

3.0 ALTERNATIVES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes four alternatives for management of the KRNCA planning area: the “no action” Alternative A and three action Alternatives B, C, and D. Alternatives are developed to establish a framework to evaluate the potential impacts on the planning area that might occur as a result of management decisions. The alternatives do not themselves constitute management decisions, but instead represent a reasonable range of approaches to managing land and activities consistent with law, regulation, and policy. Development of these management alternatives was guided by NEPA, FLPMA, the King Range Act (Appendix A), BLM resource management planning regulations, and input from the public through public and agency scoping. A final plan and Record of Decision (ROD) will be developed based on public input on this Draft and subsequent analysis. The final plan/ROD will contain the decisions (land use allocations and management prescriptions) that guide future management of the KRNCA.

In some cases, the alternatives include specific actions and action plans to be followed so as to make necessary changes in resource management within the planning area. However, not all issues can be resolved in the general language of a RMP and hence some will require that subsequent actions be taken to determine exactly how to reach desired conditions or to achieve a desired result.

The BLM has the discretion to select an alternative in its entirety or to combine elements of the various alternatives presented in this draft to develop the Final EIS and RMP. The reader may also select and/or combine elements of the various alternatives when providing comments on the plan. NEPA requires the development and testing of several alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, to analyze the potential impacts that a set of actions could have on the area. According to NEPA, BLM must consider these impacts in developing the RMP for the planning area, as described in Chapter 1.

This chapter starts with a discussion of how the alternatives were developed, briefly summarizes the approach for each, and identifies a preferred plan representing a combination of elements from different alternatives for each resource or resource use. It also proposes three geographic management zones, which consolidate and redefine the old zones from the 1974 King Range Management Program to better reflect the current conditions, allowable uses, and management goals for different parts of the KRNCA. They are intended to identify the types of activities that are most appropriate in each geographic area, as well as the level and types of environmental protection and enhancement measures desired.

The alternative goals, objectives, and management actions for each major resource area are then discussed in detail, in the same order they were covered in Chapter 2 (Affected Environment). The combination of input from guiding legislation/policies, public scoping and interagency discussions led to a framework of alternatives cover a relatively focused range of options.

Readers may note that the description of Recreation Alternatives (Section 3.15) provides significantly greater detail than the other sections. Since the KRNCA’s establishment in 1970, recreation use has seen the most change, and remains one of the most pressing issues facing management in this plan. The BLM planning team felt that this resource topic required a great deal of specificity to identify reasonable

gradations of recreation management, and as such, more site- and activity-specific information is provided for the alternatives and they pertain to recreation.

3.2 ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The basic goal of developing alternatives was to explore the range of use options, protection options, and management tools that will achieve a balance between protection of the King Range's primitive character, overwhelmingly identified as a priority in the public scoping process (see Scoping Report), and a variety of resource uses and management issues. Alternatives must: meet the project purpose and need (see Chapter 1); be viable and reasonable; provide a mix of resource protection, management use, and development; be responsive to issues identified in scoping; and meet the established planning criteria (see Chapter 1), federal laws and regulations, and BLM planning policy.

The overarching vision for the future of the KRNCA is to maintain its unique opportunity to experience the California coastline in a relatively undeveloped and natural state. This vision serves to focus the continuum of management options. However, the alternatives identify different strategies for accomplishing that vision and meeting a variety of public needs. Alternative A is a continuation of current management as the "no action" alternative, and was developed from available inventory data, existing planning decisions and policies, and existing land use allocations and programs. Alternatives B, C and D were developed with input from public scoping and collaborative work among the BLM interdisciplinary planning team to represent a range of approaches to balance use and protection of the King Range's primitive character. The team initially identified large-scale themes and priorities for each alternative scenario, then broke into smaller interdisciplinary workgroups to articulate the specific objectives and actions for each resource program. The workgroups then came back together to fine-tune the alternatives and ensure compatibility of treatments for different resource types within each alternative.

Of the action alternatives, Alternative B represents the most "hands off" approach, emphasizing the utilization of natural processes wherever possible and minimizing human impacts. This will result in low levels of active involvement in resource restoration and management, and limited recreation use focused on providing maximum opportunities for solitude and wilderness-type experiences. In the middle of the spectrum, Alternative C provides a greater diversity of uses and approaches to management, with a broad mix of tools and moderate levels of use allowed. Alternative D takes a more active approach, allowing maximum 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.

3.2.1 The Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative was selected from a range of reasonable options, and represents an effort to provide balance in managing both resources and uses of the King Range. Issues considered during this development process include: environmental impacts of the alternatives; issues raised throughout the planning process; specific environmental values, resources, and resource uses; conflict resolution; public input; and laws and regulations.

The Preferred Alternative, in summary, includes the following combination of approaches for each resource:

- ∞ Visual Resources Management: Alternative C
- ∞ Cultural and Historic Resources: Alternative D
- ∞ Lands and Realty: Alternative C
- ∞ Wilderness Characteristics: Alternative D
- ∞ Wild and Scenic Rivers: Alternative D
- ∞ Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: Alternative C
- ∞ Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries: Alternative C
- ∞ Wildlife Management: Alternative C
- ∞ Terrestrial/Vegetative Ecosystems: Alternative C
- ∞ Forest Management: Alternative D
- ∞ Special Forest Products: Alternative C
- ∞ Grazing Management: Alternative C
- ∞ Fire Management: Alternative C
- ∞ Transportation and Access: Alternative C
- ∞ Recreation: Alternative C
- ∞ Interpretation and Education: Alternative A

This combination focuses on the use of moderate, sometimes targeted management actions for most management programs in the King Range. It also would provide for moderate levels of recreation use, with some new management actions added to assure that neither resources nor recreation experiences are negatively impacted from overuse, while at the same time avoiding excessive restrictions. A few resource programs, such as Cultural/Historic Resources and Forest Management, would benefit from taking a more active approach. For Cultural/Historic Resources, this would result in greater knowledge about the resources within the King Range, as well as more specific protections for identified sites. Alternative D for Forest Management would provide a greater variety of applications that would contribute to “speeding up” ecological recovery of previously harvested lands. The KRNCA has an extensive and collaboration-based interpretation and education program already in place, which would be continued under Alternative A.

3.3 MANAGEMENT ZONES

Under Alternatives B, C, and D, some management decisions are organized by geographic zones. Three zones have been delineated, which represent a consolidation, revision, and simplification of the seven original zones in the 1974 King Range Management Program.

All three of the new zones allow multiple uses, but like the original zones, each emphasizes different primary resource values to be conserved and/or allowable uses available in various parts of the planning area. All public lands within the planning area are assigned to one of the three zones (see Figure 3-1): Backcountry, Frontcountry, or Residential. Under Alternative A, the planning area would be managed under the existing management zones prescribed by the 1974 King Range Management Program and subsequent existing revisions or amendments. (The original management zones are shown on the map in Figure 2-7.) Under Alternatives B, C, and D, the new zones would apply, as described below. All of the Backcountry Zone and a section of the northern part of the Frontcountry Zone (from Fourmile Creek north to the Mattole Campground) are within the King Range Wilderness Study Area; these areas will be managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review until Congress determines whether or not to designate the area as Wilderness. If Congress releases all or a portion of these lands from further Wilderness consideration, they will be managed under the objectives of the respective management zones.

3.3.1 Backcountry Zone

The Backcountry Zone includes the western coastal slope of the King Range plus the Honeydew Creek watershed, covering 37,319 acres. It is essentially roadless, with a primary management goal focused on recognizing and managing this unique and primitive undeveloped coastal area. This zone is the core of the KRNCA and Lost Coast, providing a primary use of a wildland recreation experience to visitors while protecting resources such as old growth forests, old-growth forest dependent wildlife, and open coastal grasslands. This environmental setting offers the greatest opportunity for both solitude and challenge, and self-sufficiency is crucial.

Management activities here need to follow the "minimal-tool" concept to maintain and restore the area to a natural functioning ecosystem. Under this approach, the BLM would achieve important resource management objectives with hand tools, except in emergency situations or where motorized equipment is determined through careful analysis to be the minimum necessary tool. Appropriate public use would include non-motorized activities with no facilities other than trails and a few primitive facilities (e.g., signs, sanitary facilities) for resource protection.

3.3.2 Frontcountry Zone

The Frontcountry Zone covers 28,931 acres and acts as the transition zone between the Backcountry Zone and surrounding private lands, and represents a broad mix of uses and tools for management. Most BLM roads and facilities are located in the southern and central parts of this zone, many functioning as "staging areas" to provide access for visitors into the backcountry. Primary uses include a more extensive array of public uses, including special forest products harvesting, fuelwood cutting, and camping in existing developed facilities. Also a primary management focus would include more intensive on-the-ground actions, such as timber stand improvement, fuels reduction work, fire break construction, or use of heavy equipment for watershed restoration. This is the zone where the most active resource management activities could occur.

FIGURE 3-1: NEW MANAGEMENT ZONES

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Despite the concentration of roads and facilities in this zone, many parts of the Frontcountry Zone are remote and contain minimal roads and facility developments. Examples are the areas near Cooskie Peak, Mill Creek, and Fourmile Creek in the northern part of the KRNCA. These lands were incorporated into this zone primarily because of their interface with surrounding private lands, and the need to allow for more intensive fuels management and resource restoration. No additional major public use facility developments (except trails) are proposed for these northern parts of the Frontcountry Zone under the plan.

3.3.3 Residential Zone

This 3,372-acre zone represents the town of Shelter Cove, which is mostly private land except for beachfront lots and parks managed by BLM. The KRNCA's most highly developed recreation sites are in this zone, and the primary uses and management goals focus on developed recreation and resource protection. The Residential Zone also represents a place to direct non-backcountry visitors, where they can learn about the primitive character of the Lost Coast and experience some of its values without the challenge of experiencing the Backcountry directly.

The remainder of this chapter presents the alternatives for each major resource management program in the King Range. Each section includes an introduction, a discussion of any goals, objectives, and management actions that are common across all the proposed alternatives, and then specific actions proposed for each distinct alternative.

3.4 VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.4.1 Introduction

The visual quality of the rugged coastline along the King Range is one of the key reasons why many people love to visit the area, according to public scoping efforts. Protection of these scenic qualities also contributed to the designation of the area as a National Conservation Area. Zones within the KRNCA are categorized according to the national Visual Resource Management (VRM) classification system, used to ensure that any development or changes in the scenic landscape maintain or enhance the overall viewshed qualities. The alternatives classify the Backcountry Zone differently, but otherwise take a fairly consistent approach to management.

3.4.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.4.2.1 Goals

- € To protect and enhance the scenic qualities and visual integrity of the characteristic landscapes of the KRNCA.

3.4.2.2 Objectives

- € To enhance opportunities for visitors and residents to view the outstanding scenic landscapes characteristic of the Lost Coast.
- € To conduct management activities and complete developments in a manner that is sensitive to the visual qualities of the area.

3.4.2.3 Management Actions

1. Complete visual contrast ratings for all proposed surface disturbing projects to ensure they meet VRM Class Objectives.
2. Complete visual contrast ratings for existing roads and facilities and identify opportunities to reduce existing visual impacts through modifications (e.g., painting culverts, removing road berms etc.).
3. Complete an inventory of existing and potential key scenic vista points along road and trail corridors within the KRNCA and identify opportunities to improve these locations as overlooks and interpretive sites so that they are available to the public.
4. Ensure that coastal developments do not detract from the scenic integrity of the area by working with Humboldt County, the California Coastal Commission and other agencies with management jurisdiction.
5. BLM managed lands in Shelter Cove provide the primary public open space in the Residential Zone. Any new site developments on public lands will be located and designed so that they do not detract from the coastal vistas. New facilities will be constructed away from the coastal bluff viewshed.

3.4.2.4 VRM Management Class Definitions

- € **Class I:** The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class allows for natural ecological changes and only very limited types of management activities and uses. Any contrasts with the natural landscape must be minimal and not attract attention.
- € **Class II:** The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities and uses can be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
- € **Class III:** The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be moderate. Management activities and uses may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements of the predominant natural features of the landscape.
- € **Class IV:** The objective of this class is to allow for management activities and uses requiring major modifications to the natural landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. Management activities and uses may dominate the view and be a major focus of

viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to mitigate the impacts of activities through careful location and repeating the visual elements of the landscape.

3.4.3 Alternative A

The original KRNCA management program contained the following VRM Classes:

- ∉ Western Coastal Slope/Beaches: Class II
- ∉ Shelter Cove: No Class Identified
- ∉ Remainder of KRNCA (Uplands): Class III

3.4.4 Alternative B

- ∉ Backcountry Zone: Class I
- ∉ Frontcountry Zone: Class III
- ∉ Residential Zone: Class IV

3.4.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

Same as Alternative B, except portion of Backcountry Zone north of Cooskie Creek will be managed as VRM Class II.

3.4.6 Alternative D

- ∉ Backcountry Zone: Class II
- ∉ Frontcountry Zone: Class III
- ∉ Residential Zone: Class IV

3.5 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

3.5.1 Introduction

While the natural scenery is often what people notice first about the King Range, the area contains substantial numbers of prehistoric sites and historic resources. Management efforts aim to reduce or eliminate deterioration and damage from other uses, as well as encourage understanding through education, outreach, and interpretive programs. All of the alternatives provide basic protections, with varying degrees of priority for the Frontcountry Zone and levels of no-action vs. proactive involvement in surveying, stabilizing, and nominating sites for national-level preservation status.

3.5.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.5.2.1 Goals

One of two desired goals for the King Range is to preserve, protect, and study the irreplaceable cultural resources and protect Native American burial grounds from disturbance or harm through outreach, educational (research oriented and informational), and interpretive efforts for the benefit of the public. (FLPMA Sec. 103(c), 201(a), 202(c); NHPA Sec. 110(a); ARPA Sec. 14(a)).

The second desired goal is to reduce imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration or potential conflict with other resource uses by identifying priority geographic areas for new field inventories based upon a probability for unrecorded significant resources. (ARPA Sec. 14(a); NHPA Sec. 106, 110).

3.5.2.2 Objectives

- € Manage public lands within the King Range to preserve, protect, and study cultural resources which represent at least 3,000 years of human occupation and use along the coastal strand and more than 6,000 years for the interior.
- € Develop and maintain good working relationships with appropriate tribal entities and Native American individuals; ensure that Native American burial grounds are protected from disturbance or harm; and re-establish traditional cultural practices through enhanced management of resources.
- € Develop cooperative efforts with educational institutions, students, tribes, volunteers from the public, and interested private consultants for scientific studies, educational opportunities, and enhanced management of cultural resources in the King Range.
- € Seek funding to conduct stabilization projects of important historic structures within the King Range such as the Punta Gorda Lighthouse and the historic Russell Chambers sheep ranching complex and develop maintenance schedules for their preservation.
- € Integrate cultural resources management with other multiple uses within the King Range for the health of the land and other priority BLM initiatives for the benefit of the public.
- € Prevent cultural properties from being disturbed or damaged through educational and interpretive outreach programs.
- € Maintain the cultural resources monitoring program following BLM Manual 8100 Series guidance.
- € Prepare nominations for the National Register of Historic Places for the KRNCA Archaeological District and the KRNCA Historic Ranching District.
- € Build upon existing historic and prehistoric overviews of the King Range to include the larger regional perspective and interior areas.

3.5.2.3 Management Actions

- € FLPMA/ARPA Cultural Use Permits and Field Authorizations may be issued to qualified persons or institutions for research and study of cultural resources located within the King Range.
- € Educational and interpretive efforts, signs, tours, and outreach are encouraged where opportunities exist and no harm will come to the cultural resources within the King Range.
- € Field evaluations and use allocations of all cultural resources located within the King Range will continue under the monitoring program.
- € Safeguards against incompatible land and resource uses may be imposed through withdrawals, stipulations on leases and permits, design requirements, and similar measures which are developed and recommended by an appropriately staffed interdisciplinary team.

Archaeological inventories will be conducted for all previously unsurveyed lands within the King Range as projects are planned and ground disturbance work is proposed. All authorizations for land and resource use will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, consistent with and subject to the objectives established in the Plan for the proactive use of cultural properties in the public interest (NHPA Sec. 106, 101(d)(6), 110(a)(2)(E); National BLM-ACHP-NCSHPO Programmatic Agreement of March 1997; California BLM-SHPO Protocol Agreement of 1998).

*Note: Per Washington, D.C. IB #2002-101, "All sections of the RMP that address the development of lands and resources will contain standard language stating that managers must not approve proposed activities until compliance with Section 106 of NHPA has been completed and documented, including, where applicable, consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and federally recognized Indian tribes." This applies to all pending RMPs, RMP revisions, and RMP amendments including Time Sensitive Plans.

