD ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Review and revise land use designation to reflect the unstable coastline conditions along the Big Lagoon subdivision non-certified areas.
2. Update LCP's to incorporate newly approved erosion control policies regarding geologic hazards. Review policies to determine if adequate protection measures are available to ensure conformance with the Coastal Act.
3. Determine conformance within the LCP's to the Department of Public Works newly developed Best Management Practices for the construction and maintenance of county roads.
4. Review geologic hazards maps for accuracy. Include recently revised ground shaking information into the plans.
5. Update the plans with new information regarding seismic safety. The seismic safety zones within the UBC should be clarified.
6. Review new information developed for tsunami hazard areas regarding the maximum credible event re-occurrence interval, and revise plans accordingly. Update the hazards maps to reflect new information regarding tsunami run up zones.
7. Review the high coastal wave hazard inundation areas (in particular, the HBAP) and revise plans accordingly.
8. Update the plan policies regarding revisions to fire codes and reference new UBC regulations.
9. Consider the development of uniform hazard maps within the plans utilizing the same information and scale of maps.
10. Airport Safety Review designations have been developed as a result of the revision to the recently adopted Airport Plan. Review Section 3.28.G of the MKAP policies for consistency.
11. Update NCAP with new information concerning the proposed improvements on the levee in Orick and possible policies regarding maintenance area.

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## VII. VISUAL RESOURCES

One of the primary objectives of the Coastal Act is the protection of scenic and visual resources, particularly as viewed from public places. Section 30251 requires that development be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and other scenic coastal areas. New development must minimize the alteration of natural landforms. This policy also requires that development is sited and designed to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas. Where feasible, the Coastal Act requires that development include measures to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.



Humboldt County's scenic resources, open space lands, coastal areas, forests, and scenic highways, contribute to the County's unique sense of place. Maintaining and enhancing these resources will help preserve the quality of life residents value. Views include coastlines, mountains, hills, ridgelines, inland streams and rivers, forests, pastoral agricultural vistas, idyllic rural communities, and a combination of all of these features. Views are distant and proximate, panoramic and discrete. There are perhaps very few areas of the County where scenic beauty is not evident.

Humboldt County's varied and extensive Pacific Ocean coastline allows for a wide range of scenic vistas from Highway 101 and from beaches, state parks and Coastal Access points. The 1980 County's Local Coastal Program included a technical study on visual resources that was used in evaluating opportunities and constraints within the Coastal Zone. This study, completed in 1979, includes a detailed inventory of local visual resources along the coastline. The study inventories and maps areas of visual concern and identifies areas as "highly scenic" and "visually degraded areas." The extensive inventory included points offering coastal views in Humboldt County.

The *2002 Natural Resources and Hazards Technical Background Report* prepared for the 2004 General Plan Update utilized this report for comparisons of current conditions. A qualitative viewshed analysis for selected viewpoints was conducted in order to assess the qualities of a viewshed and its sensitivity and susceptibility to deterioration from development impacts.

Deterioration of the scenic qualities of a viewshed can be caused by many factors, including logging and road construction as well as rural subdivision and development. As a result, viewsheds with the highest potential for deterioration are those closest to cities and towns and those near unprotected forestland.

The Local Coastal Plans currently identify scenic qualities in the planning areas by both a narrative description and by resource maps (not all plans include a narrative description). The Plans contain policies to protect coastal view areas and natural landforms and features, along

with providing resource buffer areas adjacent to public lands. Regulations for establishing Design Assistance Committees have been developed for the Trinidad Area Plan and the Northcoast Area Plan; however, there are no active review committees operating at this time. The Humboldt Bay Area Plan contains “corridor regulations” for billboards, while the Eel River Area Plan has specific policies for protecting historic buildings.

The Issue Identification Report recommends developing a more standardized approach to visual resource protection. Public opinion received during the General Plan Update favored the development of a billboard amortization program along Highway 101. This suggestion will also be forwarded as a part of this Report.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Visual Resources**

- **Section 30251 Scenic and visual qualities**
- **Section 30253 Minimization of adverse impacts**

## **Summary of Visual Resources Issues**

### **VISUAL RESOURCE ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Consider the development of a billboard amortization program for existing billboards along Highway 101 (Review amortization program developed for the PGE billboard). Review sign policies in HBAP to determine applicability to other plans with Coastal View Policies.
2. Consider standardizing the visual protection policies for each plan for a more unified approach. Review Design Assistance Committee policies to determine continued applicability.
3. Review recent public acquisitions for consistency with public land resource buffer policies.
4. Review Natural Features and the Natural Landform protection policies and update as necessary.
5. The General Plan Update reports have identified additional visual protection policies that should be reviewed for incorporation into the LCP's.
6. Review Section 3.40(B)(6) (Transfer of Development Credit) of the Trinidad Area Plan for applicability.

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## VIII. INDUSTRIAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

The Coastal Act gives priority to coastal-dependent development over other developments near the shoreline (Section 30255). In order to balance protection of coastal resources, including public access, land and marine habitat, scenic and visual quality, the Coastal Act provides policy direction that focuses new development, such as industrial uses, to existing developed areas with public services. Section 30250 requires that new development be located near existing developed areas, and where it will not have significant adverse impacts on coastal resources. Section 30260 encourages coastal-dependent industrial development to locate or expand within existing sites. Only when this is not feasible, are industrial uses allowed to locate outside of existing developed areas. Specific requirements for siting oil and gas developments within the coastal zone are provided (Sections 30261 – 30264), with an emphasis on protecting coastal resources throughout the site development and facility operations stages.



Industrial activity in Humboldt County's coastal zone is located almost exclusively around Humboldt Bay and in the Eel River Planning Area. A significant portion of these sites are located adjacent to wetlands. Energy resources are located primarily outside of the coastal zone with the exception of the PGE power plant.

