

# KING RANGE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE JANUARY 2004

## A RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE KING RANGE NCA

Greetings!

With the new year upon us, now is an ideal time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. As such, we invite you to review the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement that the BLM has prepared to guide management of the King Range National Conservation Area over the next 20 years. The plan was developed with input gathered from local communities, agencies, visitors, and other stakeholders over the last year. We now invite you to review this plan and share your feedback to see if it captures the proper vision and priorities, as well as the appropriate balance of land uses, recreational opportunities, and environmental stewardship.

As you will see, BLM's "preferred alternative" for future management is not a dramatic departure from the existing management approach. The emphasis is still on resource protection and restoration, as well as preserving the unique primitive and undeveloped qualities of the King Range that are treasured by locals and visitors alike. Some subtle changes in management are proposed – mainly to deal with public concerns that we need to monitor and manage the growing number of visitors to make sure that overcrowding does not detract from the experience of wilderness and solitude that so many seek in the King Range NCA.

More active ecosystem restoration and community collaboration are also proposed. This Planning Update provides information on how you can obtain a copy of the RMP / EIS. It is also available for viewing on the BLM website and in local libraries. We encourage you to share your comments on this draft plan by April 16, 2004, so that we may consider them and make changes as needed prior to issuing the Final RMP / EIS later this year. Thank you for your involvement in planning for the future of the King Range NCA!



Lynda Roush  
Arcata Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management



## DRAFT RMP / EIS READY FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

BLM is pleased to announce the availability of the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for public review and comment. There are several ways for you to obtain the report: 1) visit our website to view or download the plan at [www.ca.blm.gov/arcata](http://www.ca.blm.gov/arcata), 2) visit government reference sections of the Humboldt County Library in Eureka or Mendocino County Library in Ukiah, 3) request a CD with a digital copy of the report from BLM, or 4) request a hard copy of the report from BLM (see back page for contact information).

The 90-day public comment period begins on January 16 and ends on April 16, 2004. You are encouraged to submit your comments, suggestions, and clarifications on this draft report to BLM. Public comments will be considered and used to prepare the Final RMP / EIS later this year. **Comments must be received or postmarked by April 16, 2004.** You may submit them by regular mail, e-mail, or through our website (see back page). Another way to share your comments is by attending one of the upcoming public meetings. We look forward to hearing from you!



## PUBLIC MEETINGS IN FEB + MARCH

Please join us at one of the upcoming public meetings to learn more about the Draft Resource Management Plan and EIS and to share your thoughts and comments in person. See inside to find the date and location most convenient for you!

## Management Zones

To guide future uses and management in the King Range NCA, three management zones are proposed: Frontcountry, Backcountry, and Residential. The zones reflect the character of different parts of the King Range and will help to identify the types of activities, as well as the level of environmental protection, appropriate for each area.



## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The Draft RMP / EIS presents several alternative approaches to managing the King Range NCA. The basic goal of developing alternatives is to explore a range of land uses, protective measures, and management tools to find the optimal balance for the King Range. Alternatives must also meet federal laws, regulations, and BLM planning policy.

Four alternatives were developed for analysis in the Draft RMP / EIS. They describe four management scenarios with varying amounts of natural resource restoration and uses of these resources, as well as differing levels of recreation use and facilities in each management zone.

**Alternative A** – No Action (continue current management)

**Alternative B** – Low Resource Use and Management, Emphasize Natural Processes

**Alternative C** – Moderate Resource Use and Management, Augment Natural Processes

**Alternative D** – Active Resource Use and Management, Actively Enhance Natural Processes

Alternative A reflects the continuation of current management practices. Alternatives B, C, and D represent a range of approaches to balancing use and protection of the King Range's primitive character. The prevailing vision for the future of the KRNCA involves maintaining its unique landscape and the opportunity it provides to experience the California coastline in a relatively undeveloped and natural state. This vision allows only a moderate continuum of management options. Within that range, however, the alternatives represent different strategies for accomplishing the vision.

