

Management Actions

TRV 1.10.1: In coordination with the California Coastal Commission and California State Land Board, close the Backcountry Zone coastline to non-emergency motorized watercraft landings, and close the Mattole Estuary to the use of all motorized watercraft.

Rationale: Motorized Zodiacs, jet-skis and other watercraft traverse the KRNCA coastline for surfing, fishing, abalone diving, and other activities. The intent of this plan is not to limit these offshore activities. However, boats are increasingly landing at Big Flat and other locations within the Backcountry Zone and offloading overnight visitors with large amounts of equipment and materials. This motorized access into the Backcountry Zone is considered to be incompatible with area management goals, and has also led to an increase in litter. Although motorized watercraft use in the Mattole Estuary has been low, this resource is already highly stressed and is critical to the survival of salmon fry. Therefore, the closure is warranted to prevent further impacts. See Appendix B for proposed supplemental rules regarding boating use.

4.19 RECREATION (REC)

4.19.1 Introduction

Recreation management represents one of the major challenges in the King Range, as the very qualities of pristine backcountry and remote coastal access can be degraded if too many people decide to visit at the same time. There is a strong consensus among user groups that protecting the KRNCA's unique primitive character is a priority, yet increasing numbers of people are visiting the area seeking a wide variety of activities and experiences. The proposed plan includes comprehensive recreation management goals that balance accommodation of a broad array of uses while providing opportunities for visitors to find solitude and the wilderness-type recreation experience for which the King Range is best known. As a result, the three management zones are planned for different types and levels of recreation use, so as to direct users to the parts of the KRNCA most appropriate for their interests and activities.

The Proposed RMP calls for managing each zone to provide complementary recreation opportunities and activities so that visitors with varying interests and abilities can experience the dramatic outdoor setting of the KRNCA. The Backcountry Zone is managed as a primitive setting, and associated recreation opportunities are at the primitive non-mechanized/non-motorized end of the spectrum. The Frontcountry Zone offers a mix of motorized and non-motorized activities in a rustic setting. The Residential Zone, including public lands within the Shelter Cove subdivision, although urban by Lost Coast standards, offers visitors a chance to access the rugged coast while enjoying more developed tourism amenities. The Shelter Cove area can accommodate more visitors than other parts of the King Range due to less difficult road access and ample public and private visitor facilities and services.

Actions proposed to achieve Backcountry Zone management objectives include permit systems, developing minimal facilities only if necessary for resource protection, maintaining a trail system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and resource monitoring, and identification of special management areas. Actions proposed to achieve Frontcountry Zone management objectives include developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, maintaining a road and trail

system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and resource monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Actions proposed to achieve Residential Zone objectives include permit systems, developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance.

4.19.2 Area-Wide Management

Goal REC 1: Provide quality recreation opportunities that complement and continue the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S., while protecting the quality of the recreation opportunities, resources, and community character.

Objective REC 1.1: Manage and inform visitors to ensure provision of a high-quality and safe experience while protecting area resources and adjacent private lands, in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and area guidance.

Management Actions

REC 1.1.1: Provide adequate maps and visitor information. Stress compliance with coastal “Leave No Trace” principles including a strict “pack it in, pack it out” requirement, proper food storage, fire prevention, and sanitation techniques.

REC 1.1.2: Provide supplementary rules and regulations in addition to those listed in Appendix B, where required, to protect resources, visitor safety, and the community surrounding the King Range.

REC 1.1.3: The entire planning area would be considered a “Special Area” for the purposes of visitor management and permitting as defined under CFR 8372.

Rationale: Under CFR 8372, Special Areas have resources that “require special management and control measures for their protection.” These measures can include such requirements as individual use permits and other guidelines to manage visitor use levels.

REC 1.1.4: Under the Special Area management authority, the following permit requirements would be implemented:

REC 1.1.4.1 Commercial Groups: All commercial groups are required to obtain Special Recreation Permits for use of BLM managed lands as outlined in 43 CFR 2932.11(a)(1)

REC 1.1.4.2 Organized non-commercial groups: A non-commercial permit will be required but no commercial fee will be charged (dispersed use fees and permit processing fees may still apply) and no insurance required for noncommercial and certain educational group use. This includes such groups as outdoor clubs, scouts, fraternal organizations, school field labs and other organizations/group outings where charges are limited to a sharing of group expenses. If paid guides accompany the group, and/or fees offset other costs of running the organization (beyond sharing trip expenses), the group will be considered commercial for the purposes of permitting. (Authority 43 CFR 2932.11(b)(2) and (3) (i – iii))

REC 1.1.4.3 Individual and family use: A permit system would be established for individual and family users who access the Backcountry Zone and dispersed use areas in the

Frontcountry Zone (i.e., trails) for overnight use. This will be an interim measure to improve information dispersal to the public and to provide visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the visitor use allocation plan. The permit will document information on group size, trail and camping destinations, and other information necessary to determine use trends. (The permit system would be established under the authority of 43 CFR 2932.11(b)(1) special area permits)

REC 1.1.4: Evaluate all applications for special recreation permits on a case-by-case basis. Approve only those requests that are consistent with the goals of the proposed KRNCA use zones.

REC 1.1.5: Construct fences or barriers where needed to control unauthorized visitation or use from public land onto private land. Install effective barriers to preclude vehicle use within designated closed areas.

REC 1.1.6: Ensure that Universal Accessibility Standards are met for all new developed facilities and, where feasible, the retrofitting of existing facilities.

Area-Wide Standards and Guidelines (SG) for Trail Construction

The following standards and guidelines would be followed in the development of new trails, conversion of logging roads to trails, and maintenance of trails in all three management zones:

REC SG1: Limit trail tread construction and maintenance (except drainage work) to non-rain periods.

REC SG2: Minimize disruption of natural hydrologic flow paths, including diversion of streamflow and interception of surface and subsurface flow.