### ***ENERGY RESOURCES***

Energy resources in Humboldt County are primarily natural gas deposits. Active gas wells in Humboldt County are concentrated in the Tompkin Hills Gas Field, at the edge of the coastal zone. Of the County's 39 gas wells, 31 are currently producing and 8 are considered shut in, meaning they cannot produce gas at their current depths and are sealed off in order to maintain the pressure on remaining deposits. Humboldt County contains three inactive oil wells and has not produced oil in at least the past ten years. There is no record of geothermal production in Humboldt County.

The Planning Commission recently approved a Coastal Development Permit for five natural gas production well sites and a pipeline linking these wells to the PG&E gas main and regulator station at Alton. The gas wells are located along Grizzly Bluff Road in the Eel River Planning Area. This area has been the subject of previous exploratory drilling by ARCO (1991) and others; however, this project is the first to propose production wells and a pipeline connection to PG&E transmission facilities in Alton. Construction is proposed for the spring of 2003.

PG&E operates a power plant south of Eureka located adjacent to the Bay. Internal generation of the plant includes two 53 MW thermal generators, two 15 MW gas turbines, one 25 MW biomass generator and one 46 MW Qualifying Facility (PG&E, 2001). PG&E is also in the

process of decommissioning the 63 MW nuclear power plant that was in operation from 1963 to 1976. The company proposes to utilize a “Dry-cask” storage system for used-up fuel rods specifically designed to withstand earthquakes (Northcoast Journal, 1998). The design would also allow for the fuel rods to be moved to a federal nuclear repository without removing them from the storage unit.

Recent inquiries have been made before the Board of Supervisors by Calpine, a San Jose based energy company, to develop a site on Humboldt Bay in order to import liquefied natural gas and then move this gas via pipelines to the Central Valley. Some of the gas would also be used to “fire” a 220MW power plant. Review of existing policies to determine conformance with the Coastal Act would be necessary before a project of this magnitude could be considered.

### ***COASTAL INDUSTRIAL USES***

Forty percent of the total industrial land use in unincorporated areas of the county is in the coastal Humboldt Bay Planning Area, which includes the company town Samoa. The North Spit of Humboldt Bay is the site of the County’s heaviest industrial uses. Approximately 863 acres of the North Spit are planned and zoned for industrial uses, 280 acres of which are vacant. These sites include:

#### **Sierra Pacific**

Sierra Pacific Industry owns and operates a lumber mill on a 15-acre parcel located at the mouth of the Mad River Slough. The mill is approximately three miles south west of Arcata along Highway 255. An additional 30 acres is leased for log deck and lumber storage.

#### **Louisiana Pacific/Simpson**

Louisiana-Pacific (LP) owned over 1,000 acres on the Samoa Peninsula. Much of this property is planned and zoned for Coastal Dependent Industrial uses. LP operated three main manufacturing facilities on the industrial property, which included: a power generation plant, a redwood decking second growth sawmill, and a pulp mill. These facilities were located adjacent to each other with loading/unloading facilities on the bay.

Simpson Industries acquired LP’s interest in their Humboldt county holdings in 1998 with the exception of the pulp mill which was retained as a subsidiary Samoa Pacific Cellulose. The pulp mill still operates as a chlorine-free facility.

In addition to LP’s holdings, Simpson Industries owns over 400 acres on the Samoa Peninsula. The majority of these properties are zoned either General Industry or Coastal Dependent Industrial. The Simpson pulp mill at the south end of the industrial complex on the north spit has been shut down for some time, and is currently undergoing demolition. Simpson Industries recently applied for a Coastal Development Permit for a wood chip handling facility that would store, process and ship wood chips outside of Humboldt Bay.

Most other lumber processing and export on the north spit has been curtailed, although wood chips are still exported. Fairhaven Power Company operates a woodwaste fired 20MW power plant adjacent to the Samoa Pacific pulp mill.

The issues identified in this report focus on review of current conditions to determine if adequate supply of industrially zoned areas exists (adjustments may be necessary to reflect changes as a result of the Samoa Town proposal) and a determination whether oil and gas siting policies are in need of revision.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Industrial and Energy Resources**

- Section 30254 Public works facilities
- Section 30254.5 Terms or conditions on sewage treatment plant development; prohibition
- Section 30255 Priority of coastal-dependent developments
- Section 30260 Location or expansion
- Section 30261 Tanker facilities; use and design
- Section 30262 Oil and gas development
- Section 30263 Refineries or petrochemical facilities
- Section 30264 Thermal electric generating plants
- Section 30250 Location; existing developed area
- Section 30232 Oil and hazardous substance spills

## **Summary of Industrial and Energy Resources Issues**

### **INDUSTRIAL AND ENERGY RESOURCE ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Update Industrial Site Analysis for the Coastal Zone to determine status of current conditions and potential land needs.
2. Review recent Industrial Siting Surveys conducted by the Harbor District and the County to determine if revisions to current land use designation and plan polices are warranted.
3. Review changes in Coastal Act policies regarding off shore oil drilling policies to determine conformance within the LCP's.
4. Update the Plans to include a reference that any on-shore support facilities for oil drilling operations must be approved by a referendum vote.

### **8.1 INDUSTRIAL AND ENERGY RESOURCE ISSUES: HBAP**

5. Review industrial designation of the airstrip on the North Spit. Consider possible re-designation to recreation/open space.
6. The County has received a re-development plan for the Town of Samoa that would change available industrial capacity and amend industrial land use designations within the HBAP. Review the proposed plan and adjust accordingly.

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## IX. PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES

Section 30254 requires that new or expanded public works facilities be “designed and limited” to accommodate development that can be permitted consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act. This section also provides that, where public works facilities serving new development are limited, priority shall be given to coastal dependent uses, essential services, public and commercial recreation, and visitor-serving land uses. The Coastal Act also provides that no term or condition may be imposed on the development of any sewage treatment plant relative to future development that can be accommodated consistent with provisions of the Coastal Act.



