

Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks
Access Management Master Plan

Humboldt County Department of Public Works

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks are two of the most popular destinations within the Humboldt County park system. Situated along the Pacific Ocean coast between McKinleyville and Trinidad, the parks make up more than half of the coastal beach and dunes that stretch between the mouth of the Mad River and the bluffs north of Little River. Both parks are rich in scenic beauty and natural resources and provide easy access for recreational activities along the coast.

The basic goals of the County Parks system, as defined in Section 4400 of the Humboldt County General Plan, are “to provide and adequately maintain park and recreation opportunities which are highly accessible and reflective of public needs; to protect park resources from incompatible uses; and to plan park development in such a manner as to minimize environmental impacts.” The Parks Division of the Department of Public Works is responsible for operating and maintaining the County Parks system, including Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks, for the citizens of Humboldt County and visitors. The mission of the Parks Division is to provide high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities, natural and cultural resource protection, and excellent service to the public.

Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks provide access to large areas of flat, open space along the beach. The parks are equipped with basic facilities including parking areas, restrooms, and trash receptacles, and Clam Beach County Park also contains a small campground. The areas continue to be used for traditional activities by Wiyot and Yurok people, and are used for a wide variety of recreational activities by the general public including beachcombing, clamming, fishing, surfing, hiking, picnicking, dog walking, horse riding, rock climbing, wildlife viewing and exploration, and camping. Use of the beaches has grown considerably, to the point of exceeding the carrying capacity of existing facilities and overwhelming the resources of the Parks Division for managing the parks effectively. At the same time, public awareness of potential conflicts between different types of uses and potential impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources at the beaches has also grown.

Coexisting recreational and natural attributes are, in fact, what make the beaches both popular destinations and challenging management assignments. Simultaneously providing recreational activities and protecting natural and cultural resources requires careful, deliberate management to balance competing priorities. Management action is required when different recreational activities

lead to conflicts between visitors. In addition, although the majority of beach visitors engage in permitted activities, some visitors engage in prohibited activities, which pose additional management and law enforcement challenges.

Faced with increasing recreational and access demands and the need to ensure public safety and protect sensitive resources, the Humboldt County Department of Public Works received funding from the State Coastal Conservancy to prepare a planning document. This document was developed by the Department of Public Works with assistance from PlanWest Partners, Humboldt State University, and the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program.

1.2 PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks Access Management Master Plan (the Master Plan) is to evaluate specific options for enhancing public access, use, and enjoyment of the parks while maintaining public safety, minimizing user conflicts, and protecting sensitive resources. The Master Plan establishes a long-term framework for managing the parks by defining key issues, compiling relevant data and information, and analyzing the feasibility of alternatives. The Master Plan focuses on (1) potential changes to management policies and procedures, and (2) concepts for construction or upgrade of park facilities. The Master Plan will assist the County in prioritizing its activities and using its limited funds effectively, and is expected to serve as a guide for the County's management of the parks for ten years.

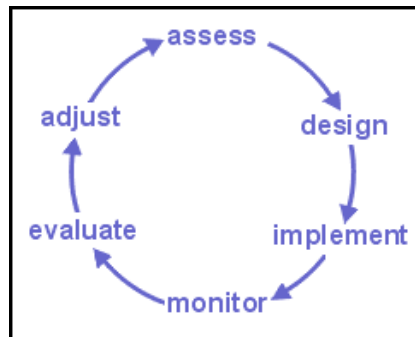
The County intends for the Master Plan to be an effective tool that will result in real benefits to the public and enhanced protection for park resources. However, it's important to note that the development of the Master Plan is simply the first step in the overall process of managing the parks. The Master Plan will be used by the County to guide future management actions and the development of more detailed facility development plans over the ten-year planning period. The Master Plan itself does not make binding decisions, nor does it create legal obligations or entitlements.

Implementation of the Master Plan will occur in various phases by direction of the County Board of Supervisors after the Master Plan is approved by the Board. The Master Plan is fundamentally a guidance document; therefore, the Board has the ability to modify the elements of the Master Plan, and the Board is free to consider alternatives which are not identified in the Master Plan. Preliminary plans for implementing elements of the Master Plan are discussed in Chapter 5.

In order to develop a viable and dynamic document, the Master Plan's structure is designed to enable an adaptive management approach whereby the County can

use the results of monitoring and assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing management practices and adapt the practices accordingly. Adaptive management can be characterized as a systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs and responding to changing conditions:

The Adaptive Management Model



Adaptive management follows a cycle of six key stages:

- Assess the conditions of the planning area and the affected resources.
- Design policies to achieve specific goals and objectives.
- Implement policies through management practices.
- Monitor key response indicators.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the management practices in terms of the original goals and objectives.
- Adjust the practices and/or policies based on the knowledge gained from carrying out the management practices.

This Master Plan serves as the assessment and design steps of the adaptive management cycle.

1.2.1 Management Practices

The Master Plan was developed to allow a phased approach for implementation of management practices. Some issues are presented with tiered options, while other issues are presented with non-tiered options. Tiered options include a series of alternatives with incremental increases in scope, cost, and level of use restriction. Tiered options are designed so that use restrictions can be decreased or increased

based on changing conditions, such as the frequency of user conflicts or the level of impacts to natural and cultural resources. Non-tiered options include a list of alternatives which are not exclusive and can be implemented separately or together.

1.2.2 *Facilities*

The Master Plan discusses aspects of the facilities at the parks which affect the visitor's experience and present challenges for effective management. The objectives for upgrading facilities include:

- Reducing conflicts by separating different types of users and reducing congestion.
- Improving the functionality of facilities.
- Facilitating operations and maintenance.
- Encouraging appropriate use and compliance with park regulations.

Based on the public input received during the planning process, some people opposed facility changes because they believe such changes would attract more visitors and lead to more congestion, or would otherwise have a negative impact on special qualities of the parks such as open space, unimpeded views, or natural resources. Some people expressed the view that if facility upgrades are necessary, there should be no increase in capacity. Other people maintained that the facilities should be expanded to accommodate projected future increases in population growth and park usage. There was a general consensus that facilities should not be intrusive to the natural setting of the park.

1.3 *SCOPE OF WORK AND PLAN ORGANIZATION*

The scope of work for development of the Master Plan included the following:

- Perform a comprehensive assessment to obtain detailed information on current and future public uses and the conditions that lead to user conflicts.
- Collect detailed information on natural, cultural, and historic resources in and around Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks.
- Obtain public input by holding general public meetings and specific meetings with stakeholder groups.

- Identify alternatives for facility improvements and management policies and programs to minimize user conflicts and impacts to park resources.
- Identify opportunities to improve park access and recreational opportunities.
- Identify protection needs for habitat enhancement to support threatened and endangered species.
- Identify opportunities to pursue cooperative management agreements, where practical and beneficial, with State agencies, land trusts, and/or private owners.

Chapter 1 presents the purpose and scope of the Master Plan and provides background information. Chapter 2 presents the Master Plan content for issues that are specific to Clam Beach County Park, and Chapter 3 presents the Master Plan content for issues that are specific to Moonstone Beach County Park. Chapter 4 presents the Master Plan content for three issues (law enforcement, signage, outreach) that are common to both parks. Chapter 5 discusses Master Plan implementation and includes a summary of the implementation steps, estimated costs, and anticipated timeframe for the preferred options.

1.4 AREA DESCRIPTION

Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks are located along the northern California coastline north of Humboldt Bay. The parks are situated within a larger physiographic area which includes an approximately 6.5-mile long stretch of coastline bordered by Moonstone Beach on the north and the mouth of the Mad River to the south (in the vicinity of Hiller Road) and spanning between the Pacific Ocean and Highway 101. This area contains interrelated natural resources and provides access points by which the public can access various different properties along the coast. A map showing the general area is provided in Figure 1. Maps showing the specific park features are provided in Figures 2 through 6.

The management aspects of this Master Plan apply specifically to Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks where Humboldt County has full management authority and responsibility. However, properties within the larger area between Moonstone Beach and the mouth of the Mad River are owned by State agencies, land trusts, and private owners, who face similar needs and issues, and the management of each parcel has the potential to affect the surrounding properties. Where applicable, the information and data collection activities were expanded to cover a larger geographic area in order to obtain information that may be useful for developing cooperative management agreements with owners

and managers of land near Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. A list of the owners of nearby properties is provided on Table 1.

Table 1 – Properties in the Vicinity of the Plan Area

LAND	OWNERSHIP	MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY
Clam Beach Area:		
Clam Beach County Park	County	Department of Public Works, Parks Division; County Sheriff (enforcement responsibility)
Southern Portion of Clam Beach Drive (frontage road)	County	Department of Public Works, Road Division
Northern Portion of Clam Beach Drive (frontage road)	State	California Department of Parks and Recreation
Hammond Trail	County	Department of Public Works, Parks Division
Clam Beach coastline: tide and submerged lands extending from the shoreline out to three miles offshore	State	State Lands Commission
Mad River: beds of California’s naturally navigable rivers, lakes and streams	State	State Lands Commission
Highway 101 and Scenic Vista Point	State	California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans), District 1
Fire Jurisdiction	State	California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)
Jurisdiction for wildland fires from Strawberry Creek to the south	Municipal	Arcata Volunteer Fire Department
Parcel north & adjacent to Scenic Vista Point	Private	Mathews Trust
Two parcels between Clam Beach Drive and Highway 101	Private	Private Owner (Stanson)
Parcels adjacent to southern Park boundary	Private	McKinleyville Land Trust
Hiller Park	Municipal	McKinleyville Community Services District
Moonstone Beach Area:		
Moonstone Beach County Park	County	Department of Public Works, Parks Division; County Sheriff (enforcement responsibility)
Moonstone Beach Road	County	Department of Public Works, Road Division
Parking area and beach access adjacent to Beach House	Private	Humboldt North Coast Land Trust and Sam Merryman
Parcel adjacent south of parking area	Private	Private Owner (Stanson)
Adjacent residential parcels (east)	Private	Various homeowners
Fire Jurisdiction	State	California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)
Little River State Beach	State	California Department of Parks and Recreation
Little River Beach coastline: tide and submerged lands extending from the shoreline out to three miles offshore	State	State Lands Commission
Little River: beds of California’s naturally navigable rivers, lakes and streams	State	State Lands Commission

Little River State Beach

Little River State Beach is located between Moonstone Beach County Park and Clam Beach County Park. Little River State Beach can be accessed from Highway 101 via the Little River State Beach exit or the Crannel overpass. The State Beach can also be accessed from northbound Highway 101 by exiting at the Clam Beach exit and traveling north on Clam Beach Drive.

Based on a land survey performed in February 2006, the northern portion (approximately 20%) of the North Lot for Clam Beach County Park is located within Little River State Beach. The North Lot provides access to unofficial use trails which pass through the dunes to the beach and shoreline. An informal parking area is also present at the northern end of Clam Beach Drive, just off the Highway 101 overpass. This paved parking area can accommodate approximately three to five vehicles.

Little River State Beach is open for day-use only, and there is no use fee. Regulations are posted along Clam Beach Drive and at the North Lot where the State Beach abuts County Park property. Horses, vehicles, and dogs are not allowed within the State Beach. Little River State Beach is patrolled by State Park rangers.

Nearby Access Points

Scenic Vista Point consists of a parking lot and viewing area adjacent to Highway 101 at the top of a bluff overlooking the southern portion of Clam Beach. Scenic Vista Point is managed by California Department of Transportation. This location does not provide access to the beach due to the steep slope of the bluff.

Letz Avenue provides access to the Hammond Trail, which leads to Clam Beach County Park. The Letz Avenue trailhead includes a wooden sign indicating permitted activities (Hike/Horse/Bike, No Vehicles) on the trail. An informational kiosk displays a map of the nearby segment of the Hammond Trail and lists the organizations involved in the development of the trails.

Murray Road provides coastal access at the southern end of Clam Beach County Park. The trailhead is equipped with a picnic area, kiosk, doggy pot, garbage receptacle, and a small, paved parking lot. A welcome sign announces access to the beach and Hammond Trail.

Hiller Road provides beach access at Hiller Park, which is located south of Clam Beach County Park. Hiller Park is managed by the McKinleyville Community Services District.

1.5 RESOURCES

1.5.1 Physical Characteristics

Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks are part of a dynamic coastal environment which includes beach waveslope and coastal sand dunes. The waveslope is defined in the county park ordinance as “the area of the beach that shows evidence of having been washed by waves during the last tidal cycle.” Evidence for the waveslope area includes wet sand, foam, debris washed up from the surf, and lack (or scarcity) of vegetation. The width of the waveslope (the distance between the edge of the surf and the beginning of the dunes) can be up to 600 feet depending on the season and tidal cycle. The upper end of the waveslope is called the beach strand.

Dunes are mounds and ridges of accumulated sand which form landward from the beach and above the mean high tide line. Within the planning area, the dune system typically consists of two or three sets of parallel dunes and includes a variety of formations depending on the interaction of sand, wind, and vegetation. The foredune is the first ridge of sand parallel to the shore and is typically the most recently formed. Older, more stabilized dune ridges can be found inland from the foredune. Dune systems may include deflation plains, which develop at locations where the wind erodes the sand down to near the level of the summer water table. Dune hollows are formed when standing water is present within the deflation plain for a period long enough to support the establishment of vegetation.

Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks include several waterways which flow down from the terrace bluffs located outside the parks and drain into the Pacific Ocean. Widow White Creek passes through the southern portion of Clam Beach County Park near the Letz Avenue trailhead. Patrick Creek and Strawberry Creek pass through the middle portion of Clam Beach County Park near the South Lot. Patrick Creek feeds into Strawberry Creek, which discharges into the ocean. Little River passes through Little River State Beach before flowing through Moonstone Beach County Park and discharging to the ocean. The two County parks also contain several intermittent streams which, depending on the time of year and recent precipitation amounts, may reach the ocean or infiltrate into the sand before reaching the ocean.

1.5.2 Biological Resources

Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks and the surrounding areas provide a diverse range of habitat types including sand flats, beach strand, foredune, dune mat, riparian areas, dune hollows, and coastal scrub. Of special importance during preparation of the Master Plan was information pertaining to sensitive

plant and wildlife species which have special status, and their associated habitats. These species include plants and animals that are legally protected under state or federal law, or are considered rare or endangered by the scientific community.

The seashore habitats of Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach support a variety of birds including shorebirds, gulls, raptors, wading birds, and songbirds. Features that are attractive to birds include the mouths of the freshwater creeks and rivers flowing into the ocean; the open beach areas which provide abundant foraging opportunities; and the dune vegetation for food and cover. The area supports breeding birds as well as transient birds who stop during migration. In addition, the area supports a variety of mammals (e.g., harbor seals, sea lions, black-tailed jackrabbit, brush rabbit, gray fox, Western harvest mice), amphibians, and invertebrates.

Clam Beach County Park is one of three modern breeding sites in Humboldt County for the Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover (the western snowy plover is not known to nest at Moonstone Beach County Park). The western snowy plover was listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1993 when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. Portions of Clam Beach have been designated as critical habitat for the western snowy plover, which means that these areas contains features which are considered essential for the survival and recovery of the species. These features are discussed further in Section 2.2.5.

Many of the dune areas that once consisted of native dunegrass community types have become dominated by European beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*), a non-native invasive species. Other prominent plant species include the non-native Yellow bush lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*) and the native Coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Three sensitive plant species – Pink sand-verbena (*Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora*), Humboldt Bay owl's clover (*Castilleja ambigua* ssp. *humboldtiensis*), and Lyngbye's sedge (*Carex lyngbyei*) – were positively identified and one additional sensitive plant species – beach pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*) – was tentatively identified during botanical surveys conducted within the area in the spring and summer of 2003.

1.5.3 Cultural and Historical Resources

Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks and the surrounding areas contain recorded and unrecorded cultural resources of the Yurok and Wiyot tribes. Little River, at Moonstone Beach, is associated with the southern boundary of the Yurok ancestral lands and the northern boundary of the Wiyot ancestral lands. Several large and small villages were located in the area and

provided access to the abundant resources for food, medicine, basketry, and tool-making as well as access to trade and social networks.

1.6 ASSOCIATED PLANNING EFFORTS

Preparation of the Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks Access Management Master Plan builds upon previous planning efforts made by Humboldt County departments and subsequent actions by the Board of Supervisors.

The Humboldt Beach and Dunes Management Plan was developed by the Humboldt County Planning and Building Department (currently the Community Development Services Department) and a citizen's advisory committee between 1989 and 1992. This plan was developed for the 19-mile stretch of beach and dune areas extending from the mouth of the Mad River to Table Bluff County Park, including the North and South Spits of Humboldt Bay. This area includes the southern portion of Clam Beach County Park, up to the rock wall at the base of Vista Point. The preferred alternative within the Beach and Dunes Management Plan was adopted by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in August 1993, and the Local Coastal Program was subsequently amended to include the plan. The Humboldt Beach and Dunes Cooperative Resource Management Plan (CRMP) was developed by Mad River Biologists for the Humboldt County Planning Division in May 2002 to support the implementation of the Beach and Dunes Management Plan.

Beginning in November 2000, the County Public Works Department initiated public meetings focusing on management of County beaches from Moonstone Beach County Park to Centerville Beach County Park. This planning effort was partially in response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's request that the County consider the potential impacts of activities at County beaches on the federally listed Western snowy plover (see Section 2.2.5). During this planning process, issues discussed included western snowy plover nesting requirements, public access, recreation, wood gathering, expansion of the 1995 Humboldt Beach and Dunes Management Plan, and enforcement actions by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office. As a result of these planning efforts the County Board of Supervisors adopted new park ordinances in March 2002. Resolutions modifying the regulations were adopted in May 2003. A copy of the current ordinances is included in Appendix A.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

The work elements for preparation of the Master Plan included the following:

- Biological survey
- Cultural and historical resources reports
- Visitor use study
- Public outreach and consideration of public comments
- Coordination and consultation with agencies and stakeholder organizations

1.7.1 *Biological Survey*

A biological survey was performed by Mad River Biologists under subcontract to Planwest Partners in 2003 to describe the various habitat types, wildlife resources, sensitive plant species, natural processes, and general ecological characteristics of the area. The complete biological resources report is provided in Appendix B.

1.7.2 *Cultural and Historical Resources*

Documentation of cultural and historical resources was obtained from Roscoe & Associates under subcontract to Planwest Partners, and the Cultural Resources Division of the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program. Copies of both documents are provided in Appendix C.

1.7.3 *Visitor Use*

Visitor Use Study

A visitor use study was performed by Dr. Steven Martin, Professor of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences at Humboldt State University. The objective of the visitor use survey was to measure the type and frequency of beach visitors' activities. The survey also examined user characteristics such as size of group, origin of visitor(s), length and frequency of visits, and mode of transportation. The results of the 2003 Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach Visitor Study are provided in Appendix D.

Surveys were distributed in the spring and summer of 2003 at Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. Survey-takers asked people to participate in the survey at the end of their visits as they were leaving the beach. Beach visitors were asked for their input on facilities, regulations, and other topics.

Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks host a wide array of recreational activities (Table 2). While the majority of park visitors are from the local area, Clam Beach provides the first sighting of open ocean and beach for people

traveling north on Highway 101 from San Francisco and serves as a destination for people passing through the area. Beach use increases considerably during the months of July, August, and September, including overnight camping use at Clam Beach County Park.