REC SG3: Minimize sediment delivery to streams from trails. Outsloping of the tread surface is preferred, except where outsloping would increase sediment delivery to streams or where outsloping is infeasible or unsafe. Route drainage away from potentially unstable channels, fills, and hill slopes.

REC SG4: Provide and maintain fish passage at all crossings of existing and potential fish-bearing streams. Most stream crossings in the KRNCA Backcountry Zone would be fords with no permanent bridges. BLM personnel or users may place temporary primitive low-water bridges (stepping stones, driftwood logs etc.) at crossings during the summer months. These crossings would be constructed/inspected so that they do not impede fish passage.

REC SG5: Fords on inland streams would be constructed/armored so that bank erosion is minimized.

REC SG6: Use materials for bridge repair, replacement, or temporary crossings that minimize the possibility of introduction of fine sediments or toxins into the drainage system.

REC SG7: Minimize the disturbance to riparian reserves for bridge and stream crossing replacement. Disturbed ground should receive appropriate erosion control treatment (mulching, seeding, planting etc.) prior to the beginning of the wet season.

REC SG8: Close and rehabilitate random social trails within riparian areas.

REC SG9: Trail maintenance activities within ¼ mile of spotted owl nest sites would be conducted with hand-tools only between February 1 and August 6.

REC SG10: Use vegetative or topographic screening, create distance buffers and establish additional construction criteria in consultation with NMFS and FWS for proposed new trails to minimize impacts to listed species.

4.19.3 Backcountry Zone Management

Goal REC 2: Provide high quality non-mechanized recreational opportunities consistent with managing the Backcountry Zone to protect wilderness characteristics.

Backcountry Zone Allowable Uses (BZAU)

BZAU 1: Non mechanized recreation activities including hiking, backpacking, surfing, surf fishing, equestrian use, camping, environmental education, wildlife viewing, hunting and other activities consistent with the goal of emphasizing backcountry experiences. Mechanized transport such as mountain bikes and hang gliders would not be permitted, unless excepted under **BZAU 3** below.

BZAU 2: Allow for both commercial and non-commercial non-mechanized recreational use, if consistent with zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

BZAU 3: The following routes within the Backcountry Zone would remain open for mountain biking as a temporary use under permit pending a final Congressional decision regarding wilderness designation, or until completion of the proposed loop trail system in the Paradise Ridge area (Frontcountry Zone):

- Buck Creek Trail (4.5 Miles)
- Cooskie Creek Trail (11.7 miles.)
- Spanish Ridge Trail (2.9 miles)
- Kinsey Ridge Trail (4.0 miles)

BZAU 4: A recreation use permit program would be established with stipulations guiding the time, place, and quantity of mountain bike use allowed in accordance with Wilderness Interim Management Policy requirements. The permit program would be discontinued if the land that the routes traverse is designated as wilderness. The trails would then be managed for uses allowed under the requirements of the wilderness legislation.

Rationale: Much of the King Range WSA and all of the Chemise Mountain WSA were recommended by the President to Congress for wilderness designation. Congress is currently considering legislation that would designate both areas as wilderness. By authorizing mountain biking under recreation use permit requirements on certain trails within the WSAs, the BLM would allow an existing use to continue on a temporary basis, while meeting the requirements of the Interim Management Policy (IMP) by ensuring that management would not preempt Congress' wilderness decision abilities. During this interim period, the BLM would work with mountain bike groups to develop a suitable trail system within the Frontcountry Zone that would provide long-term riding opportunities outside the proposed wilderness and Backcountry Zone

boundary. Upon completion of this system and the provision of mountain biking opportunities in the Frontcountry Zone, the above routes would be closed to mountain bikes.

BZAU 5: Recreation use permits authorizing mountain bike use would include the following stipulations to ensure that this use meets the Wilderness Study Area IMP:

- Use would normally be permitted except from November 1 – April 1 when a wet season closure would be in place. If wet weather extends beyond this period, the closure season could be extended as necessary to avoid trail tread damage.
- Permittees would agree to stay only on the route(s) approved on their permit.
- Permittees would be required to possess the permit at all times.
- All other use requirements that apply to other Backcountry Zone users would apply to mountain bike use (group size limits, camping stay limits etc.)
- Permittees would not be allowed to carry or otherwise transport bicycles across closed trails or lands.
- Commercially guided mountain bike trips as defined under BLM Special Recreation Permit Policy (CFR 2932) would not be permitted in the Backcountry Zone.

[NOTE: Additional permit stipulations would be established as necessary to ensure that IMP requirements are met.]

Backcountry Zone Objectives and Management Actions

Objective REC 2.1: Provide facilities that are the minimum necessary for visitor safety (commensurate with the backcountry setting) and resource protection. On-site facilities would be provided only after alternative means of addressing resource protection and safety issues have been exhausted; facilities will not be installed for visitor convenience.

Management Actions

REC 2.1.1: Provide additional primitive backcountry campsites along the upland trails through expansion of existing campsites, and development of additional sites as needed. This will prevent resource impacts from increasing backcountry use levels by directing use into appropriate areas, and away from sites with sensitive resource values.

REC 2.1.2: Construct or maintain fences and barriers where necessary to protect sensitive natural or cultural resources from visitor impacts. Barriers will be used only after education and other means of protection have been unsuccessful.

REC 2.1.3: Develop springs for potable water sources, where feasible, near existing or future upland backcountry campsites. (There are no water issues at the beach.)

REC 2.1.4: Install visually unobtrusive bear proof food storage system (such as bear lockers or hanging wires) at popular sites where bear encounters are a persistent problem, and where frequent group layover days (particularly Big Flat) make it difficult for one bear canister per person to hold enough food for an entire trip. Such systems will be installed only if aggressive promotion and enforcement of bear canister use is not adequately solving the problem.