Alternative B represents the most “hands off” approach, emphasizing the utilization of natural processes wherever possible and minimizing human impacts. This would result in low levels of on-the-ground resource management, and limited recreation use focused on providing maximum opportunities



for solitude and wilderness-type experiences. In the middle of the spectrum, Alternative C would provide a greater diversity of uses and approaches to management, with a broad mix of tools and moderate levels of use allowed. Alternative D would take an active approach, allowing maximum recreation use while still maintaining and enhancing resource conditions. It includes the widest application of management tools and actions, and provides higher levels of recreation use with fewer opportunities for solitude than the other alternatives. *(These alternatives are largely the same as the scenarios described in the last plan update dated August 2003, which is available on the website.)*



## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

BLM has selected specific components from each of these alternative scenarios to construct the “preferred alternative” – much like a menu approach. For a quick summary of the preferred alternative, we encourage you to look at Table ES-1 in the Executive Summary of the Draft RMP / EIS. Highlights include:

- Develop new trails as needed, particularly to provide some easier trails for a wider range of users (e.g., an easy-grade interpretive trail at Hidden Valley and wheelchair accessible trail between Wailaki and Nadelos). Identify “horse friendly” trails.
- Develop springs for potable water where feasible on upland trails, including side trails to provide access if needed.
- Develop a group use area for weddings, memorials, picnics, etc. at Mal Coombs Park in Shelter Cove.
- Create a visitor use allocation system designed to allow moderate numbers of visitors and provide moderate amount of opportunities for solitude. This will be an adaptive allocation system, progressing from limits on commercial groups during popular holiday weekends, to requiring permits for all users within established limits on popular holiday weekends, to high-use season permits, to year round permits, as future increases in visitation necessitate.
- Designate the Mill Creek Watershed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Implement up-slope sediment reduction, in-stream habitat enhancement, riparian silviculture, research and monitoring in fish-bearing streams within the Mattole Basin.
- Use silviculture (forestry) treatments to encourage second-growth and late-successional (old growth) forest characteristics.
- Utilize prescribed burns to maintain coastal scrub, grasslands, and coastal dunes. Apply integrated pest management approach to any future invasive plant infestations.
- Recommend eight new river segments for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

# A RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES

- Protect and study cultural resources through outreach and education.
- Establish “Native American Beargrass Collection Unit” and implement active management efforts, such as localized prescribed burns, to encourage this species. Monitor and manage the collection of special forest products (e.g., mushrooms) to ensure sustainable use of these resources.
- Suppress all fires within the Frontcountry and Residential Zones. Allow naturally ignited fires to burn under specified limits in the Backcountry Zone. Reduce fuel loads.