3.5.3 Alternative A

Cultural resources would continue to be managed in the Backcountry and Residential Zones under the existing King Range Beach Cultural Resources Management Plan using the BLM Manual 8100 Series, existing laws, regulations, policy, and the monitoring program with no increase in monitoring or site patrols. Cultural resources in the Frontcountry Zone would continue under present management to be treated as less important and for purposes of compliance under existing law, regulation, and policy.

The BLM would continue to consult with Native American Tribes and individuals as needed in compliance with federal laws and regulations.

3.5.4 Alternative B

Same as Alternative A.

3.5.5 Alternative C

Cultural resources management would continue for all three zones using the BLM Manual 8100 Series, existing laws, regulations, policy, and the California BLM-SHPO Protocol Agreement of 1998.

There would be more emphasis on expanding the King Range Cultural Resources Management Plan to include the Frontcountry Zone.

There would be more collaboration with Native American Tribes and individuals.

Patrols and site monitoring would increase.

3.5.6 Alternative D (Preferred)

Cultural resources management would continue for all three zones using the BLM Manual 8100 Series, existing laws, regulations, policy, and the California BLM-SHPO Protocol Agreement of 1998.

A proactive approach would be implemented in the Frontcountry Zone whereby Class III archaeological reconnaissance of a certain acreage of unsurveyed lands are undertaken each year and a cultural management program is developed for the entire King Range.

A regional overview would be done for the entire King Range and surrounding areas.

Stabilization projects would be developed for important historic properties such as the Chambers complex and the Punta Gorda Lighthouse.

Emphasis would be placed on cooperative and volunteer outreach and greater collaboration with the Native American community.

National Register nominations would be developed for King Range Historic and Prehistoric Archaeological Districts.

Patrols and site monitoring would increase.

3.6 LANDS AND REALTY

3.6.1 Introduction

The BLM supported a vigorous land acquisition program in the 1970s and '80s, and most of the lands within the boundary of the KRNCA are now under public ownership. Past acquisitions have consolidated and enhanced management of the KRNCA. Acquisition is still a valuable tool for facilitating efficient and beneficial management of the area. Acquisitions are conducted on a willing-seller basis, and can be achieved through donation, purchase, exchange, or other less-than fee title transactions. The alternatives propose a method for prioritizing land and interest in land acquisitions; different

acquisition approaches for the three management zones; and a range of considerations for rights-of-way applications and permits. This section also includes water rights and rights-of-way.

3.6.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.6.2.1 Goals and Objectives

Land Acquisition

The BLM will:

Work with willing sellers to acquire lands and interests in lands within the boundary of the KRNCA under the authority of the King Range Act to:

- € meet the objectives and resource conditions of the management zones and designated use identified in the RMP
- € continue to consolidate lands to provide for more efficient management

Work with willing sellers to acquire lands and interests in lands adjacent/outside the boundary of the KRNCA under the authority of FLPMA to:

- € meet the objectives and resource conditions of the management zone adjacent to the acquisition lands
- € support and complement project areas within the King Range vicinity pursuant to the Arcata Resource Area Management Plan, the Northwest Forest Plan, other federal plans that may be approved during the tenure of the RMP, or community-based conservation initiatives
- € provide habitat continuity for threatened, endangered, and other special status species
- € provide watershed protection for the Mattole River and tributaries

Manage lands contiguous to the KRNCA consistent with the management goals and objectives of the adjoining zone. Manage lands acquired in the future within and adjoining the KRNCA consistent with the goals and objectives of that zone.

Apply for water rights associated with new acquisitions, as appropriate.

Provide access to public lands within the boundary, Backcountry, and Frontcountry zones. Adjacent to or outside the boundary, provide for, or improve public access to and adjacent to public land. BLM would work with willing private landowners to acquire easements or lands that resolve administrative or public access issues.

Work with willing sellers to acquire lands and interests in lands within the Residential Zone to:

- € enhance visitor services and complement recreation opportunities
- € resolve visitor capacity issues of public use on Shelter Cove residential properties
- € facilitate protection of greenbelts, riparian values and water sources

Rights-of-Way

Issue rights-of-way and permits on, over, or across public lands within the boundary or adjacent to the KRNCA under the authority of FLPMA. Applications for rights-of-way and permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the Code of Federal Regulations 2800/2900, and must meet the overall objectives and resource conditions of the specific management zone in which they are located. This includes the Interim Guidelines for Wilderness Study Areas, Guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan, or other land use plans that affect the KRNCA during the life of the RMP.

Consider access to private lands through public lands identified as Late-Successional Reserves (LSR), and recognize existing right-of-way grants, contracted rights, easements, and special use permits in the LSRs as valid uses. Consider new access proposals on a case-by-case basis to evaluate and mitigate adverse impacts on LSRs. Mitigation measures could include rerouting access outside the LSR, or including new road designs that minimize impacts.

Water Rights

Work to ensure that in-stream flows are sufficient to protect water related resource values such as fisheries, riparian habitat, and recreation needs. To accomplish this goal, BLM will apply for water rights on public lands, as appropriate.

Water Rights-of-Way

Implement water conservation measures for all federal activities. BLM-granted rights-of-way will contain stipulations to facilitate water conservation measures. The goal will be to protect in-stream flows and provide maximum benefits of diverted water.

3.6.3 Alternative A – Applies to All Zones

3.6.3.1 Land Acquisition

Acquire lands and interests in lands from willing sellers to improve fragmentation, and/or enhance management in accordance with the King Range Act.

3.6.3.2 Rights-of-Way

Rights-of-way and/or permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.6.3.3 Water Rights-of-Way

Continue to consider water right-of-way applications on a case-by-case basis.

3.6.3.4 Water Rights

The BLM will not seek additional water rights.

3.6.4 Alternative B

3.6.4.1 Land Acquisition

Backcountry and Frontcountry Zones

Acquire lands and interests in lands from willing sellers to reduce fragmentation, and/or enhance management in accordance with the King Range Act.

Residential Zone

Only acquire lands and interests in lands that have been proposed by the affected local governments. Acquisitions will clearly meet the intent of the overall management goals/objectives for this zone.

Adjacent to/or Outside Boundary

Only acquire lands and interests in lands that have been proposed by County governments, affected local governments, and/or local community associations. Acquisitions will clearly meet the intent of the overall management goals/objectives of the RMP, Northwest Forest Plan, or other land use plans that affect the KRNCA during the life of the RMP.

3.6.4.2 Rights-of-Way

Backcountry Zone

New rights-of-way and/or permits will not be issued in this zone. (Private landowner access and legal rights associated with each parcel will be addressed on an individual basis with each landowner and is not within the scope of this plan.)

Frontcountry Zone

Rights-of-way and/or permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Utility rights-of-way will be considered on, over, or across public lands that parallel County roads to accommodate private residents. Utility lines will be placed underground except where infeasible.

The existing communication site on Paradise Ridge (microwave repeater authorized under CACA 03078) will be maintained. New construction or alteration of the communication site would not be allowed.

3.6.4.3 Water Rights-of-Way

Rights-of-way for the diversion of surface water or appropriation of groundwater from public land within or adjacent to the KRNCA will not be allowed. This alternative provides the highest level of assurance that management actions will not result in adverse impacts to water quality, fisheries, and other water-related public resource values, but may cause a hardship on neighboring landowners.

3.6.4.4 Water Rights

BLM will apply for water rights in watersheds that appear likely to become fully allocated by the State Water Resources Control Board. Similarly, BLM will assert the water rights necessary to protect resource values on public lands within watersheds that are adjudicated in the future. It is unlikely that any of the coastal streams on the west slope of the King Range would become fully allocated since they are almost all public land and have minimal development. As the regional population grows, there is a much higher likelihood that streams in the Mattole River watershed could become fully allocated. For this reason, the BLM will document beneficial uses of water on public lands within the Mattole watershed to establish water rights in those cases.

This will ensure that water-related resource values are protected, except in cases where other water right holders in the watershed have seniority. Parties with a proven senior water right would be unaffected by BLM assertion of water rights.

3.6.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

3.6.5.1 Land Acquisition

Backcountry and Frontcountry Zones

Acquire lands and interests in lands from willing sellers to reduce fragmentation, and/or enhance management in accordance with the King Range Act.

Residential Zone

BLM will acquire lands only after working with affected local governments and community associations.

Adjacent to/or Outside Boundary

BLM will acquire lands within identified acquisition project areas that have been coordinated with county governments, and local community associations.

3.6.5.2 Rights-of-Way

Backcountry Zone

New rights-of-way and/or permits will not be issued in this zone. (An exception is private landowner access and legal rights associated with each parcel. These will be addressed on an individual basis with each landowner and are not within the scope of this plan.)

Frontcountry and Residential Zones

Rights-of-way and/or permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, consistent with local planning, regulations directed by the California Coastal Commission, and overall management goals of the zones.

Utility rights-of-way will only be issued within existing corridors and placed underground except where infeasible

3.6.5.3 Water Rights-of-Way

New water rights-of-way that propose to divert surface water on public lands will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in all cases stipulate that surface water can only be diverted on public lands during the winter and spring months, when base flows are adequate.

Rights-of-way to appropriate groundwater from sources on public lands will also be considered on a case-by-case basis, and approved only when the effects on stream temperatures or sedimentation are negligible.

All new rights-of-way authorized will contain stipulations that address water conservation measures, including the installation of float valves on tanks, water meters to record usage, installation of water conserving fixtures, and appropriate reuse or reclamation of gray water.

The goal of this alternative is to encourage winter and spring storage of water for use during the dry summer and fall months, when stream flows and temperatures are at critical levels for sustaining fisheries and other aquatic resource values.

3.6.5.4 Water Rights

BLM will apply for water rights only after completing an inventory and assessing surface water sources within the KRNCA and adjacent public lands.

BLM will establish and maintain records of water demand for in-stream flows necessary to protect fisheries, riparian habitat, stock watering, micro-hydro power generation, and public drinking water supplies.

3.6.6 Alternative D

3.6.6.1 Land Acquisition

Same as Alternative C.

3.6.6.2 Rights-of-Way

Rights-of-way and/or permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis, including but not limited to utility corridors, roads, water facilities, and communication sites.

3.6.6.3 Water Rights-of-Way

New proposals to divert water will be considered on a case-by-case basis after the proponent has acquired a legal water right. The BLM would require the applicant to evaluate the potential effects to

public land resources. Standard stipulations would be required to ensure that adequate water conservation measures are applied and that water could be diverted only when in-stream flows are adequate.

This alternative facilitates the authorization of new rights-of-way to adjacent landowners and allows for additional water diversions in the future. However, this alternative provides minimal protection for in-stream flows and associated water-related resources.

3.6.6.4 Water Rights

Same as Alternative C.

3.7 WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTIC INVENTORY UNITS

3.7.1 Introduction

Management of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics is part of BLM's multiple-use mandate, and is recognized within the spectrum of resource values and uses. Lands with wilderness characteristics are defined as areas:

- ⊄ Having been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable
- ⊄ Having outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
- ⊄ Having at least five thousand acres of land or of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in unimpaired condition
- ⊄ Potentially containing ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

With exceptions, these lands must be managed to protect these values. They are also managed for the use and enjoyment of the American people and may be devoted to the public purposes of recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use. In addition, they could augment multiple-use management of adjacent and nearby lands through the protection of watersheds and water yield, wildlife habitat, natural plant communities, and similar natural values.

The KRNCA was inventoried as part of this RMP process for areas with wilderness characteristics, which were divided into identifiable subunits (see Figure 3-3). Alternative A does not include this survey, but Alternatives B, C, and D offer a range of acreages to be protected under the management guidelines listed in Appendix H. The wilderness characteristic inventory units all adjoin the existing King Range and Chemise Mountain Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), which were studied under a separate planning process and EIS (see Section 2.6.1).

FIGURE 3-3: WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTIC INVENTORY UNITS

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3.7.2 Common to All Alternatives

Manage the 37,975 acres of existing WSAs identified in the 1988 Wilderness EIS under the BLM's "Interim Management Policy (IMP) For Lands Under Wilderness Review" (H-8550-1) until Congressional designation as Wilderness or release from WSA status.

For Alternatives B, C, and D, follow the guidelines identified in Appendix H in implementing administrative actions and determining allowable uses on lands outside of WSAs that are recommended for management to protect wilderness characteristics.

3.7.3 Alternative A

No Wilderness Characteristic Inventory Units would be identified.

3.7.4 Alternative B

Protect Wilderness Characteristics on five parcels (approximately 200 acres) within the King Range WSA that have been acquired since the Wilderness EIS was published in 1988. Any future lands acquired within the WSA boundaries would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics. Protect wilderness characteristics on 10,260 acres adjacent to the existing King Range and Chemise Mountain WSAs. These areas include Wilderness Characteristic Inventory Subunits 1B, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 1J, 2A, and 2B (see Figure 3-3). Manage these parcels to protect their wilderness characteristics and incorporate them into the Backcountry Management Zone. This would result in a Backcountry Management Zone of 47,579 acres to be managed for protection of wilderness characteristics. This alternative includes all inventory subunits that meet the minimum wilderness characteristic inventory criteria.

3.7.5 Alternative C

Protect Wilderness Characteristics on five parcels (approximately 200 acres) within the King Range WSA that have been acquired since the Wilderness EIS was published in 1988. Any future lands acquired within the WSA boundaries would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics. Protect wilderness characteristics on 6,721 acres adjacent to the existing King Range and Chemise Mountain WSAs. These areas include Wilderness Characteristic Inventory Subunits 1E (except subunit 1E(a), the Mill Creek portion), 1F, 1G, 1H, and 2A (see Figure 3-3). Manage these parcels to protect their wilderness characteristics and incorporate them into the Backcountry Management Zone. This would result in a Backcountry Management Zone of 44,040 acres to be managed for protection of wilderness characteristics. This alternative incorporates inventory subunits that have high-quality wilderness characteristics and that complement the values of the existing WSAs.

3.7.6 Alternative D (Preferred)

Protect Wilderness Characteristics on five parcels (approximately 200 acres) within the King Range WSA that have been acquired since the Wilderness EIS was published in 1988. Any future lands acquired within the WSA boundaries would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics. This would

result in a Backcountry Management Zone of 37,319 acres to be managed for protection of wilderness characteristics.

The boundary in this alternative follows ridgetops, roads, and fire breaks, allowing for a mix of management actions and land use allocations that protect wilderness characteristics within the core of the King Range backcountry. It also provides for an interface of BLM lands outside of the Backcountry Zone where fuels reduction and other activities can be implemented to protect private lands adjoining the King Range from wildfire.

All of the wilderness characteristic inventory subunits meet the inventory criteria of visually appearing to be affected primarily by the forces of nature. However, parts of the units have been affected by past timber harvesting and have suffered ecological damage. Retaining these units in the Frontcountry Zone will allow for more intensive forest and watershed restoration activities. The acreage proposed for management to protect wilderness characteristics in this plan, although it does not extend beyond the existing WSA boundary, is still 12,359 acres more than the 24,960 acres recommended by the BLM to Congress for Wilderness designation in the 1988 Wilderness EIS. No actions proposed in this plan would result in irreversible or irretrievable impacts that would affect the future consideration of the units for wilderness characteristic protection (see Chapter 4).

3.8 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

3.8.1 Introduction

As part of the RMP process, a review was conducted in 2003 to assess and evaluate all river segments in the KRNCA for eligibility for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River (WSR) System (see Figure 3-2). A description of the evaluation process and proposed designations is located in Appendix C.

3.8.2 Alternative A

The “no action” alternative for Wild and Scenic Rivers does not recommend any river segments for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS). In this scenario, BLM would protect values associated with river segments through management actions other than National Wild and Scenic River designation.

FIGURE 3-2: ELIGIBLE AND SUITABLE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

11 x 17 insert

back of Figure 3-2

3.8.3 Alternative B

This alternative would find all 28 eligible river segments shown in Figure 3-2 as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. The BLM would place all suitable river segments under protective management until a final decision is made by Congress.¹ The mouth of the Mattole River and Estuary would receive preliminary classifications as a scenic river area, as well as Mill Creek and South Fork Bear Creek north of Shelter Cove Road. The remaining portion of South Fork Bear Creek, south of Shelter Cove Road, would be preliminarily classified as a recreational river area; while the remainder of the eligible streams in the King Range would all receive preliminary classification as wild river areas.

3.8.4 Alternative C

Under this alternative, fifteen of the river segments would be recommended as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. These include: South Fork Bear Creek (Segments A and B), Big Creek, Big Flat Creek, Buck Creek, Gitchell Creek, Honeydew Creek, Horse Mountain Creek, Kinsey Creek, Mattole River, Mill Creek, Oat Creek, Randall Creek, Shipman Creek, and Spanish Creek. The BLM would place all suitable river segments under protective management until a final decision is made by Congress. Preliminary classifications for all river segments would be the same as Alternative B.