REC 2.1.5: Install rustic, low maintenance backcountry toilets at popular sites where monitoring indicates substantial resource impacts or persistent sanitation problems. Facilities will be

considered only after other means (such as promoting alternative sanitation techniques, requiring portable latrines for organized groups, etc.); of solving the problem have failed. Any backcountry toilets would be constructed using native materials and meet Class I Visual Resource Management Class objectives. Design concepts would be employed for facilities in designated wilderness locations to allow for maintenance using minimum tools commensurate with the primitive, backcountry setting of the Lost Coast.

REC 2.1.6: Evaluate existing structures such as fences and ranch buildings to determine historical significance, visitor safety issues, management needs etc. Develop a strategy/priorities for removal of non-historic facilities to improve the wilderness characteristics of the Backcountry Zone.

REC 2.1.7: Maintain the existing structures at the Punta Gorda Lighthouse for preservation as an historical landmark and interpretive site. Allow for limited administrative use of motorized/mechanized equipment for major maintenance projects at the lighthouse.

Rationale: Area legislative intent, public scoping feedback, and corresponding plan goals identify the Backcountry Zone as an area to be managed to protect wilderness characteristics, and with minimal facilities necessary to ensure adequate visitor safety and resource protection. Providing adequate and aesthetically pleasing backcountry campsites, and water sources, where feasible and appropriate, would accommodate visitor use and disperse such use to help ensure high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Providing possible future backcountry toilets and/or bear-proof food storage containers may be necessary to reduce sanitation problems at major backcountry campsites, particularly along the Lost Coast, protect visitors from adverse wildlife encounters, particularly with bears, and help protect wildlife. Barbed-wire fencing and a number of buildings in various states of upkeep are located along the northern reaches of the Lost Coast Trail. Some of these structures present visitor safety impacts or are visual intrusions, and need to be evaluated for removal.

Objective REC 2.2: Provide a network of primitive backcountry trails.

Management Actions

REC 2.2.1: Work with equestrian groups to identify and prioritize “horse friendly” trails in the King Range. Improve these trails to remove/reduce barriers to horse access (i.e., provide horse pass-throughs at vehicle barriers, improve trailheads, reroute problem trail segments where possible, etc.), and maintain to equestrian standards. Identify additional trails suitable for equestrian use; and establish a horse camp at Miller Flat.

REC 2.2.2: Develop springs for potable water sources where feasible at appropriate intervals near upland trails. Construct side trails, as necessary, to provide access to such water sources.

REC 2.2.3: Develop additional trails, as needed, to complement existing trail system. Identify opportunities to provide an easier level (reduced grades) of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users, such as a route near the Hidden Valley area. Other identified possible future trails include extending the Miller Loop Trail to the Lightning Trailhead and establishing a trail from the Mill Creek area to the Cooskie Creek Trail.

REC 2.2.4: Provide a consistent standard of trail maintenance for all backcountry trails through the use of volunteers, work groups such as the California Conservation Corps, and BLM employees.

REC 2.2.5: Develop a lower gradient interpretive trail in Hidden Valley with improved parking and information at the Hidden Valley trailhead. Ensure that such trail, if developed, does not adversely affect important wildlife and cultural resources in the area.

Rationale: The unique, primitive, coastal backcountry within the KRNCA is the primary attraction for most people visiting the King Range public lands. Much of the visitor use within the backcountry depends on an adequate trail system to provide self-directed primitive recreational opportunities. In addition, trails serve to direct people along use corridors and away from identified sensitive resources such as archaeological sites and fragile vegetation communities. The existing trail network provides a comprehensive linkage between the Lost Coast trail and upland trails with trailheads accessible by motorized vehicles. Many of these trails are somewhat difficult with substantial elevation gains. While these trails provide the rugged, challenging, backcountry opportunities desired by many people, public scoping input identified the need to provide easier trails for a wider range of abilities. Although topography is a severely limiting factor in the backcountry, the BLM would evaluate the potential for easier trails where appropriate and feasible. Trails would be constructed and maintained to meet the implementation standards and guidelines listed in this section.



Cooskie Creek Trail offers opportunities for equestrians.

Objective REC 2.3: Manage visitation use levels that allow opportunities for high levels of solitude and low levels of encounters between visitors at most locations and times of the year. Manage levels of use during holiday periods and summer weekends and at popular campsites to allow moderate levels of encounters between visitors and moderate levels of solitude.

Management Actions

REC 2.3.1 (Use Allocation): Within five years of plan completion, a comprehensive Visitor Use Allocation Plan (VUAP) will be developed to manage anticipated increasing visitor numbers, particularly along the Lost Coast Trail. This system would be designed to protect sensitive resource values and ensure continued high quality visitor backcountry experience. The visitor use allocation system may redistribute use to off-peak periods as one means to reduce resource impacts and visitor encounters.

Visitor use allocation would be based on existing and projected visitor use numbers and measurable resource impacts. This allocation system is an adaptive strategy that would progress, as needed and based upon monitoring information, from limits on commercial groups during popular holiday weekends (currently being implemented), to permitting all users within established limits on popular holiday weekends, to high-use season permits, and year-round permits, as future increases in visitation necessitate. The visitor use allocation system will include, at a minimum, the following components:

- Range of allowable visitor numbers within the Backcountry Zone as a whole, along the 25-mile Lost Coast Trail, and from each trailhead.
- Percentage of visitor use allowed by commercial groups, non-commercial organized groups, and private parties.
- Maximum allowable group size limits along the Lost Coast Trail and on the upland trails.
- Permit system administration to include:
 - Who requires a permit (i.e., commercial groups, non-commercial groups, all overnight users, and/or day users?)
 - When permits are required (i.e., major holiday weekends, summer season, or other times of the year?)
 - Where and how people may obtain permits
 - Fee schedule
 - Information to disseminate (i.e., fire restrictions, bear canister requirement, proper sanitation practices, etc.)
- Indicators of change to monitor and implement visitor use allocation strategies. These indicators include such factors as: visitation increases, activity preference shifts, new technologies, changes in commercial use (i.e., outfitter and guide service), economic factors, demographic shifts, and levels of resource impacts.