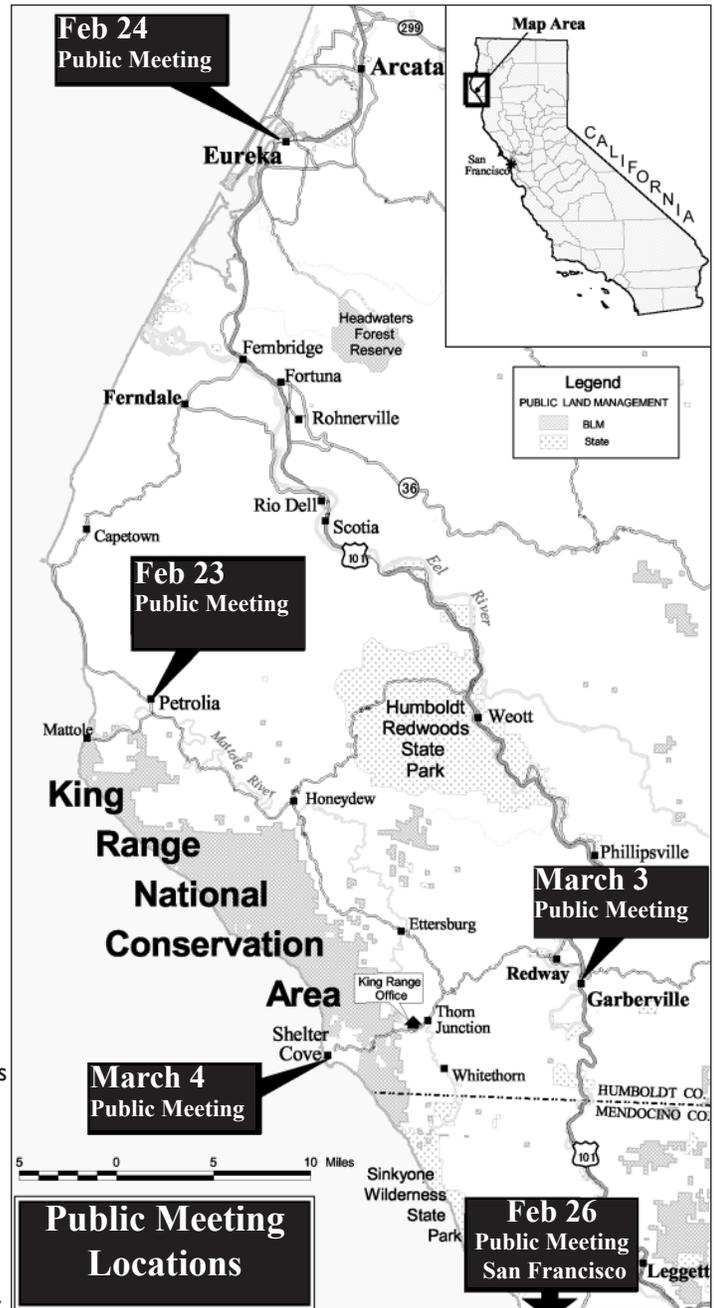


Although BLM has identified a preferred alternative in the Draft RMP / EIS, that does not mean that other alternatives and combinations are off the table. We look forward to receiving your comments to let us know if we are on the right track or if you think other components or combinations would work better. Please be specific with your comments, as it will help BLM evaluate the need to rethink or adjust the preferred alternative before preparing the Final RMP / EIS. Thank you for your help!

## PUBLIC MEETINGS ON DRAFT RMP / EIS PLEASE JOIN US!

To learn more about the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, and to share your thoughts, comments and concerns, please join us for one of the upcoming public meetings. BLM staff will present a short summary of the key features of the plan and environmental issues, followed by a public comment period and opportunities for informal conversations to answer your questions and explore ways to make the plan even better before it goes to the final stage in the planning process.

See the map to find the time and place that’s most convenient for you. If you can’t attend one of these meetings, you can still share your ideas by submitting them in writing or contacting us on our website by April 16, 2004.



## PUBLIC MEETING LOCATIONS

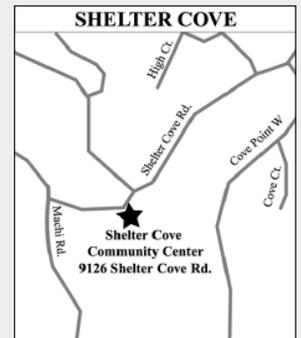
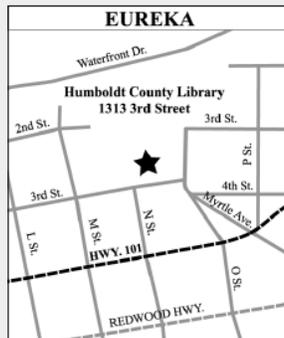
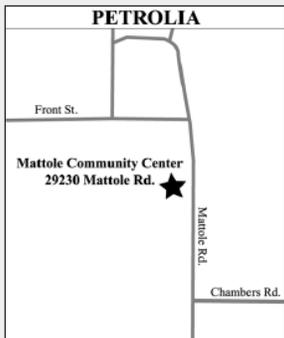
**Monday**  
February 23, 6-8 PM  
Mattole Community Center  
29230 Mattole Road  
Petrolia, CA

**Tuesday**  
February 24, 6-8 PM  
Humboldt County Library  
1313 3rd St.  
Eureka, CA

**Thursday**  
February 26, 6-8 PM  
The Commonwealth Club  
595 Market Street  
San Francisco, CA  
(close to Montgomery BART station)