The availability of public services to accommodate future growth is an important factor to consider when updating the Local Coastal Plans. Information concerning existing demand and capacity, proposed or planned expansions, and potential constraints for each Community Service District (CSD) providing services are needed prior to making decisions on urban land use. In addition to addressing public service capacity, urban land use issues identified include:

- How do we ensure maximum coordination between new growth and availability of public services and infrastructure?
- How do we accommodate this growth without violating resource protection policies in the Coastal Act?

Much of the data needed to update the public services sections in the LCP’s has been collected as a part of the Technical Background Studies prepared for the 2004 General Plan Update. In addition, data for water and sewer systems have been provided by LAFCo and local area Master Service Elements. Minor “tweaking” may be necessary to pinpoint specific issues related to service provided within the coastal zone boundary.

Public service issues addressed in these reports include water and sewer only. Solid waste and transportation issues are currently being reviewed on a countywide basis as a part of the General Plan Update, and will not be addressed separately in this report. Existing water and sewer community service districts specifically serving properties within the coastal zone are presented in Appendix B.

### ***EXISTING CONDITIONS***

Overall, public services are not viewed as a constraint to future development and growth countywide (Dyett and Bhatia, 2002). Existing capacities, combined with proposed future expansions, would accommodate the needs of the projected growth. Generally, for water services in the coastal areas it was determined that:

- An ample water supply is available to the County's water service providers, most drawn from the Mad and Eel rivers.
- The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) takes its water from the Mad River and holds title to 75 million gallons per day (mgd). It serves 77,000 residents—59 percent of the County—in three cities and five local service districts, including Eureka, Arcata, and McKinleyville.
- The Fortuna area, which draws from the Eel River Delta aquifer, is the only major population center for which current flows approach the capacity of current facilities.
- Smaller community service districts in the coastal zone that are at or near their capacity for water category include: Big Lagoon, Loleta, Westhaven, and Trinidad.

Sewer service is provided to some of the more densely populated communities, but is not universal in the County. Six incorporated cities and numerous special districts have wastewater systems. The remainder of the county is served by individual septic systems, which are supposed to be pumped at least every five years for maintenance purposes.

In the past, inadequate storage capacity to handle wet weather runoff has resulted in violations of wastewater discharge requirements. Generally, for sewer services in the coastal areas it was determined that:

- Every district acknowledges that some repairs and improvements are necessary to the local sewer system.
- In winter, Arcata's treatment plant is often overwhelmed and Fortuna has had trouble with untreated water being discharged to the Eel River during storms.
- A number of cities and smaller districts are at or near their capacity for sewer service and may require facility improvements to address a significant increase in number of connections.
- Due to issues with wet weather flow, inflow/infiltration, and handling of solids, the cities of Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna and Arcata, and the Loleta Community Services Districts may require system upgrades over the next twenty years if they experience significant growth increases.

The issues identified in this report focus on review of current conditions, urban reserve areas, and the adequacy of available land and public services to meet future demand. Public works policies need to be reviewed to identify areas where conflicts may occur with Coastal Act policies and determine the specific system upgrades that will be necessary to accommodate planned development.

## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Public Works Facilities**

- Section 30254 Public works facilities
- Section 30250 Location; existing developed area

## **Summary of Public Works Issues**

### **PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Update Master Service Elements for service providers in the Coastal Zone to determine status of current conditions and needed upgrades.
2. Review updated public services data to determine if revisions to urban limit lines, urban reserve, current land use designation and plan polices are warranted.

### **9.1 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: NCAP**

3. Update the plan to illustrate the new district boundaries for the Orick CSD (currently extending to RNP Headquarters). Also, Section 4.32 of the NCAP needs revision concerning the discussion of Urban Limit Lines.
4. Review and update the service area for the Big Lagoon estates (revise ULL as necessary).
5. Review current service connections for Big Lagoon Park to reflect recent acquisitions by the County of bluff properties. Determine status of certification with Coastal Commission for this area as a result of these recent acquisitions.

### **9.2 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: TAP**

6. Review and update the water connection status for the Trinidad area regarding hookups outside the city limits (will these connections change the current ULL?)
7. Update the Plan to include Westhaven CSD information.

### **9.3 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: MKAP**

8. Update the Plan to reflect construction of the wastewater treatment facility in McKinleyville.
9. Revise the Plan to include services provided by the Patrick Creek Subdivision CSD.
10. Review policies in newly adopted McKinleyville Community Plan to ensure compatibility for public works facilities.

11. Review ULL and Urban Reserve with current growth patterns and revise as necessary the extension of services.

#### **9.4 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: HBAP**

12. Multiple service providers operate within the HBAP planning area, often with overlapping service boundaries. Update the description of services provided/district boundaries of the CSD's, and determine if the urban reserve boundaries and policy revisions are warranted.
13. Review sewer capabilities in Manila to determine future development capacity.
14. Review and revise as necessary "Public Services – Rural" section for expansion of services to the rural areas around Mitchell Heights.

#### **9.5 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: ERAP**

15. Update services provided to Arlynda Corners and review plan policies for necessary revisions.
16. Review and update the serviceable areas outside the Ferndale City limits and determine if plan policies are required.

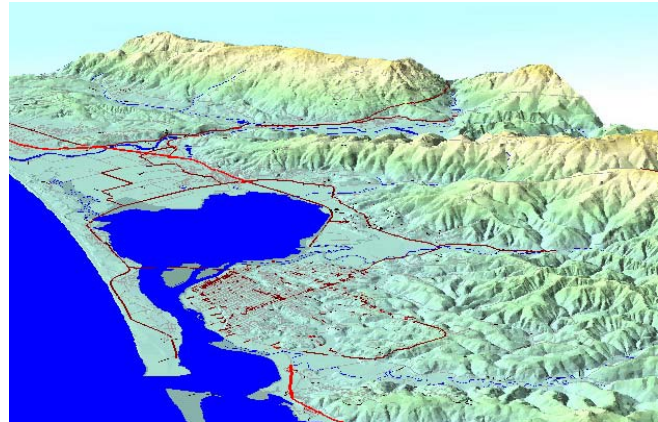
#### **9.6 PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES: SCAP**

17. Update water connections cap for the RID#1. Review plan policies for possible revisions for CDP allocation process and capacity reserve requirement for coastal dependent developments.
18. Review sewer system capacity and allocated service connections for RID# and update existing plan policies if necessary.