Table 2 – Recreation Activities at Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks

Activity	Clam Beach	Moonstone Beach
Beachcombing	●	●
Beach vehicle driving	●	
Birding and wildlife viewing	●	●
Camping	●	
Campfires	●	
Clamming	●	●
Dog walking	●	●
Fishing	●	●
Horseback riding	●	●
Kayaking	●	●
Kite flying	●	●
Photography	●	●
Picnicking	●	●
Relaxing	●	●
Rock climbing		●
Sand play	●	●
Sightseeing	●	●
Sunbathing	●	●
Surfing and surfboarding	●	●
Swimming and wading	●	●
Walking and jogging	●	●
Wood collecting	●	

Recreational Activities

Recreational activities include the following:

Equestrian Uses

The 2003 visitor use survey identified 4% of the users as equestrians who ride their horses on the beach. Local riders bring their horses to the beach as frequently as daily. The average frequency is two to three times a week for about two hours at a time. Equestrians typically access the beach by parking at Clam Beach County Park and riding north to Little River or south to Mad River, depending on wind conditions. Some equestrians ride their horses down to the beach from Dow's Prairie or McKinleyville via Central Avenue, and some ride with horse buggies.

Most horse activity consists of riding on the waveslope, but some equestrians ride in the dunes to acclimate the horses to the beach environment and for exercise. Water crossings at Patrick and Strawberry Creeks are popular training activities, to acclimate the horses to water. Other training activities including lounging (running horses in circles with a rope) and groundwork. Some people also bring their dogs to the beach along with their horses. Members of the local equestrian community regularly monitor the parking areas to keep them clear of horse waste.

Walking with Dogs

Many visitors bring dogs to the beach to provide them an opportunity to run in the open space and swim in the water. Members of the California Rescue Dog Association use the dune area of Clam Beach to train rescue dogs. 35% of the 2003 visitor use study respondents reported that they bring dogs to the beach.

Fishing

Recreational and commercial fishing is practiced throughout the year. The most common fish caught are redbait surfperch, surf smelt, and night smelt. Popular fishing activities include hook and line fishing for redbait surfperch and dip net fishing for surf smelt and night smelt. Bait, including worms and sand crabs, is often collected directly at the beach. Fishing for redbait surfperch is reportedly better at the south end of Clam Beach where the beach is steeper.

Fishing requires a license from California Department of Fish and Game. The number of commercial licenses issued in any given year is limited, however the number of fish that can be caught is unlimited. A sport (recreational) fishing license limits the number of fishing poles used at one time, as well as limiting the number of fish that can be kept.

Clamming

Clam and Moonstone Beaches are popular locations for harvesting of Pacific razor clams, which are abundant on sandy beaches exposed to heavy surf. Pacific razor clams (*Siliqua patula*) have a 3- to 6½-inch long shell with sharp edges and live in the sand on open beaches, especially in intertidal areas (areas exposed at low tides). Clam populations dropped significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, primarily due to a disease brought on by El Niño ocean conditions, but have recently rebounded. This rebound has prompting a resurgence in clamming activities.

Recreational clamming is most productive (and most popular) at low tide because most clams live near the low tide line, although some clammers are successful even during high tides. Clams move in response to changes in the beach and intertidal zone, and many clammers perform reconnaissance up to one day before the low tide to scout out the most promising clam beds. Clammers typically get into position one to two hours before low tide. Clams are dug up by hand with a shovel or spade. This requires speed and good technique as Pacific razor clams can dig into the sand and move downward very rapidly.

Clamming is regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game, with a 20 clam per day limit, and no size limit. Clamming is allowed from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Alternating portions of Clam Beach are closed each year to allow recovery of clam populations. During even years, the beach south of Strawberry Creek to Mad River is open for clamming. During odd years, the beach north of Strawberry Creek to Little River State Beach is open for clamming. Historically, clam populations are greater north of Strawberry Creek, so it is expected that clamming activity will be greater during odd years. Clamming on Moonstone Beach is allowed every year.

Wildlife Viewing and Exploration

Clam and Moonstone Beaches provide opportunities to explore the seashore environment, including the sandy beach, dunes, freshwater tributaries, boulders and rock outcrops, and bluffs. Many visitors enjoy viewing wildlife and looking for shells and driftwood. At Moonstone Beach, water collects within depressions of the boulders and rocks to create tide pools which contain a variety of sea organisms. Caves can be found along the bluffs near the northern side of Moonstone Beach, and runoff of water from the steep bluffs creates small, seasonal waterfalls.

Interpretive activities at Clam Beach include a docent program led by Friends of the Dunes, a local nonprofit organization. The docent program includes evening

Sunset Walks and periodic roves to talk with beach users about plants, wildlife, beach ecology, and appropriate behavior and regulations.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is a popular activity in Moonstone Beach County Park and along the beach immediately surrounding the park boundaries. According to the Bigfoot Country Climber's Association, rock climbing at Moonstone Beach constitutes approximately 90% of the climbing activity in Humboldt County. They estimate that approximately 300 people rock climb on a regular basis in Humboldt County, and approximately 60 people regularly climb twice or more per week. Moonstone Beach is popular with climbers because of its location on the beach and close proximity to the more populated areas, while other known climbing locations in the County require longer drives inland. Moonstone Beach is also a popular location to teach climbing techniques.

The most common climbing technique used at Moonstone Beach is top roping, which consists of attaching climbing rope to a permanently fixed anchor at or near the top of the rock as protection from falling. The anchor is usually a permanently fixed bolt of steel, stainless steel, or titanium. The permanency of the bolt is determined by the construction material of the bolt and its rate of corrosion in the coastal climate.

Lead climbing is a second climbing technique used at Moonstone Beach. Lead climbing is performed by placing temporary protection (such as spring loaded camming devices) along the route. Once the climb is completed, the temporary protection hardware is removed from the rock.

Bouldering is a third climbing technique used at Moonstone Beach. Bouldering consists of climbing the lower portion of a rock without the use of rope and hardware protection. A foam crash pad is often placed at the base of the rock to break falls. In all three techniques, chalk is used on a climber's hands to increase friction and improve grip.

Rock climbing at Moonstone Beach occurs primarily on four rocks locally known as Flat Top Rock, Karen Rock, South Rock, and Pyramid Rock. All four rocks contain bolts which are used for top roping. The procedure for replacing a bolt is to drill a five-inch deep hole and drive in a stainless steel expansion bolt or titanium bolt. A glue cartridge is used during titanium bolt placement to further secure it.

Clam Beach County Park does not have rock features amenable to rock climbing.

Surfing

Moonstone Beach is a popular surfing destination and is known as a good spot for beginners. Kayakers use Moonstone Beach for surf kayaking, and some people paddle canoes or kayaks in the flat tidewaters of Little River.

Campfires

Visitors to Clam Beach County Park have campfires in formal fire rings in the campground and near the parking lots, and non-designated locations on the waveslope. Nighttime bonfires on the beach have historically been popular. Visitors use driftwood found on the beach or haul in their own wood from outside the park.

Campfires near the vegetation on the bluff face at Moonstone Beach are considered a safety hazard by the homeowners living above the beach. In 2002, the County revised its park regulations to prohibit all campfires at Moonstone Beach County Park.

Special Events

Special events within the planning area include the following:

Trinidad to Clam Beach Run

The Trinidad to Clam Beach Run is a nationally-known run sponsored by the Greater Trinidad Chamber of Commerce. The date and start time of the race are determined by the height of the tide on either the last Saturday of January or the first Saturday of February. In 2005 the event attracted over 950 participants. A unique feature of the run is crossing the mouth of the Little River at Moonstone Beach. The course continues from along Clam Beach to the finish line at Strawberry Creek.

April 20th Celebration

April 20 (4/20) is an annual counter-culture holiday in Humboldt County which has historically resulted in a large number of overnight visitors trying to camp at Clam Beach County Park. In the past, the large number of overnight visitors on 4/20 overwhelmed the park facilities, and resulted in large numbers of visitors camping outside of designated camping areas. More recently, County Parks staff have been diverted from other assignments to enforce regulations. In addition, attendance has generally decreased. As a result, camping has been largely contained within designated areas.

Summer Holiday Weekends

Visitation to the parks increases significantly over the Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day holiday weekends. Historically, there have been problems during the summer holiday weekends with some individuals firing fireworks or driving vehicles on the beach in violation of posted regulations. Due to public safety concerns and the increased potential for impacting the park resources, the County began implementing temporary restrictions to vehicle beach access. Starting in 2003, the access gate at the South Lot has been closed during the three summer holiday weekends (except on mornings when there is an exceptionally low tide and good clamming conditions). These measures have been effective in greatly reducing conflicts with vehicles and problems with illegal fireworks and illegal camping.

1.7.4 Agency Coordination

Three general, multi-agency meetings with representatives of Federal, State, tribal, and local public agencies were held (February 25, 2003; March 18, 2004; and November 9, 2005). These meetings focused on obtaining input on issues and interests concerning management of the two parks, identifying sources of information and other resources, and identifying ways to coordinate with multi-agency efforts. In addition, several agencies provided written comments over the course of the planning process, and project team members made direct contacts with agencies to address questions regarding sensitive resource and recreational use issues.

Two meetings with representatives of local Native American Indian tribes were held (July 2003 and December 9, 2005). These meetings focused on receiving input on cultural, pre-historic/historic and natural resources, as well as other issues pertaining to the project area.

1.7.5 Public Involvement

Successful management of public land depends on the involvement of the people who have a connection to the land and know the area's history and resources. The process for developing this Master Plan was designed to ensure early and continuous public involvement. Public input was solicited early in the process, when the issues were first identified and the scope of the options was initially developed. Public involvement continued along the way as the plan elements were expanded and refined. The Public Works Department listened to the public's expressed values, priorities, and concerns, and incorporated suggestions and ideas into the Master Plan to the extent possible.

Public input and feedback were solicited through general public meetings and meetings with specific user group representatives. Comments were received through questionnaires, feedback forms, e-mails, letters, phone calls, and testimony at meetings. The comments were compiled and organized by topic, and were carefully considered as the applicable management components were developed. Summaries of each of the five public meetings are presented in Appendix E, and summaries of the verbal and written comments received are presented in Appendix F.

Public Meetings

A meeting was held in February 2003 with residents of the Moonstone neighborhood to identify their particular interests and issues based on their close proximity to Moonstone Beach.

From 2003 to 2005, five general public meetings were held at Azalea Hall in McKinleyville to present information about management issues and the planning process and to receive public input regarding interests and concerns. The meetings were publicized through articles and announcements in local media, e-mails sent to stakeholder organizations, and posted flyers. In addition, the first public meeting was publicized through a direct mailing to approximately 125 adjacent landowners and interested parties identified from records of the 2000-2001 County meetings about beach management.

The **first** public meeting was held March 27, 2003. Approximately 85 people were in attendance. Maps, photos, and other information about the beaches were displayed. Handouts included a draft outline of the Master Plan, a small-scale map of the area, current County Park use guidelines, and a questionnaire for written input.

The **second** public meeting was held August 6, 2003. Approximately 85 people were in attendance. In addition to the handouts from the previous meeting, new handouts included draft management recommendations, an accompanying comment form, aerial photos of Clam Beach County Park showing existing use areas and a conceptual design for the South Lot, and a summary of the results of the Clam and Moonstone Beach 2003 Visitor Survey. After presentation and discussion about the draft Master Plan and planning process, Humboldt State University professor Steve Martin presented a summary of the visitor use survey results. Draft recommendations were presented, and questions and comments were fielded on three focus areas (facilities at Clam Beach, vehicles on the beaches, and dogs on the beaches), and other topics of interest. During the last half hour, about one-half of the attendees stayed to participate in small-group discussions about topics of interest. Comments and ideas received at this meeting

were used to revise and refine recommendations, which included omitting some draft recommendations and incorporating some new ones.

The first draft of the Master Plan was completed in March 2004. The **third** and **fourth** public meetings were held on March 31, 2004, and May 3, 2004. The purpose of these meetings was to receive public feedback on the preliminary conceptual ideas within the Master Plan.

The Master Plan was revised based on public comments presented during public meetings or submitted in writing. The second draft of the Master Plan was completed in June 2005. The **fifth** public meeting was held on June 13, 2005. The purpose of this public meeting was to present the revised draft Master Plan to the public and receive input. The public also provided comments to the Board of Supervisors at Board meetings held on July 19 and September 13, 2005. At the conclusion of the September 13, 2005 meeting, the Board appointed a Board Subcommittee to work with Public Works staff on requested revisions to the draft plan.

From November 2005 through March 2006, as directed by the Board, meetings were held with several user groups and stakeholders to obtain input regarding beach access for vehicles, rock climbing, clamming, surf/sport fishing, and equestrian uses. Following these meetings, the Master Plan was revised to incorporate the input received, and to present several of the management options in a tiered framework. In addition, the Master Plan was re-organized and edited.

1.8 ***LEGAL ASPECTS***

This section discusses the County's land use/zoning policies, coastal zone policies and statutes, and opportunities for interagency and cooperative management agreements. Information sources for this section include the Humboldt County General Plan, Humboldt County Local Coastal Program, McKinleyville Community Plan, Trinidad Area Plan, and the California Coastal Act. A table showing the various policies and goals applicable to the planning area is included in Appendix G.

The planning area is located within the coastal zone and therefore is subject to the coastal resources planning and management policies set forth in the California Coastal Act.

Clam Beach County Park and Little River State Beach are included in the McKinleyville Area Plan of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program.

Moonstone Beach County Park is included in the Trinidad Area Plan of the Humboldt County Local Coastal Program.

1.8.1 *Land Use Designations*

Land use designations are intended to establish the general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of the land. The following land use designations were obtained from the plans listed above.

The southernmost section of Clam Beach County Park is designated as Natural Resources. The Natural Resource designation continues south adjacent to the Planning Area, following the Mad River. The remainder, and majority, of Clam Beach County Park is designated as Public Recreation. Little River State Beach, located north of Clam Beach County Park, is also designated as Public Recreation. Land use designations for the parcels located directly east of Clam Beach, and east of and adjacent to Highway 101 include Residential Estates, Commercial Recreation, Public Recreation, Public Facility, and Residential Ex Urban.

Moonstone Beach County Park is designated as Commercial Recreation. Land north of the park is designated Rural Village, and land south of the park is designated Public Recreation. Land directly east of the park is designated as Commercial Recreation up to Highway 101, and then continues as Commercial Recreation on the other (eastern) side of Highway 101.

1.8.2 *Public Access*

A property is deemed to have public access when the general public has the right and ability to enter the property. The County of Humboldt owns both Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks, and the County's Parks Division ensures that the general public has the right and ability to access these beaches. The California Coastal Commission, as well as the California Coastal Conservancy, works to implement and support public coastal access for the length of California's coastline.

1.8.3 *Prescriptive Rights*

The California Coastal Commission, federal, state, and local agencies, including the State's Attorney General's Office, are responsible for researching and establishing the legal existence for public prescriptive access rights on private property. The criteria used by the California Coastal Commission and the Attorney General's Office to determine the existence of prescriptive rights are:

- The land must have been used continually, but not necessarily continuously, and substantially for five years.

- The use must have occurred without the permission of the owner.
- The owner must not have had knowledge of the use.
- The owner must not have significantly objected to the use or made bone fide attempts to dissuade the use.

Prescriptive access rights do not apply to public coastal lands because publicly owned coastal land must by law maintain the public’s rights to access these lands (with some exceptions for military reservations). Since Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks are public land, there can be no claims for prescriptive access rights to them. However, the private properties located between Little River State Beach and Moonstone Beach (which are outside the management area) may have cases for prescriptive rights to them, but there are no current claims.

1.8.4 Easements

An easement is the right to use the real property of another for a specific purpose. The easement is itself a real property interest, but the original owner retains legal title to the underlying land for all other purposes.

A deeded easement was created in 1979 on a privately owned parcel adjacent to Moonstone Beach County Park between the owner, Samuel Merryman, and the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust. The easement allows for public access to Moonstone Beach. As shown on Figure 3, the easement is directly adjacent to the County parking area and provides additional parking for visitors.

1.8.5 Interagency Agreements

Various entities maintain jurisdiction over coastal resources within the planning area, including local, state, and federal agencies. Because of the shared responsibilities of managing and protecting these coastal resources, it may be advantageous in some cases for the County to pursue interagency agreements. Interagency agreements, such as a memorandum of understanding, can help facilitate communication, coordinate management activities, establish shared enforcement, synchronize projects, and maximize resources.

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) has jurisdiction over the state’s tide and submerged lands along the coastline, extending from the shoreline out to three miles offshore. The CSLC also has jurisdiction over the beds of California’s naturally navigable rivers, lakes, and streams. The CSLC is responsible for managing and protecting the natural and cultural resources of, and public access to, these “public sovereign” lands. However, the CSLC is a

property owner, and not a regulatory agency, and delegates regulations to other agencies on their lands. For example, the CSLC owns Little River State Beach, but has no regulatory authority over it other than issues of health and safety. A legislative statute gives regulatory authority to California State Parks over the first 1,000 feet of beach.

The County may elect to develop an interagency agreement with the CSLC. The County could submit a request for the CSLC to issue a lease giving the County regulatory authority over CSLC land on County beaches. To request this lease, the County can submit either a State application form, or a letter with submission of a plan. The County can also submit an application to close all or part of the beach for certain periods of time for public health and safety reasons or for endangered species protection.

1.8.6 County Park Ordinances

The current park ordinances are included as Appendix A and are summarized on Table 3.

Table 3 – Summary of Humboldt County Park Regulations for Clam & Moonstone Beach Parks (May 2003)

Vehicle Use on County Beaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street licensed, 4-wheel drive vehicles allowed on waveslope on Clam Beach. • Permitted from sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset, unless authorized by special permit or by permit for night smelt fishing. • Accessed only by the designated access routes. • Maximum speed - 15 mph. • Vehicle play prohibited. • Driving in creeks is prohibited, except to cross over.
Horses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted at Moonstone and Clam Beach.
Camping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted in designated sites at Clam Beach for a maximum of 3 days in a 30-day period.
Campfires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibited at Moonstone Beach. • Permitted in designated fire rings in the camping and/or picnic areas at Clam Beach • Also permitted on the beach areas of ocean beach parks. Fires must be 50 feet or more away from large driftwood, 100 feet seaward of the vegetated dunes, 300 feet from a known snowy plover nest, and be small enough to fit within a 30" circle. Larger fires by special permit for special events.
Dogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where permitted, dogs must be on a leash no greater than 10 feet in the parking and camping areas and within 100' of these areas. • Permitted to be unleashed if under complete control by owner, on the beach at Moonstone County Park. • "Control" means that the dog is within view and within voice range of the owner, that the

<p>dog comes at first calling, and that the dog is not allowed to approach people in a threatening manner or in any way harass people, wildlife, other dogs, or horses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted to be unleashed, if under complete control by owner, on the waveslope at Clam Beach all year and on the entire beach from October 1 through February 28. • Owner must pick up and dispose of animal waste.
<p style="text-align: center;">Wood Collecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood Collecting Permitted on certain County Park Ocean Beaches, under permit, on the waveslope and from mean high tide line to first line of dunes, bluffs, or vegetation from Oct. 1 to Feb 28 (29) of the following year. With the required wood collecting permit, driving off the waveslope and onto the open sand area (but not in dunes or vegetation), directly to collect a large piece of wood and back out on the same tracks, is permitted on Clam Beach (refer to vehicle use on county beaches). • Pieces larger than 3 feet in diameter and/or 8 feet long must be left. • No permit is required for small amounts of wood that can be carried manually in one armload from ocean beaches. • No collecting within 400 feet of a Snowy Plover nest. • With the required wood collecting permit, chain saws are allowed on ocean beaches. • Maximum of 3 cords allowed per year.
<p style="text-align: center;">Kites and Model Airplanes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall not be flown within 400 feet of a plover nest.
<p style="text-align: center;">Night Fishing for Night Smelt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed commercial and sport fishermen, by special permit, may fish for night smelt at Clam Beach between 30 minutes after sunset to sunrise. • One full set of gear per family is required.
<p style="text-align: center;">Plover Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access restricted in signed areas protecting western snowy plover breeding areas. • Maintain a distance of 200 feet from plover nests. • Keep kites and airplanes more than 400 feet from plover nests.
<p style="text-align: center;">Hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day-use parks and day-use park areas of Clam Beach are closed midnight to 5:00 a.m. All park areas where camping is allowed are closed to all but fee paying campers between 12:00 a.m. (midnight) and 5:00 a.m. • Occupation of a campsite after 8 p.m. shall be considered camping.