3.8.5 Alternative D (Preferred)

Under this alternative, eight eligible river segments on seven different streams would be recommended as suitable for inclusion in the NWSRS. These include: South Fork Bear Creek (Segments A and B), Big Creek, Big Flat Creek, Honeydew Creek, Gitchell Creek, Mattole River, and Mill Creek. The BLM would place all suitable river segments under protective management until a final decision is made by Congress.¹ Preliminary classifications for all river segments would be the same as Alternatives B and C.

Appendix C lists management guidance under interim protection for specific program areas.

¹ Protective Management: When a river is determined eligible and given a tentative classification (wild, scenic, and/or recreational), its identified Outstanding Resource Values (ORVs) shall be afforded adequate protection, subject to valid existing rights, and until the eligibility determination is superceded, management activities and authorized uses shall not be allowed to adversely affect either eligibility or the tentative classification. Public notification of protective management shall occur no later than publication and release of the draft RMP, or plan amendment. However, protective management shall be initiated by the authorized officer as soon as eligibility is determined. Specific management prescriptions for eligible river segments should provide protection in the following ways:

- ∞ Free-flowing Values: The free-flowing characteristics of eligible river segments cannot be modified to allow stream impoundments, diversions, channelization, and/or rip-rapping to the extent the BLM is authorized under the law.
- ∞ River-related Values: Each segment shall be managed to protect identified outstandingly remarkable values (subject to valid existing rights) and, to the extent practicable such values shall be enhanced.
- ∞ Classification Impacts: Management and development of the eligible river and its corridor cannot be modified, subject to valid existing rights, to the degree that its eligibility or tentative classification would be affected. Should a nonsuitable determination be made in the RMP process, then the river shall be managed in accordance with management objectives as outlined in the plan document.

3.9 AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

3.9.1 Introduction

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are areas of public land where special management attention is required to protect important natural and/or cultural resource values. The ACEC designation indicates to the public that the BLM recognizes these significant values, and has established special management measures to protect them. These alternatives either maintain the current management of a single designated ACEC in the King Range, at the Mattole Estuary, or propose an additional ACEC designated in the Mill Creek Watershed.

3.9.2 Common to All Alternatives

Continue management of the 655-acre Mattole Estuary Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect significant archaeological sites, the fragile sand dune ecosystem, and riparian areas/ wildlife values in the Mattole Estuary and coastal strand south to Sea Lion Gulch.

3.9.3 Alternative A

No additional ACECs would be designated.

3.9.4 Alternative B

Same as Alternative A.

3.9.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

The Mill Creek Watershed ACEC would be established and would include all BLM managed lands (approximately 680 acres) in the Mill Creek Watershed. The primary features that would be protected by this designation are the water quality of this important anadromous fish stream/cold water tributary to the Mattole River, and the low-elevation old-growth Douglas fir forest. Any additional lands or interests in lands acquired by the BLM in the Mill Creek Watershed would be automatically incorporated into the ACEC (see Figure 3-4).

“Special management attention” is needed for the Mill Creek ACEC to protect the sensitive old-growth Douglas fir forest and the important anadromous fish stream/cold water tributary to the Mattole River. Special rules proposed for the area focus on allowable public uses, including: 1) Day-use only (no overnight camping); 2) No campfires; and 3) Pets must be on a leash. These rules apply on public lands in the watershed (presently 680 acres). Additional rules may be proposed for the area through an Activity Plan to be developed with public participation.

FIGURE 3-4: PROPOSED MILL CREEK WATERSHED ACEC

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back of Figure 3-4



Mill Creek ACEC looking north from Prosper Ridge, Mattole Valley in the distance.

3.9.6 Alternative D

Same as Alternative C.

3.10 AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS AND FISHERIES

3.10.1 Introduction

The desired condition for all streams within the KRNCA is that physical, chemical, and biological components of stream habitat are maintained in a manner such that each stream or stream reach supports a desired compliment of native species appropriate for the capability of each stream or stream reach. Thus, the stream habitat and water quality conditions for small, headwater stream may be quite different than conditions in large, salmon-bearing streams since the habitat capability and native fauna of these two types of stream are quite different.

In general, the desired condition for all streams within the KRNCA includes the following: water temperatures will be supportive of cold water species; water will generally be non-turbid except during storm events; contaminants would not be found at levels which would negatively impact native species; exotic species will be absent or limited to the extent where they are not impacting native species; human-caused migration barriers will be absent; in-channel large woody debris will be present at levels which promote diverse habitat conditions; riparian areas will provide adequate shade and potential for recruitment of future large woody debris; water discharge is not effected by human activities (amount, duration, and timing); floodplains (where present) would be intact and regularly inundated with flood waters; streambed substrate would support habitat requirements of native fauna; and, the amount of sediment stored in stream channels would not substantially impact habitat quality for native species.

The conditions of the streams in the KRNCA are a function of heavy and often intense rainfall upon steep, erodible, generally forested terrain. These conditions have led to a very high channel density on the landscape. For example, the Bear Creek watershed contains over fourteen miles of stream channel per square mile of land, which means that Bear Creek contains approximately 300 miles of stream channels. The great majority are ephemeral (flowing only in response to rainfall) or intermittent (not flowing year round), and only about fifteen miles of stream in Bear Creek support populations of salmon and steelhead. However, because the vast network of smaller streams collectively influences conditions in larger streams, protection of these smaller streams and stream networks influences habitat conditions and trends in downstream habitat occupied by listed Pacific salmonids. Thus, the KRNCA represents a unique ecosystem that is important to the survival and recovery of native species.

3.10.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.10.2.1 *Goals*

The overall goal for the KRNCA is to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems on public lands, and, to the extent possible, partner with other landowners to coordinate restoration efforts across watersheds.

The KRNCA contains important habitat for species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Relative to aquatic habitat, one of the most critical land allocations in the KRNCA are the vast network of Riparian Reserves (RRs) that consist of lands along streams and unstable or potentially unstable areas. Riparian Reserves generally parallel the stream network but also include other areas necessary for maintaining hydrologic, geomorphic, and ecological processes. The Riparian Reserve network has not yet been mapped for the entire KRNCA. Watersheds within the area will be mapped on an as-needed basis as an implementing action of this plan, using the location criteria contained in Appendix D. The Honeydew Creek watershed has been mapped and is shown in Figure 3.5 as an example of the extent of the Riparian Reserve network on KRNCA public lands. The Riparian and Aquatic Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) listed in Appendix D will be used to ensure that management activities and public uses in Reserves do not retard or prevent attainment of management objectives (listed below), and to maintain productivity and resiliency of riparian and aquatic ecosystems and the species that depend on them.

3.10.2.2 *Objectives*

BLM-administered lands within the KRNCA will be managed to:

- € Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations, and communities are uniquely adapted.
- € Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.

FIGURE 3-5: RIPARIAN RESERVES—EXAMPLE FROM HONEYDEW CREEK WATERSHED

8.5 x 11 insert

- € Maintain and restore the physical integrity of aquatic systems, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.
- € Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.
- € Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include the timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage, and transport.
- € Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing. The timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high, and low flows must be protected.
- € Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.
- € Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.
- € Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.

3.10.2.3 *Management Actions*

Based on existing knowledge of aquatic habitat conditions in the KRNCA and the need to manage riparian-dependent resources to maintain or restore desired conditions, the following five categories of management actions were identified for consideration:

1. Upslope Sediment Reduction
 - € road decommissioning
 - € landslide rehabilitation
 - € road drainage maintenance and upgrades
2. Instream Habitat Enhancement
 - € creation of pool habitat, or improving pool habitat by addition of cover elements
 - € increasing instream cover (large wood)
 - € spawning habitat enhancement
3. Riparian Silviculture
 - € planting native riparian species

- € thinning overstocked stands to enhance native species composition and to improve riparian function
4. Monitoring (to assess existing conditions of key indices and to detect trends over time)
- € water quality indicators
 - € habitat/channel condition indicators
 - € biological indicators
5. Estuary Enhancement
- € Large wood enhancement projects implemented in coordination with local watershed restoration groups



Road decommissioning requires the use of heavy equipment.

3.10.2.4 Criteria for Implementation of Management Actions

Sediment Reduction Projects

Implementation of sediment reduction projects in KRNCA watersheds will be considered if:

1. Project implementation could result in long-term improvement of habitat for native fauna, especially salmon and steelhead.
2. An inventory and/or analysis of potential sediment sources within a watershed indicates that treatment of a particular site would be among the highest priorities within a watershed or of significant value for sediment reduction.
3. Adequate access to the project site(s) exists for implementation and post-project monitoring.

4. Project implementation would not substantially interfere with identified access to private lands, recreation facilities, fuel breaks, or other such necessary access.

Instream Habitat Improvement Projects

Implementation of instream habitat improvement projects in KRNCA streams will be considered if:

1. Project implementation would provide beneficial habitat for salmon, steelhead, or other desired native species.
2. Analysis has shown that the project would address habitat conditions limiting survival of target species at a particular life stage.
3. Adequate access to the project site(s) exists for implementation and post-project monitoring.
4. The project would not create a hazard for KRNCA visitors or other recreations.
5. The project will comply with the Wild and Scenic River Act for all “suitable” stream segments.

Riparian Silviculture Projects

Implementation of riparian silviculture projects will be considered if:

1. Project implementation would provide beneficial habitat for salmon, steelhead, or other desired native species.
2. Analysis has shown that the project will address long term recruitment of large woody debris, provide adequate stream shade, and input of organic matter.
3. Local impacts from any canopy removal will not result in significant alteration of summer water temperatures, sediment input, or long-term input in organic matter.

Monitoring

Implementation of stream, biotic, or watershed monitoring will be considered if:

1. The outcome of monitoring will assist in implementing the Resource Management Plan, recovery of listed species, or increasing the knowledge base of the resources.
2. Storage, analysis, and reporting of monitoring data are planned prior to data collection.
3. The impacts of monitoring will not substantially interfere with other goals and objectives contain in the RMP.
4. Priority will be given to those streams which contain listed aquatic species.

Estuary Enhancement

Implementation of enhancement projects in the Mattole Estuary will be considered if:

1. Project implementation would provide beneficial habitat for salmon, steelhead, or other desired native species.

2. Analysis has shown that the project would address habitat conditions limiting survival of target species at a particular life stage.
3. The project would not create a hazard for KRNCA visitors or other recreationists.

3.10.3 Alternative A

Implement upslope sediment reduction, instream habitat enhancement, riparian silviculture, and monitoring actions in Mattole Basin in fish bearing streams. Implement estuary enhancement.

3.10.4 Alternative B

Implement only upslope sediment reduction actions in Mattole Basin in fish bearing watersheds; do not implement instream habitat enhancement, riparian silviculture, and monitoring actions, nor estuary enhancement.

Allowable uses that could potentially affect aquatic habitat in the KRNCA will be guided by determining consistency with Management Objectives as well as Riparian and Aquatic S&Gs (Appendix D), which are specific to ongoing or future proposed land management activities.

3.10.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

Implement upslope sediment reduction, instream habitat enhancement, riparian silviculture, and monitoring actions in Mattole Basin in fish bearing watersheds. Implement estuary enhancement.

Allowable uses that could potentially affect aquatic habitat in the KRNCA will be guided by determining consistency with Management Objectives as well as Riparian and Aquatic S&Gs (Appendix D), which are specific to ongoing or future proposed land management activities.

3.10.6 Alternative D

Implement upslope sediment reduction, instream habitat enhancement, riparian silviculture, and monitoring actions KRNCA-wide. Implement estuary enhancement.

Allowable uses that could potentially affect aquatic habitat in the KRNCA will be guided by determining consistency with Management Objectives as well as Riparian and Aquatic S&Gs (Appendix D), which are specific to ongoing or future proposed land management activities.

3.11 WILDLIFE

3.11.1 Introduction

These alternatives all include cooperative management with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to achieve, maintain, and enhance natural wildlife populations, protect habitat, prevent damage, and increase public education. They include a range of

specific actions for six sensitive wildlife species with habitat occurring in the KRNCA, as well as other management issues involving management and monitoring of wildlife populations and the habitats they rely on.

3.11.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.11.2.1 *Threatened and Endangered Species*

BLM's objective is to work with federal, state, and local partners to minimize or eliminate the need for additional listing of species under the Endangered Species Act and to contribute to the recovery of the species already listed as such. The BLM will take measures to promote the recovery and conservation of all special status animal species within the King Range. This will be in accordance with applicable Endangered Species Act of 1973 regulations (50CFR402) and BLM policy (6840 Manual, IM UT No. 97-66).

Management actions for both threatened and endangered species, as well as BLM Special Status species apply to Backcountry, Frontcountry, and Residential Management Zones. Six wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered which are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the King Range are:

- € Brown Pelican (Federal Endangered)
- € Bald Eagle (Federal Threatened, Federal Proposed for Delisting)
- € Western Snowy Plover (Federal Threatened)
- € Marbled Murrelet (Federal Threatened)
- € Northern Spotted Owl (Federal Threatened)
- € Northern (Steller's) Sea Lion (Federal Threatened)

3.11.2.2 *Other Wildlife*

The goal for wildlife populations in the King Range is to maintain or enhance populations of appropriate native species and to increase the knowledge base for these species.

Migratory Birds

Guidelines for the management of migratory birds are in the Executive Order (13186) for Conservation of Migratory Birds (January 11, 2001). Of the approximately 900 migratory birds occurring in the United States, 122 were selected species of management concern at the national level, known as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern (MNBMC). Migratory bird species on this list occur within the KRNCA and contiguous lands. Birds on the MNBMC list known to occupy the King Range (either presently or historically) include northern goshawk, white-tailed kite, peregrine falcon, Vaux's swift, black swift, rufous hummingbird, Allen's hummingbird, red-breasted sapsucker, olive-sided flycatcher, Pacific slope flycatcher, yellow-breasted chat, and California thrasher. The management goals will generally be achieved by habitat protection and enhancement as described in the Vegetation and Fisheries sections; specific management actions for each alternative are described below.

Herpetofauna

Restore aquatic and terrestrial habitat suitable for appropriate native species. The southern torrent salamander, foothill yellow-legged frog, northern red-legged frog, tailed frog, and northwestern pond turtle are California state species of special concern and federal species of concern that potentially occur in the King Range. All alternatives will restore natural ecosystems and avoid disturbance to known populations during project activities. Much of this objective will be met with the aquatic and riparian management actions described in the Fisheries section.

Intertidal Habitat

Although these habitats are technically outside of BLM's jurisdiction, BLM brings people into this area and is (partially) responsible for their affects to this resource. In all alternatives, BLM will manage visitors in an attempt to maintain the natural diversity of intertidal organisms in this special habitat, and work cooperatively with CDFG in the management of marine life.

Game Species

The goal of game management in the King Range is to host a natural complement of species at population levels consistent with the habitat management goals outlined elsewhere in this document, and in a manner consistent with CDFG regulations. For all alternatives, BLM will provide a mix of habitats necessary to support diverse and appropriate population levels of wildlife game species; specific management actions can be found in the Terrestrial Ecosystems and Vegetation section (Section 3.8).

Wildlife Introductions

In all alternatives, the BLM will maintain, restore, and enhance historic levels of wildlife species native to the King Range. Non-native species will not be encouraged in the King Range. Wildlife introductions are not a stated objective in any of the alternatives, however BLM will work cooperatively to assess the suitability of reintroductions proposed by Fish and Game and other entities that are consistent with this goal.

3.11.3 Alternative A

3.11.3.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

Brown Pelicans

These birds occur at the interface between the King Range and the Pacific Ocean, using offshore rocks as roosting sites. Disturbance at roosting sites will be minimized. No specific management actions are planned.

Bald Eagles

Enhance the existence of habitat should they colonize the King Range area. No specific management actions are planned.

Western Snowy Plovers

Monitor for nesting plovers by continuing monthly breeding season surveys at the Mattole River mouth and at gravel bars on the lower Mattole.

Marbled Murrelets

Preserve existing potential nesting habitat and accelerate the development of late-successional forest characteristics in stands that have been previously harvested. Conduct project-level marbled murrelet protocol surveys in appropriate habitat prior to project implementation.

Northern Spotted Owls

Protect existing habitat and increase the availability of suitable habitat for nesting and roosting so as to twelve to fourteen pairs of owls in the King Range. This will be achieved by maintaining late successional forests where they exist and encouraging the development of late-successional forests at sites that have been converted to early successional stages by timber harvest or large scale fires and by minimizing disturbance to nesting owls. Project level assessments and consultation with the FWS will be completed for activities potentially impacting spotted owls. Monitoring known owl sites and periodic surveys of the suitable habitat in the King Range will help determine trends in owl activity center numbers, locations and productivity.

Steller's Sea Lions

This species occurs at the interface between the King Range and the Pacific Ocean, using selected offshore rocks as roosting and potential breeding sites. No specific management actions are planned.

3.11.3.2 Other Wildlife

No specific management actions are planned for any of the other wildlife categories.