Rationale: The accommodation of backcountry users exploring and enjoying the King Range backcountry must be balanced with the need to protect its natural and cultural resources and provide quality recreational experiences. Also, some backcountry camping locations have a very limited physical space (e.g., Buck Creek and Shipman Creek) to accommodate users. In response to similar crowding and capacity issues, many public land locations have implemented visitor use allocation plans. These programs serve to protect natural resources and provide quality opportunities for the types of experiences called for under area management goals. The need for such a system is based on factors such as measurable resource damage/deterioration, decreasing visitor enjoyment of the area, visitor conflicts, and permittee complaints.

The advantages of establishing a use allocation system are to prevent undesirable resource deterioration, and ensure continued high quality backcountry experiences. The disadvantages of such a system include the potential inconvenience for visitors to obtain a permit and disallowing some people and organized groups from visiting the backcountry during heavy use periods. In addition, implementing and managing such a program would increase the administrative cost for the BLM. Establishing this use allocation would require improved visitor use statistics, several years of resource monitoring to assess resource condition trends, and determination of trends in visitor preferences and level of enjoyment. Therefore, specific allocation determinations have been deferred until a comprehensive implementation plan is developed.

REC 2.3.2 (Special Recreation Permits and Interim Group Allocation Measures): The following interim actions would be implemented to manage current use levels. They will be adjusted as needed based on the final Visitor Use Allocation Plan (VUAP) (Appendix B contains specific language and definitions regarding these items as proposed supplemental rules):

REC 2.3.2.1 (Commercial Outfitters): Commercial outfitters would not be allowed to operate during Memorial Day or Fourth of July weekends. Additional daily closures may be instituted as use levels increase.

REC 2.3.2.2 (Commercial/Organized Group Daily Trailhead Limit): To accommodate multiple groups, 30 people per day may leave each trailhead.

REC 2.3.2.3 (Group Size Limits): On all trails, a maximum of 15 people per group will be allowed.

REC 2.3.2.4 (Stock Use groups): Stock use groups will be allowed to have up to 25 “heartbeats” (people/stock combination), with a maximum of 15 people per group.

[Note: Stock animals would not be counted towards daily group trailhead limits, but must meet the established group limits. Interim daily trailhead limits are not established for individual, informal or family groups. Daily trailhead limits for these individuals would be established through development of carrying capacities. Established group size limits would apply to all visitors including informal and family groups.]

REC 2.3.3 (Group Use Areas): Organized groups and commercial outfitters would be directed to specific locations that can accommodate larger groups without overwhelming the campsite capacity and diminishing the quality of the backcountry experience at other locations. Management of these areas would be an integral part of both the interim and long-term VUAP with adaptive strategies of reducing resource and social impacts on sensitive, less spacious locations. Initially identified group use areas include the following (other areas may be identified as needed):

REC 2.3.3.1 (Big Flat/Miller Flat): As an interim policy until the VUAP is completed, require permitted groups having multiple layover days to camp at Big Flat/Miller Flat and require all permitted groups to camp here instead of Shipman Creek or Buck Creek. Inform the general public that there are ample camping locations here, but that during busy times their opportunities for solitude may be reduced.

REC 2.3.3.2 (Spanish Flat): Due to its expansive area, presence of several water sources, and numerous camping locations above the tidal zone, Spanish Flat has been identified as a second location to focus organized group camping. Group camping along Spanish Flat would be promoted over other, less spacious locations in the interim until more specific management guidance is developed in the VUAP.

REC 2.3.4 (Group Avoidance Areas): Identify sensitive areas with limited camping sites to manage for lower visitation levels. Integrate group permit administration and possible future individual permit administration into the management of these areas to reduce overcrowding, resource damage, and impacts on zone management objectives. As an interim measure (until the VUAP is completed), do not permit commercial and organized group camping at Buck, and Shipman Creeks through the Special Recreation Permit process, except under special circumstances as approved on a case-by-case basis by the authorized officer.

REC 2.3.5 (Competitive Events): No competitive recreational permits would be permitted within the Backcountry Zone.

REC 2.3.6 (Special Use Management): Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses would be allowed as long as they are consistent with zone management goals. Such uses (i.e., geocaching, paragliding, etc.) would be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues. These uses will be managed to ensure that the primary objectives of the Backcountry Zone are achieved.

REC 2.3.7 (Motorized watercraft landings): A decision in the travel management section of this plan prohibits shore landings of motorized watercraft, including boats, zodiacs, jet skis, and other craft powered with internal combustion engines, as this use is not consistent with the primitive recreation use objectives of the Backcountry Zone. This restriction does not affect offshore anchorages or emergency landings.

REC 2.3.8 (Low flying aircraft): Work with Humboldt County, the Federal Aviation Administration, and other agencies with management authority over King Range Airspace to establish parameters for commercial touring flights over the Backcountry Zone, and to discourage commercial low flying aircraft.

REC 2.3.9 (Interim Permit System): An interim permit system would be implemented for all overnight trail users to improve information dispersal to the public and to improve visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the VUAP (see also Management Action 1.1.4.3).

REC 2.3.10 (Visitor Use Fees): A fee would be established for overnight backcountry use in conjunction with implementing the permit program and visitor use allocation system. No fees are anticipated for day use. Fees would be used to offset costs associated with the visitor use allocation system and be reinvested into management and protection of backcountry resources, providing maintenance, and visitor services.

Objective REC 2.4: Educate visitors to practice a level of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency commensurate with a self-directed backcountry experience.

Management Actions

REC 2.4.1: The minimal necessary level of backcountry signs would be provided for visitor safety and resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures would be rustic and constructed of natural materials in keeping with the wilderness character. Specifically:

- Provide directional signs at all trail junctions.
- Install identification signs, where necessary, to post private land boundaries to help prevent trespass onto private lands.
- Install identification signs to point out backcountry campsites, water sources, sensitive resource areas, or other important features, where necessary for visitor safety and resource protection.

