



# King Range National Conservation Area

California

The King Range National Conservation Area (NCA) is administered by the Bureau of Land Management Arcata Field Office in Humboldt and Mendocino counties, California. The NCA encompasses 68,000 acres along 35 miles of coastline roughly 200 miles north of San Francisco. An abrupt wall of mountains towers 4,000 feet above this spectacular and remote stretch of the “Lost Coast,” inspiring the nation’s first NCA designation in 1970 by Congress. Also within the King Range NCA is the 43,000-acre King Range Wilderness, designated in 2006.



## King Range Alliance

The King Range Alliance maximizes collaboration in conservation and public education. The KRA member groups are Friends of the Lost Coast, Mattole Restoration Council, Mattole Salmon Group, and Sanctuary Forest. The group works on coastal prairie and native grassland

restoration, estuary restoration at the mouth of the Mattole River, and streamflow enhancement.

Educational activities include field trips, hands-on workshops, lectures, classroom lessons, and more.

The Mattole River watershed provides 56 miles of habitat for coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead, all listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Ongoing restoration efforts by the KRA have made substantial progress improving habitat conditions.

The Nick’s Interns program provides an opportunity for local high school-aged youth to work with KRA partners and the BLM each summer through paid internships. It is named in memory of former BLM intern Nick Raphael.

## Tribal Partnerships

The King Range NCA is within the homeland of the Dene-speaking Mattole and Sinkyone peoples. Tribal ceremonial use and traditional gatherings of plants for food, regalia, and basketry regularly take place. The BLM works with Tribal partners to restore natural and cultural landscapes, and to identify, monitor, and protect cultural sites.

## Recreation Opportunities

King Range visitors enjoy backpacking, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, horseback riding, mushroom collecting, mountain biking, hunting, surfing, camping, and ocean fishing.



The BLM provides developed recreation areas throughout the NCA, including:

- Approximately 85 miles of hiking trails, including 25 miles of wilderness coastal backpacking along the world famous Lost Coast Trail
- 24 miles of singletrack mountain bike trails in the Paradise Royale trail system
- Four campgrounds with a total of 53 sites
- 45 miles of unpaved roads provide access to trailheads and scenic touring
- Four day use areas in Shelter Cove provide beach access and outstanding coastal views
- Honeydew day use area provides access to Honeydew Creek
- King Range Visitor Center is open Monday through Friday, year-round

## Visitation

The King Range NCA receives an average of 135,000 visits and issues about 12,000 wilderness backpacking permits annually. Overnight public visitation in the Wilderness is managed through a daily quota and permit system, available through [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov):

- **May 15 - September 15:** 60 persons/permits per day are available.  
**September 16 - May 14:** 30 persons/permits per day are available.

Tides, waves, and storms dramatically affect the ability to safely travel on the Lost Coast Trail. BLM staff and partners spend a considerable amount of time helping visitors plan their trips around these safety concerns.

## Geology

The King Range NCA lies immediately southeast of one of the most geologically active areas in North America. Three large tectonic plates converge just offshore at a geologic feature known as the Mendocino Triple Junction, causing large and frequent earthquakes. These compressional forces produce one of the highest geologic uplift rates in the world, which accounts for the high elevation and steep topography of the King Range.

## Lighthouses

The Punta Gorda Lighthouse, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, perches on an outcrop three miles south of the Mattole Campground. This is a popular destination for visitors to the King Range NCA.

At the southern end of the King Range NCA, the Cape Mendocino Lighthouse resides at Mal Coombs Park in Shelter Cove. This lighthouse is largely considered the centerpiece of the coastal community.

Volunteers with the Cape Mendocino Lighthouse Society maintain the lighthouse and open it to the public during the summer months.

The northernmost successful breeding site for northern elephant seals is located near the Punta Gorda Lighthouse. Pup counts have increased by 87 percent since 2018.

## Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

- The Mill Creek ACEC, approximately 950 acres, protects the tributary to the Mattole River, and the high quality remnant of low-elevation old-growth Douglas fir forest.
- The Mattole ACEC, approximately 800 acres, protects significant cultural sites, dune ecosystems, and riparian/wildlife values.

## Grazing Allotments

The King Range NCA also has grazing opportunities. Currently, there are five active livestock grazing allotments where ranchers have permits to graze cattle.