3.11.4 Alternative B

3.11.4.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

Same as Alternative A for brown pelicans, bald eagles, and Steller's sea lions.

Western Snowy Plovers

BLM will encourage the existence of habitat for snowy plovers should they colonize the Mattole River mouth area, but no specific management actions are planned.

Marbled Murrelets

Preserve existing potential nesting habitat and conduct project-level protocol surveys in appropriate habitat prior to project implementation.

Northern Spotted Owls

Protect existing habitat for nesting and roosting by maintaining late successional forests where they exist. Project level assessments and consultation with the FWS will be completed for activities potentially impacting spotted owls, and monitoring known owl sites in the King Range will help determine trends in owl activity center numbers, locations and productivity.

3.11.4.2 Other Wildlife

Same as Alternative A.

3.11.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

3.11.5.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

Brown Pelicans

Disturbance at roosting sites will be minimized, and roost sites on the offshore rocks will be protected by working cooperatively with the California Coastal National Monument.

Bald Eagles

Enhance the existence of habitat should they colonize the King Range area. Healthy populations of anadromous fish (an important component of eagles' diet) will be encouraged by actions described in the fisheries section of this document. Large trees will be encouraged to develop along major watercourses to provide perch sites and potential nesting sites.

Western Snowy Plovers

Protect and enhance beach habitat at the mouth of the Mattole River to provide suitable nesting habitat for nesting/wintering plovers if/when the population responds to the recovery plan and re-colonize the area. Continue monthly breeding season surveys at the Mattole River mouth and at gravel bars on the lower Mattole.

Marbled Murrelets

Preserve existing potential nesting habitat and accelerate the development of late-successional forest characteristics in stands that have been previously harvested and conduct project-level protocol surveys in appropriate habitat prior to project implementation. Given the lack of murrelet detections in spite of extensive surveys, no other management objective is considered appropriate. Management actions taken for the protection and enhancement of late-successional forest stands and late-successional forest

characteristics in younger stands will be consistent with management objectives for all old-growth associated species.

Northern Spotted Owls

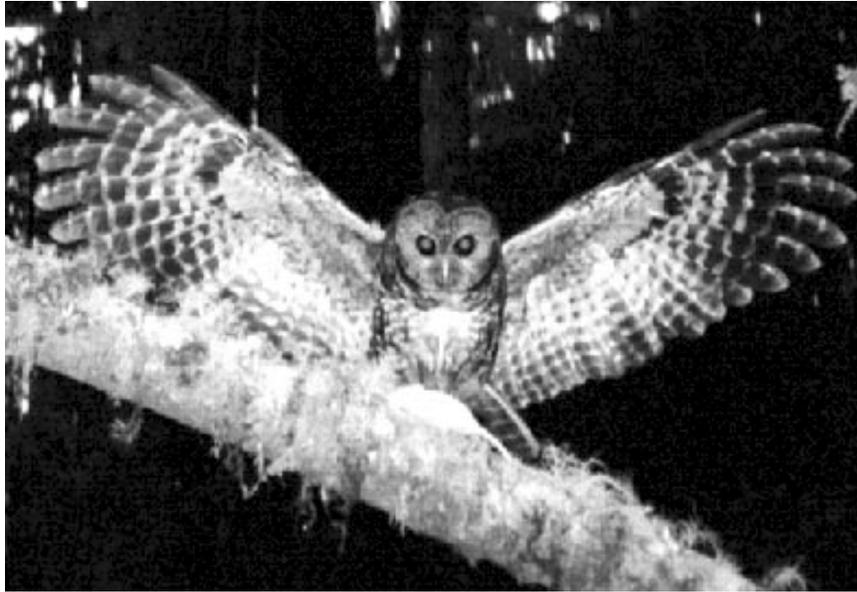
Protect existing habitat and increase the availability of suitable habitat for nesting and roosting. Establish sufficient habitat to attract and maintain twenty breeding pairs of spotted owls in the King Range. This goal is consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan objectives to restore and enhance late successional habitat within the range of the northern spotted owl.² Project level assessments and consultation with the FWS will be completed for activities potentially impacting spotted owls. Monitoring known owl sites and periodic surveys of the suitable habitat in the King Range will help determine trends in owl activity center numbers, locations, and productivity.

² Regional Perspective for owl recovery: The conservation and recovery strategies for the northern spotted owl are founded in the basic tenets of conservation biology as described by Thomas (ISC 1990).

1. Species well-distributed across their range are less prone to extinction.
2. Large blocks of habitat, containing multiple pairs are superior to small blocks.
3. Blocks of habitat that are close together are better than blocks far apart.
4. Habitat that is less fragmented is better than fragmented habitat
5. Habitat between blocks facilitates dispersal when it more closely resembles suitable habitat

All iterations of owl recovery planning include a system of designated “reserves” capable of sustaining appropriate numbers of interacting owl populations (ideally 20 pair areas) spaced across a general landscape (matrix) in a configuration which provides for an interchange (emigration and immigration) of dispersing owls among these reserves. Each planning iteration has also described recovery of the species in the California Coastal Province as being limited by the lack of federal ownership, and thus the lack of capability of any strictly federal strategy to provide adequate habitat over time. A planning group assembled by the California Board of Forestry (BOF) attempted in the early 1990s to develop a Habitat Conservation Strategy which could be applied to private lands to augment the federal strategy in California. The preferred alternative presented to the BOF included a comprehensive approach to establishing “Multiple Pair Areas” (MPAs) on private lands in a configuration which would mimic the size and spacing of reserves in the federal strategy. In this alternative, in the southern portion of the California range of the owl, it was found that not only were the opportunities to maintain pairs on federal lands limited south of federal holdings in the South Fork Eel River and the KRNCA, but the opportunities to establish MPAs on private lands were limited as well. This was due to the increasingly fragmented nature of owl habitat in generally a northwest to southeast gradient extending south roughly from the Jackson State Forest on the west and the northern Mendocino National Forest boundary on the east. The BOF strategy necessarily abandoned the MPA approach in this fragmented southern oak-hardwood zone adopting a strategy of managing for individual pairs wherever they occur with a goal of simply maintaining the range of the owl in this region.

The analyses of owl recovery opportunities all underscore the importance of the King Range as the southernmost federal holding of coastal habitat in the California range of the species with potential to maintain a significant number of interacting pairs. Currently the King Range provides habitat for fifteen owl activity centers with reasonably good connectivity to owl populations in the South Fork Eel, Gilham Butte, and Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Analyses of habitat capabilities within the King Range indicate high potential for establishing additional activity centers on acquired lands which were previously harvested, particularly in the Bear Creek and Honeydew Creek watersheds. These gains would be achieved over time as in-growth and management of these stands promote forest structure suitable for owl nesting.



The KRNCA can potentially support up to twenty pairs of northern spotted owls.

Source: Amy Krause, BLM

Steller's Sea Lions

Disturbance at haul-out sites will be minimized. Haul-out sites on the offshore rocks will be protected by working cooperatively with the California Coastal National Monument. An outreach program will be developed to educate people using boats to access the King Range shoreline.

3.11.5.2 Other Wildlife

Migratory Birds

Avoid and minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting habitat restoration activities. Restore and enhance habitat for migratory birds to a "pre-mechanized treatment landscape." Prevent or abate pollution or detrimental alteration of environmental characteristics of benefit to migratory birds. Design an "all bird" monitoring plan to provide long term data regarding bird populations and their habitats. The design of this monitoring program will be such that it can be implemented opportunistically as a part of other survey efforts, or as a stand-alone effort. Basic components of this plan will include the use of bird point counts or area searches (Ralph et al. 1993) with the intent of gathering statistically valid samples to assess the long-term effectiveness of management activities. Collaboration with other entities such as Partners in Flight, Forest Service research personnel, or graduate students will be encouraged for this monitoring effort.

Intertidal Habitat

In addition to cooperating with CDFG, also educate visitors to the intertidal habitat to help reduce their impact on species not covered by existing fishing and marine mammal protection regulations and enhance understanding of the existing regulations.

Wildlife Introductions

Roosevelt elk have recently been reestablished in the southern part of the King Range. Casual monitoring of this population, including its interaction with human populations outside of the King Range, will continue.

3.11.6 Alternative D

3.11.6.1 Threatened and Endangered Species

Same as Alternative C for all six species.

3.11.6.2 Other Wildlife

Migratory Birds

Avoid and minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting habitat restoration activities. Restore and enhance habitat for migratory birds to a “pre-mechanized treatment landscape.” Prevent or abate pollution or detrimental alteration of environmental characteristics of benefit to migratory birds. Design and implement an “all bird” monitoring plan to provide long term data regarding bird populations and their habitats as a stand-alone effort. Basic components of this plan will include the use of bird point counts or area searches (Ralph et al. 1993) with the intent of gathering statistically valid samples to assess the long-term effectiveness of management activities. Collaboration with other entities such as Partners in Flight, Forest Service research personnel or graduate students will be encouraged for this monitoring effort.

Intertidal Habitat

Same as Alternative C.

Wildlife Introductions

Same as Alternative C.

3.12 TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND VEGETATION

3.12.1 Introduction

BLM will manage the vegetative resources of the King Range to promote the overall health of this diverse biogeographical region and to provide for the wide spectrum of organisms, ecosystem processes, and human resource needs that depend upon these plant communities. Specific goals, objectives, and actions in these alternatives address particular habitat types found in the King Range, special status species, and other aspects of vegetation management. Actions detailed for the various vegetative resources apply to all three management zones unless otherwise specified.

3.12.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.12.2.1 Habitats

The goal of management of habitats for all the alternatives is intended to produce and/or maintain a mosaic of compositionally and structurally diverse habitat types and plant communities that have historically (prior to European settlement) occurred in the King Range. Specific management objectives and actions have been identified in this plan for coastal dunes, coastal scrub, grasslands, and chaparral habitats. (For discussion of forested habitats and grazing management on grasslands, see those individual sections.)

3.12.2.2 Special Status Species

All alternatives will also maintain and encourage viable populations of threatened, endangered, and BLM Special Status plant species known to occur in the King Range. The management actions for threatened and endangered species and BLM Special Status species apply to Backcountry, Frontcountry, and Residential Management Zones.

The only known threatened or endangered plant species within the King Range is *Layia carnosa* (beach layia). This species is state and federally listed as endangered, and is restricted to the dune habitat in the vicinity of the mouth of the Mattole River. This alternative will maintain this occurrence of *Layia carnosa* in the Mattole Beach Dunes in accordance with the Recovery Plan for the Seven Coastal Plants and the Myrtle's Silverspot Butterfly (FWS 1998). The BLM will monitor the frequency and distribution of this population on an annual basis. Should the frequency of beach layia decline more than 30% between any two years, the BLM will initiate an appropriate management response. It will also continue on-going efforts to identify and remove invasive plant species such as *Ammophila arenaria* (European beachgrass), *Carpobrotus* ssp. (iceplant), and *Lupinus arboreus* (yellow bush lupine), if and when they occur.

In addition, all project proposals will be reviewed prior to implementation to determine if they would affect BLM Special Status species, and will incorporate project recommendations in accordance with the California Bureau Sensitive Species Policy (BLM Manual 6840) to prevent any actions that would contribute to the listing of these species under the ESA.

3.12.2.3 Sudden Oak Death

In order to reduce the threat of sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*) to the forested habitats of the King Range, BLM will work cooperatively with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Humboldt County Agricultural Commission in addition to other applicable agencies to remain informed of current research related to the spread of this pathogen. Monitoring of species known to be susceptible to this pathogen will continue to be conducted on a semi-annual basis.

3.12.3 Alternative A

3.12.3.1 *Habitat*

The management objective for habitat under the no-action alternative is to carry forward general vegetation guidelines from current planning documents, particularly Section 2.52 of the Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for California and Northwestern Nevada Final EIS (BLM 1998b) for coastal scrub and grasslands. There currently are no management actions specified for individual habitat types.

3.12.3.2 *Invasive Plant Species*

The objective for this alternative is to implement and meet national BLM policies consistent with the Partners Against Weeds Initiative (USDI 1998) and Executive Order 13112.

The BLM will continue to initiate and maintain current, on-going efforts to map, monitor, and eradicate invasive plant species within the King Range. The BLM will remain an active and participating member of the Humboldt County Weed Management Area, and work with local landowners, community members, volunteers, and additional agencies to promote education about these species and encourage efforts that will aid in the prevention of invasive plant establishment. Removal of invasive plant species by manual means is the preferred method of eradication, and will be utilized wherever possible.

3.12.3.3 *Sudden Oak Death*

Appropriate literature consistent with the California Oak Mortality Taskforce will continue to be made available to educate the public about the spread of this disease.

3.12.4 Alternative B

3.12.4.1 *Habitat*

Coastal Dunes

Maintain a semi-stable dune system in the vicinity of the mouth of the Mattole River that will continue to promote a diverse assemblage of native plant species. This habitat would be managed to remain free of invasive plant species, which increase the stability of these sandy substrates and compromise the health of native species. The maintenance of this dune system would be accomplished by continuing to implement invasive plant eradication efforts.

Coastal Scrub

Maintain and encourage a productive and vigorous coastal scrub community that will produce an abundance of new foliage as forage for ungulates and other herbivores, allow for the establishment of decadent scrub communities as habitat for other species, and provide habitat for rare plant species known to occur in the vicinity of the King Range. No specific management prescriptions will be applied. Natural disturbance, such as wildfire, will be the sole agent of change for these scrub communities.

Grasslands

Maintain healthy, productive grasslands in accordance with Section 2.52 of the Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for California and Northwestern Nevada Final EIS (BLM 1998b) and to encourage native species abundance and diversity when feasible. The use of prescribed fire and the manual removal of encroaching tree species would be utilized to maintain the distribution and extent of these grasslands.

Chaparral

Maintain current levels of this important, fire-adapted plant community as a component of the diverse vegetation mosaic found within the King Range. Allow for natural disturbances such as wildfire necessary to maintain these fire-dependent habitats. Prescribed burns may be implemented in specific areas if it is determined necessary to implement specific management goals.

3.12.4.2 Invasive Plant Species

Same as Alternative A.

3.12.4.3 Sudden Oak Death

BLM will implement preventative and control measures consistent with guidelines developed by the USDA and Humboldt County Agricultural Commission. Appropriate signage and literature provided by the California Oak Mortality Taskforce will continue to be made available to educate the public about the spread of this disease.

3.12.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

3.12.5.1 Habitat

Coastal Dunes

Same as Alternative B, but with the addition of qualitative monitoring of recreational use throughout this plant community, which will be tracked over time to assess the trends of these habitats.

Coastal Scrub

Maintain and encourage a productive and vigorous coastal scrub community that will produce an abundance of new foliage as forage for ungulates and other herbivores, allow for the establishment of decadent scrub communities as habitat for other species, and provide habitat for rare plant species known to occur in the vicinity of the King Range. Prescribed burns will be utilized as necessary to mimic the pre-mechanization era fire regimes that helped to shape and maintain the distribution and extent of these different coastal scrub communities. Limited grazing outside allotment boundaries within the Frontcountry Zone will be allowed to help maintain and help increase vigor of coastal scrub communities on a project-by-project basis.

Grasslands

Maintain healthy, productive grasslands in accordance with Section 2.52 of the Rangeland Health Standards and Guidelines for California and Northwestern Nevada Final EIS (BLM 1998b) and to encourage native species abundance and diversity when feasible. Prescribed burns will be utilized as necessary to mimic the pre-mechanization era fire regimes that helped to shape and maintain the distribution and extent of these grasslands. Native grass enhancement projects will be pursued through an integrated approach including, but not limited to burning, grazing, re-seeding, and transplanting with locally collected seed stock. Limited grazing outside allotment boundaries within the Frontcountry Zone will be allowed for vegetation management purposes on a project-by-project basis.

Chaparral

Same as Alternative B.

3.12.5.2 Invasive Plant Species

Same as Alternative A, except that an Integrated Pest Management approach will be applied to all invasive non-native species infestations. The use of herbicides would be restricted to specific situations when all other alternatives are determined to be unfeasible and ineffective. Any proposed use of herbicides would be conservative, targeting specific weed individuals for a given species. Any herbicide use would be assessed using the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and would be made available for public comment.

3.12.5.3 Sudden Oak Death

This alternative has the additional objective to implement and meet national BLM policies consistent with the Partners Against Weeds Initiative (USDI 1998) and Executive Order 13112. To accomplish this, BLM will implement preventative and control measures consistent with guidelines developed by the USDA and Humboldt County Agricultural Commission. Appropriate signage and literature provided by the California Oak Mortality Taskforce will continue to be made available to educate the public about the spread of this disease. Additional preventative and control measures may be implemented, such as mandatory vehicle “dip” stations as developed by the BLM if found necessary to manage a potentially devastating infestation.

3.12.6 Alternative D

3.12.6.1 Habitat

Coastal Dunes

Same as Alternative C, but BLM would also develop further guidelines directing recreational use that could be implemented to meet habitat objectives.