2.0 CLAM BEACH COUNTY PARK

2.1 SETTING

2.1.1 Geographic Area and Surrounding Properties

Clam Beach County Park occupies approximately 370 acres along the coast between McKinleyville and Trinidad (Figures 3 through 5). The park is bordered on the north by Little River State Beach, on the east by State Highway 101 and private properties, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by private property. The southern boundary of the park aligns with Murray Road. In addition, the County owns three parcels located immediately east of the Highway 101/Central Avenue interchange.

Clam Beach Drive serves as a frontage road along the northeastern portion of the park. The County owns a portion of the strip of land between Clam Beach Drive and Highway 101, including the parcel where the horse facilities are located (across from the South Lot). The parcels to the north of the horse facilities are privately owned by members of the Stanson family. The Stanson property extends northward to the southern boundary of Little River State Beach.

The northern end of the Hammond Coastal Trail currently terminates near the South Lot of Clam Beach County Park. Future extension of the trail to the north is anticipated.

2.1.2 Current Facilities

The facilities at Clam Beach County Park are clustered in two locations, generally referred to as the South Lot and the North Lot. Aerial photographs of the South Lot and North Lot are provided in Figures 7 and 8. The facilities were originally built in 1973, and were expanded in 1989.

The South Lot is located at the south end of Clam Beach Drive and adjacent to the Central Avenue/Highway 101 interchange. The South Lot is situated within the east-central portion of Clam Beach County Park. The South Lot includes a day-use parking area, horse trailer parking area, campground, and access point for vehicle access to the waveslope. With the exception of the horse trailer parking area, the facilities are located on the west side of Clam Beach Drive.

The South Lot day-use parking area has a gravel surface and is equipped with information kiosks. Vehicles can access the waveslope by passing through a steel

gate located at the southwest corner of the day-use parking area and driving through a corridor which crosses Patrick Creek.

The South Lot campground includes an asphalt-paved parking lot, primitive camp sites adjacent to the parking lot, restroom, and bicycle parking area.

The North Lot is situated along the central portion of Clam Beach Drive, near the northeast corner of the park. The North Lot is an asphalt-paved, day-use parking area with markings designating parking for large vehicles and trailers. The North Lot is equipped with a restroom and bulletin board for posting information.

2.1.3 *Recreational Uses and Activities*

Recreational User Surveys

362 visitors participated in the 2003 Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach Visitor Study. Most people surveyed at Clam Beach came in groups of two and stayed for approximately one hour. Many (68%) had visited previously, and about a third of those surveyed visit the beach more than once a week. Approximately half of the respondents were residents of Humboldt County, of which about a half were from the McKinleyville area.

Of the visitors surveyed at Clam Beach, 72% arrived via motor vehicle and 25% arrived on foot. The remaining 3% of visitors arrived via other modes of transportation, which included horse and bicycle. Most respondents (81%) accessed Clam Beach from either the North Lot or South Lot. Other access points included Murray Road (15%), Letz Avenue (2.5%), and up or down the beach from another access point (1%).

Most visitors to Clam Beach reported engaging in passive recreational activities such as:

- Walking for pleasure;
- Enjoying the scenery;
- Relaxing alone or with friends;
- Exercise; jogging, running, walking;
- Exercising the dog; and
- Beachcombing.

295 of the respondents listed at least one value of Clam Beach that was important to them. Top values included:

- Scenic value;

- Place to get away, relax;
- Clean; and
- Open space, natural setting with little development.

Respondents were asked to identify what factors, if any, detracted from their beach experience. The top responses were: dogs and/or feces on the beach (40 responses); litter (29 responses); and vehicles on the beach or vehicles driving too fast/recklessly on the beach (27 responses).

The large majority of Clam Beach respondents reported that conditions met their expectations (91%). Of the 32 people who said that conditions did not meet expectations, 28 provided a reason. The main reason for dissatisfaction was the presence of vehicles on the beach (8 responses). Other reasons included litter/broken glass (4 responses), rude camp hosts, and not enough campsites (3 responses each).

Of the Clam Beach study participants, approximately one quarter were overnight campers. Approximately half of the total respondents indicated that they would oppose overnight closure of Clam Beach. One third of respondents were neutral, and 17 % supported overnight closure.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Clam Beach, including portions of the County Park, is one of three modern breeding sites in Humboldt County for the western snowy plover. Plovers are present year-round and use the area for breeding between April and September. Within Clam Beach County Park, nesting occurs above the high tide line in sandy substrate and occasionally on driftwood. Nesting and brooding has also occurred in the backdune areas within Little River State Beach. Western snowy plovers are discussed further in Section 2.2.5.

Three sensitive plant species were positively identified during vegetation surveys conducted in the spring and summer of 2003. Pink sand-verbena (*Abronia umbellata* ssp. *breviflora*) was observed growing in an area west of the North Lot (within the park boundary). Humboldt Bay owl's-clover (*Castilleja ambigua* ssp. *humboldtiensis*) was observed on private property south of Murray Road. Lyngbye's sedge (*Carex lyngbyei*) was observed on private property south of Widow White Creek and west of Hiller Road. One additional sensitive species, Beach pea (*Lathyrus japonicus*), was tentatively identified within the park near the northern boundary. This species was tentatively identified based on vegetative features but positive identification was prevented by a lack of flowering plants.

2.1.5 *Cultural and Historical Resources*

The area south of Little River along Clam Beach is part of the ancestral lands of the Wiyot people. Clam Beach is a significant cultural area as a historical and current source of resources to the Wiyot people, and continues to be used as an area of traditional use.

Clam Beach became popular with white settlers as they established ranches on the bluffs east of Clam Beach in the 1850s and 1860s. Historical activities at the beach included gold mining, harvesting of natural resources, camping, picnicking, and beachcombing. Clam Beach was also used as a transportation corridor for wagons, railroads, and vehicles.

2.2 *MANAGEMENT*

This section describes eight management issues at Clam Beach County Park. Potential management actions regarding dogs, vehicle driving on the beach, camping, campfires, and western snowy plovers are presented as tiered options. Potential management actions regarding sensitive plants, cultural and historical resources, and staffing are presented as non-tiered options. The difference between tiered and non-tiered options is discussed in Section 1.2. Options involving changes in park regulations would be implemented by revising the ordinances contained in the Humboldt County Code.

2.2.1 *Dogs*

Existing Conditions

Dogs are required to be under the complete control of their owners at all times. “Control” means that the dog is within view and within voice range of the owner, the dog comes at first calling, and the dog is not allowed to approach people in a threatening manner or harass people, wildlife, other dogs, or horses. Dogs must be leashed in parking and camping areas and within 100 feet of these areas. In addition, during the western snowy plover nesting season (March 1 through September 30), dogs are not allowed in designated plover protection areas and must be restrained on adequate leashes (not greater than ten feet long) within the park except on the waveslope, where dogs may be unleashed if kept under the complete control of the owner. Owners are required to pick up and properly dispose of animal waste.

Dogs are not allowed in Little River State Beach, which is located adjacent to the north end of Clam Beach County Park.

Compliance with the existing requirements for maintaining control of dogs and staying out of closed areas has been inconsistent. Regulations which change seasonally can be confusing to the public and difficult to enforce. Although many dog owners collect the waste from their dogs for proper disposal, those who do not pick up waste create a nuisance for other visitors and County Parks staff.

Issues

The primary issues associated with dogs in the park are user conflicts and impacts to resources:

1. User conflicts. Dogs are required to be under control at all times, but people have different interpretations of what constitutes “control,” and the subjective nature of the rule makes enforcement difficult. Some people do not feel safe when unleashed dogs are present on the beach. When conflicts occur between unleashed dogs, the conflicts are more likely to escalate.
2. Impacts to resources. Dogs can disturb wildlife, including western snowy plovers (Section 2.2.5). Dogs that are off leash are more likely to enter the plover breeding areas which are marked with symbolic fencing. The presence of dog waste on the sand and dunes is a nuisance.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to the rules for dogs within the park.

Option 2 – Owners Carry Leashes

Maintain the existing regulations with minor changes intended to reduce user conflicts and impacts to resources. Require dog owners to carry a leash at all times, and require owners to put their dog on the leash if it is determined that the dog is not under complete control of the owner.

Option 3 – Special Dog Area

Designate an area within the park where dogs are allowed to be off leash as long as they remain within the control of their owners. Require dogs to be leashed in all other areas of the park.

Option 4 - Dogs Leashed at All Times off the Waveslope

Require dogs to be leashed in all areas of the park except on the waveslope, where they could be unleashed if they are under the complete control of the owner. Require dog owners to carry a leash and leash their dogs on the waveslope adjacent to plover protection areas.

Option 5 - Dogs Leashed at All Times throughout the Park

Require dogs to be leashed at all times throughout the park.

2.2.2

Vehicle Driving on the Beach

Existing Conditions

The beach has traditionally been open to all street-licensed, four-wheel-drive vehicles for driving on the waveslope. Visitors who access the beach with vehicles include clammers, fishermen, surfers, picnickers, people carrying equipment and supplies, disabled people, and senior citizens.

Driving motor vehicles on the waveslope is allowed from sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. The gate at the vehicle access point is open during periods when driving is permitted and closed otherwise. The maximum speed is 15 miles per hour, and vehicle play is prohibited. Driving in the dunes and restricted areas is prohibited. The County maintains a wildlife protection area within the portion of the park south of the rock wall below Vista Point, and closes this area to vehicles between March 1 and September 30. Except for crossing Patrick Creek within the corridor from the day-use parking area to the waveslope, driving in creeks is prohibited.

Most visitors who drive on the beach obey the park ordinances, and the large waveslope area promotes separation between vehicles and other users. However, vehicle use regulations are frequently violated by some individuals. Violations include driving in areas with seasonal closures, speeding, driving off of the waveslope, using non-designated access routes, driving in creeks, and driving vehicles for play. Vehicles sometimes get stuck in the wet sand and require extraction by a tow truck. The number of vehicles accessing the beach has increased over time, which has contributed to perceived conflicts. Nighttime driving violations were common prior to the installation of the gate at the vehicle access point in July 2003. Following installation of the gate, the gate was regularly closed at night and during the Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day holiday weekends.

Vehicle driving on the beach presents a challenge for enforcement. As discussed in Section 4.1.2, the County currently has one Sheriff's Office deputy assigned to patrol vehicle use on all of the off-highway vehicle areas in Humboldt County. The deputy spends approximately half of his time on duty patrolling Clam Beach. This deputy position has been funded through a grant from the State Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) program, but due to funding reductions within the OHV program the position has recently required supplemental funding from other sources.

To accommodate night fishing for night smelt, the Parks Division issues permits to licensed commercial and non-commercial fishermen for night access to Clam Beach County Park after the normal gate closure time. Permit holders are required to abide by all vehicle regulations and have in their possession one full set of night smelt fishing gear per family. Keys that are issued with permits are non-transferable. The night fishing permits require annual renewal. No fee is charged.

Issues

The primary issues associated with vehicle driving on the beach are public safety, resource impacts, and user conflicts:

1. Public safety. Drivers who exceed the speed limit or who participate in vehicle play in areas with high visitor use create an increased risk to public safety.
2. Resource impacts. Dunes and creeks can be significantly impacted by vehicle traffic. Vehicles can disturb wildlife, including western snowy plovers (Section 2.2.5).
3. User conflicts. Vehicles accessing the beach contribute to congestion at the South Lot. Some people feel that the quality of experience at the park is diminished by the presence of any vehicles on the beach.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the current situation in which street-licensed, four-wheel drive vehicles are allowed to access the beach during the day for driving on the waveslope only, with a maximum speed of 15 miles per hour. If the risk to public safety or the level of resource impacts or user conflicts is unacceptable, then a more restrictive option (Option 2, 3, or 4) would be implemented.

Sub-option 1A – No changes

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes.

Sub-option 1B – Enhanced Enforcement and Monitoring

Maintain the existing conditions but provide for enhanced enforcement and monitoring. Enforcement would be enhanced through actions such as increased sheriff’s patrols or County Park staff patrols. Potential indicators to be monitored include the number of public complaints, incidents reported in camp host logs, and the number of citations issued.

Option 2 – New Permit Program with No Gate Closure

Require drivers of vehicles to have a permit for driving on the beach. A permit program would facilitate enforcement of the driving regulations. The gate at the vehicle access point would remain open year-round during daytime hours. The existing regulations governing vehicle use on the beach would not change.

The new permit program would include the elements described on Table 4. Additional program elements would be developed when the program is incorporated into the Humboldt County Code.

Table 4 – Elements of New Permit Program for Vehicle Access at Clam Beach County Park

Permit Type	Description	Duration	Fee
General	Permits would be issued to commercial fishermen, clammers, disabled persons, and senior citizens. The permit would be tied to a specific vehicle. Clammers would need to have a recreational fishing license and clamming gear in their possession.	No expiration. Permits would need to be renewed when ownership of the vehicle changes.	\$10 - \$25
Special Use	Permits would be issued at the discretion of the Public Works Department if applicants demonstrate a reasonable need for such a permit and the proposed vehicular use would be conducted in a manner and location that will not result in an adverse impact to coastal resources.	Duration would be determined on a case-by-case basis.	\$25 - \$50

Applicants would fill out an application form at the Public Works Department office. The application would include information on the applicant and vehicle and a description of the activity requiring beach access. If the applicant meets the specified criteria, the permit would be issued for a specific vehicle. The permit would contain conditions and restrictions for vehicle driving on the beach, and the permit holder would need to post the permit in a specified location on the vehicle. The list of permit holders and vehicles would be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office and County Parks staff.

During seasonal low tides, the permit requirement would be waived for all clambers with recreational fishing licenses and clamming gear. In addition, County Parks would have the authority to grant exceptions for other special events.

If the risk to public safety or the level of user conflicts or resource impacts continues to be unacceptable, then a more restrictive option (Option 3 or 4) would be implemented.

If there is evidence that a permit system is not warranted, then a less restrictive option (Option 1) would be implemented.

Sub-option 2A – Seasonal Permit Program from Memorial Day through Labor Day

Under Sub-option 2A, drivers on the beach would be required to hold a permit from Memorial Day (late May) to Labor Day (early September), which is the period when park visitation is the highest and there is the highest potential for use conflicts.

Sub-option 2B – Seasonal Permit Program from March 1 through September 30

Under Sub-option 2B, drivers on the beach would be required to hold a permit from March 1 through September 30, which is the nesting season for western snowy plovers.

Sub-option 2C – Year-round Permit Program

Under Sub-option 2C, drivers on the beach would be required to hold a permit year-round.

Option 3 – Seasonal Permit Program and Gate Closure

Require drivers of vehicles to have a permit for driving on the beach during a specified portion of the year as described in Option 2, and close and lock the gate at the vehicle access point during this period. Permit-holders would be authorized

to open the locked gate for accessing the waveslope. A permit program would facilitate enforcement of the driving regulations, and seasonal gate closure would increase compliance with the driving regulations during the period when visitor use is the highest and when the plovers are most sensitive to disturbance. During the rest of the year, a permit would not be required and the gate would normally be open during the day. The existing regulations governing vehicle use on the beach would not change.

The gate would be locked either by a padlock or a cardlock system. Permit recipients would receive a padlock key or access card with their permit, and would be charged a fee to cover the costs of the locking device. The fee associated with the cardlock system would be higher due to the costs of installing, maintaining, and replacing (if necessary) the cardlock system. A cardlock system would keep a time record of which card was used to access the gate, and this time record could be useful for tracking usage and investigating vehicle incidents at the beach. Cards for specific permit holders could be de-activated if cancellation becomes warranted.

During seasonal low tides, the permit requirement would be waived for all clambers with recreational fishing licenses and clamming gear, and County Parks staff would open the gate for these users. In addition, County Parks would have the authority to grant exceptions for other special events.

Implementation of gate closure would reduce or eliminate the need for the camp host to close the gate on a daily basis, which would result in a savings of \$300 per month.

If the risk to public safety or the level of user conflicts or resource impacts continues to be unacceptable, then a more restrictive option (Option 4) would be implemented.

If there is evidence that a permit system and/or seasonal gate closure are not warranted, then a less restrictive option (Option 1 or 2) would be implemented.

Sub-option 3A – Permit Program and Gate Closure from Memorial Day through Labor Day

Under Sub-option 3A, the gate would be closed from Memorial Day (late May) through Labor Day (early September), which is the period when park visitation is the highest and there is the highest potential for use conflicts. Vehicles with permits (as described in Option 2) would still be allowed on the beach. Permits would not be required and the gate would be open during daylight hours from Labor Day through Memorial Day.

Sub-option 3B – Permit Program and Gate Closure from March 1 through September 30

Under Sub-option 3B, the gate would be closed from March 1 through September 30, which is the nesting season for western snowy plovers. Vehicles with permits (as described in Option 2) would still be allowed on the beach. Permits would not be required and the gate would be open during daylight hours from October 1 through the last day of February.

Option 4 – Year-round Permit Program and Gate Closure

Require drivers of vehicles to have a permit for driving on the beach and close the gate at the vehicle access point at all times during the year. Permitted vehicles would be able to open the locked gate to access the waveslope. County Parks would grant permits as described under Option 2. The lock system would be installed as described under Option 3.

If there is evidence that a permit system and/or year-round gate closure are not warranted, then a less restrictive option (Option 1, 2, or 3) would be implemented.

2.2.3

Camping

Existing Conditions

Camping is allowed within a designated campground at the South Lot. Current park regulations limit campers to a maximum of three days within a 30-day period. Camping was formerly allowed in the North Lot and along Clam Beach Road, however this large area was difficult to manage with limited park staff. The facilities for the campground are discussed in Section 2.3.2. Camp hosts and County Parks staff who maintain the campground are discussed in Section 4.1.1.

Many people camp at Clam Beach County Park to enjoy the park's unique features. However, the park is also used by travelers looking for an overnight rest stop, and by people looking for a venue to hold parties. In the past, the availability of long-term camping attracted transient and homeless people. However, the three-day camping limit and strict enforcement have been effective in abating the long-term camping problem.

As shown on Figure 9, camping at Clam Beach has grown steadily in popularity over the last 15 years. The highest annual usage was 5,193 camping groups (including RV and tent campers) in 2001-2002. July and August are the most popular months for camping; however, County revenue records reflect that camping is a popular activity at Clam Beach throughout the year. Table 5 shows County Park revenue data for Clam Beach by month, for the 2001-2002 and 2002-

2003 fiscal years. The busiest month (July 2002) had an average daily camping rate of 38 campers per day. A modest 5% growth rate over the next ten years would result in an increase to 62 campers per day.