Rationale: A minimal level of rustic signing is critical to ensure that visitors do not get lost, trespass onto private land, suffer health risks (such as drinking untreated water from developed water sources), or damage sensitive natural or cultural resources. Providing aesthetically pleasing signs with consistent style would provide visitor safety commensurate with the desired self directed primitive recreational experiences.

Goal REC 3: Preserve the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S.

Objective REC 3.1: Maintain a naturally appearing landscape, with the sights, sounds, and forces of nature being the predominant physical features and sensations that visitors experience. The works and impacts of humans would continue to be minimal in extent and transitory in nature.

Management Actions

REC 3.3.1: Conduct an ongoing comprehensive monitoring program to determine impacts from recreational use on natural and cultural resources in the backcountry, assess social impacts of changing visitor use, make necessary adjustments to the visitor use permitting program, and achieve Backcountry Zone management objectives. The monitoring program would include the following:

- Collection of visitor use statistics, particularly along the more heavily used sections of the backcountry, most notably the Lost Coast Trail. This will be accomplished through trailhead registers, traffic counters, patrol logs (counting cars at parking areas as well as backcountry users), Special Recreation Permit information, establishment of a backcountry permit system, and correspondence with visitors.
- Collection of resource impact information, particularly along trails and campsites. This will include campsite inventory, evaluation of human and stock impacts on vegetation, soils, etc. as well as identifying resource problems like sanitation, litter, proliferation of fire rings, etc. Separate monitoring of resources such as cultural sites, invasive plants, water quality, etc. will also be conducted as needed by resource specialists.
- Survey of visitor preferences and experiences. This survey would be conducted approximately every 5 years or as needed to determine trends in visitor enjoyment

of the area and changes in social impacts from projected increases in future visitor use. This survey will also improve visitor use data.

- Evaluation (through contact with visitors, written responses at trailhead registers, visitor surveys, on site observations, etc.) of significant changes in activity preferences, new technologies, commercial interest, and economic, demographic, and environmental conditions.

Rationale: Implementation and continuance of an effective monitoring program is essential to development of the visitor use permitting program as well as keeping abreast of overall trends in user interests, preferences, satisfaction, and types of use.

Goal REC4: Allow for levels of predominantly self-directing recreational use that provide for high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and freedom of access while protecting the diverse scenic and natural resources in the area.

Objective REC 4.1: Implement off-site (out of the Backcountry Zone) management actions to prepare visitors to enter and use the backcountry safely and with minimal impacts to resources and other visitors. Off-site management would be the primary means of affording visitors the experience and freedom to choose travel and camping locations once they enter the backcountry. Off-site actions include providing pre-trip information to the public (such as maps, brochures, web page, BLM public contact representative to provide information via phone and office visit, etc.) and providing necessary backcountry services such as bear can rentals and fire permits.

Objective REC 4.2: Ensure that management presence on-site is subtle, with only moderate levels of direct visitor contact by BLM backcountry ranger and patrols by law enforcement rangers.

4.19.4 Frontcountry Zone Management

Goal REC5: Provide high quality motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences in the Frontcountry Zone that complement the adventurous nature and rustic character of the Lost Coast.

Rationale: The major management objectives of the Frontcountry Zone are twofold: first, to provide staging sites such as trailheads to access the Backcountry Zone; second, to provide for mountain biking, car camping, scenic driving, and other recreational activities which require the use of mechanized and motorized equipment, or a higher level of facility development. To accomplish these goals, a sufficient number and quality of developed campgrounds, day use and overnight parking facilities, and trailheads are necessary.

Frontcountry Zone Allowable Uses (FZAU)

FZAU 1: A mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses including car camping, driving for pleasure, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, hunting and fishing (as allowed under California Fish &

Game regulations), nature study, wildlife viewing, and other activities compatible with the management objectives for this zone.

FZAU 2: Emphasize uses such as mountain biking, scenic driving and car camping that are not available or consistent with the objectives of the Backcountry Zone. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial recreational use, as appropriate to meet zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

FZAU 3: Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses would be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses would be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

FZAU 4: Limit camping in undeveloped areas surrounding Mattole Campground to prevent damage to sensitive resources in the Mattole ACEC, reduce fire danger, and prevent littering, sanitation, large gatherings and other problems that conflict with the purpose and intent of managing the area for natural resource-based recreation.

FZAU 5: Public lands north of Lighthouse Road and south of the Mattole River for a distance of 1 mile inland from the Mattole Campground would be closed to overnight camping. Public lands along Mattole Beach for 500 feet north and south of the Mattole Campground would also be closed to camping.

FZAU 6: Dispersed camping would continue to be allowed along the Mattole Estuary access route identified in the Travel Management section of the plan (Section 4.18). Barriers of natural materials (mainly driftwood) would be placed along the access route to allow a small number of dispersed camping locations, but to restrict vehicle and camping access from disturbing sensitive estuary resources and riparian areas. This site would not be designated as an overflow or dispersed campsite, but would be managed to allow continued use at a small number (5-10) of dispersed locations.

Rationale: The Mattole Campground and recreation site continues to grow in popularity. The area is completely surrounded by either wetlands or coastal dunes containing cultural sites and sensitive plants. Therefore, expansion to accommodate additional users is not possible. The above limitations are designed to ensure that the campground and coastal access area are used for their intended purpose as expressed in the goals and objectives of this plan, and to reduce crowding and resource damage.

Frontcountry Zone Objectives and Management Actions

Objective REC 5.1: Maintain a predominantly naturally appearing landscape with visitor access provided through a network of roads and trails that complement the remote rural character of the Lost Coast.

Management Actions

REC 5.1.1: Monitor the Frontcountry Zone to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use would be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at trailheads, campground fee collection information, observation sheets, patrol logs, and direct visitor contact.

Objective REC 5.2: Recreation facilities would be developed and maintained to meet the needs of visitors, protect resources, and promote visitor safety and knowledge of the area.