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## X. HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The California Coastal Act requires that Local Coastal Plans “protect, encourage, and where feasible, provide housing opportunities for families or individuals of low or moderate income” in areas along the coast (Humboldt County Housing Study, 1980). As seen throughout the state, land costs adjacent to the coastline tend to be much higher than those found inland; often driving low and moderate income families away from coastal areas. One goal of the act is to protect coastal resources for all residents of the State by requiring local governments to build into approved LCP’s some compensating mechanism to assure continued access to coastal housing for all.



The Coastal Act also requires that development occur in accordance with adopted policies of the local Housing Element of the General Plan. The most recent update to the Housing Element occurred in 1998. The Coastal Commission; however, has not yet approved the proposed revisions of the 1998 Housing Element for the Coastal Planning area. The County has prepared a Draft Housing Element, proposed for adoption in December of 2003. The housing needs identified as a part of the Draft Housing Element are proposed to be incorporated as a part of the Local Coastal Plan updates.

The County recently approved re-development funding for the areas of Samoa/Fairhaven, Fields Landing and Orick. Re-development of the Samoa area is currently being designed by a private re-development firm and will likely go through the public hearing process as a separate LCP amendment package. The proposed re-development by the County is not anticipated to affect current land use designations currently found in the LCP’s.

### ***COUNTY HOUSING ISSUES***

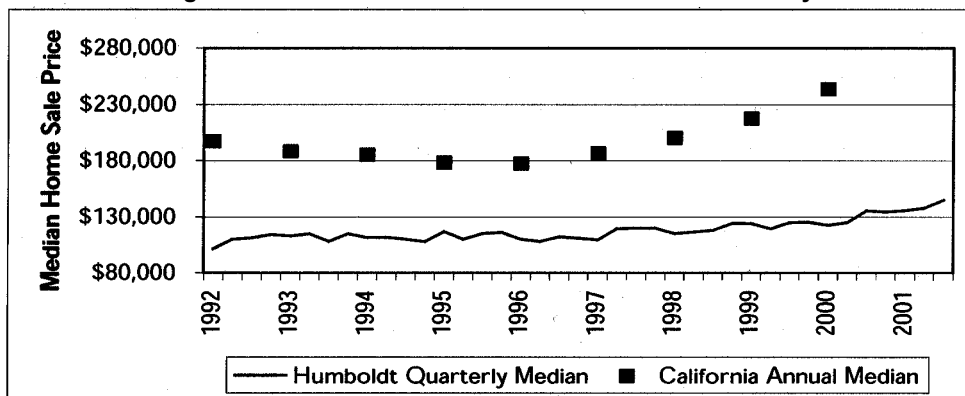
The 1979 Local Coastal Plans Housing Background Study identified that the concentration of population in Humboldt County occurred in the near-coastal communities between Trinidad and Fortuna. At that time, there was no identifiable shortage of housing units with the vacancy rate consistently at six percent. The majority of substandard housing conditions and low-income families located in the coastal areas were found predominantly in portions of McKinleyville, Manila, King Salmon and Fields Landing.

The 1998 Housing Element documented that although growth in housing stock kept pace with the increase in population, there was substantial erosion in the affordability of housing between 1980 and 1990. Growth in household income did not match the increase in the cost of housing and as a result, more people “overpaid” (paid more than 25% of their income) for housing in 1990 than in 1980. Very low income renters continued to pay more of their income for housing

than any other group; in 1990, 93% of their very low income households paid more than 25% of their income for housing up from 88% in 1980.

A continuation of this trend was found in the 2000 Census data and documented in the Draft 2003 Housing Element Draft. The percentage of low, low-income households paying more than 25% of their income on housing has actually risen to 97%. The affordability of housing has dropped significantly since 1990 as housing prices have risen over 52%. According to the Census 2000, the median house value in Humboldt County was \$133,500, which is up \$45,500 (52%) from the 1990 figure, a rather alarming increase of more than 5% each year. This compares to an average sales price of \$129,000 in 2000 according to information provided by the Association of Realtors. The Association of Realtors has documented that the average sales price rose from \$129,000 in 2000 to XXXXXX for 2003. The following figure shows the trends in housing prices tracked by the Association of Realtors over the past decade.

Figure 10 Median Home Sales Prices in Humboldt County 1992 - 2001



Sources: Humboldt County Association of Realtors, 2001(Humboldt data), California Statistical Abstract, 2001 (California data)

The trends for rental housing are a bit less dramatic. In 2000 the median monthly gross rent payment (including utilities) in Humboldt County was \$461, up from \$344 in 1990, an increase of 3.4% each year. The Statewide figure rose from \$561 to \$677 during this same time period.

## NOMADIC HOUSEHOLDS

Nomadic households belong to a generally unnoticed demographic segment of the population that resides throughout the year in various campgrounds, parks, and other sites both public and private (2003 Draft Housing Element). The nomadic population distinguishes itself from other forms of housing styles by staying on the move. Typically, the nomadic population will utilize recreational vehicle parks intended for short-term recreational uses, rather than mobilehome parks, permitted for residential uses.

The Coastal Zoning Ordinance distinguishes between Manufactured Home Parks (“mobilehome” parks) and Recreational Vehicle Parks (including campgrounds) based upon the tenure of the residency. Manufactured Home Parks are considered a Residential Use Type and include the lease of a lot for a manufactured home or recreational vehicle on a more permanent basis.

Recreational Vehicle Parks are considered a Commercial Recreational Use Type and provides for the lease of a site for recreational vehicles or tents for temporary occupancy.

Recreational Vehicle Parks are designated a “principal use” in the Commercial Recreation land use designation in the County’s Local Coastal Plans. The purpose of this designation is to “protect sites suitable for the development of commercial recreation facilities, and for visitor serving facilities appropriate to assure recreational opportunities for visitors to the area.” The intent is to provide recreational facilities, i.e. campgrounds; that will be used by “visitors”, not as a primary residence.