Coastal Scrub

Same as Alternative C, with the addition that mechanical means as well as prescribed burns may be used to maintain this habitat type.

Grasslands

Same as Alternative C.

Chaparral

Same as Alternative B.

3.12.6.2 Invasive Plant Species

Same as Alternative C.

3.12.6.3 Sudden Oak Death

Same as Alternative C.

3.13 FOREST MANAGEMENT

3.13.1 Introduction

The desired goal of forest management in the King Range is to maintain and enhance a complex mosaic of various forest vegetation communities indicative of each successional stage and to protect existing stands with late successional or old-growth characteristics. This diverse and complex mosaic of forest vegetation will be represented with stands of all age classes and structural attributes. It will also provide a range of special forest products that serve both personal and commercial interests while maintaining existing and sustainable populations of vegetative species. The alternatives vary primarily on which tools will be available for achieving these goals, and where those tools may be applied.

3.13.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.13.2.1 Goals

Forest vegetation will be maintained and developed based on a historical perspective prior to the onset of logging with mechanical equipment, roughly after 1945. Data collected suggests managing for a forest vegetation distribution of approximately sixty percent late successional or old-growth stands, twenty percent mid-mature stands, and twenty percent early successional stands. Percent distributions of forest vegetation are based on data collected and analyzed in the Honeydew Creek Watershed Analysis (BLM 1996) and the King Range Late Successional Reserve Assessment (BLM 1998) and will be used as the reference condition.

3.13.2.2 Objectives

- € The public lands within the King Range will be managed to maintain and develop stand characteristics that are a reflection of natural processes in forest vegetation development.
- € Maintain undisturbed late successional forest habitat by keeping those stands intact and ensuring that the natural processes within these stands are left undisturbed.
- € Accelerate second growth stands to achieve old growth or late successional stage characteristics. Silvicultural treatments will be used to treat previously harvested stand on public lands. The result of these restoration treatments will be an accelerated rate of succession among forest successional stages.
- € Restore structural diversity of the second-growth stands and assist in developing a more enriched species composition of the second- growth stands.
- € Reduce the size and frequency of large scale forest stand replacement fires.



Previously harvested stands need silvicultural treatments to promote stand diversity and reduce fire danger.

3.13.3 Alternative A

Silvicultural treatments will continue at the Bear Trap Plantation. Presently, 100 acres have been thinned and an additional 100 acres are scheduled for treatment.

Forest restoration activities are limited to tree planting following a large stand replacement fire and road decommissioning projects.

3.13.4 Alternative B

Salvage timber harvest operations would not be conducted after a stand replacement fire.

Silvicultural treatments to accelerate and enhance forest structure will be limited to the Bear Trap Plantation. No other silvicultural treatments will be conducted.

Tree planting will be limited to forest restoration following forest fires and on newly decommissioned roads.

3.13.5 Alternative C

Silvicultural treatments will be used to treat previously harvested stands to accelerate their development to late successional characteristics. Thinning of some forest stands is a desirable method of increasing the forest stand structural complexity and thereby developing old-growth or late successional characteristics. These treatments will involve stem-density management and tanoak control in sapling, pole, and early mature stands. Objectives to be incorporated into the prescription include reducing the stem densities to accelerate growth rates and succession into early-and mid-mature successional stages and create more diverse and healthy forest stand structures. Treatments will provide for the retention of snags and large woody debris for the development of stand structure and diversity.

The removal of timber will be restricted to specific projects where the thinning of stands to enhance stand structure will result in the production of small merchantable timber.

All silvicultural treatments will be designed to reduce the fuel loading within stands and aid in the prevention of stand replacement fires.

Tree planting will be done as part of forest restoration following a fire and the establishment of native forest vegetation on newly decommissioned roads. Only trees grown from native seed will be planted.

Following a stand replacement fire burned timber may be removed as part of a salvage effort and to aid in the restoration of the fire area. Burned timber will only be removed after careful environmental analysis and within specified standards and guidelines, see Appendix E. No new roads will be constructed and salvage will only occur where access is available. Helicopter logging may be used as a method to remove the timber. Salvage of timber will only occur in the Frontcountry and Residential Zones. No salvage operations will occur in the Backcountry Zone.

Silvicultural treatments will be performed by such means as cooperative agreements, partnerships, and contracts. Local communities will be given opportunities to participate in completing projects.

Silvicultural treatments will be prioritized based on their probability of success, the need of treatment and accessibility.

Conduct forest stand evaluations to identify stands in need of treatment to develop more diverse stand characteristics and accelerate their development to a late successional condition.

Silvicultural projects will not be conducted in the Backcountry Zone. Natural processes will be used to maintain the existing mosaic of forest vegetation. Forest restoration projects will be limited to previously harvested stands on public lands in the Frontcountry and Residential Zones.

The size of the treatment acreage will be limited by accessibility and achievement of goals such as the effectiveness of the treatment.

Treatment criteria will include the following:

- € Forest site potential: the inherent ability of a site to rapidly develop stand structure and volume.
- € Timing treatment with respect to stand development: effecting treatments at a most advantageous successional stage for maximizing stand development.
- € Effectiveness/efficiency of treatment: the ability of an existing stand to advance in successional stages to meet objectives within reasonable cost.

Approximately 700 acres have been currently identified for potential treatment to enhance the development of a more diverse forest structure and accelerate the development of late successional forest stand characteristics. A detailed Late Successional Reserve Assessment for the King Range was completed in 1998 and recognized the need for forest treatment projects.

The following locations have been identified for treatment and are areas in need of silvicultural treatment and meet the criteria previously discussed (see Figure 3-6):

Nooning Creek and Finley Ridge

The Finley Creek Fire burned an estimated 13,000-17,000 acres and consumed the entire Nooning Creek drainage. Post-fire rehabilitation efforts included the planting of approximately 500,000 Douglas fir seedlings. The site is within the tanoak series and competition from tanoak is intense.

Treatment: Reduce the tanoak competition to release Douglas fir on approximately 300 acres. Reduction of fuel loading is a critical consideration in this drainage. Where tanoak slash will reach unacceptable levels, pile burning will be proposed. In other areas, single tree release or culturing of dominant conifers will be proposed. In some areas tanoak competition remains manageable in size and density. In these areas tanoak removal will be accomplished over a broader area. Approximately 200 trees per acre will be left with a high degree of variability in density and spacing conducive to providing diversity in the new stand.

Bear Trap Creek

Prior to acquisition into public ownership this tract of land was clear cut and repeatedly burned to maintain grazing lands. Following acquisition in 1985, approximately 125,000 Douglas fir seedlings were planted on a 200 acre site. These trees are exhibiting extremely high growth rates and the site is in need of thinning to develop structural diversity and accelerate the stand to late successional stand characteristics.

FIGURE 3-6: SILVICULTURE TREATMENT AREAS

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Treatment: Reduce the Douglas fir stocking to approximately 70 trees per acre by means of thinning treatments over a certain period of time using random spacing as much as possible. Both conifers and hardwoods will be left to maintain species diversity. All native brush will be left uncut except in areas where brush interferes with getting the slash to the ground or pile burning is proposed. This site is lacking in the hard wood component and an effort will be made to encourage the development of hardwoods within this plantation.

Kaluna Cliff

This acquired parcel was part of the 1974 Finley Creek fire and was planted following acquisition into public ownership. Approximately 60,000 Douglas fir have been planted on this site and these trees are beginning to exhibit extremely high growth rates and will be in need for thinning within the next ten years. This action will be required to develop structural diversity and accelerate this stand to late successional conditions. Thinning of this plantation will also reduce the fuel loading and protect this stand and reduce the risk of an early replacement fire.

Treatment: Reduce the Douglas fir stocking and encourage the development of a diverse hardwood component. Thinning will be done to a variable spacing and will yield approximately 70 trees per acre after several entries into the plantation over a period of time. Approximately 100 acres will be thinned.

3.13.6 Alternative D (Preferred)

Same as Alternative C, with the following additions:

Salvage logging will be more intensively pursued, but only under circumstances where it contributes to primary goals of restoring forest ecological health. Old logging roads may be reopened and new temporary roads may be built to remove the burned or fire killed timber. Upon completion of the operation all temporary roads will be removed. The use of helicopters will be allowed in the removal of timber. Salvage operations will only be done in the Frontcountry and Residential Zones. No salvage will be allowed in the Backcountry Zone. Environmental concerns will be addressed and identified standards and guidelines as attached in this document will be followed.

All the proposed silvicultural projects will be brought forward in this plan. In addition forest restoration will also be conducted on some lands that were harvested prior to acquisition into public ownership. These lands were harvested in the late 1950s to early '70s and will need silvicultural treatments to accelerate their development into a more mature forest and a distribution based on a historical perspective prior to the onset of mechanical logging. Prior to implementation a detailed inventory will need to be completed to identify areas in need of treatment. The following is a more detailed description of project areas:

Previously Harvested Stands

A large percentage of the private land acquired in the King Range was previously harvested prior to acquisition into public ownership. Harvest prescriptions usually included clear cutting or "high-grading," the practice of taking all the largest commercial trees from the forest. These harvested sites received no follow-up treatment and became dominated with tanoak. On many sites a residual and a second-growth

Douglas fir component persists in varying densities across much of this landscape. These forested stands are now between 30 to 45 years old. The Douglas fir component is deficient in many areas, well spaced in other, distributed in clumps or thickets, or in some cases in extremely dense pole-sized stands of 10 - 100 acres.

Treatment: Prescription will include culturing of individual conifer trees in dense tanoak stands, culturing, and thinning in thickets and dense clumps and thinning in pole stands to provide variable spacing and selection of dominant trees. All treatments will be in units smaller than 40 acres with the objective of increasing stand diversity with variation in horizontal and vertical stand structure. Dense thickets are of high value to some wildlife species and will be preserved as an important element of stand diversity and will be maintained as a component of the landscape. This prescription will allow for the removal of some portion of the hardwood component and will present opportunities for fuel wood removal. Some of these stands will require the opening of old hauling and skid roads. Following the completion of the treatment, these roads will be properly decommissioned to prevent erosion and sediment entering into streams.

3.14 SPECIAL FOREST PRODUCTS

3.14.1 Introduction

Special forest products collected in the King Range include wild mushrooms, fuelwood, beargrass, and other vegetative products for floral trades. Many special forest products are also associated with strong cultural meanings or roles in local communities. The alternatives here offer a range of utilization levels for permitting personal and/or commercial collection, while assuring the sustainability of the habitats and ecological processes these species depend upon.

3.14.2 Common to All Alternatives

Provide special forest products to the public for both personal and commercial usage based on best biological and resource information. This will allow the BLM to provide special forest products to the public at levels that do not compromise the sustainability of these resources or the ecosystem processes that are associated with them.

3.14.3 Alternative A

Mushrooms

Collection permits are issued with a limitation of thirty commercial permits for mushrooms. The closing date for commercial mushroom collection is the last day of the calendar year. Personal collection permits have a five-pound limit per day, and no seasonal restrictions.

Beargrass

Issue cultural use permits for collection of beargrass.

Floral Trade Species

Issue Special Use Permits for collection of plants used in floral trade, such as huckleberry and salal.

Fuel Wood

Cutting permits are issued on case-by-case following a wind storm to help clear roads.

3.14.4 Alternative B

Special forest products permits will only be issued for personal usage. No commercial permits will be issued. Permits will be restricted to the Frontcountry and Residential Zone. Seasonal restrictions will be implemented and amounts of material collected will be limited. Permits may also be limited to certain locations.

3.14.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

Special forest product permits will be issued for a variety of forest resources for personal collection and commercial harvesting throughout the KRNCA. Permits may be issued for such vegetative resources as but no limited to: beargrass, huckleberry, salal, mushrooms, and fuelwood. Permits may be restricted as to amount, location of collection and length of time. Additional stipulations will be identified on the permits for resource protection. The number of permits that will be issued will depend on environmental concerns and limited biological resources.

Mushrooms

A seasonal restriction for commercial mushroom collection will be established. The proposed closing date is the end of the last day in the year. No seasonal restriction will be placed on personal permits. The number of permits issued each year will depend on the availability of the resource and the ability to maintain existing and sustainable populations. Monitor mushroom collection methods to prohibit destructive techniques, and encourage cooperative studies and monitoring programs.

Beargrass

Issue cultural use permits for collection of beargrass. Coordinate with local tribes to increase awareness and education regarding cultural use of beargrass. Implement active management efforts, such as localized prescribed burns, in a designated "Native American Beargrass Collection Unit" to encourage this species.

Floral Trade Species

Issue Special Use Permits for collection of plants used in floral trade, such as huckleberry and salal.

Fuel Wood

All fuel wood permits will be issued on a site-specific basis. Both personal and commercial use permits will be issued. The fuel wood areas will be made available as a result of either forest treatment or fuel

reduction projects designed to accelerate late successional characteristics. No fuel wood permits will be issued for the Backcountry Zone or the Mattole Estuary.

3.14.6 Alternative D

Same as Alternative C.

3.15 GRAZING MANAGEMENT

3.15.1 Introduction

In the northwestern corner of the King Range, livestock grazing contributed to the management of open grasslands above the coastline. The KRNCA currently has four active grazing leases, with associated allotments, representing a total of 2,050 AUMs. There are also several outstanding administrative issues that need to be addressed, redefining the boundary of one allotment to improve rangeland health, and administratively making four unused allotments permanently unavailable for grazing, with no change in the number of AUMs authorized. Alternative B also considers the option of making all rangelands in the KRNCA unavailable to livestock grazing.

3.15.2 Alternative A

Same as Alternative C.

3.15.3 Alternative B

Designate all rangelands as unavailable to livestock grazing in the King Range.

3.15.4 Alternative C (Preferred)

Maintain existing four active grazing leases and associated grazing allotments, representing a total of 2,050 AUMs.

Administratively redefine Spanish Flat grazing boundary to exclude the terraced prairie between and including Spanish and Randal Creeks in order to protect significant cultural sites and to reduce conflicts with recreation visitors. Portion to make unavailable to livestock grazing is approximately 500 acres of perched prairie shelf including and between Randall Creek and the southern-most allotment boundary; no AUMS lost as use has been shifted to other areas of the allotment. This change is needed to resolve rangeland health and resource use conflicts: This action will benefit cultural resource protection, and to a lesser extent, anadromous fisheries protection and water quality protection for back country users (see Figure 3-7).

Administratively change land use allocations for four expired leases from available to unavailable to livestock grazing:

FIGURE 3-7: REVISED BOUNDARY FOR SPANISH FLAT ALLOTMENT

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- € **Bear Trap Allotment:** 654 acres, 400 AUMs, lease cancelled since 1995; allotment was an old clear cut that has since been planted and has redeveloped back to forest. It does not consist of suitable grazing lands and was only grazed for two seasons in 1985-86.
- € **Etter Lease:** 40 acres; 8 AUMs, limited grasslands have converted to forest type, lease expired and cancelled 1996. This parcel is currently being exchanged with the landowner (previous lessee).
- € **Jewett Ridge Allotment:** 80 acres, 13 AUMs, lease cancelled since 1996. Allotment has no suitable grassland on it. It historically was a clear cut adjacent to a private landowner who wished to graze it while the grasses were available. The area has returned to a productive forest and is no longer capable of accommodating livestock production.
- € **Big Flat Allotment:** 2,285 acres, 60 AUMs, lease never grazed at lessee annual request; lease expired 1995. Area is unsuitable for livestock grazing due to cultural and soil resource protection needs, recreation and visual incompatibilities and access logistics.

Rationale for Making Big Flat Unavailable for Grazing

Protection of archaeological and cultural resources in the Big Flat grazing allotment is not compatible with livestock grazing. Several large cultural sites exist in the transition zone from beach to prairie. It has been demonstrated on the Spanish Flat grazing allotment to the north that livestock grazing on a coastal terrace prairie, with its fragile soil-vegetation surface integrity, can not occur without extensively damaging the sites, unless the sites are completely fenced and regularly maintained.

The soils are not suitable for livestock grazing. Grasses grow on a mosaic of semi-stabilized sand and sandy-loam. The coastal terrace prairie soils are developed primarily as a result of repeated seismic events which have uplifted near-shore marine deposits (intertidal beach sands and gravel deposits). These uplifted terraces are fairly young as they have been carbon-dated at about 3,000 years old in the area north of Spanish Flat (Lajoie et al. 1982) and have not had enough geologic time to form real soil horizons. The erodability of these soils is very high when grass cover is removed, as the soil profile lacks adhesive clay particles and it is extremely thin, in the neighborhood of a few centimeters at best. Once the thin sandy-loam surface is disturbed, susceptibility to wind erosion is extremely high as loamy-sand and sand are the remaining constituents below.