Table 5 – Clam Beach Revenue by Month for the Years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003

Month	2001/02 Revenue	2002/03 Revenue
July	\$7,385	\$9,505
August	\$7,698	\$8,830
September	\$3,879	\$4,788
October	\$5,009	\$2,856
November	\$1,319	\$2,580
December	\$768	\$1,341
January	\$979	\$1,444
February	\$1,439	\$1,063
March	\$2,839	\$1,152
April	\$4,681	\$2,061
May	\$2,760	\$1,032
June	\$2,990	\$3,418
Total	\$41,547	\$40,069

Source: Humboldt County Department of Public Works

The campground at Clam Beach County Park is the closest beach campground to Arcata and McKinleyville. Heading north from Clam Beach, the following campgrounds are available:

- Patricks Point State Park is located 12.4 miles from Clam Beach; the park has 124 camping sites.
- Big Lagoon County Park is located 14.2 miles from Clam Beach; the park has 25 camping sites.
- Emerald Forest of Trinidad is located 7 miles from Clam Beach; the campground has 90 sites.

Heading south from Clam Beach, the following campgrounds are available:

- Samoa Boat Launch County Park is located 20.7 miles from Clam Beach; the park has 25 spaces.
- Eureka KOA is located 13.9 miles from Clam Beach; the campground has 108 sites.
- Sandpiper RV Park in Arcata is located 10.9 miles from Clam Beach.

Fees collected from overnight guests to Clam Beach are a source of County revenue utilized to fund the County Park staff and the infrastructure associated with providing facilities at the park.

Issues

The primary issues associated with camping are public safety, user conflicts, resource impacts, and cost to the County:

1. **Public safety.** Some people continue to perceive that the park attracts transients, although this problem has largely been addressed in recent years. Some campers use illegal drugs or alcohol, and physical altercations are not uncommon.
2. **User conflicts.** The campground attracts people with different expectations for a camping experience, and user conflicts are common. The existing camping facilities, as described in Section 2.3.2, are not designed to minimize these conflicts.
3. **Resource impacts.** The existing camping facilities, as described in Section 2.3.2, are not designed to minimize impacts to park resources.
4. **Cost to the County.** The existing camping facilities, as described in Section 2.3.2, are not designed for efficient management and require considerable staff time.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Continue to accommodate tent camping and parking for overnight guests. This option does not address the identified issues, unless campground facilities are upgraded as discussed in Section 2.3.2.

Option 2 - Day Use Only

Prohibit camping in the park. This option would eliminate the need for campground facilities and could potentially prevent further resource impacts associated with camping. However, this option would result in a loss of approximately \$40,000 annual revenue and potentially a reduction in park staff and enforcement of park regulations. There is the risk that nighttime activity and unauthorized camping would continue even if the campground is closed. The existing campground area would need significant restoration if it is closed.

2.2.4

Campfires

Existing Conditions

Campfires are allowed in fire rings located at designated campsites and on the beach under certain conditions. Small fires no larger than 30 inches in diameter are allowed on the beach if located a minimum of 50 feet away from large pieces of driftwood, a minimum of 500 feet from any known plover nest, and a minimum of 100 feet seaward of the vegetated dunes. Campfires contribute to trash on the beach, including nails left behind from pallets, partially burnt wood and paper, cans, and broken bottles.

Issues

The primary issues associated with campfires are public safety, impacts to resources, and cost to the County:

1. Public safety. Debris from campfires on the beach can be a safety hazard.
2. Impacts to resources. Campfires can disturb wildlife, including western snowy plovers. People collecting firewood in the dunes at night can inadvertently step on plover eggs. Debris from campfires degrades the resources.
3. Cost to the County. Collection of campfire-related trash on the beach is a burden on County Parks staff.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain existing conditions with no change to campfire regulations.

Option 2 – New Restrictions on Campfires

Restrict campfires to designated fire rings located in the campground and day-use areas, and on the waveslope within 200 feet from the North Lot and South Lot. Prohibit the burning of pallets on the beach.

Option 3 – Prohibit Fires on the Beach

Limit campfires to designated fire rings located in the campground and day-use areas.

2.2.5

Western Snowy Plover

Existing Conditions

The Pacific coast population of the western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) is a small shorebird that requires sandy beaches for breeding. The western snowy plover was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act in 1993 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At Clam Beach County Park, plovers are attracted to the large areas of sandy dunes and beaches. In addition, it has been hypothesized that they are attracted to a localized abundant source of food (small invertebrates). Additional information regarding western snowy plover life style characteristics is provided in Appendix B.

In May 2001, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a draft recovery plan for the western snowy plover with recovery goals for Recovery Unit 2 which includes Clam Beach and Little River (sub-unit CA-6). The recovery criteria include meeting goals for the number of breeding adults and yearly average productivity rates, and establishing mechanisms for long-term protection and management. The specific goals for Clam Beach/Little River include a breeding population of six plovers and a winter population of 11 to 32 plovers. The recovery plan also recommended the formation of unit working groups to facilitate regional cooperative programs. The working group for this unit coordinates nesting site management and protection efforts.

On September 29, 2005, critical habitat areas for the western snowy plover were established in the Federal Register. Critical habitat areas are areas which contain essential habitat features for a listed species and require special management. The 1.8-mile-long portion of Clam Beach between the north end of the South Lot and the south abutment of the Highway 101 bridge over Little River was designated as critical habitat Sub-unit CA 3A. This area was designated critical habitat because of its large areas of sandy dunes, areas of sand beach above and below the high tide line, and generally barren to sparsely vegetated terrain.

On April 21, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service introduced a proposed special rule under Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act for the western snowy plover. The proposal was based on the finding that although significant progress was being made toward recovery, additional recovery actions are needed. The proposal is intended in part to provide an incentive for land managers to implement additional recovery measures and increase local support for recovery. The proposed special rule establishes Breeding Bird Management Goals as a criterion for evaluating recovery progress on a county-wide basis. If the Breeding Bird Management Goals for a county are met, and specified documentation is provided, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would replace the

general prohibition against incidental take as defined in Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act with a more focused definition of the specific actions constituting a prohibited incidental take. The more focused definition would exempt activities that include most of the common recreational and commercial activities occurring within plover habitat. The incentive provided by the proposed special rule is a reduction in federal scrutiny of the management activities conducted by all land owners (public and private) within the county and a corresponding reduction in liability if the Breeding Bird Management Goals for the county as a whole are met and documented. Prohibitions against intentional take would remain in effect. The comment period for the proposed rule ends August 21, 2006.

Past and Current Plover Protection Activities

Following the release of the draft recover plan in 2001, the County and other organizations moved quickly to implement protective measures on County Parks. Protection activities included monitoring, coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on installing seasonal predator exclosures and symbolic fencing, seasonal closure of protection areas, informational signage, participation in the Unit 2 Snowy Plover Working Group, and enhanced law enforcement.

- Monitoring – In the late 1990s, monitoring of western snowy plover activity on Clam Beach was initiated by biologists from Mad River Biologists. Since 2001, monitoring has been coordinated by biologists from Humboldt State University and MRB Research. Monitoring efforts include documentation of nesting plover distribution, hatching success, brood movements, and fledging success through surveying and banding.
- Predator Exclosures – Predator exclosures are boxes constructed of wire fencing and plastic netting and designed to prevent predators from reaching nests. Exclosures have been placed around plover nests to exclude predators from the nest sites since 1999 by Humboldt State University and MRB Research. Placement of exclosures begins around April 15 of each year, after Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) have migrated out of the area. The exclosures are removed after the nest has hatched. Exclosures are often initially successful in increasing hatching success of beach-breeding plovers, but can become ineffective over time if they attract predators.
- Symbolic Fencing – Symbolic fencing has been placed around a portion of the most popular plover nesting area north of Strawberry Creek since 2004. The symbolic fencing consists of metal fence posts with blue rope strung between them, and includes signs indicating the purpose of the fencing. The symbolic fencing is erected by Humboldt State University

and MRB Research biologists at the direction of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides materials and direction. Humboldt County has provided permission to install the fencing within the park.

- Seasonal Closure of Protection Area to Vehicles – The County maintains a wildlife protection area within the portion of the park south of the rock wall below Vista Point, and closes this area to vehicles between March 1 and September 30.
- Snowy Plover Working Group – The Public Works Department participates in the Snowy Plover Working Group for Recovery Unit 2. Other group participants include local, state, and federal government agency representatives, and non-profit and private entities involved in plover conservation, management, and research. Participants include the Public Works Department, Humboldt County Planning Division, Humboldt State University Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, LBJ Enterprises, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, MRB Research, California Dept. of Fish and Game, and Friends of the Dunes.
- Public Outreach and Education – A coordinated program of education and public awareness has produced interpretive signs, brochures, a docent program, and educational workshops about western snowy plover presence and behaviors. Mad River Biologists offers Snowy Plover Observation Training. Friends of the Dunes and the Snowy Plover Working Group Outreach Subcommittee have sponsored education workshops. The Outreach Committee is also focused on a docent program with volunteers present on the beach during busy periods informing beach visitors about plovers, tables of information at special events, and public participation in habitat restoration activities.
- Signs – In 2001, informational signs were erected at the vehicle access entrance to Clam Beach. Signs describing western snowy plovers and their activities are posted on the kiosks, as well as on boards near the restrooms at the campground and north parking lot.
- Law Enforcement – Since 2001, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office has patrolled Clam Beach to enforce County ordinances. Ordinances regulating activities that could have an effect on plovers include littering, vehicle use of the beach, camping, campfires, dog use, and other disturbance activities.

Issues

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the decrease in active nesting areas and the decline in breeding population of western snowy plovers have been a result of habitat degradation associated primarily with the following sources:

1. **Invasive, non-native plants.** Plovers generally prefer a barren to sparsely vegetated terrain with high visibility. The presence of European beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*) causes the dunes to be artificially high and significantly reduces the amount of open space.
2. **Disturbance from humans and dogs during the breeding season.** The periods of highest vehicle use occur during the plover nesting season, increasing the chance of vehicles harming chicks or nests. Current enforcement levels (Section 4.1.2) are not sufficient for stopping vehicle play, speeding, and driving off the waveslope. Dogs have been observed chasing adult plovers and/or chicks. Campfires located near a plover nest can disturb nesting plovers for prolonged periods of time. People collecting firewood in the dunes at night can inadvertently step on eggs. Some of the activities that are currently allowed at Clam Beach County Park could result in the loss of birds or nests. These losses are referred to as “incidental takes” under the Endangered Species Act and can result in legal action by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
3. **Expanding predator populations.** European beachgrass provides cover for predators such as Corvids (ravens and crows), skunks, and feral cats. Predators may be drawn to a plover breeding area if human trash is available nearby.

Options

Option 1 – Continue with Existing Measures

Option 1 consists of continuing with the measures that are currently in place for western snowy plover protection. The existing measures include:

- **Monitoring** - Monitoring of western snowy plover nesting activities would continue on Clam Beach. The County would continue to cooperate with and participate in existing research and monitoring programs.
- **Predator Exclosures** - The County would continue to work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, HSU, and MRB Research on the placement of predator exclosures around plover nests during breeding season.

- Symbolic Fencing - The County would continue to work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, HSU, and MRB Research to install symbolic fencing in primary plover nesting areas during breeding season.
- Seasonal Closure of Southern Portion of Park to Vehicles – The County would continue to maintain the portion of the park south of the rock wall below Vista Point as a restricted area closed to vehicles between March 1 and September 30.
- Western Snowy Plover Working Group - The County would continue to participate in the Western Snowy Plover Working Group, coordinating nesting site management and protection efforts.
- Signage - The existing signage informing the public about western snowy plovers and defining restricted areas and applicable park regulations would be maintained.
- Law Enforcement - Continued presence by law enforcement officials would ensure that human behavior that negatively affects plovers is minimized.

If regulatory agencies recommend additional measures to minimize impacts to plovers or their habitat, Option 2 measures would be considered for implementation.

Option 2 – Continue with Existing Measures and Implement Additional Measures

Option 2 consists of continuing to implement the existing measures to protect western snowy plovers outlined in Option 1, expanding some measures, and implementing additional measures for plover protection. The selection of measures and the sequence for implementation would be based on the County’s available resources and evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures. Preliminary plans for implementing Option 2 measures are discussed in Section 5.

Option 2 measures include the following:

- Habitat Restoration - Habitat restoration projects would be initiated on Clam Beach to increase and enhance western snowy plover habitat. Plover habitat has been degraded due to the growth of invasive exotic plants, especially European beachgrass, yellow bush lupine, and pampas grass. California State Parks has initiated European beachgrass removal projects and experimental dune habitat restoration on Little River State Beach. The recent pilot restoration work by State Parks has shown

positive signs of expanding the available habitat into areas that do not receive as much recreational activity. Additional projects to remove exotic plants, especially European beachgrass, and restore natural beach and dune habitat in the plover nesting areas would benefit plovers.

- Predator Control - Replace existing trash receptacles with predator-proof trash receptacles to reduce litter as a food source for birds (especially Corvids) and other animals that are predators of western snowy plovers. Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies to develop and implement enhanced predator control measures.
- Additional Vehicle Restrictions - Additional vehicle restrictions would be implemented as described under Section 2.2.2 during the plover breeding season. Measures to increase compliance with the rules may include installing a roped corridor from the gate directly to the waveslope, or providing additional signage indicating the boundary of the waveslope.
- Additional Dog Restrictions - Additional dog restrictions would be implemented as described under Section 2.2.1 during the plover breeding season.
- Additional Enforcement - Additional staff presence would be implemented as described under Section 4.1.2.
- Increased Regulatory and Educational Signage - Additional signage focusing on plover information and related County regulations would be developed as described in Section 4.1.3.

The threshold for implementation of Option 3 is a documented, unauthorized “incident take” of a western snowy plover on County property and regulatory agency order.

Option 3 – Incidental Take Permit

The Federal Endangered Species Act prohibits the “take” of an endangered or threatened species. Take is defined as harassing, harming, pursuing, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting a threatened or endangered species. Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act allows for the “take” of an endangered species if the Secretary of Interior issues an Incidental Take Permit (ITP). If the implementation of Option 1 and Option 2 is not sufficient to avoid direct or indirect impacts to western snowy plovers or their habitat that would result in harm to the species, then an Incidental Take Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be required. Application for an ITP consists of a number of components, including a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), review

under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and an Implementation Agreement (IA) with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The HCP is a document outlining what the applicant will do to minimize and/or mitigate impacts of his activity on an endangered species. The HCP is developed with technical assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and specifies the impacts of the taking, steps to minimize the impacts, and alternatives to the proposed taking. It also outlines the mitigation measures that will be implemented. The cost for the County to develop a HCP could range from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

The advantages to writing and implementing an HCP and entering into an IA with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service include having input in the process of determining measures that will help protect plovers on the beach while allowing for continued public use of the beach. Receipt of an ITP will protect the County from violation of the Endangered Species Act or civil lawsuit by allowing a certain level of “take.” Difficulties in the HCP/ITP/IA process include the length of time (approximately one year) and cost (\$25,000 to \$50,000) of writing an HCP, the extensive public and agency review period (average two years to approve an HCP and issue an ITP), and the additional cost of implementation. If the western snowy plover recovers to target levels and is delisted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the ITP and HCP would no longer be required. In the event of delisting, the County would be allowed to relinquish the ITP and suspend the HCP, with the exception that the County could be obligated to complete certain mitigation measures which were contained in the HCP.

The full cost to receive an ITP would consist of the costs of writing the HCP (including additional research and surveys to collect data to create the HCP baseline and establish effective measures to minimize impacts to plovers/habitat and mitigation), writing the NEPA document (initially an Environmental Assessment leading to either a Finding of No Significant Impact or an Environmental Impact Statement), and writing and executing an IA with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once an ITP is received, the cost of implementation of minimization and mitigation measures as outlined in the HCP over the long term is unknown.

2.2.6

Sensitive Plant Species

Existing Conditions

Three sensitive plant species were positively identified within the planning area (Pink sand-verbena, Humboldt Bay owl’s-clover, and Lyngbye’s sedge) during vegetation surveys conducted in the spring and summer of 2003. One additional sensitive species (beach pea) was tentatively identified based on vegetative

features but positive identification was prevented by a lack of flowering plants. In addition to the sensitive species observed in 2003, dark-eyed gilia and beach layia have been present within or adjacent to the planning area. Maps showing the locations of the sensitive plant occurrences are on file at the Department of Public Works office.

Exotic invasive species such as European beachgrass, pampas grass, and yellow bush lupine are present in many of the dune areas and crowd out the native flora within the park. In addition, the park may be “hot spot” within the larger physiographic area, serving as a significant source for the migration of exotic invasive species onto nearby properties.

Based on the survey conducted in 2003, pink sand verbena located near the North Lot appears to be vulnerable to impact from vehicle, pedestrian, and domestic animal activity and exotic species. Impacts to Lyngbye’s sedge and beach pea are not evident.

Options

Potential measures for protecting sensitive plant species include:

- **Restoration** – Perform restoration activities such as removal of non-native, invasive species and re-vegetation with native plant species. Identify botanical management areas and prioritize restoration efforts by ecological priority and feasibility. Design restoration projects to minimize the effect on recreational uses, especially near high-use areas (e.g., South Lot). Coordinate with other land owners and managers within the planning area.
- **Fencing** – Use fencing to redirect beach access and reduce impacts in areas of sensitive plant occurrences to the maximum extent practicable. Fenced areas would be designated as “botanical management areas” and would have a high priority for exotic species removal and preservation of sensitive plants and habitats. Fencing materials would be consistent throughout the management area to minimize aesthetic impacts. Interpretive signage explaining the protection of these areas would be incorporated either near fenced areas, along pedestrian trail areas, or at kiosks in parking areas.
- **Designated Trail System** - Develop and manage trails to encourage appropriate use and discourage potential impacts to sensitive plants and riparian and wetland habitats. Trails would be directed away from sensitive plant occurrences and riparian and wetland habitat, and would be physically designated by fencing, signage, and/or trail borders (such as logs or rocks) as appropriate. Raised boardwalks could be used for public

access in areas of wetland or sensitive plant resources, for optimum habitat protection. This option is directly related to the option for enhancing pedestrian access which is discussed in Section 2.3.1.3.

2.2.7 *Cultural and Historic Resources*

Existing Conditions

As described in Section 2.1.5, Clam Beach is a significant cultural area for the Wiyot Tribe, who continue to use the area for gathering materials for cultural uses (basketry, medicine, food). Due to the high public use of the area, there is the potential for visitors to discover cultural or historic artifacts.

Options

Potential measures for protecting cultural and historic resources include:

- Consult with the Wiyot Tribe regarding management and protection of traditional resources, especially clams.
- Consult with the Wiyot Tribe prior to developing interpretive signage regarding the history of clamming so that reference to the history of clamming by local tribes can be included.
- Support traditional resource use by Wiyot tribal members to the extent that the resources are not negatively impacted. If requested by tribal representatives, develop a memorandum of agreement between the County, the tribal government, and resources agencies to document this support.

2.3 *FACILITIES*

2.3.1 *Access*

2.3.1.1 *Vehicle Access to Park*

Existing Conditions

Clam Beach County Park can be reached from southbound Highway 101 via the Little River State Park/Crannell Road exit and from northbound Highway 101 via the Clam Beach County Park exit. The park can also be reached from the east via

Central Avenue. These three approach routes lead to the Clam Beach Drive frontage road, which provide access to the South Lot and North Lot.