The majority of the Local Coastal Plans contain development policies for Recreational Vehicle Parks that allowed for a limited use of the park for permanent residential uses; however, the intent of the regulations were to provide for temporary recreational housing facilities. For example, the Trinidad Area Plan states:

*325B(4) Residential Use of Recreational Facilities*

*In an approved recreational vehicle park the residential occupancy of recreational sites by mobile homes shall be allowed up to 20%, but not to exceed a total of 10 such existing sites from June through August and up to 80%, but not to exceed 40 from September through May.*

Many of the spaces in Recreational Vehicle Parks located in the coastal zone are used as a primary residence by local residents, even if only on a temporary basis. A recent survey conducted by staff found that the RV parks in the North Coast and Trinidad Planning areas are full throughout the summer, with a large proportion of the use by local residents. The use in the winter months is primarily by local residents.

The demand for additional facilities for nomadic housing facilities was documented in both the 1993 and 1997 Housing Elements. The, 1993 Housing Element identified the need for at least 80 special occupancy park spaces to accommodate the needs of nomadic households in Humboldt County. The 1997 Housing Element assumed that with the 8.2% increase in overall population in unincorporated areas between 1990 and 2000, there would be a corresponding increase in the nomadic population, and approximately 89 special occupancy spaces would be needed.

The County inventoried properties for the 2003 Draft Housing Element that were being used as special occupancy parks, and identified a total of 37 sites in the unincorporated areas that could potentially accommodate the identified housing needs of the nomadic households. Further site specific study of these properties to assess the number of available sites is included as an implementation program of this Report.

## ***NEW DEVELOPMENT***

The Coastal Act strives to focus new development in areas of close proximity to existing development with available public services. The policies were designed to minimize the impacts of “leap-frog” development that results in the construction of new roads, utilities and other

services. Section 30250 of the Coastal Act requires that new residential, commercial, or industrial development be located near existing developed areas, and where it will not have a significant adverse impact on coastal resources. Additionally, Section 30250 establishes that land division outside existing developed areas can only be permitted when fifty percent of existing parcels have already been developed and that the new parcels are no smaller than the average size of existing parcels.

The County is currently in the process of updating the General Plan for the inland portions of the County. As a part of this process, the existing land uses, vacant lands and anticipated future land demand for all areas in the County were determined. Staff then identified constraints to development in order to calculate “unconstrained” developable lands (the constraints summarized in this chapter are associated primarily with constraints for which there is a policy and/or legal basis for restricting or prohibiting development). Following is a brief description of the findings for both the coastal and non-coastal areas, and how this information relates to the development needs within the Coastal Planning Areas (more detailed analysis of this data can be found in the General Plan Background Reports titled “*Building Communities Report*”, February 2001 and “*Natural Resources and Hazards Report*”, October, 2002).

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

Land in the Coastal Zone accounts for less than one-twentieth of the County’s total unincorporated acreage. Approximately 113,000 acres of the 2.3 million acres in Humboldt County are located in the Coastal Zone. Of the 103,000 acres located within the unincorporated Coastal Zone boundary, approximately 46% is in either public ownership or tribal lands.

Comparing the unincorporated Coastal Zone and the remainder of the unincorporated County, most land uses occur in similar proportions; the most significant difference is in the inventory of agriculture and timber lands. In the Coastal Zone, agriculture and grazing land account for 46.6 percent of total land use, while timber production covers 14.1 percent; in the remainder of the unincorporated County, the proportions are almost exactly switched (13.7 percent agriculture and 46.5 percent timber).

**Table 1: Existing Land Use in the Unincorporated Coastal Zone**

LAND USE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Rural Residential	4,491.7	4.4%
Single-Family Residential	1,165.8	1.1%
Multi-Family Residential	107.6	0.1%
Commercial	628.4	0.6%
Light Industrial	5.2	0.01%
Heavy Industrial	757.3	0.7%
Public and Semi Public	2,2024.7	2.0%
Open Space/Parks	27,263.9	26.5%
Agriculture and Grazing	48,008.5	46.6%
Timber Production	14,485.3	14.1%
Tribal Lands	62.0	0.1%
Vacant Lands (Urban)*	996.5	1.0%
Vacant Lands (Unclassified*)	2,926.2	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,923.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Vacant Urban lands refer to vacant lands with single-family, multi-family, commercial or industrial designations, while Vacant Unclassified Lands encompass all rural residential land and land without a use description in the Assessors records.

Source: Humboldt County GIS, 2002

Commercial and industrial uses occupy an area that is about 64.1 percent of the size of the total amount of land devoted to residential land use; commercial land use represents 46 percent of the total and industrial use accounts for 54 percent. Twenty-two percent of the total commercial land use in unincorporated areas of the county is within the Fortuna and McKinleyville planning areas, and another 18 percent is in the North Coast Coastal Zone Plan Area. Forty percent (753 acres) of the total industrial land use in unincorporated areas of the county is within the Humboldt Bay Coastal Zone Plan Area, which includes the company town Samoa.

## POPULATION

According to the 2000 Census, the total population in Humboldt County was 126,518. The distribution of people within the County is illustrated graphically in Figure ???. Humboldt County's population growth rate increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has since returned to a level more consistent with historic growth rates over the past 20 years. Between 1985 and 1990, the County grew by about 8,000 people (7.3 percent), with an average annual increase of 1.4 percent. The total unincorporated population of the county grew 18.6 percent between 1980 and 2000, rising from 56,688 to 67,242 people (Dyett and Bhatia, 2002).

The total population within the Coastal Zone Planning Areas according to the 2000 Census was 19,380 (this total includes the population data for the incorporated areas within the Coastal Zone). This accounts for approximately 15% of the total County population. As expected, the

largest population concentration is found in the Humboldt Bay Planning Area with just under 13,000 people (Table 2).