Any active grazing on Big Flat would require extensive new fencing. New fences would have to be constructed around a) the several large cultural sites for protection and mitigation, b) the air strip; to prevent damage to the air strip, incoming and outgoing airplanes, and livestock, and c) the private parcels to prevent trespass. In all, about three miles of fencing would have to be built in the most coveted destination point along the Lost Coast trail. Access logistics and economics alone make these fences infeasible. Further, construction of new fences in the primitive zone of the wilderness study area is not compatible with the management goals and objectives for this area.

Big Flat is a very inaccessible location within the Backcountry Zone. Vehicle transport to the bottom of the Smith-Etter Road would be difficult, and likely impassable during wet times of year. Then, to get stock to Big Flat, livestock would have to be driven four miles south down the beach. Practical grazing compliance monitoring and range improvement maintenance by both the operator and BLM staff would be difficult to achieve.

3.15.5 Alternative D

Same as Alternative C.

3.16 FIRE MANAGEMENT

3.16.1 Introduction

Throughout history, fire has been one of the primary forces affecting the King Range landscape, creating and maintaining a mosaic pattern of fire-adapted ecosystems such as grasslands and chaparral. The plan alternatives seek to find a range of balances between managing for the natural dynamics of fire effects across the landscape and protecting property and resources from damage both within and adjacent to the KRNCA. These alternatives outline a continuum of responses to wildfires (both natural and human caused) and approaches to fuels management.

Note that the term “Appropriate Management Response” as used in this section has specific meaning regarding fire planning/management. It is defined as “Specific action taken in response to a wildland fire to implement protection and fire use objectives.” In other words, the “appropriate management response” is determined by the specific goals and objectives outlined in this RMP and King Range Fire Management Plan.

The conditions associated with individual fires and the resulting tactics employed to manage those fires are too numerous to document in this plan; the appropriate response to a specific situation must take these conditions into account along with area fire use objectives.

3.16.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.16.2.1 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives common for all alternatives are to reduce the wildfire risk to life, resources, and property. Protection of human life (firefighter and public safety) is the highest priority during the occurrence of any wildland fire. Reduce the damaging effects of fire suppression activities on natural and cultural resources. Develop a landscape resistant to damage associated with large scale, high intensity fires by allowing for the natural dynamic effects of fire to occur on the ecosystem.

3.16.2.2 Management Actions

Permits shall be required for all campfires outside of developed campgrounds year round. Campfires will be permitted only in developed campsites during high wildfire potential periods. Consideration may be given to allowing fires in certain specific locations outside of developed campgrounds (e.g., beach) at the discretion of the authorized officer.

Conduct wildfire prevention and education programs in conjunction with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF).

Limit the use of mechanized equipment within Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), additional lands found to possess wilderness character, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Perform burned area rehabilitation to mitigate damages associated with wildfires.

Complete and maintain the shaded fuelbreak system that separates the Frontcountry and Residential Zones from the Backcountry Zone. Shaded fuel breaks involve the removal of brush, lower tree branches, and other fuels that can carry a fire, while leaving larger trees to provide a shade canopy. This type of fuel break is very effective while causing a minimal level of resource impacts and visual intrusion. The main fuel break system runs east from Kaluna Cliff to the King Peak Road, and continues north to the Horse Creek Trailhead and up the ridgeline to Horse Mountain. It then follows the ridgeline north to the Buck Creek Trailhead and down to the King Range Road. From the north end of King Range Road the fuel break goes down Bear Wallow Ridge to Honeydew Creek and up to the Smith-Etter Road. Finally, it runs parallel to the Smith-Etter Road along the ridgeline to the west, terminating at the North Slide Peak Trailhead.

The 2003 Honeydew Fire required an extensive suppression effort to protect life and property on private lands and in communities surrounding the KRNCA. This required tactics such as construction of new dozer lines and reopening of existing dozer lines, including several miles of line within the King Range Wilderness Study Area.

To improve protection of surrounding communities and private lands, and to lessen the need for future dozer lines and their associated impacts, the shaded fuel break system would be expanded under all alternatives to augment the existing system discussed above. Additional locations currently planned include the 2003 dozer line on Fire Hill (From the King Crest Trail to a slide above the beach), Paradise Ridge and Finley Ridge. Other locations may be added to meet the objectives of the area fire management plan (under development), as long as they meet the objectives of this RMP.

In summary, expansion of the shaded fuel break, although they cause some modest impacts to naturalness, would reduce impacts to the area's naturalness in the long-term by providing defensible containment perimeters for fire, thus reducing the need for dozer line construction. Having several defensible fuel breaks will also increase the BLM's capability for reestablishment of the natural role of fire in the backcountry zone.

3.16.3 Alternative A

3.16.3.1 All Zones

Under this alternative all wildfires, regardless of cause, would be suppressed to protect human life and property and natural/cultural resources both within and adjacent to agency administered lands. Fire suppression activities shall be commensurate with values at risk and potential long-term damages associated with the suppression efforts. Detailed instructions for fire suppression responses and restrictions are contained in the King Range Fire Management Plan (BLM 1992b).

Use broadcast burning to achieve resource management goals on a case-by-case basis. No broadcast burning will be used for hazardous fuels reduction purposes. Pile burning may be used for removal of cut fuels within the fuelbreak system.

3.16.4 Alternative B

3.16.4.1 All Zones

Under this alternative broadcast burning will not be used to achieve any resource management goals. Pile burning may be used for removal of cut fuels within the fuelbreak system. Update 1992 King Range Fire Management plan to reflect current conditions as set forth in this alternative.

3.16.4.2 Backcountry and Frontcountry Zones

Re-establish the natural role of fire in the Backcountry and Frontcountry Zones by allowing naturally ignited fires to burn. Manage fuels to allow variable intensity wildfires to create a landscape resistant to damages associated with large, high intensity fires, yet provide for the natural, dynamic effects of fire to occur on the ecosystem. All human caused fires will be suppressed. Take suppression actions on any natural fire that may threaten private property. In all suppression situations, minimize direct attack. Use bucket drops and retardant to cool hotspots and slow the rate of spread if deemed appropriate. Assess direct attack needs on a case-by-case basis for wildfires that occur during extreme fire conditions.

Apply Appropriate Management Response suppression efforts to the extent it poses no wildfire risk to adjacent private property. Fires may be allowed to burn within broad containment areas defined to enhance the natural character of the KRNCA and when current and expected fire behavior conditions will not result in developing adverse impacts. Implementation of this strategy is dependent on communication between resource advisors, BLM, and CDF suppression agencies during the incident and continuous monitoring and assessment of the immediate fire situation is required. Detailed instructions for fire suppression responses and restrictions are contained in the King Range Fire Management Plan (BLM 1992b).

3.16.4.3 Residential Zone

Protect human life and property and natural/cultural resources both within and adjacent to agency administered lands. Suppress all wildfires, regardless of cause. Fire suppression activities shall be commensurate with values at risk and potential long-term damages associated with these efforts. The strategic use of Appropriate Management Response will not be applicable in this zone. Fuels are managed to create conditions that result in low intensity wildfires and reduced fire spread potential within this zone.

3.16.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

3.16.5.1 *All Zones*

Under this alternative, use prescribed fire activities (combinations of broadcast and pile burn) to improve forest health and increase unique habitat improvement (such as disease control, exotic species eradication, coastal prairie maintenance, etc.). Augment the fuelbreak system by using broadcast burning to increase the reduction of fuels adjacent to the system. Update 1992 King Range Fire Management Plan to reflect conditions as set forth under this alternative.

3.16.5.2 *Backcountry Zone*

Re-establish the natural role of fire in the Backcountry Zone by allowing naturally ignited fires to burn. Manage fuels to allow variable intensity wildfires to create a landscape resistant to damages associated with large, high intensity fires, yet provide for the natural, dynamic effects of fire to occur on the ecosystem. Maintain this natural role of fire in the Backcountry Zone through the use of prescribed fire and allowing naturally ignited fires to burn. All human caused fires will be suppressed.

Initiate suppression actions on natural fires that may threaten private property. In all suppression situations, minimize direct attack. Use bucket drops and retardant to cool hotspots and slow the rate of spread if deemed appropriate. Assess direct attack needs on a case-by-case basis for wildfires, which occur during extreme fire conditions.

Manage fuels for variable intensity wildfires to create a landscape resistant to damages associated with large, high intensity fires, yet allow for the natural, dynamic effects of fire on the ecosystem. Suppress natural fires when BLM and CDF agree the fires may threaten private property. In all situations, minimize direct attack. Use bucket drops and retardant to cool hotspots and slow the rate of spread if deemed appropriate. Assess direct attack needs on a case-by-case basis for wildfires that occur during extreme fire conditions.

Practice Appropriate Management Response within the Backcountry Zone to the extent it remains safe for fire suppression forces and does not pose a risk to adjacent private property. Fires may be allowed to burn within broad containment areas if it is determined by BLM, in conjunction with the CDF that current and expected fire behavior will not have adverse impacts and will enhance the natural character of the KRNCA. Implementation of this strategy is dependent on communication between resource advisors and the fire suppression agency during the incident. A continuous process of monitoring and assessment of the immediate fire situation is required.

3.16.5.3 *Frontcountry and Residential Zones*

All wildfires, regardless of cause, within the Residential and Frontcountry Zones will be suppressed to protect human life and property and natural/cultural resources both within and adjacent to agency administered lands. Fire suppression activities shall be commensurate with values at risk and potential long-term damages associated with the efforts.

Utilize prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction methods in managing fuels to create conditions resulting in low intensity wildfires and to reduce fire-spread potential and damages associated with large, high intensity fires. Update 1992 King Range Fire Management Plan to reflect current conditions as set forth in this alternative.



Winter burning of brush removed from the Saddle Mountain shaded fuel break.

Explore opportunities for stewardship contracts with local interests for thinning, biomass removal/utilization, and firewood cutting provided such projects meet the goals of hazardous fuels reduction and vegetative management. These stewardship contracts could include, for example, opportunities for residents to reduce hazardous fuels on public lands adjoining their private properties.

3.16.6 Alternative D

3.16.6.1 All Zones

Under this alternative all wildfires, regardless of cause, will be suppressed to provide maximum protection of human life, property and natural/cultural resources both within and adjacent to agency administered lands. Fire suppression activities shall be commensurate with values at risk and potential long-term damages associated with the efforts. Suppression operations will be conducted under conditions that are safe for fire suppression forces.

Utilize prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction methods in managing fuels to create conditions resulting in low intensity wildfires and to reduce fire-spread potential and damages associated with large, high intensity fires. Augment the fuelbreak system by using broadcast burning to increase the reduction of fuels adjacent to the system. Extend the fuelbreak system in potentially opportunistic areas such as Paradise and Finley Ridges. Update 1992 King Range Fire Management Plan to reflect current conditions as set forth in this alternative.

3.16.6.2 *Frontcountry and Residential Zones*

Explore opportunities for stewardship contracts with local interests for thinning, biomass removal, and utilization, and firewood cutting provided such projects meet the goals of hazardous fuels reduction and vegetative management. These stewardship contracts could include opportunities for residents to reduce hazardous fuels on public lands adjoining their private properties.

3.17 TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

3.17.1 Introduction

The purpose of the transportation program is to provide a network of roads for public and administrative access while minimizing impacts on natural and cultural resources in the area. These roads are designed and managed to blend with the primitive character of the KRNCA, and to allow for a diversity of uses and experiences. Restrictions on use are sometimes needed to ensure safety or to protect resources from degradation due to excessive erosion. The alternatives propose a range of degrees of access by varying the designation of specific roads according to type of vehicles and seasons of use allowed. The more active management approaches also consider some road improvement projects to allow greater access than is currently available.

3.17.1.1 *Background on Travel Management Program and Off Highway Vehicle Designations*

All public lands in the planning area are designated through the land use planning process as either open, limited, or closed to vehicle travel under the BLM Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Regulations (43 CFR Subpart 8342—Designation of Areas and Trails). Under this system, in an “Open Area,” all vehicle types are allowed to access all parts of an area (including cross-country travel) at all times. In a “Limited Area” vehicle use is allowed only during certain times of year, by certain types of vehicles, or in certain parts of the area such as designated roads and trails.

In the King Range, all public vehicle routes are in the Frontcountry and Residential Zones, and vehicle use is limited to designated roads and trails. Additional limitations for vehicle type and time are outlined below for each route. These designations only apply to BLM managed roads and trails, and not to County roads. Note that:

- ⊘ Any areas and routes on public lands within the planning area that are not identified explicitly in this plan are closed to public vehicle use. Routes designed for passenger car access to and within campgrounds, trailhead parking areas and other BLM Recreation Sites, although they are not identified explicitly, are open to vehicles unless signed, gated, or otherwise closed.
- ⊘ Certain routes are designated as limited to 4-wheel drive (4WD) vehicles. This designation indicates that the routes have steep or irregular surfaces and are not maintained for passenger car access. These designations are for planning purposes, and visitors should inquire locally as to current conditions of routes.

3.17.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.17.2.1 *Goal*

Provide a network of roads for public and administrative access that complement the rural character of the KRNCA and surrounding Lost Coast region, and have minimal impacts on the resource conditions.

3.17.2.2 *Objectives*

1. Provide administrative, fire and emergency access for management and protection of the area visitors, resources, and facilities.
2. Provide public access to trailheads, campgrounds, and other BLM managed lands and facilities.
3. Fulfill legal access requirements to private landowners and other right-of-way holders and land use permittees. (Specific access issues regarding private landowners are beyond the scope of this plan and will be addressed on an individual basis with each landowner).
4. Provide visitors with opportunities to experience diverse scenic and recreational resources along a variety of driving routes ranging from passenger car to 4-WD vehicle.
5. Minimize impacts to water quality and other resource condition objectives through proper design and maintenance of roads.
6. Recognize that county roads provide the primary access to/through much of the King Range. Coordinate with and assist Humboldt County in ensuring that the county road system complements King Range resource protection and public access needs.
7. Manage the western coastal slope, or Backcountry Zone of the King Range as a non-motorized use area.

3.17.3 Actions/Designations Common to all Alternatives

3.17.3.1 *Year-Round Access for All Vehicle Types*

The following roads have a limited designation, and would be open year-round to all vehicle types:

1. Prosper Ridge Road

- € From Lighthouse Road to private property boundary just beyond intersection with Windy Point Road (approximately 2.2 miles)

This road provides access to several scenic vista points, a paragliding launch site, and numerous private year-round residences.

2. Noonung Creek Road

- € From Shelter Cove Road to end (approximately 2.0 miles)

This road provides access to numerous private year-round residences and to public lands along Nooning Creek.

3. King Range Road

€ From King Peak Road to end (approximately 6.6 miles)

This road provides access to the popular Lightning Trailhead. The road beyond the trailhead was restored to a natural appearing landscape several years ago because of major road failures, landslides, and potential for adverse resource impacts. This road also serves as a major firebreak connector between Saddle Mountain Ridge and Bearwallow Ridge.

3.17.3.2 Year-Round Access for 4-WD Vehicles

The following road has a limited designation, and would be open year-round to 4-WD vehicles:

4. Finley Ridge Road

€ From Paradise Ridge Road to BLM land boundary (approximately 1.5 miles)

This road provides access to private property and undeveloped public lands along Paradise Ridge.

3.17.4 Roads that Vary by Alternative

Note that Alternative C is the Preferred Alternative for all roads (see Figure 3-8).

5. Smith-Etter Road

€ Wilder Ridge Road to its intersection with Telegraph Ridge Road (approximately 10.2 miles)

Alternative A, B, and C

€ Limited seasonally from April 1 to October 31. Vehicle Type: 4-WD.

This road provides access to the Kinsey Ridge, North Slide Peak, and Spanish Ridge trailheads and is also used by hunters, special forest product collectors, and as a scenic backcountry driving route. It also provides access to private property. Portions of the road serve as a major firebreak. During the winter, severe storms with strong winds and high rainfall (and snowfall at the highest elevations) make it impractical to keep the road open. Vehicle use during the winter would also cause sedimentation and road damage to the lower section of the road without drainage and surface improvements.

Alternative D

€ Limited seasonally from April 1 to December 31. Open to all vehicle types.

Extend the fall use season by two months until December 31 (weather permitting) to allow for public access during the commercial mushroom harvesting and small game hunting seasons. Also, improve the road surface to allow for access by low-clearance vehicles. The use season extension would require improving the road base to prevent wet-weather resource damage in the lower segment of the route.

6. Johnny Jack Ridge Road

- € Public land boundary to trailhead parking area near intersection with Cooskie Creek Trail (1.5 miles (+/-), mileage to be determined based on easement and trailhead location).

Alternatives A, B, and C

- € Not available (closed) due to lack of legal public access.

Alternative D

- € Limited (contingent on BLM securing the necessary public access easements) seasonally from April 1 to October 31. Vehicle type: 4-WD.