Management Actions

REC 5.2.1: Maintain existing campgrounds at Nadelos, Wailaki, Tolkan, Horse Mountain, and Honeydew Creek. Provide drinking water, where possible, at all campgrounds. Upgrade Horse Mountain Campground to meet universal accessibility standards according to visitation need and budget availability. Tie in expanded mountain bike road/trail system (see trail section) to Horse Mountain Campground and Tolkan Campground for mountain bike use. Where feasible, ensure that restrooms and other facilities are retrofitted to best meet universal accessibility standards.

REC 5.2.2: Provide small overlook/picnic sites at scenic view points such as along Saddle Mountain and Paradise Ridge roads.

Objective REC 5.3: Facilities would serve primarily as staging areas to allow visitors to enjoy the remote scenic character of the Lost Coast.

Management Actions

REC 5.3.1: Provide and maintain trailhead facilities including parking and informational kiosks at all trailheads.

Objective REC 5.4: On-site and off-site management actions would be employed so visitors can experience a mix of personal freedom and security, and informing them of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management Actions

REC 5.4.1: Specific sites may be identified as designated use areas to accommodate specialized visitor needs such as equestrian camping.

REC 5.4.2: Nadelos Campground may be reserved for group use under special permit. Availability for group use reservations may be suspended during peak use periods.

REC 5.4.3: Other campgrounds and recreation sites in the King Range may be reserved in certain instances for group activities and special events (e. g. Native American gatherings, volunteer projects, community events) , where this use has a demonstrated benefit to public land management or area resource values.

REC 5.4.4: A campground reservation system may be established at certain campgrounds/sites to improve visitor convenience in trip planning.

Objective REC 5.5: Management presence on-site would be more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of campgrounds, day use facilities, trailheads, etc. by law enforcement rangers, maintenance and fire control personnel, and other staff members responsible for updating kiosk information, monitoring visitor use, providing visitor information, and other Frontcountry tasks.

Goal REC 6: Manage the Frontcountry Zone for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

Objective REC 6.2: Establish and maintain a network of trails that connect to the Backcountry Zone trails and for use in the Frontcountry. Emphasize uses, such as mountain biking, that are less available in the Backcountry Zone.

Management Actions

REC 6.2.1: Provide adequate trail maintenance and vehicle barriers while still providing horse passes for equestrian use.

REC 6.2.2: Explore feasibility of developing alternate trailhead access to Black Sands Beach to accommodate horse trailers and overnight hikers.

REC 6.2.3: Establish non-motorized loop trail system designed primarily for quality mountain biking opportunities in the Paradise Ridge area. This would include reconstruction of the trail tread on the Queen Peak Trail and other loop opportunities as highlighted on (Figure 4-10). Link this trail system to Horse Mountain and/or Tolkan Campgrounds.

REC 6.2.4: Provide trail linking the northern portion of the Lost Coast trail (which currently ends at Horse Mountain Creek Trailhead) with the Chemise Mountain/Sinkyone portion of the trail. Currently through hikers must traverse several miles of road to make the connection.

REC 6.2.5: Construct the Mill Creek Trail linking Lighthouse Road to the Cooskie Creek Trail.

Objective REC 6.3: Develop some trails of lower difficulty hiking use and interpretive/environmental education use for Frontcountry Zone trails to complement the more rugged network of the Backcountry Zone trails.

Management Actions

REC 6.3.1: Develop a trailhead and short trail along Bear Creek near the Shelter Cove Road/Chemise Mountain Road intersection, if feasible.

REC 6.3.2: Expand and improve interpretive trail between Wailaki and Nadelos Campgrounds by developing a loop trail and making the entire loop trail wheelchair accessible.

REC 6.3.3: Re-establish trail from Tolkan Campground to Bear Creek.

Rationale: Design of some trails within the Frontcountry Zone is envisioned somewhat differently than backcountry trails. This is due to 1) the rugged, often steep nature of the backcountry trail system and the identified need expressed in public scoping input for lower gradient, easier trails; 2) the proposed phasing out of mountain bike use from the Backcountry Zone in the long-term; and 3) the identification of the need for easy, accessible, interpretive trails. Accommodating these needs as well as linking major components of the backcountry trail system would enhance the overall trail system in the King Range and provide trail opportunities for a wider range of visitors.

Objective REC 6.4: Provide for a broad variety of types and levels of recreational opportunities that are in keeping with the rustic resources and character of the King Range, but that are less rugged and

primitive than the opportunities emphasized within the Backcountry Zone; and provide visitors choices in where they may access the Backcountry Zone.

Management Actions

REC 6.4.1: Maximum numbers of people and stock would be determined for each developed facility in the Frontcountry Zone, most notably campgrounds, as part of the visitor allocation plan. If existing facilities are expanded or new ones constructed, changes in allowable use will be made.

REC 6.4.2 (Trail Group Size Limits): On all trails, a maximum of 15 people per group will be allowed.

REC 6.4.3 (Trail Stock Use Group Size Limits): Stock use groups will be allowed to have up to 25 “heartbeats” (people/stock combination), with a maximum of 15 people per group.

REC 6.4.4: Existing supplemental rules regarding maximum numbers of people per campsite (eight per site), group size limitations for reserved campgrounds (such as Nadelos, present maximum sixty people) would be carried forward in this plan.

REC 6.4.5: Allowable numbers and locations of stock use would be determined site by site. Capacities will also be developed for trails planned in the Frontcountry Zone as use levels necessitate.

REC 6.4.6 (Interim Permit System): An interim permit system would be implemented for all overnight trail users to improve information dispersal to the public and to improve visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the Visitor Use Allocation Plan (VUAP).

REC 6.4.7 (Visitor Use Fees): A fee would be established for overnight dispersed use (i.e., on the trail system) in conjunction with implementing the permit program and visitor use allocation system. Fees would be used to offset costs associated with the visitor use allocation system and be reinvested into management and protection of backcountry resources, providing maintenance, and visitor services.

Objective REC 6.5: Make available informational materials that encourage visitors to practice a level of personal responsibility in following applicable laws, regulations, policies, and management guidelines and regulations to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area, recreational facilities, and respect the rights of other recreationists and local residents.