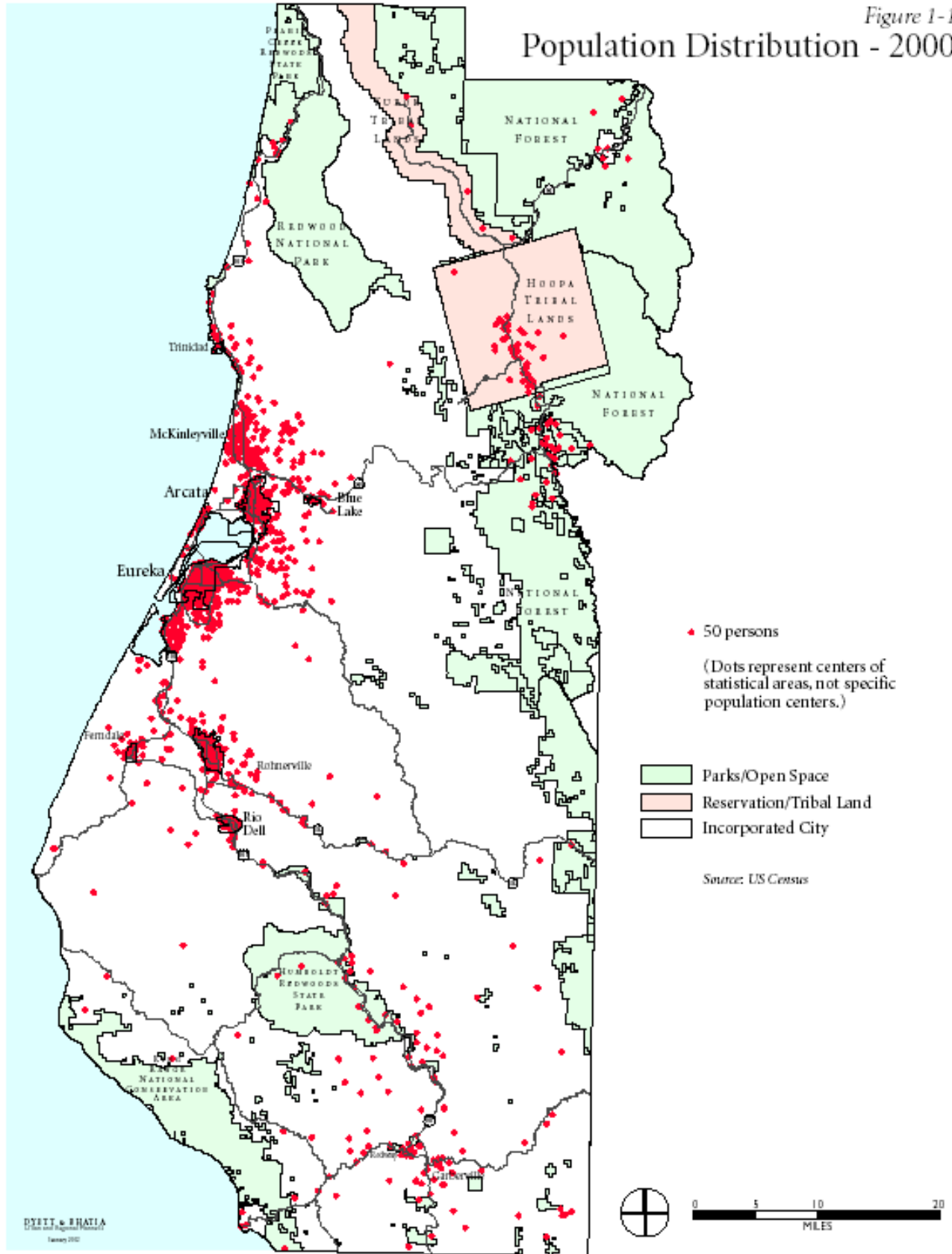
**Table 2: Population within Coastal Zone**

<b>Coastal Zone Planning Area</b>	<b>Populati on</b>
North Coast Planning Area	459
Trinidad Planning Area	1,416
McKinleyville Planning Area	2,327
Humboldt Bay Area Plan	12,647
Eel River Planning Area	2,154
South Coast Planning Area	377
<b>Total:</b>	<b>19,380</b>

Source: Humboldt County GIS, 2002, US Census, 2000

The primary growth areas of the county are found in the community of McKinleyville and the cities of Arcata and Fortuna, which accounted for 32.3 percent of the population in 2000, up from 29.3 percent in 1990. By comparison, according to the U.S. Census and DOF, Eureka's population dropped slightly in the 1990s, with growth occurring in the surrounding communities of Cutten, Bayview, and Humboldt Hill. McKinleyville has been the most consistently high-growth unincorporated community in Humboldt County for the past 20 years, averaging nearly three percent growth per year.

Figure 1-1  
Population Distribution - 2000



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## **EXISTING DEVELOPMENT**

Excluding residential land within the incorporated cities, just under 5,300 acres of land is developed for residential use within the 22 Community Planning Areas and six Coastal Zone Plan Areas, and another 150 acres are developed in the remainder of the unincorporated County. About 50.1 percent of the total is within the Eureka and McKinleyville planning areas. Nine out of ten acres of developed residential land is for single-family use; multi-family housing occupies only 610 acres.

Developed residential land in the unincorporated coastal zone areas accounts for 23.4% of all residential development in the County at just under 1,300 acres. Almost 90% (1097.5 acres) of this total is within the Humboldt Bay and McKinleyville coastal planning areas. The majority of these properties are developed with single-family residential, with multifamily residential developments occupying only 8.5% of the total. Multi-family residential development is located primarily in the Humboldt Bay and Eel River planning areas.

Forty percent of all commercial development in the unincorporated areas in the county occurs in the Coastal Zone. Almost half of this is located in the North Coast planning area with 289 acres (this planning area accounts for 18 percent of the total commercial land use in unincorporated areas of the county). The Trinidad and Humboldt Bay coastal planning areas follow this with both containing around 145 acres.

