

## Dear Reader

It's hard to believe that almost three years have passed since the interim management plan was completed for the South Spit. The area is now a popular coastal destination for area residents, and natural resource restoration actions are in full gear. The three-year mark signals that it's time to look back at the results of interim plan implementation and to move forward with development of a long-term management plan for the area. Some specific improvements made under the interim plan include public use provisions:

- New picnic tables, restrooms and grills have been installed at the north and south ends of the management area.
- Vehicle corridors have been designated to allow for continued wave slope access while protecting fragile dune habitat.
- Pedestrian and hunter access/parking areas have been constructed.
- The area is open to day use, with provisions allowing early access for traditional activities such as brant hunting.

A 2004 survey showed that approximately 95 percent of area users were satisfied with the visitor and recreation management of the area. The South Spit hosted an estimated 50,000 visitors in 2005.

Equally exciting progress has been made in the restoration of native wildlife and vegetation:

- The 20-acre Western snowy plover restoration area on the north end of the spit has been treated twice to improve and maintain desired habitat conditions.
- Western snowy plovers have returned to the area for nesting, with two successful fledglings in 2005. Visitors have respected symbolic fencing erected to protect the bird's nest sites.
- Over 20 acres of European beach grass have been manually removed to restore native dune vegetation on the south end of the spit.
- Available habitat for the endangered dune plant, beach layia, has been expanded from 34 acres to over 54 acres.

These examples are just some of the successes that the managing agencies feel demonstrate the effectiveness of the interim plan. One purpose of this plan was to provide a baseline for use in determining appropriate long-term management actions – in essence, to implement some actions in the short-term to see how they worked. Because of the high level of overall success of the interim plan in reaching public access and resource protection goals, the managing partners are proposing to carry this plan forward, with minor modifications, as the long-term management plan. As we begin the process to consider adoption of the interim plan for the long-term, we are requesting public input to make sure management goals and actions for the area are on the right track. The BLM and Humboldt County are currently completing a memorandum of understanding to formalize our existing cooperative relationship in management of the 15.5 acre Table

Bluff County Park. These county park lands will also be included in the long-term cooperative management planning effort.

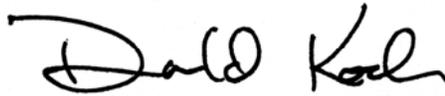
The public will have several opportunities to provide input in the planning process. First, the scoping process will run through **May 19**, 2006. Public input from scoping comments will be incorporated into a preliminary management plan and environmental assessment/mitigated negative declaration which will also be available for public comment later this year. Necessary changes will then be made prior to adoption of a long-term final plan. The attached question and answer sheet contains more detailed background information on the planning process and instructions on how to provide input.

The managers of the South Spit thank the public for working with us to make the area a coastal open-space asset to residents and visitors to Humboldt County. If you have any questions on the planning process or public input provisions, please contact BLM Arcata Field Office Planner Bob Wick at (707)825-2321.

Sincerely,



Lynda Roush  
Bureau of Land Management  
Arcata Field Manager



Don Koch  
California Department of Fish and Game  
Regional Manager

Attachment: South Spit Plan Information Sheet.