Management Actions

REC 6.5.1: Maintain visitor information and interpretive center at the BLM office in Whitethorn. Extend visitor hours during high use periods, when possible, to better accommodate visitors.

REC 6.5.2: Maintain adequate signing and informational facilities to provide the visitor with the directional, interpretive, and regulatory information necessary to enhance their recreational experiences and protect important natural and cultural resources in the area.

REC 6.5.3: Adequate frontcountry signs and interpretive information would be installed and maintained to provide for visitor orientation, safety, and education, and to promote resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will be installed to meet safety requirements,

provide consistency by sign type, and to be as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Include the following measures:

- Provide directional signs at all road junctions, trailheads, and trail junctions.
- Provide adequate visitor safety and regulatory signs, as needed, along roads and at trailheads and campgrounds.
- Provide signs, where necessary, to identify private land boundaries and roads closed to public use.
- Provide signing, where necessary, to identify water sources, sensitive resource areas, or other important features.
- Provide interpretive signs or panels, where feasible, at key locations such as along the interpretive trail between Nadelos and Wailaki Campgrounds, at the Punta Gorda Lighthouse, and at a representative, important archaeological site near Mattole Campground.

Rationale: Adequate directional signing is critical to ensure that visitors can find BLM roads and facilities without getting lost, trespassing onto private property, or traveling off legally designated roads. Safety and regulatory signs are equally important to ensure compliance with important rules such as seasonal campfire prohibitions, mandatory use of bear canisters, and protection of sensitive areas. Interpretive signing at key locations can enhance visitor knowledge and enjoyment of the area while promoting responsible stewardship of the area.

4.19.5 Residential Zone Management

Goal REC 7: Manage public lands within the Shelter Cove subdivision to serve as major coastal access points and coastal green space in the community and by offering recreation and environmental education opportunities to visitors who visit the Lost Coast without camping, or spending extended time in the backcountry.

Residential Zone Allowable Uses (RZAU)

RZAU 1: Sightseeing, picnicking, environmental education, wildlife viewing, tidepool exploration, staging for backcountry use; group picnicking and events such as weddings and memorial services; and other activities compatible with the management goal and objectives for this zone.

RZAU 2: Commercial groups would be required to camp at least ¼ mile north of Black Sands Beach trailhead and individuals and non-commercial groups to camp north of Telegraph Creek.

RZAU 3: Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses would be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses would be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

Residential Zone Objectives and Management Actions

Objective REC 7.1: Maintain open space and protect the unobstructed scenic ocean views at public land locations in the Shelter Cove subdivision.

Management Actions

REC 7.1.1. Conduct monitoring as necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage, especially to coastal tide pools. Monitoring of visitor use would be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at Black Sands Beach trailhead, Lighthouse visitation data, observation sheets and patrol logs, and direct visitor contact.

Objective REC 7.2: The primary overnight accommodations in the Residential Zone would continue to be provided by the private sector (community motels, campgrounds).

Objective REC 7.3: Management presence on-site would be more apparent than in the Backcountry or Frontcountry Zones.

Management Actions

REC 7.3.1 Provide regular patrols of day use facilities and the Black Sands Beach trailhead by law enforcement rangers, maintenance personnel, and other staff members responsible for updating kiosk information, monitoring visitor use, and other tasks.

REC 7.3.2 A greater focus will be placed on guided activities (i.e., interpretive walks, environmental education programs, etc.) in the Residential Zone.

Goal REC 8: Focus management on interpreting the significant natural and cultural resources of the area through community partnerships.

Objective REC 8.1: Make available informational materials that encourage visitors to practice a level of personal responsibility in following applicable laws, policies, and management guidelines and regulations to protect the area and respect the rights of others.

Management Actions

REC 8.1.1. Adequate signs and interpretive information would be installed and maintained to provide for visitor orientation, safety, and education, and to promote resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures would be installed to meet safety requirements, provide consistency by sign type, and to be aesthetically pleasing. Specifically:

- Provide directional signs at key locations along Shelter Cove Road.
- Provide adequate identification, visitor safety, and regulatory signs, as needed, at facilities.
- Provide adequate visitor information in kiosks at Black Sands Beach and Mal Coombs Park.

- Provide interpretive signs or panels at key locations such as Seal Rock, Mal Coombs Park overlooking the tidepools, and other educational features.

Goal REC 9: Provide more developed opportunities for group gatherings and individual use while still maintaining open space and scenic quality, and affording protection of area resources (e.g. tidepools).

Objective REC 9.1 Maintain existing system of on-site day use and overnight parking facilities to allow visitors access to beaches and tidepools, more developed recreation opportunities, and provide information and interpretive resources to promote environmental education and appreciation for the KRNCA. BLM facilities would complement services and facilities provided by community businesses.

Management Actions

REC 9.1.1. Develop and maintain Mal Coombs Park including:

Upgrade and improve the restroom to ensure adequate provisions for persons with disabilities and accommodate heavy seasonal use.

- Develop a group use area (and group use policy) for weddings, memorials, picnics, etc.
- Work cooperatively with the Cape Mendocino Lighthouse Preservation Society, the Shelter Cove Pioneers, and other local groups to maintain the Lighthouse, memorials, and other approved joint community projects to develop and maintain such facilities in an aesthetically pleasing and well maintained standard.
- Upgrade the parking area to expand and make more efficient use of available space.
- Evaluate proposed additional projects (such as a children's playground) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they maintain the scenic coastal environment and are consistent with the overall theme and ambience of the park. Facilities will only be approved if they do not detract from the open coastal vista.
- Maintain existing pedestrian access to tidepools. Provide information and interpretation for tidepool ecology and the need to preserve tidepool diversity.