Industrial development occurs only in the Eel River and Humboldt Bay coastal planning areas. Forty percent (753 acres) of the total industrial land use in unincorporated areas of the county is within the Humboldt Bay Coastal Zone Plan Area, which includes the company town Samoa. Most of the unincorporated industrial land is designated for timber products processing only, as overlay zoning applied to many of these industrial areas prohibits other industrial uses.

## ***CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT***

The key constraints addressed in the analysis of vacant lands for the General Plan Update included geological hazards, unstable slopes, flood zones, sensitive species, wetlands, and agricultural soils, all of which are defined by one or more of the State open space categories. No timberlands occur on any of the vacant residential, commercial, or industrial sites within the Coastal Zone, and, therefore, timberlands are not further addressed in this chapter. Land designated as TPZ was excluded from the vacant land inventory in the Building Communities report and thus is not considered as available land for future development.

It is important to note that the presence of a constraint does not necessarily mean that the land is rendered unsuitable for development. The constraints mapping suggests one of three possible scenarios depending on the hazard, potential fragility of the resource, size/location of the vacant development site, and other factors:

- All development should be prohibited (e.g., floodways or steep slopes with severe instability);
- Development should be permitted only on part of the land and the remainder preserved as open space for resource conservation and/or resource production; or

- Development should be permitted subject to site plan review and imposition of conditions to protect against hazards

For example, there are many mitigation measures and site design practices available that could offset development impacts on sensitive biological resources and provide opportunities for utilization of at least a portion of the land for residential or commercial uses.

## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS**

The constraints analysis conducted county-wide identified a total of over 10,000 acres of residential land that may be available for future development. Of this total, approximately 4,325 acres are in the large lot rural residential category (parcel sizes greater than 5 acres), leaving about 6,675 acres for potential single-family, multi-family, and estate (one to five acre parcel size) rural residential development.

Approximately 7,220 acres of vacant residential land and 373 of vacant non-residential lands in CPAs or Coastal Zone Planning Areas are subject to resource and/or hazard constraints. However, the consultant identified approximately 2,117 acres of unconstrained vacant residential lands and 106 unconstrained non-residential lands within the coastal zone planning areas.

Acreages represent those lands with one or more identified resource or hazard constraints versus lands with no identified constraints. The severity of the constraint depends on the type of constraint and whether multiple constraints are found on a particular vacant site. Please note that site-specific investigations will be needed to determine the precise amount of available land. Also, analysis of constraints such as roadway access, public utilities availability, and water supply may affect the overall amount of available land.

The following sections identify and quantify specific constraints and opportunities for each Coastal Zone Planning Area for residential uses.

**VACANT RESIDENTIAL LANDS WITHIN THE COASTAL ZONE PLANNING AREAS**

**North Coast.** Most of the land designated for residential or commercial development in the CPZA is not significantly affected by constraints. Steep or unstable slopes are a constraint on rural residential land in the southern portion of the CPZA. 100-year flood zones and agricultural soils are constraints, primarily in the area near the town of Orick.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>North Coast:</b>		
Rural Residential	62.2	699.4
Single-Family Residential	0	1.3
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		<b>700.7</b>

**Trinidad.** The primary constraint in the CPZA is agricultural soils although steep or unstable slopes and Alquist-Priolo zone is a significant constraint around the City of Trinidad. Agricultural soils affect 152 of the 526 acres of rural residential land, mostly in the northern section of the CPZA.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>Trinidad:</b>		
Rural Residential	200.2	547.4
Single-Family Residential	0.8	2.0
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		<b>549.4</b>

**McKinleyville.** The primary constraints in the CPZA are Alquist-Priolo zone and agricultural soils. Agricultural soils are present mostly along the eastern edge of the CPZA, affecting all of the vacant commercial and industrial land, and most of the vacant single-family residential land. Some rural residential land which may be available for development is scattered along Highway 101 in the southern portion of the CPZA.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>McKinleyville:</b>		
Rural Residential	55.6	27.1
Single-Family Residential	21.6	0.1
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		<b>27.2</b>

**Humboldt Bay.** The most significant constraint, in terms of area, is wetlands which cover much of the northern, eastern, and southern section of the CPZA. Alquist-Priolo zone, 100- year flood zone, and agricultural soils are the other primary constraints in the area, and are present throughout the CPZA. Vacant land which may be available for development in rural-residential, single-family residential, and industrial designations are scattered throughout the CZPA.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>Humboldt Bay:</b>		
Rural Residential	256.9	273.3
Single-Family Residential	24.2	81.5
Multi-Family Residential	5.5	0.0
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		

**Eel River.** Most of the vacant residential land in the CPZA is constrained, primarily by 100-year flood zone, agricultural soils, and wetlands, mostly along the Eel River. Most of the vacant single and multi-family residential land is constrained but approximately 46 of the 223 acres of vacant rural residential land may be available for development.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>Eel River:</b>		
Rural Residential	176.8	46.0
Single-Family Residential	23.8	0.0
Multi-Family Residential	1.5	0.2
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		

**South Coast.** Much of the land potentially available for higher density or intensity development is in the area around Shelter Cove. Steep and unstable slopes, and Alquist-Priolo zones are the primary constraint in this area. Rural residential land, potentially available for development is located outside the Shelter Cove area.

<i>Coastal Zone Planning Area</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Constrained</i>	<i>Hazards/Resources: Not Constrained</i>
<b>South Coast:</b>		
Rural Residential	2.4	229.9
Single-Family Residential	145.8	208.8
<b>Total Potentially Available Acres</b>		<b>438.6</b>

## **RESIDENTIAL AND NON RESIDENTIAL LAND DEMAND**

The total projected countywide residential land demand for Year 2025 is 3,120 acres, as calculated in the *Building Communities Report* (Dyett and Bhatia, 2002). This total includes a demand of 604 acres in areas served by public sewers and 2,516 acres in areas not served by public sewers. The total projected countywide non-residential land demand is 275 acres.