The South Lot is often congested due to the high concentration of vehicles and other users including horses, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Vehicles are present at the South Lot for day-use parking, camping, and access for beach driving. Peak use days often result in restricted traffic flows along Clam Beach Drive. Equestrians who park in the equestrian parking area must cross Clam Beach Drive with their horses to access the beach through the South Lot. Many pedestrians and bicyclists use the South Lot for beach access and as an access point for the Hammond Trail. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic is anticipated to increase as the Hammond Trail is expanded. The diversity of activities occurring in a single location has the potential to create conflict among users.

Clam Beach County Park does not have a formal park entrance, and visitors are not always aware that they have entered a County Park. As a result, some visitors are not prepared to practice appropriate use within the park and are not aware that speeds should be reduced.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with vehicle access to the park are congestion and a poorly defined park boundary:

1. Congestion. A large number of vehicles, pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists are clustered within a relatively small space at the South Lot.
2. Poorly defined park boundary. A better defined park entrance would provide visual and physical cues that speeds should be reduced.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to vehicle access to the park.

Option 2 - Formal Park Entrance and Traffic Calming

Establish formal “gateway” park entrances along Clam Beach Drive near the park boundaries to incorporate traffic calming measures and encourage appropriate public use of the park.

Conceptual elements for more formal park entrances are depicted on Figure 10. Design considerations include the following:

- Make the park entrances physically identifiable by narrowing the roadway and/or creating turn-ins, center islands, and other vertical or horizontal roadway elements.
- Incorporate visual elements such as monument signs, logos, sculptures, landscaping, and textured pavement.
- Place an information kiosk or manned gatehouse in a median or center island. This design would narrow the travel lanes, separate two-way traffic, and create traffic calming. The placement of the kiosk would be based on projected peak trip generation and designed to prevent traffic from backing up and interfering with the operation of the Highway 101 interchange. If vehicles are required to stop, the kiosk must be placed an adequate distance from the highway off-ramps to give sufficient space for vehicles entering the park to wait in line without inhibiting the flow of traffic to the off-ramps.
- Design intersections and crossings to minimize conflicts and congestion and maximize safety. Include maximum site visibility and traffic calming measures in circulation designs.

Potential traffic calming measures include:

- Narrow lanes for motor vehicles.
- “S” shaped roadways.
- Median barriers (e.g., raised islands, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaped medians).
- Raised intersections.
- Textured or colored crossings.
- Speed humps.
- Landscaping.

Option 3 – Single Entrance and Single Exit, with One-way Traffic

Develop the southern end of Clam Beach Drive for park entrance only, and develop the northern end for park exit only. A portion of Clam Beach Drive near the North Lot would be converted to one-way traffic. Clam Beach Drive would continue to provide two-way circulation near the South Lot. If applicable, a cul-

de-sac could be installed to allow turn-around movements where the road changes from two-way to one-way. The beginning of the one-way stretch would be established with bollards, spikes barriers (a.k.a. treadles), large planters, or other appropriate measures.

A formal “gateway” park entrance would be developed at the South Lot as described in Option 2.

The intent of this concept is to reduce the number of vehicles at the South Lot by directing all exiting traffic through the northern entrance. Further design and feasibility studies would be required to predict the actual reduction in traffic congestion. Because the California Department of Parks and Recreation owns the northern portion of Clam Beach Drive, their approval would be required.

2.3.1.2 *Vehicle Access to Waveslope*

Existing Conditions

Vehicles access the waveslope through a gated opening at the southwest corner of the South Lot day-use parking area. The gate is normally open from a half hour before sunrise to a half hour after sunset. The entry point provides access to a fan-shaped corridor which crosses Patrick Creek and leads to the waveslope. Vehicle access to the beach through entry points other than the South Lot is prohibited.

The vehicle access point was not formally designed. With the existing configuration, vehicles can exit the freeway and drive directly out on the beach without realizing they are in a County Park or being aware of park rules.

Daily unlocking and locking of the gate is an expense to the County. Currently the camp hosts are paid an additional \$300 per month for maintaining the gate.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with vehicle access to the waveslope are congestion, cost, insufficient signage, and impact to resources:

1. **Congestion.** The corridor leading from the South Lot to the waveslope is also used by pedestrians and equestrians, leading to potential user conflicts.
2. **Cost.** Daily opening and closing of the gate is a cost to the County.

3. Insufficient signage. The vehicle access point does not convey information on resource and safety issues and park regulations.
4. Impact to resources. The location of the existing vehicle access point requires drivers to cross Patrick Creek, resulting in impacts to the creek.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain existing conditions with no changes to the gate and vehicle access for driving on the beach.

Option 2 - Redesign Vehicle Beach Access

Redesign the day-use parking area to make the route to the gate less direct and to promote exposure to educational and regulatory information. This option would be implemented in conjunction with the options discussed in Section 2.3.3 for South Lot parking improvements.

This option would also be implemented in conjunction with the options discussed in Section 2.2.2 for managing vehicle driving on the beach. Some of these options involve keeping the gate closed on a seasonal basis or year-round, except for permitted users with a key or passcard.

Option 3 - Relocate Vehicle Beach Access

Relocate the vehicle access to a new point between the South Lot and the North Lot.

This option would eliminate driving through Patrick Creek and reduce congestion at the South Lot. However, this option would require disturbance to an undeveloped area of the park and could result in new impacts to resources. Much of the area between the North Lot and South Lot is considered critical habitat for western snowy plovers. More detailed feasibility studies would be required to determine whether these concerns can be adequately addressed.

2.3.1.3

Pedestrian Access to Beach

Existing Conditions

Pedestrians can access Clam Beach by walking from the North Lot, South Lot, or multiple locations along Clam Beach Drive. Pedestrians walk approximately 700

feet through soft sand and/or dune habitat to reach the waveslope. At the South Lot, pedestrians must cross Patrick Creek to access the beach. Pedestrians can also reach Clam Beach from the north by walking through Little River State Beach.

Currently there are no formally designated trailheads to the beach. As a result, visitors who park along Clam Beach Drive can have difficulty figuring out how to get to the waveslope. Haphazard foot traffic has led to the cutting of numerous trails throughout the dunes. Walking to the beach through the soft sand can be difficult for some people. A small foot bridge was recently placed over Patrick Creek. Historically, pedestrians waded across the creek or crossed on make-shift crossings constructed with driftwood or boards.

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the people surveyed at Clam Beach indicated that they would be “Likely” or “Very Likely” to use an interpretive boardwalk in the dunes.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with pedestrian access to the beach are accessibility and impact to resources:

1. Accessibility. The beach is difficult to access for some visitors.
2. Impact to resources. Random traffic through the dunes impacts the dune habitat.

Options

Options for enhancing pedestrian access include the following:

1. Improve pedestrian and equestrian access by developing designated access points and trails from the North Lot, South Lot, and Clam Beach Drive. The trails along Clam Beach Drive would reduce some of the usage at the North Lot and South Lot where congestion is the highest. Identify trails with fencing and/or signage to encourage use. Mark access points with appropriate regulatory, educational, and/or interpretive signage, especially near plover breeding areas. At the South Lot, design the trail to serve as a collector for visitors coming from the day-use parking area and the campground. The presence of access points and trails would encourage the majority of visitors to use designated paths for accessing the beach.

2. Develop a trail leading from Vista Point down to the southern portion of Clam Beach County Park. A trail at this location would assist visitors in accessing lesser used areas and help alleviate congestion at the South Lot.
3. Install an ADA-compliant “floating” boardwalk to the beach and/or an interpretive loop through the dunes at one or both of the lots. Integrate access improvements with the northern extension of the Hammond Trail.
4. Install a larger temporary bridge with railings for access over Patrick Creek during summer months.

2.3.1.4 *Hammond Trail*

Existing Conditions

The northern end of the Hammond Coastal Trail currently terminates adjacent to the South Lot. The segment of trail extending south from the South Lot to the north end of Letz Avenue is a Class I, non-motorized path. A bicycle/pedestrian bridge spans Strawberry Creek, allowing direct access to the trail from the parking lot.

Visitors can access the southern parts of Clam Beach by foot via the Hammond Trail from the Murray Road trailhead and seasonally below the Vista Point (beach access through the dunes is closed during the western snowy plover nesting season).

The Hammond Coastal Trail Extension Analysis (Redwood Community Action Agency, June 2001) identifies a trail route passing through Clam Beach Park and ultimately reaching Trinidad.

Options

The County supports efforts to complete the Hammond Trail, including the extension of the trail through Clam Beach County Park to Moonstone Beach. Options for extending the trail include the following:

1. Develop a multi-use trail that runs along the western side of Clam Beach Drive. This trail would provide access for bicycles, pedestrians, and equestrians and would be ADA compliant. The design phase will need to address the potential loss of parking along Clam Beach Drive.

2. Develop a pedestrian trail that is detached from the roadway and passes through the dunes. To avoid impacts to a pedestrian trail from bicycles and equestrians, a “bypass” multi-use trail would be constructed first.

2.3.2

Parking Areas

Existing Conditions

The South Lot is equipped with an unpaved day-use parking area which provides parking for approximately 24 vehicles. The South Lot provides the primary entrance to Clam Beach County Park. As discussed in Section 2.3.1.2, this parking area also serves as the access point for beach driving. Because the parking spaces are not marked, parking frequently occurs in an unorganized and inefficient manner. The number of visitors who want to park at the South Lot day-use parking area during the summer season frequently exceeds the area’s capacity. The South Lot day-use parking area is often congested due to the convergence of vehicles, horses, bicycles, and pedestrians within a small area. The location of the parking area results in high usage near Patrick Creek.

The North Lot is equipped with a paved day-use parking area which provides 11 car-sized parking spaces and 12 recreational vehicle (RV) pull-through spaces (two handicapped). The North Lot serves as an access point for both Clam Beach County Park and Little River State Beach. The North Lot is also used by equestrians for horse trailer parking. The North Lot parking area reaches capacity during some high-use events and on sunny summer days.

On-street parking is available during day use hours on both sides of Clam Beach Drive, which has capacity for approximately 200 vehicles. Parking along Clam Beach Drive is common, especially during special events.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with parking are congestion and impacts to resources:

1. Congestion. The South Lot day-use parking area is often congested due to the convergence of vehicles, horses, bicycles, and pedestrians within a small area, and the lack of parking space markings. The North Lot parking area also frequently reaches capacity.
2. Impacts to resources. The South Lot day use parking area is adjacent to Patrick Creek, resulting in high use.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain existing conditions with no changes to parking facilities.

Option 2 - Improve South Lot Day-use Parking

Re-design the South Lot day-use parking area. Figure 8 depicts a preliminary layout for upgrading the South Lot day-use parking area in conjunction with upgrading the campground. Considerations for designing the parking area include the following:

- A paved day-use parking lot would be created at the southern portion of the existing campground parking lot. The lot will have at 20 to 25 vehicle spaces and ten RV pull-through spaces, and will be compliant with ADA.
- The new day-use parking area would be separated from the campground with vegetation and/or other natural barriers.
- A trail starting from the new day-use parking area would be developed to provide beach access. The trail would cross Patrick Creek at the current crossing location.
- Vehicles would drive from the day-use parking area through a gate and onto the beach, crossing Patrick Creek at the existing crossing location.
- The parking lot would include an adequate number of bicycle racks placed in appropriate locations to maximize efficient circulation and safety.
- The northern portion of the existing day-use parking area lot would be converted to a picnic area.
- The southern portion of the existing day-use parking area would be restored with native vegetation, to provide a buffer for Patrick Creek. An equestrian trail would be routed through this area to separate the horses from vehicles.

Option 3 - Improve South Lot And North Lot Day-use Parking

Improve the South Lot as described in Option 2 above. Improve and enlarge the North Lot to accommodate at least twelve additional vehicles by extending the parking area to the south. The restroom may need to be relocated to maximize parking efficiency.

This option could result in additional disturbance of dune habitat. Further studies would be needed to determine the significance of the impact and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

2.3.3

Campground

Existing Conditions

The South Lot campground includes a paved parking lot and campsites within the adjacent dunes to the north. The campground is bordered by Patrick Creek to the north and west, Clam Beach Drive to the east, and the day-use parking area to the south. Camping is allowed in vehicles occupying a parking space in the parking lot and within the dunes extending 150 feet from the north side of the parking lot.

The parking lot consists of 31 parking spaces, which include nine pull-through spaces for over-sized vehicles. The parking spaces are numbered to facilitate camper registration. The parking area is equipped with two vault toilets, a camp host area, recycling and garbage receptacles, a water spigot, and signage. The adjacent dune area contains 14 developed campsites. Eight campsites are equipped with picnic tables and fire rings with attached grills, while six campsites are equipped with fire rings and grills only.

Camping at Clam Beach is permitted for a maximum of three days within a 30-day period. The overnight camping fee is \$10.00 per vehicle. The walk-in/bike-in camping fee is \$3 per person per night. Occupation of a campsite after 8 p.m. is considered camping and requires a fee. Campers self-register by depositing fee envelopes inside a slotted metal pole located near the restrooms. Park staff verify that campers have paid the appropriate fees. Campers in vehicles who refuse to pay their fee may be issued a violation by Parks staff.

The South Lot campground has limited capacity and is often at or over capacity. The camp sites within the dune area and are not directly associated with parking spots. When the nine developed sites are full, campers often pick other locations in the dunes to set up camp. Campers haphazardly set up tents in the adjacent dune area, which has resulted in a large area being impacted. County Parks staff must go into the dune area to locate campers and collect fees, which is time consuming and can potentially result in conflicts between staff and campers. Some campers come in late and leave early to avoid paying fees and the three-day camping limit. The camp host is frequently disturbed in the middle of the night by campers.

The campground was not originally intended to be a campground. Campsites are poorly defined, resulting in impacts to resources and contentious enforcement. The layout of the campground promotes the gathering of large groups, which

often results in excessive noise and illicit activities. The layout provides minimal separation between visitors, and conflicts are common.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with the campground are user conflicts, management difficulties, and impact to resources:

1. User conflicts. The campground provides minimal separation between campsites, and attracts some visitors who create excessive noise and conduct illicit activities.
2. Management difficulties. The lack of defined camp sites makes it difficult for County Parks staff to enforce limitations on the number of campers, enforce regulations for appropriate use, and verify payment of fees.
3. Impact to resources. The lack of defined camp sites results in haphazard camping within the dunes.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain the Same Level of Camping Spaces

Sub-option 1A – Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to camping facilities.

Sub-option 1B – Upgrade the South Lot Campground

Upgrade the campground to address the identified issues. Figure 10 depicts a preliminary layout for upgrading the campground in conjunction with upgrading the day-use parking area at the South Lot. Considerations for designing the campground include the following:

- Drive-in campsites would be located along a small paved one-way road extending from the existing overnight parking area. Each campsite would have a gravel pad its own fire ring and picnic table. This arrangement would benefit County staff because it would reduce problems with associating a vehicle to a camper.
- Walk-in campsites would be provided in the general area where it currently exists. However, improvements would be made to define the camping sites and prevent the random camping that currently occurs. An area bordered with a fence or bollards would be developed for walk-in camping. This

area would contain communal fire rings and tables. Tent campers would benefit because the campsites would be pre-established and would not require that campers find a spot in the dunes to pitch their tent.

- The northern half of the current overnight/camping parking lot would be dedicated to campers in RVs or other self-contained vehicles. The area could also accommodate horse trailers overnight. Signage and a self-registration station would be visible upon entry to this area. Overnight and RV visitors who use the overnight parking area would use the restrooms located adjacent to this area.
- Symbolic fencing would direct people away from riparian habitat. A beach trail would route campers to a formal trail over Patrick Creek. Trash cans and potable water would be centralized within the tent campground.
- A camp host for the campground would continue to serve as the on-site presence at the County Park. A new, permanent on-site camp host site would be developed in a location separated from the main campground. The camp host site would consist of a trailer pad, with water, electrical power, and a septic holding tank. The design of the site would be simple and visibly compatible with the beach park setting.

The design improvements would assist in separating different user groups, facilitate fee collection and management, and reduce impacts to the dune environment. The upgraded camping facility would be located within the footprint of the area currently used for camping, and environmental impacts to the dunes would be limited to the formal camp sites.

Sub-option 1C – Discontinue Campground at the South Lot, Develop a New Similar-sized Campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue

Discontinue the campground at the South Lot, and develop a new similar-sized (30-site) campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue.

The intent of this sub-option is to segregate users and reduce congestion at the South Lot. The disadvantages include high cost, development within previously undeveloped areas, and moving camping activities closer to plover breeding areas.

Option 2 – Increase the Number of Camping Spaces

Sub-option 2A – Upgrade the South Lot Campground with Expanded Capacity

Expand the South Lot campground to provide additional capacity.

The intent of this sub-option is to provide a facility that meets the usage demands during high-use periods. The disadvantages include development within previously undeveloped areas and increasing congestion at the South Lot.

Sub-option 2B – Upgrade the South Lot Campground with the Same Capacity and Develop a New Large Campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue

Upgrade the South Lot campground and develop a new large (approximately 60-site) campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue.

The intent of this sub-option is to address the existing management issues at the South Lot campground and provide camping facilities within the park that meet the usage demands during high-use periods. The disadvantages include high cost, and development within previously undeveloped areas, and moving camping activities closer to plover breeding areas.

Sub-option 2C – Discontinue the South Lot Campground and Develop New Medium-sized Campgrounds at the North Lot and along Letz Avenue

Upgrade the South Lot campground and develop a new large (approximately 60-site) campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue.

The intent of this sub-option is to segregate users and provide camping facilities within the park that meet the usage demands during high-use periods. The disadvantages include high cost, and development within previously undeveloped areas, and moving camping activities closer to plover breeding areas.

2.2.4

Restrooms

Existing Conditions

The North Lot and South Lot each have restrooms which are equipped with vault toilets. A vault toilet collects the waste in a concrete holding basin which is pumped out periodically by a septic service contractor. The restroom at the South Lot is located on the campground parking lot and serves both campers and day-use visitors. The South Lot restroom is frequently over capacity during the high use season.

The existing restroom facilities were built in 1989 and are past their expected life. The holding basins have increasing potential to develop cracks and leak as the facilities age.

Forty two percent (42%) of people surveyed at Clam Beach indicated that additional facilities were desired. The top two requested facilities were better restrooms and showers.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with the restrooms are impact to resources and limited services:

1. Impact to resources. The existing restrooms have the potential to cause a release of human waste to the soil and groundwater.
2. Limited services. The South Lot restroom receives high usage and provides a primitive level of service.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to restroom facilities.

Option 2 – Replace the Vault Toilets at the South Lot

Replace the existing vault toilets at the South Lot with new vault toilets.

Option 3 – Install a New Restroom with Flush Toilets and Showers at the South Lot

Remove the existing vault toilets at the South Lot and construct a new restroom equipped with flush toilets, sinks, lighting, and showers. The restroom would be relocated and designed to meet the shared needs of campers and day use visitors. A septic system would be installed as part of the restroom upgrade. Electrical power would be extended to the site.

Option 4 – Replace the Vault Toilets at the North Lot

Replace the existing vault toilets at the North Lot with new vault toilets.

Option 5 - Install a New Restroom with Flush Toilets at the North Lot

Replace the existing vault toilets at the North Lot with a new restroom equipped with flush toilets, sinks, and lighting. A septic system would be installed as part of the restroom upgrade. Electrical power would be extended to the site.