REC 9.1.2. Maintain existing Black Sands Beach parking facility. Improve landscaping, views from overlook, and visitor safety along coastal bluff. Locate additional sites, if feasible and as opportunities arise, to include additional vehicle parking and parking for horse trailers. This may include the purchase of an additional nearby lot, or working with Humboldt County and Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District to improve parking access along Humboldt Loop road, or other options. Maintain extensive visitor information kiosks.

REC 9.1.3. Maintain Seal Rock and Abalone Point areas for individual and small group day use. Provide opportunities for picnicking, wildlife viewing, interpretation, and other compatible recreational and educational activities. Allow group use events on a case-by-case basis if such use does not result in resource damage or impacts to nearby residents.

Objective REC 9.2 Provide for types and levels of recreational use that can be physically accommodated by on-site facilities without causing undue conflicts with other recreational users and local residents, and without degrading recreational facilities and the surrounding coastal landscape.

Management Actions

REC 9.2.1. Coordinate with Humboldt County and the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District and other community organizations to develop contingencies to manage overflow parking and other capacity issues associated with peak use summer weekends.

Objective REC 9.3 Maximum individual and family use levels would be determined for on-site facilities by the physical capacity of the sites and their associated parking and use facilities.

Management Actions

REC 9.3.1. Maximum numbers of people permitted for group use of Mal Coombs Park (and possibly Abalone Point and Seal Rock on a case-by-case basis) would be determined based on the physical capacity of the sites with permit stipulations designed to minimize conflicts with nearby residents and other public land users.

REC 9.3.2. Specific areas and sites may be identified as group use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs. Development of a group use area in Mal Coombs Park would accommodate desired group events not available or as desirable at other BLM locations.

4.20 INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION (IE)

4.20.1 Introduction

People that are well informed when they come to the King Range are more likely to achieve their recreational goals and leave less of an impact on the resources and communities. The overall mission of the field of interpretation and environmental education is to inspire a sense of connection with the natural resources and an appreciation for other cultures. It is through these connections that a sense of respect for and stewardship of these resources would likely arise. The interpretive and educational programs in the King Range currently revolve around several major themes. A vibrant and effective interpretation and education program has already been built around these themes, and so the plan seeks to continue implementing this program. Current themes are as follows:

- Dynamic physical processes continue to shape the rugged isolation of the KRNCA coastline, which in turn, have created the area's special cultural and natural resource values.
- The BLM manages the KRNCA to maintain the area's undeveloped character and to protect and enhance resource values while providing a diversity of recreation opportunities for the public.
- The King Range is a very dynamic and fragile area (i.e., weather is very variable and can change rapidly, how the tides affect the beach hike, how humans impact the tidepools and other habitats).

- The King Range is located in the rural region of Southern Humboldt County. Visitors are encouraged to travel in the area in a way that is respectful to the surrounding local communities.
- People are encouraged to get to know and respect the wild, untamed character of the land and to experience the King Range on nature's terms.



The BLM would continue to place interpretive exhibits at popular developed sites.

4.20.2 Information and Support

GOAL IE 1: Provide current, accurate, and descriptive information to visitors that facilitates a safe, enjoyable trip to the King Range while minimizing impacts on resources and surrounding communities.

Objective 1.1: Provide specific descriptive information on area road conditions (including narrowness, steepness of grades etc.), facilities, and recreation opportunities so that potential visitors can determine if the King Range offers the right “fit” for their recreation needs.

Management Actions

IE 1.1.1: Communicate changing conditions and other critical announcements with a wide audience through public service announcements, KRNCA webpage, and other forms of media.

IE 1.1.2: Coordinate with local chambers of commerce, state parks, and other information centers or organizations to provide updated information on changing conditions such as road/trail status on a regular basis.

Objective 1.2: Provide detailed orientation information at easily accessible locations (i.e., “Lost Coast Adventure” video, website, brochure).

Management Actions

IE 1.2.1: Place wayside exhibits to interpret resources (i.e., using temporary exhibits to explain a work-in progress such as road removal, interpretive signs at overlooks).

IE 1.2.2: Identify projects to enhance the development of the Lost Coast Interpretive Association, such as producing the orientation video, or coordinating tidepool monitoring with the community.

IE 1.2.3: Maintain information kiosks at trailheads and campgrounds to provide adequate information on recreation facilities and opportunities in the King Range.

IE 1.2.4: Maintain adequate signing on roads and at trailheads so that people can distinguish public from private land.

Objective 1.3: Orient visitors on the unique features and hazards of the coastal environment before they enter the backcountry.

Objective 1.4: Provide support for KRNCA programs and policies utilizing a variety of outreach approaches.

Management Actions

IE 1.4.1: Provide backcountry ranger/interns/law enforcement ranger/resources staff patrols on the Lost Coast and other trails to respond to information requests.

IE 1.4.2: Maintain adequate staffing of the King Range Office front desk in order to respond to requests for special recreation permits and other information needs.

IE 1.4.3: Coordinate with organized outdoor groups and retail stores to provide updated information to them.

4.20.3 Education and Outreach

GOAL IE 2: Engage people of all ages in learning about the cultural and natural history of the King Range and encourage stewardship of these lands.

Objective 2.1: Coordinate with resource specialists to identify opportunities to share an aspect of their work with schools, children, residents, and visitors.

Management Actions

IE 2.1.1: Establish outdoor field school sites/research opportunities and begin to gather baseline data such as monitoring diversity of the tidepools.

Objective 2.2: Engage children in learning about the King Range by developing curriculum based education opportunities.

Management Actions

IE 2.2.1: Participate in offsite presentations about low impact camping in the King Range to interested groups (CCCs, high schools, boy scouts).

IE 2.2.2: Coordinate with partners such as Mattole Restoration Council to provide school programs and curriculum related to the King Range.

Objective 2.3: Encourage community and public stewardship of the King Range.

Management Actions

IE 2.3.1: Provide opportunities for school credit, volunteerism, and employment (i.e., School to Work program, train young docents, hire students).

IE 2.3.2: Use volunteers, wherever possible, to perform tasks.

IE 2.3.3: Give guided natural/cultural history programs.