The consultant projected that at the current rate of growth, the land demand in the coastal zone planning areas for Year 2025 would be approximately 586 acres. Of this total, 250 acres would be sewerred and 337 acres would be located outside sewerred areas. Based upon the constraints analysis presented in the *Buildings Communities Report* (and referenced throughout the chapter), vacant residential land currently exceeds the anticipated demand by Year 2025 within the coastal zone.

The consultant projected that at the current rate of growth, the land demand for non-residential development in the coastal zone planning areas for Year 2025 would be approximately 27 acres. Based upon the constraints analysis presented in the *Buildings Communities Report* (and referenced throughout the chapter), vacant non-residential land currently exceeds the anticipated demand by Year 2025 within the coastal zone.

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## **Relevant Coastal Act Policies: Housing**

- **Section 30213 Public works facilities**
- **Section 30250 Location; existing developed area**
- **Section 30116(f) Sensitive Coastal areas: low income housing**

## **Summary of Housing and Development Issues**

### **HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES: GENERAL**

1. Review 1998 Housing Element policy recommendations and incorporate into the LCP Amendments.
2. Review 2003 Draft Housing Element identified housing needs and proposed ordinance revisions and incorporate into the LCP Amendments.
3. Review findings for vacant lands survey for LCP areas and revise accordingly.
4. Review nomadic housing issues and revise LCP's accordingly.

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## NEXT STEPS....

The purpose of the Issue Identification Report is to outline needed revisions to the Local Coastal Plans (LCP). These proposed revisions include both minor updating of baseline information contained in the plans and revisions that may drastically alter existing plan policies.

After release of the report, public workshops will be conducted to solicit comments on the report. Staff will review these comments and prepare a revised Issue Identification report. This Report will guide research and preparation of the draft LCP amendments. A Hearing Draft of the LCP amendments will then be circulated for public review. Public hearings will be conducted before the Humboldt County Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and the California Coastal Commission, with final review authority resting with the state Coastal Commission.



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## APPENDIX A

### Table 1<sup>1</sup>

<b>Federal and State Listed Species in Humboldt County</b>		
<i>Scientific Name</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
<i>Astragalus agnicidus</i>	Humboldt Milk-Vetch	5
<i>Bensoniella oregona</i>	Bensoniella	5
<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>	Marbled Murrelet	-
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>	Western Snowy Plover	6
<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Willow Flycatcher	1
<i>Erysimum menziesii ssp eurekaense</i>	Humboldt Bay Wallflower	6
<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	Tidewater Goby	6
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	American Peregrine Falcon	2
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	5
<i>Layia carnosa</i>	Beach Layia	10
<i>Lilium occidentale</i>	Western Lily	9
<i>Oncorhynchus clarki clarki</i>	Coast Cutthroat Trout	32
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i>	Coho Salmon-Central CA ESU	3
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	Summer-Run Steelhead Trout	6
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	Northern California Steelhead Trout	-
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha spring-run</i>	Spring-Run Chinook Salmon	1
<i>Rallus longirostris obsoletus</i>	California Clapper Rail	1
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Bank Swallow	1
<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>	Northern Spotted Owl	318
<i>Thlaspi californicum</i>	Kneeland Prairie Pennycress	1

<sup>1</sup> Table 1 shows a complete list of federal and state listed species for the County. As summarized in Table 2, there are six federally listed endangered species, seven federally listed threatened species, and two federal candidate species in Humboldt County.

TABLE 2

<b>Summary of Special Status Species in Unincorporated Humboldt County <sup>2</sup></b>	
<i>Status</i>	<i>Number of Species</i>
Federal Endangered	6
Federal Threatened	7
Federal Candidate	2
State Endangered	10
State Threatened	2
State Rare <sup>1</sup>	1
DFG Species of Special Concern <sup>2</sup>	24
CNPS* Rare or Endangered in CA and elsewhere	25
CNPS* Rare or Endangered solely in CA	30

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<sup>2</sup> The marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) and the Northern California steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) are not included in the CNDDB, therefore occurrences and watershed information is not available through GIS. Both are federally listed as threatened; the marbled murrelet is also listed as endangered by the State.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Table 3**  
**COASTAL ZONE CSD'S**  
**Water and Sewer Services**

LCP AREA	CSD	SERVICES	MSE <sup>1</sup>	MAP <sup>2</sup>
<b>NCAP:</b>	Orick CSD	Water only	✓	✓
	Big Lagoon Park	Water only (Corp and LP)	✓	✓
	Big Lagoon Estates	Private –water only		
<b>TAP:</b>	City of Trinidad	Water only	✓	✓
	Westhaven CSD	Water only	✓	✓
<b>MKAP:</b>	McKinleyville CSD	Water/sewer	✓	✓
	Patrick Creek CSD	Water only (McK CSD)	✓	✓
<b>HBAP:</b>	Humboldt CSD	Water/sewer <sup>3</sup> – Eureka, King Salmon, Fields Landing	✓	✓
	City of Arcata	Water/sewer	✓	✓
	Manila CSD	Water/sewer	✓	✓
	City of Eureka	Water/sewer	EIR	✓
	HBMWD	Water only (services seven municipalities <sup>4</sup> )	✓	
<b>ERAP:</b>	Loleta CSD	Water/sewer	✓	✓
	City of Fortuna	Water/sewer	✓	✓
	City of Ferndale	Water <sup>5</sup> /sewer	✓	✓
	Riverside CSD	Water only	✓	✓
<b>SCAP:</b>	Shelter Cove RID#1	Water/sewer	✓	✓

<sup>1</sup> Master Service Element has been prepared for the district

<sup>2</sup> The Service District has been mapped by the County's GIS program

<sup>3</sup> The City of Eureka and the HCSD water services are interconnected at various locations allowing for transfer of services within each other's district. Service interdependence extends to sewer disposal as well.

<sup>4</sup> Cities of Eureka, Arcata, Blue Lake and Humboldt CSD, McKinleyville CSD, Fieldbrook CSD and Manila CSD

<sup>5</sup> The City of Ferndale and Arlynda Corners receives water from Del Oro Water Company