**Wednesday**  
March 3, 6-8 PM  
Veterans Memorial Building  
483 Conger St.  
Garberville, CA

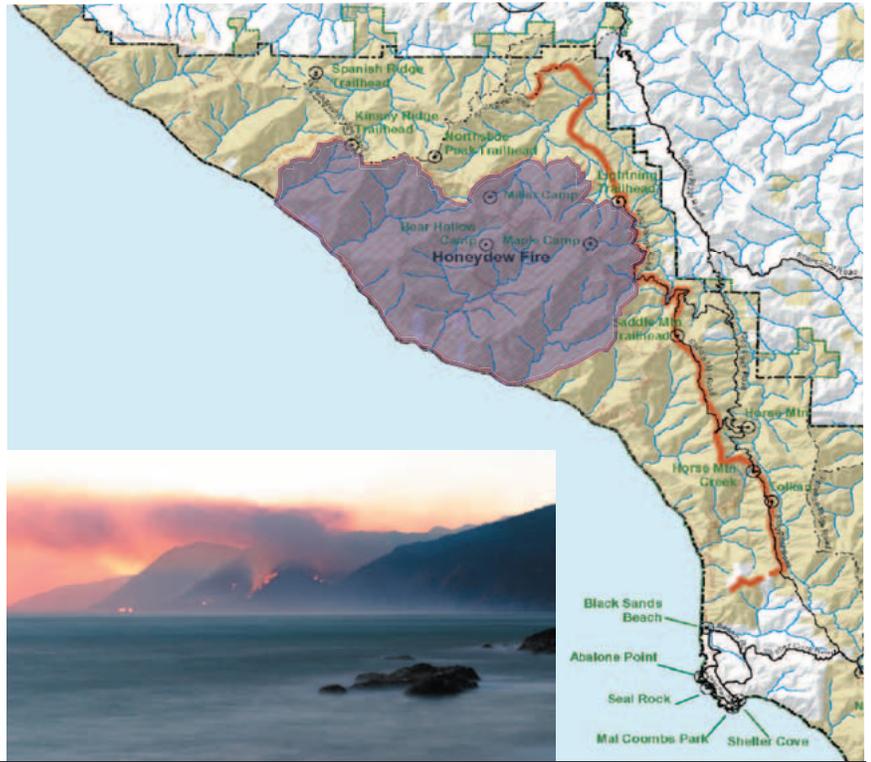
**Thursday**  
March 4, 6-8 PM  
Shelter Cove Community Center  
9126 Shelter Cove Rd.  
Shelter Cove, CA



## FALL 2003 FIRE

A fierce thunderstorm in September 2003 sparked 59 lightning-ignited fires in Humboldt County. Most of these fires were contained within the first week. However, due to remote and extremely steep terrain, the Honeydew Fire in the King Range NCA and the Canoe Fire in Humboldt Redwoods State Park proved difficult to control. Both fires continued to grow, and by the time they were contained, the Canoe Fire burned 11,200 acres and the Honeydew Fire 13,778 acres. Suppression costs for the two fires exceeded \$34 million, with an estimated 40 percent (\$13.6 million) expended on the Honeydew Fire.

The fire burned entirely within the King Range Wilderness Study Area. Extreme fire behavior threatened the community of Shelter Cove, so approximately four miles of bulldozer lines were constructed. Preliminary observations indicate that the fire was a “tree stand-replacing” event over large portions of the burn area. BLM is initiating efforts to help stabilize the soil and control erosion. Even with such a dramatic fire, the landscape is expected to recover and sprout new vegetation relatively quickly.



### CONTACT US!

Do you have questions or comments about the Management Plan update process? Please contact:

**707.825.2300 (phone)**

**caweb330@ca.blm.gov (email)**

For general information about visiting the King Range NCA, please call 707.986.5400

### VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

**[www.ca.blm.gov/arcata](http://www.ca.blm.gov/arcata)**

You may also submit your comments via our website.

Photography by Bob Wick, BLM and CDF  
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**PLANNING THE FUTURE OF THE KING RANGE NCA**