2.2.5

Equestrian Facilities

Existing Conditions

Most equestrians bring their horses to Clam Beach with trailers. Trailers are normally parked at the unpaved parking area which is directly across Clam Beach Drive from the South Lot campground, or at the North Lot. The unpaved parking area at the South Lot can accommodate two to three trailers. This parking area is adjacent to a designated equestrian area, which includes three horse hitches and two picnic tables. One disadvantage of the South Lot parking area is that riders must cross Clam Beach Drive to get to the corridor leading to the waveslope.

Issues

Parking – Vehicles with horse trailers can park in the pull-through parking spaces available at the North Lot, and at the South Lot equestrian parking area. The number of pull-through spaces at the North Lot is limited, and they are sometimes taken by small vehicles. Haphazard parking in the North Lot can affect the maneuverability of vehicles with horse trailers, requiring vehicles to back up with the trailer rather than the preferred method of driving forward. At the South Lot, RVs frequently park in the designated equestrian parking area, which limits the number of vehicles with horse trailers that can park there.

Horse Rolling Area – Many equestrians encourage their horses to roll in the sand after their ride is over to release energy. The former preferred rolling area was an undesignated area south of the South Lot day-use parking area. This area is now occupied by a campfire pit and frequently contains broken glass, making it unsuitable for horse rolling. The park does not have a designated area for horse rolling.

Dunes Trail – A trail through the dunes along the roadside fence from Little River to the Clam Beach South Lot was frequently used by equestrians to vary their routes along the beach and get out of the wind. Little River State Beach now prohibits horse riding along this trail. The western snowy plover protection area, which is marked with symbolical fencing and closed during breeding season, limits where horses can access the dunes. There is no designated horse trail through the dunes, and haphazard dunes riding is discouraged at both Little River State Beach and Clam Beach County Park.

Options

The following options were identified for enhancing the opportunities for equestrian recreation and reducing conflicts between horses and other user groups.

- Equestrian Parking Area Expansion – Expand the existing South Lot equestrian parking area toward the north to produce additional pull-through parking spaces. This expansion would result in the loss of a designated equestrian picnic area which is reportedly used infrequently.
- Equestrian Parking at the North Lot – Inquire into the possibility of acquiring the private property east of Clam Beach Drive, across from the entrance of the North Lot. If acquired, construct a parking area with pull-through parking spaces to accommodate vehicles with horse trailers.
- Designated Horse Rolling Area – Designate an area specifically for horse rolling and longing. The preferred area would be flat, located near equestrian parking, and kept free of debris. The preferred area would consist of clean soft sand and would have signage discouraging uses not associated with horses.
- Designated Equestrian Dunes Trail – Establish a designated equestrian trail in cooperation with State Parks to run from Little River State Beach to the Clam Beach vehicle access area. This trail would reduce the use of most of the vegetated dunes area by horses (therefore reducing horse impacts to the dunes ecosystem), while still providing the opportunity to ride and train horses in the soft sand away from the waveslope.

2.2.6

Caretaker Housing

Existing Conditions

Currently the roving park caretaker spends the majority of his time at Clam Beach County Park. However, without on-site employee housing, he has less availability for monitoring the campground at night or responding to incidents.

Options

If a full-time park caretaker position is created for Clam Beach County Park, the County could develop an employee residence on one of the County parcels located east of Highway 101 near Clam Beach. The recommended location would be at the site where rental cabins were located until the early 1970s, to take advantage of the flat grade, road access, and proximity to electrical service. This location would be close enough to allow easy access to the campground but far enough away to provide privacy to the employee. The site could be developed with a concrete pad and all utilities, and the park caretaker could provide a trailer or manufactured home (similar to the arrangement for the park caretakers at Van Duzen and A.W. Way County Parks).

2.2.7

Day-use Facilities

Existing Conditions

The South Lot and North lot are each equipped with picnic tables and fire rings.

Options

The County could develop a new playground to increase the recreational opportunities and encourage usage of the park by families. The presence of a playground near the campground would help create a family atmosphere and encourage additional use of the campground by families.

3.0 MOONSTONE BEACH COUNTY PARK

3.1 SETTING

3.1.1 Geographic Area and Surrounding Properties

Moonstone Beach County Park occupies approximately eight acres north of Little River State Beach (Figure 6). The park is located at the western end of Moonstone Beach Drive, less than a mile west of the communities of Moonstone and Westhaven and approximately four miles south of Trinidad. The park is bordered on the north, south, and east by private property and on the west by the Pacific Ocean (Figure 11). The Beach House, a private facility which is rented out for special events, is located directly east of the park. The Moonstone Grill restaurant (formerly Merryman's Restaurant) is located east of the Beach House and up the hillside overlooking Moonstone Beach.

The northern portion of the Moonstone Beach parking lot is part of Moonstone Beach County Park, while the southern portion is on private property. The County parking area is paved and accommodates approximately five vehicles (including one handicapped parking space). The County-owned area is demarcated by the edge of the pavement and by a signpost at the southwestern corner of the property. The remaining portion of the Moonstone Beach parking area is on private property and fronts the Beach House. The North Coast Land Trust, a local non-profit organization based in Trinidad, holds a public access easement from the property owner, Sam Merryman, for the ocean side of the current parking area which includes approximately half of the existing parking spaces. The surface of the parking area is unpaved (sand and gravel) and accommodates approximately sixty vehicles. The public generally has access to free parking on the private property, except when parking is restricted for events at the Beach House, or when it is closed during severe weather events.

3.1.2 Current Facilities

Park facilities include a small parking area, restroom (portable rental chemical toilet), trash/recycling receptacle, and a doggy pot. The park is not equipped with a campground.

3.1.3 Recreational Uses and Activities

Recreational User Surveys

A total of 377 visitors to Moonstone Beach participated in the *2003 Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach Visitor Study*. Most people surveyed at Moonstone Beach came in groups of two or three and stayed for 45 minutes to two hours. Most visitors (85%) had previously visited Moonstone Beach, and about a third of the respondents reported that they visit the beach more than once a week. The majority of respondents (70%) were residents of Humboldt County, mostly from Arcata or McKinleyville.

Approximately 90 % of the visitors surveyed at Moonstone Beach arrived via motor vehicle, and approximately 7 % arrived on foot. The other mode of transportation listed was bicycle. All but one of the 377 visitors responding to the Moonstone survey accessed the beach from the main parking lot in front of Merryman's beach house.

Most visitors to Moonstone reported engaging in passive recreational activities such as:

- Walking for pleasure;
- Relaxing alone or with friends;
- Enjoying the scenery;
- Exercising the dog;
- Swimming or wading; and
- Playing with the children.

From the 333 respondents who listed at least one value of Moonstone Beach that was important to them, the top values included:

- Scenic beauty;
- Clean;
- Place to get away; and
- Open space; natural setting with little development.

Respondents were asked to identify what factors, if any, detracted from their beach experience. The top responses were: dogs and/or feces on the beach (14%); litter (12%); and lack of parking (9%).

The majority (93%) of Moonstone Beach respondents reported that conditions met their expectations. The top reasons for dissatisfaction were unsanitary toilet or lack of toilet (7 responses), and litter/broken glass (5 responses).

Over half of the respondents (51%) were opposed to a day-use fee at Moonstone Beach. The remaining respondents were split between support of the fee and neutrality on the subject.

3.1.4 *Biological Resources*

Western snowy plovers have not been observed conducting breeding activities within Moonstone Beach County Park, and the park is not expected to provide suitable habitat.

One sensitive plant species is known to occur in the vicinity of Moonstone Beach County Park. Wolf's evening primrose (*Oenothera wolffi*) is known to occur along Scenic Drive, but was not observed within the planning area during the 2003 vegetation surveys.

3.1.5 *Cultural and Historical Resources*

Moonstone Beach is situated within the southern portion of the ancestral Yurok lands. The area has cultural significance as the site of former villages and as a place with connections to native oral history and cosmology. Rock outcrops within the area have ceremonial and spiritual significance to the Yurok people, who continue to use the area for traditional resource gathering and ceremonies.

Along with Clam Beach, Moonstone Beach became popular with white settlers as they established ranches on the bluffs east of Clam Beach in the 1850s and 1860s. Historical activities at the beach include harvesting of natural resources, camping, picnicking, and beachcombing. Beginning in the early 1900s, a series of hotels, resorts, dance halls, and restaurants were constructed in the area.

3.2 *MANAGEMENT*

This section describes four management issues at Moonstone Beach County Park. Potential management actions regarding dog walking and rock climbing are presented as tiered options. Potential management actions regarding sensitive plants and cultural and historical resources are presented as non-tiered options. The difference between tiered and non-tiered options is discussed in Section 1.2. Options involving changes in park regulations would be implemented by revising the ordinances contained in the Humboldt County Code.

3.2.1

Dogs

Existing Conditions

Dogs are required to be under the complete control of their owners at all times. “Control” means that the dog is within view and within voice range of the owner, the dog comes at first calling, and the dog is not allowed to approach people in a threatening manner or harass people, wildlife, other dogs, or horses. Dogs must be leashed in parking and campground and within 100 feet of these areas. County Park regulations require owners to pick up and properly dispose of animal waste.

While the primary issue with dogs at Clam Beach County Park is disturbance to western snowy plovers, the primary issue at Moonstone Beach County Park is the potential for user conflicts due to the large number of dogs and people in close proximity. Moonstone Beach County Park occupies a relatively small area and is subject to periods of high use on sunny days and weekends. Some dog owners have been observed allowing their dogs to run loose at the beach while they sit in their cars or surf.

Confusion exists over what the rules regarding dogs are on the adjacent property managed by the North Coast Land Trust.

Although many dog owners collect the waste from their dogs for proper disposal, those who do not create a nuisance for other visitors and Park staff.

Issues

The primary issues associated with dogs are user conflicts and resource impacts:

1. User conflicts. Some people do not feel safe when unleashed dogs are present on the beach. The potential for conflicts is high because the size of the park is relatively small and many visitors can be concentrated within a small area.

Dogs are required to be under control at all times, but people have different interpretations of what constitutes “control.” The subjective nature of the rule makes enforcement difficult.

2. Resource impacts. Dogs can disturb wildlife. The presence of dog waste on the sand and dunes is a nuisance.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to the rules applicable to dogs within the park.

Option 2 – Owners Carry Leashes

Maintain the existing regulations with minor changes intended to facilitate enforcement. Require dog owners to carry a leash at all times, and require owners to put their dog on the leash if it is determined that the dog is not under complete control of the owner.

Option 3 – Special Dog Area

Designate an area where dogs that are under control are allowed to be off leash. Dogs would be required to be leashed in all other areas of the park. Due to the small size of the park, establishing a designated area may not be feasible.

Option 4 - Dogs Leashed at All Times off the Waveslope

Dogs would be required to be leashed at all times off the waveslope at the park.

Option 5 – Flexible Hour Program

Implement a program that allows dogs to be off leash at designated times and/or on designated days. For example, dogs could be allowed off leash before 9:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m., but would be required to be leashed at all other times. Involve interested stakeholders in the development and implementation of the program.

Option 6 - Dogs Leashed at All Times throughout the Park

Require dogs to be leashed at all times throughout the park.

3.2.2

Rock Climbing

Existing Conditions

Rock climbing is described in Section 1.7.3. Rock climbing at Moonstone Beach is an unregulated activity.

The Yurok people consider large rocks, coastal rocks, rock outcrops, cliffs, boulders, and sea stacks to be cultural, living, religious places. The Yurok Cultural Committee recommended in their cultural resources report for this Master Plan that visitors be discouraged from rock climbing. The Yurok Tribe Council subsequently issued a statement that the Yurok Tribe is opposed to all rock climbing for other than cultural or ceremonial purposes.

Issues

The primary issues associated with rock climbing are resource impacts and public safety:

1. Cultural resource impacts. Rocks at the park have special significance to the Yurok tribe, who oppose non-Indian climbing.
2. Natural resource impacts. Bolting affects the appearance of the rock because the bolts stick out from the rock surface. Bolting may also lead to cracking or staining.
3. Public safety. Use of unsafe bolts by climbers can lead to falls and injuries.

Options

All options would include informational signage explaining the significance of the cliffs and rocks as cultural resources of the Yurok people. For Options 2 through 5, the County ordinance would be modified to contain the new prohibition. Signs would be placed at the parking lot explaining the rule change and citing the ordinance.

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Option 1 consists of continuing to allow rock climbing as it is currently practiced. Permanent anchor bolts for top roping would remain in the rocks and no restrictions on climbing activities would be instituted. The number of bolts could increase in the future if new bolts are set.

If there is an increase in climbing activity under Option 1 to the level where the risk to public safety or the level of impact to resources is unacceptable, Option 2 would be implemented.

Option 2 – Bolt Replacement Allowed, but No New Bolts

Continue to allow current rock climbing activities, but prohibit the setting of new bolts. Replacement of existing bolts would require a permit, which would allow the County to track how often bolts are replaced and what types of replacement bolts are used.

Current climbing activities would not be affected by the implementation of this option. In the future, the number of bolts would remain the same.

If it is determined that public safety is being compromised due to bolt replacement activity (lack of replacement, incorrectly set bolts), or that bolt replacement activity is damaging the rock, Option 3 would be implemented.

Option 3 – No Bolt Replacement and No New Bolts

Continue to allow current rock climbing activities, but prohibit the setting of new bolts and the replacement of existing bolts.

Current climbing activities (technique and activity level) would not immediately be affected by the implementation of this option. In the future, the number of bolts would decrease as existing bolts corrode and are removed or fall out, and climbing activity could be subsequently reduced. Ultimately, the climbing technique of top roping would cease due to the lack of bolts. Other climbing techniques would not be affected.

If top roping results in climber falls or injuries due to the use of unsafe bolts, or if the Yurok Tribe specifically requests the removal of existing bolts, Option 4 would be implemented.

Option 4 – Restrict Climbing Activities, Remove Existing Bolts

Continue to allow current rock climbing activities, but remove all existing bolts and prohibit the top roping technique to prevent the use of existing vegetation as anchors. Other climbing techniques would not be affected.

The rocks in Moonstone Beach County Park would be left without permanent anchor bolts. This option would discourage climbing as recommended by the Yurok Tribe, while still accommodating climbers by allowing techniques other than top roping. This option would likely lead to a reduction in overall climbing activity levels within the park. Rock climbing activities on Flat Top rock, which is located outside the County Park, would not be affected.

If implementation of any of the above options results in the serious injury or death of a climber or it is determined that Options 1-4 are resulting in damage or destruction of the rocks, Option 5 would be implemented.

Option 5 – Prohibit Rock Climbing

Prohibit all forms of rock climbing, including top roping, lead climbing, and bouldering. The County ordinance would be modified to contain the new prohibition. Signs would be placed at the parking lot explaining the rule change and citing the ordinance.

This option would result in the termination of rock climbing within the park except for activities related to Yurok culture and ceremony.

3.2.3 Sensitive Plant Species

Existing Conditions

Sensitive plant species were not observed within the park during the vegetation survey conducted in 2003. Two sensitive plant species (pink sand verbena and Wolf’s evening primrose) have historically been observed within the greater Moonstone Beach area. Wolf’s evening primrose had been successfully introduced along the shoreward side of the Moonstone Beach parking lot, but was removed by ocean waves during storm events in the winter of 2003.

Genetic purity of Wolf’s evening primrose is a concern. Ornamental cultivars and/or hybrids of evening primrose have been introduced along Moonstone Beach Drive, outside the park.

Options

Potential new enhanced measures for protecting sensitive plant species include:

- **Restoration** – Perform restoration activities such as removal of non-native, invasive species and re-vegetation with native plant species. Identify botanical management areas and prioritize restoration efforts by ecological priority and feasibility. Coordinate with other land owners and managers within the planning area.
- **Fencing** – Use fencing to redirect beach access and reduce impacts in areas of sensitive plant occurrences to the maximum extent practicable. Fenced areas would be designated as “botanical management areas” where exotic species removal and preservation of sensitive plants and habitats could occur.

Existing Conditions

The remains of a Yurok village site are located within the vicinity of Moonstone Beach County Park. Rocks located within the park have cultural significance to the Yurok people. The Yurok tribe has identified the following management issues:

- Rock climbing, unauthorized overnight camping, continued erosion at the parking area, and multiple foot trails through vegetation have the potential to adversely effect significant cultural resources. The Yurok tribe believes that recreational uses are not sufficiently monitored.
- Installation of an improved restroom facility would discourage visitors from impacting the vegetated areas.
- Yurok tribal members continue to want access to traditional resources and resource use areas within Yurok ancestral territory, including Moonstone Beach for gathering of seaweed and harvesting of shellfish and fish.

Options

Potential measures for protecting cultural and historic resources include:

- Site Protection - Initiate an effort in conjunction with the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust and the Yurok Tribal Governments to address the exposure of cultural artifacts due to erosion on the property managed by the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust.
- Regulatory Signage – Erect regulatory signage stating that it is a crime to remove, destroy, or deface cultural resources or historical objects (Public Resources Code 5097.59 and Penal Code 655-1/2) or possess human remains (Public Resources Code 5097.99 and Health and Human Safety Code 7050.5). The signage would direct people to contact the Public Works Department if historic or cultural resources are found. (The Public Works Department would contact the cultural resource departments of the Yurok and/or Table Bluff Reservation-Wiyot Tribe if the found objects appear to be cultural in nature.)
- Interpretive Signage – Erect interpretive signage in the Moonstone Beach parking lot conveying the concept that Yurok people traditionally used the coastline for habitation and continue to use the coastline for fishing

(particularly surf fishing), gathering, and ceremony. Consult and work with the Yurok Tribal Governments to design such interpretive signage.

- Traditional Resource Use - Support traditional resource use by all tribal members to the extent that the resources are not negatively impacted. If requested by tribal representatives, develop a memorandum of agreement between the County, the local tribes, and resources agencies to document this support.

3.3 ***FACILITIES***

3.3.1 ***Access***

Existing Conditions

Moonstone Beach is accessed from northbound Highway 101 by taking the Westhaven exit, turning south on Scenic Drive, and then west on Moonstone Beach Drive. The western terminus of Moonstone Beach Drive ends at a parking area, which is parallel and immediately adjacent to the beach.

Vehicle and pedestrian access to the beach is difficult during high use periods when the parking area reaches capacity. Illegal parking along Moonstone Beach Drive contributes to congestion problems. Potholes, erosion, and random parking inhibit efficient circulation and restrict access. When the parking area is full, some people park along Scenic Drive and walk down the side of Moonstone Beach Drive, which creates safety concerns due to the narrow shoulder on the road. The visitor survey conducted at Moonstone Beach indicated that 90% of people accessed the beach by vehicle.

Issues

The primary issue associated with access to the park is limited capacity:

Limited capacity. The park and associated parking areas are relatively small and often become crowded. Improving access conditions and parking at Moonstone Beach would enhance the visitor's experience, provide safe access and circulation, and protect resources.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to access.

Option 2 - Controlled Access

Install an access gate to control vehicle access into Moonstone Beach parking area (for example, for after-hours or when the lot is full). Locate the access gate on Moonstone Beach Road just below the entrance to the Moonstone Grill restaurant's parking lot. When the gate is closed, turn-around movements would be possible in the restaurant parking lot; this will require permission from the property owner. The County would maintain and manage the gate to not adversely impact access to or from the restaurant. The access gate would comply with all applicable emergency access requirements.

Issues with ownership of property below the proposed gate would need to be resolved. This option could potentially increase congestion at the gate location. More detailed feasibility studies would be required to determine whether these concerns can be adequately addressed.

Option 3 - Day Use Fee

Implement a day use fee as a measure to manage access and offset costs. The purpose of implementing a fee would be to re-direct casually interested visitors to other beach access points and prevent the overuse of a limited resource that is over-capacity. The fee concept should include provisions for seasonal park permits.