Would allow for access into the coastal uplands in the Cooskie Peak Area. This route accesses the northeast portion of the KRNCA, but there is currently no legal public access through the private lands between the county road and BLM land boundary. The route would be opened to a trailhead parking area constructed near its intersection with the Cooskie Creek Trail, contingent upon acquisition of easements from willing sellers.

7. Windy Point Road

- € From intersection with Prosper Ridge Road to private property boundary (approximately 1.6 miles)

The road provides close access to Punta Gorda Lighthouse, a popular abalone diving area, and offers scenic vistas of the coastline. It also provides access to private property. During the winter rains, vehicle use would cause significant resource damage without substantial road upgrades.

Alternatives A and C

- € Limited seasonally from April 1 to October 31 (season of use can vary based on rainfall/ soil conditions). Vehicle Type: 4-WD.

Would allow public access during the peak use months including the summer tourist season, abalone and deer season.

Alternative B

- € Closed.

FIGURE 3-8: OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE DESIGNATION FOR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (C)

11 x 17 insert

back of Figure 3-8

The Windy Point Road is surrounded by open coastal prairie with no natural barriers to cross-country vehicle travel. Closure would eliminate resource impacts from illegal cross-country vehicle travel.

Alternative D

€ Limited. Vehicle type: 4-WD.

This alternative would keep the Windy Point Road open year-round. This would require upgrading the road to allow for use during the wet season (providing a gravel base). The character of the driving experience would change from a two-track 4-WD trail to a gravel roadway.

8. Telegraph Ridge Road

€ Intersection with Smith-Etter Road to the gate on Lake Ridge (approximately 3.2 miles).

Alternatives A and C

€ Limited seasonally from April 1 to October 31. Vehicle Type: 4-WD.

This road extends from the Smith-Etter Road (seasonal use) and provides public access to several trails. It allows hunters closer vehicle access to popular hunting areas at the north end of the King Range. During the winter, severe storms combined with high rainfall and snow makes it impractical to keep open during the rainy season. Vehicle use on this road during the winter would be potentially unsafe and would greatly increase maintenance costs.

Alternative B

€ Closed.

Under this alternative, The Telegraph Ridge Road would be closed and decommissioned (removed), leaving a route for a hiking/equestrian trail. This would increase the natural character of the King Range Wilderness Study Area.

Alternative D

€ Limited seasonally from April 1 to December 31. No vehicle restrictions to Spanish Ridge Trailhead (2.3 miles). Remaining 0.9 miles 4-WD only.

This alternative would require improvements in the road to allow for access by low clearance vehicles. It would allow passenger car travelers to access the Spanish Ridge Trailhead. It would change the driving experience, except for the last 0.9 miles which would remain a 4-WD trail.

9. Etter Road

€ From Smith-Etter Road to BLM land boundary (approximately 1.9 miles)

Alternative A and B

- € Closed.

This route is currently closed to the public since it was not designated explicitly in the Transportation Plan. Under Alternative B it would be closed to the general public, but would not be decommissioned. Access would continue to be available for CDF emergency services vehicles and private landowners with access rights-of-way.

Alternative C

- € Limited seasonally from April 1 to October 31. Vehicle Type: 4-WD.

This route receives low public use but provides easier and more rapid emergency access for fire suppression (through private property). The access season must coincide with the Smith-Etter Road which provides public access.

Alternative D

- € Limited seasonally from April 1 to December 31. Open to all vehicle types.

Would allow for additional access during the mushroom and small game hunting seasons, coinciding with the extension of the Smith-Etter Road opening.

10. Paradise Ridge Road

- € Shelter Cove Road to end (approximately 9.0 miles)

Alternative A, B, and C

- € Limited. Vehicle type: 4-WD.

This road is located on a ridgeline where soil erosion is minimal. It provides access to private property. Numerous hunters and other vehicle-oriented recreation users enjoy traveling this road for a backcountry riding experience. The road also serves as a major firebreak.

Alternative D

- € First 1.5 miles (approx.) with no vehicle limitations, remainder limited by vehicle type: 4-WD.

Improving the first 1.5 miles for low-clearance vehicles would allow a larger number of visitors to access several outstanding vista points of the Lost Coast and inland mountains.

11. Saddle Mountain Road

- € Intersection with King Peak Road to intersection with King Range Road (approximately 5.4 Miles)

This road provides access to the Saddle Mountain trailhead. Most of the road traverses a ridgeline where soil erosion is minimal during the rainy season. Numerous scenic vistas of the coastline offer visitors with a high quality vehicle touring experience. The vistas here are similar to the King Crest trail system. Most of the road corridor serves as a major shaded fuel break.

Alternatives A, B, and C

- € Limited. Vehicle type: 4-WD.

Alternative D

- € Unlimited, with no vehicle or seasonal limitations.

Upgrade of road would allow visitors with low-clearance vehicles to access a spectacular scenic coastal mountain drive.

12. Mattole Estuary Road and Spur

- € Approximately 2 miles

This road and a number of unmaintained spurs provide access into the gravel bars in the Mattole Estuary area. The main road also fords the river to private property on the north side (landowner has an easement). The gravel bars are accessed for a variety of uses, including fishing, hunting, hiking, overnight camping, and wildlife viewing. Parts of the estuary contain riparian vegetation and woody debris critical to the anadromous fishery and other wildlife values. Local fishery restoration groups have focused considerable attention on monitoring and improving habitat in the area and are concerned about impacts from unmanaged vehicle use, as well as firewood cutting, escaped campfires, etc. The portion of the estuary below mean high water line was outside of BLM's management jurisdiction. However, the BLM recently obtained a permit from the State Lands Commission to manage vehicle use on these lands.

Alternative A

- € Open to OHV use below Mean High Water mark.

Alternative B

- € Closed.

This is the most protective designation for riparian and fishery values, but would eliminate vehicle access to a popular local outdoor recreation access point.

Alternative C

- € Open the main access road plus two designated routes totaling approximately two miles.

This alternative would allow limited vehicle access and use of two designated routes that do not impact the riparian vegetation.

Alternative D

- € Open the main access road plus all existing routes that do not impact fishery and riparian resources (mileage unknown/variable depending on water levels).

This alternative would provide the most freedom for vehicle access. However, it would be difficult to enforce.

3.18 RECREATION*3.18.1.1 Introduction*

Recreation management represents one of the major challenges in the King Range, as the very qualities of pristine wilderness 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 character is a priority, yet increasing numbers of people are visiting the area seeking a wide variety of activities and experiences. The plan alternatives consider a broad spectrum of recreation management possibilities, from facilities development to signage and permitting systems to balance access levels with 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.

3.18.2 Common to All Alternatives

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.

Provide adequate and timely maintenance of all facilities, roads, trails, and signs.

Provide supplementary rules and regulations, where required, to protect resources, visitor safety, and the community surrounding the King Range. Such rules may include provisions such as campfire prohibitions during times of extreme fire danger, requiring use of bear proof food storage canisters in the backcountry, disallowing boats landing on beach, requiring weed free feed for livestock use within the KRNCA, etc.

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.

Encourage and promote cooperative management efforts with local groups, communities, and interested individuals. Promote volunteerism.

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.

Enforce existing regulations and apply other regulations, if necessary, to address visitor safety or resource protection issues as they arise.

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

3.18.3 Alternative A

3.18.3.1 Alternative A: Backcountry Zone

Management Goal

Continue management of the Backcountry Zone under the goals of the King Range Visitor Services Plan Objectives.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

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 are minimal in extent and transitory in nature.

Maintain the existing network of backcountry trails, directional signing, and minimal facilities. No other facilities will be allowed.

Social Setting

Provide for levels of use that meet public demand and allow freedom of access while managing to provide opportunities for solitude and quality primitive recreation through existing permit system for all organized groups.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency commensurate with a self-directed backcountry experience.

Management Presence

The majority of management actions will occur off-site so that visitors can experience freedom to choose travel and camping locations once they enter the backcountry. Management actions will prepare visitors to enter and use the backcountry safely and with minimal impacts to resources and other visitors.

Management presence on-site is subtle, with moderate levels of direct visitor contact by BLM backcountry ranger and intermittent patrols by law enforcement rangers.

Allowable Uses

Non motorized recreation activities including hiking, backpacking, surfing, surf fishing, equestrian use, camping, environmental education, wildlife viewing, and other activities consistent with the goal of emphasizing backcountry experiences. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial non-motorized recreational use, if consistent with zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems for organized groups, maintaining a trail system and minimal facilities, signing and interpretive information, and visitor use and resource monitoring.

Use Allocation

Under the No Action alternative, the existing group permitting system will be continued. No permit system or use allocation limits will be imposed on private parties. All organized groups, both commercial and non-commercial, will require permits and the following rules will continue to apply:

- € Maximum group size of fifteen “heartbeats,” meaning combined people and livestock for the Lost Coast and no more than ten on the upland trails. The upland trail group size maximum of ten does not apply if upland trails are used to access the beach without being used for overnight camping.
- € No more than two organized groups (maximum of 25 people total) may leave per day from any trailhead.
- € Groups having more than fifteen people must break into two groups, may not leave any given trailhead within two hours apart, and may not camp within a half-mile of each other.
- € Commercial groups are not allowed to run trips in the King Range during Memorial Day and Fourth of July weekends.

Facility Development

Existing backcountry facilities will be maintained. No new facilities will be developed within the Backcountry Zone. Actions include the following:

1. Maintain upland backcountry campsites including Maple Camp, Bear Hollow Camp, Miller Camp, and Chinquapin Camp at existing primitive levels. Maintain major campsites along the Lost Coast to primitive aesthetic standards including actions such as litter removal, obliteration

- of unsightly, unnecessary, or unsafe fire rings, reduction of sanitation problems, and “toning down” of large driftwood shelters to ensure adequate visitor health and safety.
2. Evaluate existing structures like fences, fallen down buildings, etc. case-by-case (after addressing cultural and natural resource concerns and management use needs) to determine which can be removed or kept.
 3. Maintain existing fences and barriers erected to protect sensitive natural or cultural areas.
 4. Maintain existing springs for potable water at Bear Hollow and Miller camps.

Trails

Maintain existing network of backcountry trails for primitive and predominantly self-directed hiking/backpacking and equestrian use to offer a diversity of backcountry use opportunities. Provide a consistent standard of trail maintenance for all backcountry trails through the use of volunteers, work groups such as the California Conservation Corps (CCC), and BLM employees.

Signage and Interpretation

The minimal existing backcountry signs and interpretive information will be maintained, as required, to provide for visitor safety and resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will continue to be aesthetically pleasing (i.e., natural wood routed signs rather than metal) with consistent style by sign type. Existing signs and interpretive structures include directional signs at all trail junctions, identification signs posting private land boundaries, and identification signs locating backcountry campsites and water sources.

Monitoring

Continue the ongoing comprehensive monitoring program to determine impacts from recreational use on natural and cultural resources in the backcountry and to assess social impacts of changing visitor use. This monitoring program includes the following components:

1. Collection of visitor use statistics, particularly along the more heavily used sections of the backcountry, most notably the Lost Coast Trail. This is accomplished through data collected from trailhead registers, traffic counters, patrol logs (counting cars at parking areas as well as backcountry users), Special Recreation Permit information, and correspondence with visitors.
2. Collection of resource impact information, particularly along trails and campsites. This includes campsite inventory, evaluation of human and stock impacts on vegetation, soils, freshwater, 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, fisheries, etc. may also be conducted as needed by resource specialists.
3. Survey of visitor preferences and experiences. This survey was conducted in 1997 and again in 2003 and is helpful in determining trends in visitor enjoyment, social impacts, and perception of resource impacts from visitor use.

4. Evaluation (through contact with visitors, written responses at trailhead registers, visitor surveys, on site observations, etc.) of informal visitor perceptions and identification of specific problems in the field.

3.18.3.2 Alternative A: Frontcountry Zone

Management Goal

Provide a mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences. Allow recreational facilities and vehicular access for camping, day use, and backcountry trailhead access at a level which maintains the high visual quality of the area and protects the area's natural resources. Manage for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Maintain the existing predominantly naturally appearing landscape with visitor access provided through a minimal network of roads and trails.

Maintain the existing system of on-site facilities to allow visitors opportunities for camping and day use as well as trailhead access to the backcountry trail system. Maintain the existing signs 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.

Social Setting

Provide for types and levels of recreational use that provide less rugged, primitive opportunities emphasized within the primitive Backcountry Zone. The Frontcountry Zone will also provide visitors choices in where they may access the Backcountry Zone.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area, the recreational facilities and respect the rights of other recreationists and local residents.

Management Presence

Management actions will continue to occur both on-site and off-site so visitors can experience a mix of personal freedom and security. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site will continue to be more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of campgrounds (including fee collections), 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, and other tasks.

Allowable Uses

A mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses including car camping, driving for pleasure, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, hunting, fishing (restricted to certain areas), nature study, wildlife viewing, and other activities compatible with the management objectives for this zone. Emphasize uses not available or compatible in the Backcountry Zone. Continue to allow for both commercial and non-commercial group use, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions to achieve zone management objectives include maintaining existing 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. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Capacity

Although the major emphasis of the existing visitor use allocation system within the King Range is in the Backcountry Zone, there are maximum numbers of people and stock allowed within developed campsites (eight people per campsite). Nadelos Campground may be reserved for groups ranging from twenty to a maximum of sixty people.

Facility Development

Existing recreation facilities will be maintained, as required, to meet the minimal needs of visitors to the King Range, to protect resources, and to promote visitor safety and knowledge of the area. These facilities include Nadelos, Wailaki, Tolkan, Horse Mountain, Honeydew, and Mattole Campgrounds, trailhead parking and informational kiosks at all trailheads, including an expanded, paved trailhead facility at the more heavily used Black Sands Beach trailhead, and the BLM administrative site/visitor center in Whitethorn.

Trails

Maintain existing Universally Accessible interpretive trail between Nadelos and Wailaki Campgrounds.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate Frontcountry signs and interpretive information will be maintained to provide for visitor orientation, safety, and education, and to promote resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will continue to be installed to meet safety requirements, provide consistency by sign type, and to be as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Existing sign types include directional signs at all road junctions, trailheads, and trail junctions, visitor safety and regulatory signs along roads and at trailheads and campgrounds, signs identifying private land boundaries and roads closed to public use, signs identifying water sources, sensitive resource areas, and other important features, and interpretive panels along the interpretive trail between Nadelos and Wailaki Campgrounds, at the Punta Gorda Lighthouse, and at an important archaeological site near Mattole Campground.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts are focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Frontcountry Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will continue to be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at trailheads, campground fee collection information, observation sheets, patrol logs, and direct visitor contact.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

Nadelos Campground will continue to be open for reservation for group use under special permit. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

*3.18.3.3 Alternative A: Residential Zone***Management Goal**

Direct recreation visitors to and focus impacts on public land instead of private lands in the Shelter Cove area. Provide more developed opportunities for group gatherings and individual use while still maintaining open space and scenic quality of the area. Provide visitor information, interpretation, and environmental education programs.

Objectives**Physical Setting/Facilities**

Complement the development of Shelter Cove by maintaining some open space and protecting the unobstructed scenic ocean views at select locations.

Maintain a system of on-site day use and overnight parking facilities to allow visitors access to the beach and tidepools, provide more developed recreation opportunities, and provide information and interpretive resources to promote environmental education and appreciation for the KRNCA.

Social Setting

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 the recreational facilities and surrounding landscape.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the area and respect the rights of others.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur mainly on-site although information concerning recreation opportunities will continue to be available for people before arriving in Shelter Cove. Management actions will inform

visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of day use facilities and 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.

Allowable Uses

Group picnicking and events such as weddings, memorial services, etc. sightseeing, picnicking, environmental education, wildlife viewing, staging for backcountry use, and other activities compatible with the management goal and objectives for this zone.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, maintaining facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility condition monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Capacity

The current maximum numbers of people permitted for group use of Mal Coombs Park will be continued.

Facility Development

Existing recreational and interpretive facilities will be maintained, as required, to accommodate public need for information and education and staging facilities for recreational activities. These facilities include:

1. Mal Coombs Park including restroom, parking lot, picnic tables, the relocated Cape Mendocino Lighthouse with accompanying interpretive information, monuments, interpretive panels, split rail barriers, and steps down to the beach and tidepools.
2. Maintain existing Black Sands Beach parking facility, restroom, overlooks, informational kiosks, emergency telephone and Accessible parking and off-loading area near beach. Ensure continued aesthetically pleasing landscaping, views from overlook, and visitor safety along cliff.
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. Continue to allow group use events on a case-by-case limited basis if such use does not result in resource damage or impacts to nearby residents.

Trails

Maintain wheelchair accessible trail in Mal Coombs Park to provide designated access between facilities (restroom, Mario's statue, Lighthouse, picnic areas, interpretive signs, parking area, etc.). Maintain safe and adequate beach access trail at Black Sands Beach trailhead.