The County does not own the majority of the parking area and therefore would not be able to implement a fee on the North Coast Land Trust property. Agreements with adjacent landowners would be necessary to implement this option.

Option 4 - Develop Pedestrian Trail to Beach

Develop a pedestrian trail along the shoulder of Moonstone Beach Road between the lower parking area and Scenic Drive. A pedestrian trail would encourage people to visit the park without a vehicle and make parking elsewhere more desirable. When the Hammond Trail is extended to Moonstone the beach trail could provide access to the beach from the Hammond Trail. The County would likely need to acquire right-of-way to allow widening the shoulder for construction of a pedestrian trail.

3.3.2

Parking Areas

Existing Conditions

The County parking area is paved, and accommodates approximately five vehicles plus one handicapped parking space. The remaining portion of the parking area is private property. The parking area located on private property is unpaved (sand and gravel) and accommodates approximately sixty vehicles. The Humboldt North Coast Land Trust has a public access easement over the ocean side of the current parking area that includes approximately half of the parking spaces. The public generally has access to parking on the private property, except when parking is restricted for an event at the Beach House, or when it is closed during severe weather storms.

The number of vehicles at Moonstone Beach consistently exceeds the amount of existing parking spaces. Parking spaces are not marked and parking frequently occurs in an unorganized and inefficient manner. Visitors park along the edge of Moonstone Beach Drive even though it is not allowed.

The parking area managed by the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust has been damaged by erosion and is in need of immediate maintenance. Erosion is resulting in a reduction in space for public parking and threatens to expose cultural artifacts.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with parking areas are limited capacity and impact to resources:

1. Limited capacity. The parking area does not provide enough spaces to meet demand. Parking spaces are being lost due to erosion of the parking area.
2. Impact to resources: Erosion is damaging the parking area and threatens to impact cultural resources.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain existing conditions with no changes to parking facilities.

Option 2 - Parking Lot Improvements

Initiate a coordinated “parking lot improvements project” for Moonstone Beach, including the County’s parking lot and the adjacent parking lot on the private property deeded to the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust. Develop a cooperative management agreement or memorandum of understanding with the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust, which will assist securing grant funding and ensure that shared resources are used efficiently.

This option would increase parking by recapturing the seaward edge of the existing lot and adding striping for more efficient parking, and would also protect cultural resources. Conceptual elements for this project are depicted on Figures 12A and 12B. Design considerations for the parking area at Moonstone Beach include the following:

- Improvements would be designed to maximize vehicle capacity and minimize environmental, cultural resource, visual impacts, and maintenance requirements. The parking lot would be resurfaced and striped, and erosion protection would be installed at the beach edge. ADA access would be incorporated into the project design.
- Erosion control measures such as riprap or sheet piles would be constructed to protect the parking area and enhance public safety during storms and flooding. Riprap of the appropriate size would enable revegetation with native plants that have binding root systems, such as native blackberry, willow, and rose. All erosion control measures would be designed to avoid disrupting the beach’s natural formation processes and causing adverse impacts to sensitive plant species cultural resources.

Option 3 - Develop Parking Area along Scenic Drive

Develop a parking area outside the park within the cul-de-sac at the end of Scenic Drive. This parking could also serve as a trailhead for the Hammond Trail when it is extended to the Moonstone area.

The next step would be to consult with Caltrans (owner of the cul-de-sac property) and nearby residents to identify potential issues. Construction of the parking area would be relatively simple (striping and signage). However, construction of a pedestrian trail from the parking area to the beach would also be required (see Section 3.3.1).

3.3.3

Restrooms

Existing Conditions

The only restroom available to the public at Moonstone Beach is a rented portable toilet located on County property adjacent to the parking lot. The portable toilet is small and often reaches capacity. Portable toilets often present sanitary and odor issues and are more subject to vandalism (e.g., tipping over) than permanent facilities. Forty six percent (46%) of people surveyed at Moonstone Beach indicated that additional facilities were desired; the top two requested facilities were better restrooms and showers.

Issues

The primary facility issues associated with restrooms are cost and insufficient service to the public:

1. Cost. Frequent vandalism increases the cost of maintaining the portable toilet. Installation of a permanent vault toilet would be more cost-effective than continuing to rent a portable toilet.
2. Service. The level of use received by the restroom facility warrants an upgrade in service, to increase capacity and reduce sanitary and odor concerns.

Options

Option 1 - Maintain Existing Conditions

Maintain the existing conditions with no changes to restroom facilities.

Option 2 - Install Permanent Vault Restroom

Replace the existing portable restroom with a permanent vault-style restroom that does not require water, sewer, or electricity. A pre-fabricated restroom could be placed in the general vicinity of the existing toilet with minimal site disturbance. The restroom would require periodic servicing to pump out the waste.

Option 3 - Install Permanent Septic Restroom

Replace the existing portable restroom with a permanent flush toilet restroom with septic system, sinks, and electricity. The permanent restroom would be located in the general vicinity of the existing restroom. Electric power would be installed to provide lighting and to support the septic system. The facility would

also require the addition of water service. The maintenance costs for a flush toilet restroom would be more expensive than a vault toilet restroom. Further study would be required to determine the feasibility of installing a septic system without causing significant impacts to natural or cultural resources.

4.0

CLAM AND MOONSTONE BEACH COUNTY PARKS

4.1

MANAGEMENT

4.1.1

County Parks Staff and Camp Hosts

Existing Conditions

County Parks Staff

The County Parks staff includes the parks supervisor, four park caretakers, and seasonal extra-help positions. One of the park caretakers is assigned with roving duty and has the primary responsibility for maintaining the County's eight coastal parks, including Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks, and the Hammond Trail. The roving park caretaker is assisted by other County Parks staff to the extent possible. For fiscal year 2004-2005, permanent staff logged 750 hours and extra-help staff logged 1,047 hours at Clam Beach County Park.

The general park caretaker duties include the following:

- Maintain park grounds; mow lawns and trails; prune trees and shrubs.
- Maintain park facilities and equipment; perform minor plumbing, carpentry, painting, electrical and cement work.
- Operate and maintain a variety of hand and power tools and equipment.
- Patrol and inspect park areas; correct or report safety hazards; clean, maintain and re-stock restrooms; pick up trash and empty garbage receptacles.
- Provide information to park users regarding facilities, rules, natural features and local attractions.
- Collect fees and oversee the use of parks and facilities; advise park users of park regulations and call for law enforcement assistance when required.
- Issue tickets to vehicles for minor parking infractions (failure to pay park fees, failure to obey posted sign, illegal camping).

In addition, the roving Park caretaker performs the following duties:

- Perform “heavy” (intense) maintenance such as plumbing repairs, painting, and repairs to vandalized facilities.
- Train and coordinate with camp hosts.
- Schedule services such as propane delivers and septic pumping.
- Respond to complaints.

The level of staffing within the Parks Division has not increased since 1980, while the level of use at the County Parks, especially at the coastal parks, has increased substantially. As a result, County Parks staff struggle to provide the minimum services required at the Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks. The roving Park caretaker spends the majority of his time at Clam Beach County Park, however, he also has obligations at seven other parks and the Hammond Trail. County Parks staff devote most of their time keeping up with maintenance and cleaning and checking for payment of camping fees, and have little or no time for other activities such as litter pick-up on the beach or performing outreach to visitors.

As discussed in Section 2.3.2, the layout of the Clam Beach County Park campground leads to considerable inefficiencies in staff time. In addition, staffing levels do not allow for staff to be on duty during the evenings when they would be able to reduce the number of incidents in which people evade fee payment.

County Parks staff can enforce regulations and issue tickets for violations associated with vehicles, but cannot issue tickets directly to individuals. Thus County Parks staff cannot enforce non-vehicle related incidents such as incidents when dogs are not under the control of their owners, when people are camping illegally without a vehicle, or when people are infringing on a plover protection area. County Parks staff cannot make arrests and must contact the Sheriff’s Office for situations where individuals refuse to leave the park.

Camp Hosts

A camp host is assigned year-round to the campground. The County provides the camp host with free overnight camping, trailer, generator, cell phone with local-only service, and compensation of \$350/month (\$50 base amount plus \$300 for opening and closing the access gate on a daily basis). Camp hosts are allowed to provide their own trailer or camper as long as it is approved by park staff. Utility hookups are not available.

Camp hosts are selected through an application process which includes interviewing the six most qualified applicants. Couples may apply to be hosts and are interviewed together. The selected applicant is required to sign a camp host agreement that outlines the duties, benefits, obligations, and termination conditions. Camp hosts are considered contractors rather than County employees. The agreement can be terminated by either party by giving 24-hour written notice.

Due to limited park staffing, the camp host plays an important role in the operation of Clam Beach County Park. Camp host duties include the following:

- Advise park users of camping fees and park rules and regulations.
- Perform minor maintenance functions, pick up litter, replenish restroom supplies, and assist with restroom cleaning.
- Note conditions which may create a hazard to public safety and report the condition to park staff.
- Report incidents such as violations and emergencies to park staff or law enforcement personnel, and (starting in 2006) maintain an incident log.
- Open and close the South Lot vehicle access gate and the North Lot gate at sunrise and sunset.

These duties are consistent with camp hosts at similar parks. The Parks Division is responsible for providing camp hosts with good guidance on the extent of their duties, the limitations of their roles, and procedures for reporting incidents.

Issues

The primary issues associated with County Parks staffing are understaffing and limited enforcement authority:

1. Understaffing. County Parks staff are not specifically assigned to Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks. The staff who are responsible for maintaining Clam and Moonstone Beach County Parks are spread thin and have competing responsibilities. There is a documented need for daily presence by staff who can enforce park regulations.
2. Limited enforcement authority. County Parks staff are only authorized to enforce vehicle-related regulations.

Options

Potential measures for enhancing the ability of County Parks staff to manage the park include:

- Hire a Permanent Park caretaker - Establish a full-time permanent Park caretaker position for operation and maintenance of Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. A permanent caretaker would be able to respond quickly to incidents and maintain a more continual watch over the parks. A permanent caretaker would also be able to lead and participate in more proactive measures such as educational outreach and plover protection activities. Salary and benefits for park caretakers range from \$41,500 to \$51,600.
- Authorize and Train Park caretakers to Issue Citations - Authorize one or more members of County Parks staff to issue citations for misdemeanor violations of state law and infractions of County park ordinances pursuant to Section 5380 of the Public Resources Code (and Section 836.5 of the Penal Code). If a permanent park caretaker is hired, the person hired for this position should have full citation-writing authority for misdemeanors and infractions. In addition, at least one staff person should be trained so he or she can serve as backup when the permanent caretaker is off duty. Salary and benefits for new full-time Park Caretaker II position with full citation-writing authority would be approximately \$54,600.
- Hire a park ranger with peace officer status - Establish a full-time permanent position for a park ranger with peace officer status as defined in Section 830 of the Penal Code. The park ranger would have a law enforcement commission and would be authorized to enforce felonies as well as misdemeanors and infractions similar to a Sheriff's Office deputy. The park ranger would also perform operational duties and potentially some maintenance duties; however, the primary duty would be law enforcement and protection of public safety. Candidates for the position would require specialized training as specified in Section 832 of the Penal Code. Salary and benefits for a new park ranger position would be approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000.

4.1.2

Law Enforcement

Existing Conditions

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office holds primary jurisdiction for law enforcement at Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. The Sheriff's Office staff includes a Beach Deputy who is specifically assigned for law

enforcement at the County's beaches and dunes, including Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. The Beach Deputy is normally on duty four days per week. When the Beach Deputy is off duty, other deputies are available to respond to specific incidents. Enforcement actions include warnings, citations, and arrests, primarily for vehicle infractions and actions that threaten public safety. In addition to law enforcement, the Beach Deputy provides information and education regarding natural resource issues.

Other entities with law enforcement authority include Humboldt County Park Staff, California State Parks Rangers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agents, and California Department of Fish and Game Wardens. Humboldt County Park staff are authorized to write citations for parking and camping violations. State Parks Rangers patrol Little River State Beach, accessing the beach through the vehicle access gate at Clam Beach. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agents will become involved in enforcement if there is a take of a federally listed species (e.g., western snowy plover). Fish and Game Wardens enforce California Fish & Game Code on County and State property.

As described throughout the Master Plan, a law enforcement presence at Clam and Moonstone Beaches has proven necessary for public safety and protection of park resources.

During the visitor use survey and public meetings, many members of the public affirmed that they support increased enforcement of the County's existing park regulations. People noted that with better enforcement and education, many of the user conflicts and concerns regarding impact to resources on the beaches would become much less significant. Many people expressed a preference for increased enforcement over additional regulations, facilities, or other measures.

The Beach Deputy position was historically funded from the State Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant, but funding levels have recently been reduced. In 2005, one-time funds were received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to keep the Beach Deputy position active for the year. If outside funding is not available, County beach patrols will likely be discontinued or severely reduced until new funding is found. A reduction in law enforcement presence on Clam and Moonstone Beaches would significantly exacerbate the management issues currently being faced at the parks.

In general, there is a chronic shortage of available law enforcement personnel, within the Sheriff's Office and other agencies, to adequately enforce regulations on the county beaches. Ideally, State Park Rangers and Sheriff's Department Deputies would coordinate their schedules for maximum visible law enforcement presence on Clam, Little River, and Moonstone Beaches, and coordinate with

County Park staff for maximum coverage. However, coordination between agencies has been difficult due the lack of available personnel.

Issues

The primary issue associated with law enforcement is funding:

1. **Funding.** The current level of law enforcement within the planning area depends on grant funding which is in jeopardy of being reduced or terminated.

Options

Potential options for increasing enforcement include:

- Hire a permanent caretaker and provide training for enhanced enforcement authority, as described in Section 4.1.1.
- Hire a commissioned park ranger as described in Section 4.1.1.
- Encourage the Sheriff's Office to continue to fund the Beach Deputy position in the event that the OHV grant or other grant funds are not available.
- Increase education outreach and improve signage to increase awareness of County regulations.
- Pursue coordinated, cooperative management activities within the planning area, which includes private property and State lands. Allocate appropriate staffing levels to carry out the duties of establishing and maintaining these relationships and/or agreements.

The following entities have been identified as potential key participants in a cooperative management approach.

- **State Parks:** The County would coordinate with State Parks regarding shared time commitments for beach patrol.
- **Adjacent Property Owners:** The County would pursue developing a cooperative agreement (e.g. an Memorandum of Understanding) among property owners in and around the planning area to coordinate management activities, including enforcement efforts.
- **Local Organizations:** The County would coordinate management activities with local organizations with the goal of increasing the public's knowledge of and compliance with County Park regulations on Clam and Moonstone Beaches. Coordinated management activities would include education and outreach.

- State Lands Commission: The County would acquire a lease from the State Lands Commission to facilitate County management and enforcement in the tidal area. The lease would clearly specify the County's authority to enforce County regulations on lands under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission.

4.1.3

Signage

Existing Conditions

Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks are equipped with assorted signs providing regulatory and information. Clam Beach County Park is equipped with a welcome sign, posted park regulations, three four-sided kiosks, and educational signs. Educational signs advise about the beach's sensitive habitats and species, including guidelines on "Plover Nest Protection Rules" and actions visitors can take to help protect the Western snowy plover. Moonstone Beach County Park has limited regulatory signage and no place name or interpretive signage.

The County does not have a signage program with standards for consistency, developing effective content, and minimizing aesthetic impacts. An effective signage program can encourage visitor appreciation of park resources and increase the public's knowledge of park regulations. According to the *2003 Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach Visitor Study*, roughly half of the visitors surveyed indicated that they did not know, or were unsure, what the County regulations (regarding open hours, camping, vehicles, dogs, and fires on the beach) are at the beach they were visiting. Some visitors are not aware of where the waveslope begins and where driving is not allowed.

Signage is especially needed at beach access points along the Hammond Trail south of Clam Beach County Park, as well as access points that currently lack official signage, such as Moonstone Beach.

Options

A signage program is needed for the planning area to enhance public awareness of park features and resources while encouraging responsible public use. The signage program could address beach access locations between Moonstone Beach to the north and Hiller Road to the south, and could be used to establish standards for all coastal County Parks. The intent of the signage program would be to replace existing signs rather than adding additional signs.

The signage program would establish standards for directional/place-name, regulatory, and interpretive signage. Signs would be designed and installed in a

manner that provides place recognition and visual continuity for the entire planning area, and doesn't crowd the landscape or beach view. The design and placement of new signage should be aesthetically pleasing, engaging, and readily visible. Where appropriate, a map of all coastline access points within the plan area would be included. The program would include an inventory of existing signs by type and identify gaps. The program would be developed in close coordination with docent groups and other stakeholder groups as appropriate.

Regulatory signage throughout the planning area would be enhanced to better convey park regulations, especially the areas with a high degree of user conflicts. The fines and/or penalties for violators of park regulations would be included on enforcement signs. Visual elements and regulatory language for signage would be clear, attention grabbing, consistent.

Habit-changing signage would be designed and installed at appropriate locations. Examples of habit-changing language include "Keep Our Beaches Beautiful" or "No Littering."

The interpretive elements of the signage program would be based on the Humboldt Bay Interpretive Signing Program Manual, which was developed by the Redwood Community Action Agency in 2003. Interpretive signage to educate visitors about the area's unique features, natural resources, and cultural significance would be developed in a consistent manner and in consultation with the Wiyot and Yurok tribes and dune ecologists. The Humboldt Bay Interpretive Signing Program manual includes at least two artistic sign panel templates that are appropriate for use within the Clam and Moonstone Beaches planning area. The manual also provides recommendations for wayside sign base and kiosk structural alternatives, along with a list of fabricators and manufacturers.

4.1.4 Public Outreach

Existing Conditions

Communication with the public is an integral tool to achieve success with planning and management efforts. The Parks Division is not funded to implement an educational outreach program.

Options

Potential measures for enhancing outreach efforts include:

- Actively support and coordinate with local organizations such as Friends of the Dunes that offer education outreach and resource protection programs for beach and dunes habitat.

- Develop a County-wide educational outreach program to increase the public's knowledge of County beach and park regulations and understanding of natural resource and habitat protection issues.
- Engage and collaborate with government agencies that have a stake in the management area, including California State Parks and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to identify partnering opportunities for public outreach.
- Design educational materials such as brochures and field guides for County beach and park visitors and user groups regarding interpretive areas, regulations, and special/restricted use areas.
- Include public outreach in the duties of a new park caretaker position (Section 4.1.1).

5.0 *IMPLEMENTATION*

5.1 *GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS*

5.1.1 *Overview*

Chapters 2 through 4 of this Master Plan presents a series of options for management practices and facility improvements at Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks. However, the Master Plan does not make legally binding decisions. Implementation of specific elements within the Master Plan will require authorization to proceed from the County Board of Supervisors and compliance with applicable regulations. It is expected that the Board will initiate implementation of the Master Plan elements in phases based on level of need, funding, and coordination with other relevant projects.

Implementation of a specific element within the Master Plan will begin with a staff report by the Public Works Department at the regular Board of Supervisors meeting. The staff report will present the background for the issue, discuss the financial impacts, and describe the recommended action as well as alternative actions. The Board may direct staff to take no action, to make certain modifications to the recommended action before proceeding, to implement the recommended action as presented, or to implement an alternative action.

Options for management practices are summarized on Tables 6 through 8. As discussed in Section 1.2, some of the management practices are presented as tiered options to allow the County to make adjustments based on changing conditions at the parks. Other management practices are non-exclusive and can be implemented together or separately. Implementation of the management practices is expected to change during the ten-year horizon of the Master Plan based on changing conditions.

Options for facility improvements are summarized on Tables 9 and 10. Because several of the facility improvement options are interrelated, implementation of these options would be coordinated to the extent possible. Facility development projects will require more detailed feasibility and design studies and acquisition of funding prior to implementation.

**Table 6
Clam Beach County Park - Management Options**

Topic	Option	Sub-option	Description
Dogs	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Owners Carry Leashes
	3		Special Dog Area
	4		Dogs Leashed at All Times off the Waveslope
	5		Dogs Leashed at All Times throughout the Park
Vehicle Driving on the Beach	1	1A	Maintain Existing Conditions - No Changes
		1B	Maintain Existing Conditions - Enhanced Enforcement and Monitoring
	2		New Permit Program with No Gate Closure
	3	3A	Seasonal Permit Program and Gate Closure - Permit Program and Gate Closure from Memorial Day through Labor Day
		3B	Seasonal Permit Program and Gate Closure - Permit Program and Gate Closure from March 1 through September 30
	4		Year-round Permit Program and Gate Closure
Camping	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Day Use Only
Campfires	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		New Restrictions on Campfires
	3		Prohibit Fires on the Beach
Plovers	1		Continue with Existing Measures
	2		Continue with Existing Measures and Implement Additional Measures
	3		Incidental Take Permit
Sensitive Plant Species	(Non-tiered)		Restoration
			Fencing
			Designated Trail System
Cultural and Historical Resources	(Non-tiered)		Consult on Resource Management
			Consult on Interpretive Signage
			Support Traditional Resource Use

Table 7
Moonstone Beach County Park - Management Options

Topic	Option	Description
Dogs	1	Maintain Existing Conditions
	2	Owners Carry Leashes
	3	Special Dog Area
	4	Dogs Leashed at All Times off the Waveslope
	5	Flexible Hour Program
	6	Dogs Leashed at All Times throughout the Park
Rock Climbing	1	Maintain Existing Conditions
	2	Bolt Replacement Allowed, but No New Bolts
	3	No Bolt Replacement and No New Bolts
	4	Restrict Climbing Activities, Remove Existing Bolts
	5	Prohibit Rock Climbing
Sensitive Plant Species	(Non-tiered)	Restoration
		Fencing
Cultural and Historical Resources	(Non-tiered)	Site Protection
		Regulatory Signage
		Interpretive Signage
		Support Traditional Resource Use

Table 8
Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Parks - Management Options

Topic	Option	Description
Staffing and Camp Hosts	(Non-tiered)	Hire a Permanent Park Caretaker
		Authorize and Train Park caretakers to Issue Citations
		Hire a park ranger with peace officer status
Law Enforcement	(Non-tiered)	Additional Funding
		Expand Park Caretaker Citation Authority
		Increase Education Outreach and Improve Signage
		Cooperative Agreements
Signage		Signage Program
Educational Outreach		Educational Outreach Program

**Table 9
Clam Beach County Park - Facility Options**

Topic	Option	Sub-option	Description
Vehicle Access to Park	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Formal Park Entrance and Traffic Calming
	3		Single Entrance and Single Exit, with One-way Traffic
Vehicle Access to Waveslope	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Redesign Vehicle Beach Access
	3		Relocate Vehicle Beach Access
Pedestrian Access to Beach	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Designated Access Points and Trails
	3		ADA-Compliant Floating Boardwalk
	4		Expand Temporary Bridge over Patrick Creek
Hammond Trail	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Multi-use Trail along the Road
	3		Pedestrian and Horse Trail off the Road
Parking Areas	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Improve South Lot Day-use Parking
	3		Improve South Lot and North Lot Day-use Parking
Campground	1	1A	Maintain the Same Level of Camping Spaces - Maintain Existing Conditions
		1B	Maintain the Same Level of Camping Spaces - Upgrade the South Lot Campground
		1C	Maintain the Same Level of Camping Spaces - Discontinue Campground at the South Lot, Develop a New Similar-sized Campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue
	2	2A	Increase the Number of Camping Spaces - Upgrade the South Lot Campground with Expanded Capacity
		2B	Increase the Number of Camping Spaces - Upgrade the South Lot Campground with the Same Capacity and Develop a New Large Campground near the North Lot or along Letz Avenue
		2C	Increase the Number of Camping Spaces - Discontinue the South Lot Campground and Develop New Medium-sized Campgrounds near the North Lot and along Letz Avenue
Restrooms	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Replace the Vault Toilets at the South Lot
	3		Install a New Restroom with Flush Toilets and Showers at the South Lot
	4		Replace the Vault Toilets at the North Lot
	5		Install a New Restroom with Flush Toilets and Showers at the North Lot
Equestrian Facilities	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Equestrian Parking Area Expansion
	3		Equestrian Parking at the North Lot
	4		Designated Horse Rolling Area
	5		Designated Equestrian Dunes Trail
Caretaker House	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Develop Caretaker House on County Property
Day-use Facilities	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		New Playground

Table 10
Moonstone Beach County Park - Facility Options

Topic	Option	Sub-option	Description
Access	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Controlled Access
	3		Day Use Fee
	4		Develop Pedestrian Trail to Beach
Parking Areas	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Parking Lot Improvements
	3		Develop Parking Area along Scenic Drive
Restrooms	1		Maintain Existing Conditions
	2		Install Permanent Vault Restroom
	3		Install Permanent Septic Restroom

5.1.2 Approach

Implementation of the Master Plan will include the following elements:

- Public Involvement – The Public Works Department will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the public regarding management of the parks. The Public Works Department will seek to develop opportunities for the public to participate directly, such as assistance with restoration projects or monitoring of park conditions.
- Consultation with Tribes – The Public Works Department will consult with the Yurok and Wiyot tribes on an ongoing basis and seek their active participation and support.
- Monitoring – Consistent with the Adaptive Management model presented in Section 1.2, a monitoring plan for evaluating management actions will be developed concurrent with implementation of Master Plan elements. Examples of potential indicators include visitation rates, visitor feedback, facility usage, number of citations and reported incidents, survival rates of western snowy plovers at Clam Beach, diversity and abundance of native plants, areal extent of invasive/non-native plants, and the rate of erosion at the Moonstone Beach parking lot.

5.1.3 California Environmental Quality Act

During the development of the Master Plan, there was discussion of preparing an environmental review document for the plan under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, it was subsequently determined that development of the Master Plan and approval by the Board are exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Article 18, Section 15262 (Feasibility and

Planning Studies) because the Master Plan itself does not make binding decisions, nor does it create legal obligations or entitlements.

Implementation of specific elements described in the Master Plan may require environmental permits and environmental review under CEQA, including analysis of cumulative impacts. Some elements of the Master Plan do not constitute projects as defined under CEQA and are not subject to CEQA review. Facility redevelopment and habitat restoration projects will require further design and engineering prior to review under CEQA. The CEQA review for these projects will be conducted closer to the point when funding is secured, so that the most recent information regarding environmental conditions can be incorporated.

5.1.4 Funding

Some of the management practice options within the Master Plan are primarily administrative, and the cost for implementation would be covered by the regular County Parks budget. Options that require more extensive effort such as permitting or developing new programs may require a supplemental budget from the General Fund or outside funding. The majority of the costs for restoration and facility development projects would be paid by outside funding. Funds are available from the Per Capita Program established for the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (the “Park Bond”). The County is eligible to obtain funding from a variety of federal, state, and local funding sources for implementing the Master Plan. In addition, the County may elect to establish partnerships with other organizations such as public agencies and non-profit entities who have access to additional grant funding sources. A list of potential federal, state, and local funding sources is included in Appendix H.

5.2 PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

This section summarizes the options which were identified as “preferred” by Public Works Department staff based on the following criteria:

- Consistency with the goals of the County Parks system
- Level of need based on conditions at the parks at the time the Master Plan was finalized
- Sufficiency in addressing the identified issues
- Public input regarding preferences and concerns

- Cost-effectiveness

Approval of the Master Plan by the Board of Supervisors does not mean that the Board agrees with or approves of the preferred options identified in the Master Plan.

5.2.1 Clam Beach County Park - Management Practices

5.2.1.1 Dogs

Preferred Option	Option 2 – Owners Carry Leashes
Implementation Steps	1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Change County ordinance 3. Revise signage
Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$500 (General Fund)
Time Required	2-3 months

5.2.1.2 Vehicle Driving on the Beach

Preferred Option	Option 3B – Permit Program and Seasonal Gate Closure from March 1 through September 30
Implementation Steps	1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Prepare application for Coastal Development Permit 3. Receive Coastal Development Permit from Coastal Commission 4. Change County ordinance 5. Revise signage 6. Develop vehicle permit program 7. Purchase and install cardlock system 8. Provide public notice of policy change
Costs	<u>One-time Costs</u> Staff time for developing permit program, acquiring the Coastal Development Permit, and administrative activities: \$5,000 (General Fund) Pre-design services, design, contracting, equipment, construction, and project management to provide electric

	<p>service at the gate and install a cardlock system: \$75,000 (General Fund or Park Bond)</p> <p><u>Annual Costs</u> Staff time for administration of program: \$1,000 Electricity: \$200 Maintenance (labor and expenses): \$3,000</p>
Time Required	<p>Develop application for Coastal Development Permit: 1 month</p> <p>Review of application by Coastal Commission: 4 months to 2 years</p> <p>Change ordinance, revise signage, develop permit program, install system: 3-4 months</p>

5.2.1.3 *Camping*

Preferred Option	Option 1 – Maintain Existing Conditions
Implementation Steps	None
Costs	No change
Time Required	Not applicable

5.2.1.4 *Campfires*

Preferred Option	Option 2 – New Restrictions on Campfires
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Change County ordinance 3. Revise signage
Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$500 (General Fund)
Time Required	2-3 months

5.2.1.5

Plovers

Preferred Option	Option 2 – Continue with Existing Measures and Implement Additional Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat restoration • Vehicle restrictions • Dog restrictions • Enforcement • Signage • Predator control
Implementation Steps	Habitat restoration: see Section 5.2.2.1 Vehicle restrictions: see Section 5.2.1.2 Dog restrictions: see Section 5.2.1.1 Enforcement: see Section 5.2.5.1 Signage: see Section 5.2.5.3 Predator control: 1. Purchase two new animal-proof trash receptacles for the North Lot and South Lot 2. Install receptacles
Costs	Equipment and freight: \$3,500 (Park Bond)
Time Required	2-3 months

5.2.1.6

Sensitive Plant Species

Preferred Option	Option 2 - Continue with Existing Measures and Implement Additional Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat restoration • Designated trails
Implementation Steps	See Section 5.2.2.1
Costs	See Section 5.2.2.1
Time Required	See Section 5.2.2.1

5.2.1.7 *Cultural and Historical Resources*

Preferred Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If requested by tribal representatives, develop a memorandum of agreement between the County, the local tribes, and resources agencies to document support for traditional use by tribal members. • Consult with the Yurok and Wiyot Tribal Governments on interpretive signage.
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact tribal representatives 2. Incorporate input from the tribes into the signage program.
Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$250 (General Fund)
Time Required	1-2 months

5.2.2 *Clam Beach County Park – Redevelopment and Restoration Projects*

5.2.2.1 *Joint Project with California Department of Parks and Recreation*

Preferred Option	<p>Integrated redevelopment and restoration project that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements at North Lot (better drainage, floating boardwalk, interpretive signs) • Dune restoration between North Lot and Strawberry Creek • Extension of Hammond Trail along Clam Beach Drive
Implementation Steps	<p>Phase One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval by County Board of Supervisors (issued at May 16, 2006 Board meeting) • Develop detailed project proposal. • Meet with stakeholder groups. • Conduct on-site tours. • Make adjustments to the project proposal. • Present the refined project proposal to the Board of Supervisors for review and comment. • Make adjustments to the project proposal. • Develop initial study in accordance with California

	<p>Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-day review period. • Revise the CEQA document and project plans as needed. • Present the CEQA document to the Board for approval. <p>Phase Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue grant funding opportunities. • Acquire required permits. • Design and construction.
Costs	<p>Phase One: \$3,000 (General Fund) (Public Works costs only, does not include costs for the California Department of Parks and Recreation)</p> <p>Phase Two: To be determined. Most of the funding would be provided by granting agencies.</p>
Time Required	<p>Phase One: 7 to 9 months</p> <p>Phase Two: 4 to 8 years to complete entire project</p>

5.2.2.2 *South Lot Redevelopment*

Preferred Option	<p>Integrated redevelopment and restoration project that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal park entrance and traffic calming measures • Improvements to the day-use parking area • Redesigned vehicle access point • Upgraded campground • Improvements to pedestrian trails • Upgraded restroom • Restoration of riparian areas
Implementation Steps	<p>Phase One:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Evaluate funding opportunities 3. Refine project concepts 4. Public involvement activities 5. Preliminary design 6. Develop CEQA document 7. Obtain Coastal Development Permit and other

	environmental permits as needed
	Phase Two: Detailed design and construction
Costs	Phase One: \$10,000 - \$14,000 (Outside funding)
	Phase Two: To be determined. Most of the project would be financed with outside funding.
Time Required	Phase One: 12 to 18 months
	Phase Two: 4 to 6 years to complete entire project

5.2.2.3 *North Lot Restroom*

Preferred Option	Option 5 (Replace the Vault Toilets)
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purchase new equipment 2. Dismantle and dispose of old structures 3. Install new facilities
Costs	<p>Pre-design services, design, contracting, equipment, construction, and project management:</p> <p>One-seat system: \$40,000 (Park Bond funds)</p> <p>Two-seat system: \$60,000 (Park Bond funds)</p>
Time Required	Purchase and construction: 6 months

5.2.2.4 *Employee Housing*

Preferred Option	Develop site for employee housing (concrete slab and utilities for employee-provided trailer or manufactured home)
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Modify zoning and General Plan designations to allow residential use 3. Obtain building permit and Coastal Development Permit 4. Install septic system or sewer hook-up.
Costs	One-time costs:

	Administrative activities - \$3,000 (General Fund) Construction of a concrete pad with utility connections - \$45,000 - \$50,000 (General Fund)
	Annual costs: Utilities - \$3,000 (General Fund)
Time Required	Modify zoning and General Plan designations: 9 months to 1 year Develop application for Coastal Development Permit: 1 month Review of application by Coastal Commission: 4 months to 2 years Design and construction: 4 to 6 months

5.2.3 Moonstone Beach County Park – Management Practices

5.2.3.1 Dogs

Preferred Option	Option 4 – Dogs Leashed at All Times off the Waveslope
Implementation Steps	1. Approval by County Board of Supervisors 2. Change County ordinance 3. Revise signage
Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$500 (General Fund)
Time Required	2 to 3 months

5.2.3.2 Rock Climbing

Preferred Option	The Public Works Department recommends further consultation with the Yurok Tribe and local rock climbing organizations before identifying a preferred option.
Implementation Steps	1. Contact representatives from the Yurok tribe and local rock climbing organizations for further discussions. 2. Based on the results of these discussions, the Public Works Department will identify a preferred option and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$500 (General Fund)
Time Required	4-6 months

5.2.3.3 *Sensitive Plant Species*

Preferred Option	Option 1 – Maintain Existing Conditions
Implementation Steps	None
Costs	Not applicable
Time Required	Not applicable

5.2.3.4 *Cultural and Historical Resources*

Preferred Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If requested by tribal representatives, develop a memorandum of agreement between the County, the local tribes, and resources agencies to document support for traditional use by tribal members. • Consult with the Yurok and Wiyot Tribal Governments on interpretive signage.
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact tribal representatives 2. Incorporate input from the tribes into the signage program.
Costs	Staff time for administrative activities: \$250 (General Fund)
Time Required	1-2 months

5.2.4 *Moonstone Beach County Park – Redevelopment and Restoration Projects*

5.2.4.1 *Restroom*

Preferred Option	Option 2 (Install Permanent Vault Restroom)
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Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare application for Coastal Development Permit. 2. Receive Coastal Development Permit from Coastal Commission. 3. Purchase and install new toilets
Costs	<p>Permitting: \$750 (Park Bond funds)</p> <p>Pre-design services, design, contracting, equipment, construction, and project management: One-seat system: \$43,000 (Park Bond funds) Two-seat system: \$63,000 (Park Bond funds)</p>
Time Required	<p>Develop application for Coastal Development Permit: 1 month</p> <p>Review of application by Coastal Commission: 4 months to 8 months</p> <p>Purchase and construction: 6 months</p>

5.2.4.2 *Parking Area Improvement*

Preferred Option	<p>Integrated redevelopment and restoration project that would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to lower parking area • Construction of rock slope protection to protect parking area from future wave action
Implementation Steps	<p>Phase One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval by County Board of Supervisors • Consultation with adjacent private property owners, Humboldt North Coast Land Trust, the Yurok tribe, and the general public • Preliminary design • Obtain Coastal Development Permit <p>Phase Two: To be determined. Most of the funding would be provided by granting agencies or Park Bond funds.</p>
Costs	<p>Phase One: \$3,000 (General Fund)</p> <p>Phase Two: To be determined. Most of the funding would be provided by granting agencies.</p>

Time Required	<p>Consultation and preliminary design: 6 months</p> <p>Develop application for Coastal Development Permit: 1 month</p> <p>Review of application by Coastal Commission: 4 months to 2 years</p> <p>Phase Two: 1 to 2 months for construction</p>
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5.2.5 Clam Beach and Moonstone Beach County Park – Management Practices

5.2.5.1 Staffing and Enforcement

Preferred Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a permanent caretaker. • Provide the new caretaker and one existing caretaker with training to write citations. • Encourage the Sheriff’s Office to continue funding the Beach Deputy.
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a new permanent caretaker position. 2. Allocate funds for the new position in the Parks Division budget. 3. Amend the Humboldt County Code to confer citation-issuing authority to designated employees. 4. Modify the job specifications as needed. 5. Post notice for position. 6. Interview candidates and make selection. 7. Provide training. 8. Manage staff schedules to ensure daily coverage at the parks during the summer. 9. Maintain contact with the Sheriff’s Office on the status of the Beach Deputy.
Costs	<p>Salary and benefits for new full-time position for Park Caretaker II: \$54,600 (General Fund)</p> <p>Training for existing caretaker: \$500 (General Fund)</p> <p>Annual cost for vehicle: \$6,000 (General Fund)</p> <p>Annual salary increase for existing caretaker after training: \$3,000 - \$6,000 (General Fund)</p>
Time Required	4 to 6 months

5.2.5.2 Signage

Preferred Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a signage program for coastal County parks that would include standards and protocols. • Replace the existing park signs with new signs developed according to the new signage program.
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval from County Board of Supervisors 2. Pursue funding from a grant agency. 3. Develop standards and protocols. 4. Obtain Coastal Development Permit. 5. Construct new signs.
Costs	<p>Cost to develop grant applications: \$2,000 - \$4,000 (General Fund)</p> <p>Estimated cost for complete signage program: \$100,000 - \$125,000 (grant)</p>
Time Required	<p>Grant application: 2 months</p> <p>Complete signage program: 1-2 years</p>

5.2.5.3

Educational Outreach

Preferred Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include public outreach in the duties of a new park caretaker position. • Actively support and coordinate with local organizations.
Implementation Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate outreach duties in the job description of a new caretaker position (see Section 5.2.5.1). 2. Continue contact with local educational organizations.
Costs	<p>Staff time for administrative activities: \$0 (included within existing Parks Division budget)</p>
Time Required	Ongoing

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