Signage and Interpretation

Existing signs and interpretive information will be maintained to provide for visitor orientation, safety, and education, and to promote resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will continue to meet safety requirements, provide consistency by sign type, and be as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Existing sign types include directional signs at key locations along Shelter Cove Road, identification, visitor safety, and regulatory signs, at facilities, adequate visitor information in kiosks at Black Sands Beach and Mal Coombs Park, and interpretive panels at Seal Rock, Abalone Point, Mal Coombs Park, and Black Sands Beach.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts will continue to be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Residential Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will continue to 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.

3.18.4 Alternative B*3.18.4.1 Alternative B: Backcountry Zone*Management Goal

Provide high quality non-motorized recreational opportunities. Preserve the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S. Allow for levels of self directing recreational use that provide for very high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation while protecting the diverse scenic and natural resources in the area.

Objectives**Physical Setting/Facilities**

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 are minimal in extent and transitory in nature.

Maintain a network of backcountry trails and minimal directional signing. No other facilities will be allowed and existing facilities will be removed, where possible.

Social Setting

Provide for levels of use that allow for high quality solitude and low levels of encounters between visitors throughout the year.

Visitors are expected to practice a high level of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency commensurate with a self-directed backcountry experience.

Management Presence

The majority of management actions will occur off-site so that visitors can experience freedom to choose travel and camping locations once they enter the backcountry. Management actions will prepare visitors to enter and use the backcountry safely and with minimal impacts to resources and other visitors.

Management presence on-site is subtle, with low, unobtrusive levels of visitor contact by BLM backcountry ranger and patrols by law enforcement rangers only in response to resource protection problems or emergency response.

Allowable Uses

Non motorized recreation activities including hiking, backpacking, surfing, surf fishing, equestrian use, camping, environmental education, wildlife viewing, and other activities consistent with the goal of providing high quality backcountry experiences. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial non-motorized recreational use, if consistent with zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, removing structures, maintaining a trail system, minimal signing, visitor use, and resource monitoring, and identification of special group use areas. Specific actions are detailed below.

Visitor Use Management

a) Use Allocation. Within three years of plan completion, a comprehensive visitor use allocation system will manage anticipated increasing visitor numbers, particularly along the Lost Coast Trail. This system will be designed to prevent unacceptable resource impacts and ensure a high quality visitor backcountry experience. The system will be designed to provide the highest opportunities for solitude and lowest visitor densities of the plan alternatives. The visitor use allocation system will attempt to redistribute use to off-peak periods as one means to reduce visitor encounters.

Visitor use allocation will be based on existing visitor use numbers and measurable resource impacts. This allocation system is an adaptive strategy that will be implemented as soon as possible to address the trend of steadily increasing visitation in the King Range and restrict use numbers to promote high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive backcountry recreation. The visitor use allocation system will include, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Range of allowable visitor numbers within the Backcountry Zone as a whole, along the 25 mile Lost Coast Trail, and from each trailhead.

2. Percentage of visitor use allowed by commercial groups, non-commercial organized groups, and private parties.
3. Maximum allowable group size limits along the Lost Coast Trail and on the upland trails.
4. Permit system administration to include:
 - ∅ Who requires a permit (i.e., commercial groups, non-commercial groups, all overnight users, and/or day users?)
 - ∅ Where and how people may obtain permits
 - ∅ Fee schedule
 - ∅ Information to disseminate (i.e., fire restrictions, bear canister requirement, proper sanitation practices, etc.)
5. Indicators of change will be identified to monitor and implement use allocation strategies. These indicators include: changes in visitation, activity preference shifts, new technologies, changes in commercial use (i.e., outfitter and guide service), economic factors, demographic shifts, and levels of resource impacts.
6. In response to immediate concerns over increasing visitation, the following interim actions will be implemented prior to completion of the visitor use allocation plan:
 - ∅ a. Commercial outfitters will not be allowed to operate during Memorial Day or Fourth of July weekends.
 - ∅ b. A self registration permit system will be implemented to ensure better information dispersal to the public and to improve visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the use permitting plan.
 - ∅ c. Group size limits will be reduced to ten people (maximum fifteen “heartbeats” including people and stock animals).

Under this alternative, ensuring very high opportunities for solitude and primitive, backcountry recreation experiences is the primary focus in addition to ensuring very low impacts to the natural and cultural resources present. A permit system would be implemented immediately and an adaptive use allocation program established soon after to reverse the trend of increasing use levels. Although this may mean that some visitors will be turned away and both commercial and non-commercial groups will have greater difficulty getting permits, those who are able to get permits will be assured of quality recreational opportunity with a high potential for solitude.

Facility Development

Minimal backcountry facilities will be maintained to allow upland trail camping and promote resource protection only. Visitor use levels will be used as the primary tool, rather than facility development, to minimize resource damage. Potential actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintain existing designated backcountry campsites along the upland trails.

2. Manage campsites along the Lost Coast to protect aesthetics and reduce resource impacts. Remove driftwood shelters and fire rings along the coast to maintain as natural a setting as possible.
3. Evaluate existing structures like fences, fallen down buildings, etc. case-by-case (after addressing cultural and natural resource concerns) to determine which can be removed to enhance the natural character of the land;
4. Construct or maintain low impact fences and barriers only where absolutely necessary to protect sensitive natural or cultural areas.

The management goal and overwhelming public scoping feedback identifies the Backcountry Zone as an area to be managed with minimal facilities necessary to ensure adequate visitor safety and resource protection. Providing minimal, aesthetically pleasing backcountry campsites and water sources, where feasible and appropriate, will accommodate visitor use and spread out such use to help ensure high quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Evaluating facilities present (i.e., fences, remains of former structures, etc.) for possible removal will help reduce the man-made visual impacts in the backcountry.

Trails

Maintain network of backcountry trails for primitive and self-directed hiking/backpacking and equestrian use to offer a diversity of backcountry use opportunities. Specific actions proposed may include but are not limited to:

1. Provide all gates and fences which block trails from vehicle access with horse passes to allow equestrian use.
2. Prohibit mountain bikes on backcountry trails in anticipation of possible wilderness designation for much of the Backcountry Zone and to preserve the area for non-mechanized recreational use.
3. Restrict additional trail development to minor reroutes to protect visitor safety and fragile resources, where necessary. Do not develop additional trails to benefit recreationists.

The unique, primitive, coastal backcountry within the KRNCA is the primary attraction for most people visiting the King Range public lands. The existing trail network provides a comprehensive linkage between the Lost Coast trail and upland trails with trailheads accessible by motorized vehicles. Under this alternative, maintaining these trails for backpacking and equestrian use without opening up other, primitive portions of the King Range to additional access will continue to allow adequate recreational opportunities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment.

Signage and Interpretation

Minimal backcountry signs will be installed and maintained, as required to provide for visitor safety and orientation and resource protection. All signs will be aesthetically pleasing (i.e., natural wood routed signs rather than metal) with consistent style by sign type. Proposed actions include but are not limited to the following:

1. Provide directional signs at all trail junctions.
2. Install identification signs, where necessary, to post private land boundaries to help prevent trespass onto private lands.

Minimal signing is critical to ensure that visitors don't get lost, trespass onto private land, or damage sensitive natural or cultural resources. Providing aesthetically pleasing signs with consistent style will provide visitor safety commensurate with the desired self directed primitive recreational experiences.

Monitoring

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 zone management objectives. The monitoring program will include the following:

1. 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. Emphasis will be placed on collecting visitor use information with minimal impact on the privacy of the backcountry visitor.
2. Collection of resource impact information, particularly along trails and campsites. This would 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.
3. Survey of visitor preferences and experiences. This survey should 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 our visitor use data and should be conducted with minimal impact on the privacy of the backcountry visitor.
4. 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.

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.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

a) Special Uses. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management goals. Such uses (i.e., geocaching, paragliding, etc.) will be

monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues. Recreational uses that conflict or are likely to conflict with the Backcountry Zone objectives need to be managed to eliminate those conflicts. Identified proposed actions include but are not limited to the following:

1. Mountain bike use: Prohibit mountain bike use on all trails within the Backcountry Zone.
2. Boats landing on Lost Coast: Disallow all motorized watercraft from landing along the BLM administered portion of the Lost Coast except for emergency purposes.
3. Low flying aircraft along beach: 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 both private and commercial low flying aircraft.
4. Competitive events: Disallow any competitive events within the Backcountry Zone.
5. Hunting: Coordinate with California Dept. of Fish and Game to change, if feasible, the deer rifle hunting season for the King Range to begin after Labor Day weekend.

Unforeseen changes in recreational uses, patterns, and technologies force us to remain flexible and adaptive in managing such emerging issues. Within the goal of managing the Backcountry Zone to protect its primitive, non-motorized, self directing recreation opportunities, the BLM will try to allow new or expanded activities as long as they do not unduly interfere with visitor safety, resource protection, or conflict with other recreational pursuits. Prohibiting mountain bikes on backcountry trails would preserve the area for non-mechanized recreational use. The shore landings of motorized watercraft, including boats, zodiacs, jet skis, and other craft powered with internal combustion engines, is incompatible with the primitive recreation objectives of the Backcountry Zone. Airplane and helicopter use for touring flights has become a major impact in many highly scenic backcountry areas. The primitive, backcountry use zone is not considered an appropriate place for competitive recreational events. Changing the deer rifle hunting season to begin after Labor Day would reduce conflicts and potential safety concerns during the busy holiday weekend.

b) Special Use Areas. Specific areas may be designated as special use areas to promote quality primitive recreational experiences and to accommodate appropriate differences in recreational use levels and types. Manage Big Flat/Miller Flat to accommodate slightly higher numbers of people. Require permitted groups to camp at Big Flat/Miller Flat rather than at Shipman or Buck Creek. Require all permitted groups to spend any layover days at Big Flat/Miller Flat instead of Shipman Creek or Buck Creek. Establish a horse camp at Miller Flat.

Managing Big Flat/Miller Flat for slightly higher visitation would channel organized groups (having generally larger numbers of people with potentially greater impacts) into the one, popular use area that can accommodate higher use levels due to its spacious setting, higher level of existing development (i.e., private dwelling, airstrip, etc.), and an abundance of suitable campsites.

3.18.4.2 *Alternative B: Frontcountry Zone*

Management Goal

Provide a mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences. Allow recreational facilities and vehicular access for camping, day use, and backcountry trailhead access at a level which maintains a high visual quality of the area and protects the area's natural resources. Manage for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Maintain a predominantly naturally appearing landscape with visitor access provided through a minimal network of roads and trails.

Maintain a minimal system of on-site facilities to allow visitors opportunities for camping and day use and trailhead access to the backcountry trail system. Provide signing and informational facilities necessary 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.

Social Setting

Provide for types and levels of recreational use that provide less rugged, primitive opportunities emphasized within the primitive Backcountry Zone. The Frontcountry Zone will also provide visitors choices in where they may access the Backcountry Zone.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area, recreational facilities and to respect the rights of other recreationists and local residents.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur both on-site and off-site so visitors can experience a mix of personal freedom and security. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is somewhat more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of campgrounds (including fee collections), 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, and other tasks.

Allowable Uses

A mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses including car camping, driving for pleasure, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, hunting, fishing (restricted to certain areas), nature study, wildlife viewing, and other activities compatible with the management objectives for this zone. Emphasize recreational uses not available or compatible in the Backcountry Zone. Allow for both commercial and

non-commercial recreational use, if appropriate to meet zone objectives, through established permitting procedures

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve 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. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Capacity

Incorporate the Lost Coast segment from Mattole trailhead to the Punta Gorda Lighthouse into the backcountry visitor use allocation system. Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, maximum numbers of people and stock will be determined for each developed facility in the Frontcountry Zone, most notably campgrounds. If existing facilities are expanded, changes in allowable use will be made. Maximum numbers of people per campsite (presently eight per site), group size limitations for reserved campgrounds (such as Nadelos, present maximum sixty people) and allowable numbers and locations of stock use will be determined site by site.

Facility Development

Adequate recreation facilities will be developed as required to meet the minimal needs of visitors to the King Range, to protect resources, and to promote visitor safety and knowledge of the area. Facilities will be installed to provide adequate overnight and day use recreational opportunities consistent with maintaining an overall natural, aesthetically pleasing landscape. Potential facilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Provide and maintain trailhead facilities including parking and informational kiosks at all trailheads.
2. Maintain existing campgrounds at Nadelos, Wailaki, Tolkan, and Mattole. Remove Horse Mountain Campground when the facilities deteriorate to the point of requiring major renovation to keep it open. Provide potable drinking water, if feasible, at Tolkan and Mattole. Consider closing Honeydew Campground if vandalism makes upkeep difficult and expensive and keep it as a day use facility with access to the Mattole River. Where feasible, ensure that restrooms and other facilities are retrofitted to best meet Universal Accessibility standards.
3. Disallow camping within ¼ mile from Mattole Campground to prevent damage to sensitive resources, reduce fire danger, and prevent littering, sanitation and vehicle use problems.
4. 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.
5. Maintain the Punta Gorda Lighthouse for preservation as an historical landmark and interpretive site.

The major objectives of the Frontcountry Zone are to provide access to the Backcountry Zone, to encourage certain recreational uses which may not be possible or allowed in the Backcountry Zone, and to accommodate basic visitor needs. To accomplish these goals, a minimal number and quality of developed campgrounds, day use and overnight parking facilities, and trailheads are necessary.

Trails

Establish and maintain a minimal network of trails connecting to the Backcountry Zone trails and for use in the frontcountry. Emphasize recreational uses less available in the Backcountry Zone. Emphasize lower difficulty hiking use and interpretive/environmental education use for frontcountry trails to complement the more rugged network of Backcountry Zone trails. Specific actions proposed may include but are not limited to:

1. Identify opportunities to provide easier level of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users. Establish loop trail opportunities for mountain bikes and equestrian use, linking Paradise Ridge Road to King Peak Road, possibly via the old Queen Peak Road.
2. Expand and improve interpretive trail between Wailaki and Nadelos Campgrounds by developing a loop trail, if feasible, and making the entire loop trail wheelchair accessible;
3. Provide adequate trail maintenance and barriers against illegal OHV use while still providing horse passes for equestrian use.

This alternative would provide some additional opportunities for equestrian and mountain biking as well as easier trails identified as currently inadequate within the KRNCA. Minimal new trail construction will reduce environmental impacts, cost, and allow the BLM to focus more heavily on maintaining existing trails.

Signage and Interpretation

Minimal frontcountry signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

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

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 hopefully promoting responsible stewardship.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Frontcountry Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at trailheads, campground fee collection information, observation sheets and patrol logs and direct visitor contact.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

Specific areas may be designated as special use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs such as equestrian camping. Nadelos Campground may be reserved for group use under special permit. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.18.4.3 Alternative B: Residential Zone

Management Goal

Direct recreation visitors to and focus impacts on public land instead of private lands in the Shelter Cove area. Provide opportunities for recreational use while emphasizing open space and scenic quality of the area. Provide adequate visitor information and interpretation.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Complement the development of Shelter Cove by maintaining some open space and protecting the unobstructed scenic ocean views at select locations.

Maintain a system of on-site day use and overnight parking facilities to allow visitors access to the beach and tidepools, provide more developed recreation opportunities, and provide information and interpretive resources to promote environmental education and appreciation for the KRNCA.

Social Setting

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 the recreational facilities and surrounding landscape.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the area and respect the rights of others.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur mainly on-site although information concerning recreation opportunities will be available for people before they arrive in Shelter Cove. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of day use facilities and 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.

Allowable Uses

Group picnicking and events such as weddings, memorial services, etc. sightseeing, picnicking, environmental education, wildlife viewing, staging for backcountry use, and other activities compatible with the management goal and objectives for this zone.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility condition monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Specific actions are detailed below:

Use Allocation

Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, 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) will be determined.

Facility Development

Minimal recreational and interpretive facilities will be developed, as required, to accommodate public need for information and education and provide staging facilities for recreational activities with minimal impact on the scenic resources which attract visitors to the area. Facilities will be installed to provide adequate day use recreational opportunities and overnight parking for backcountry users consistent with maintaining an overall natural, aesthetically pleasing landscape. Potential facilities include, but are not limited to:

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.
 - € 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.

- € Maintain the parking area with possible upgrade to make more efficient use of available space.
 - € Maintain existing pedestrian access to tidepools. Provide information and interpretation for tidepool ecology and the need to preserve tidepool diversity.
2. Maintain existing Black Sands Beach parking facility. Improve landscaping, views from overlook, and visitor safety along cliff. Maintain extensive visitor information kiosks. Disallow all camping within ¼ mile from Black Sands Beach trailhead.
 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.

Trails

Maintain wheelchair accessible trail in Mal Coombs Park to provide access between facilities (restroom, Mario's statue, Lighthouse, picnic areas, interpretive signs, parking area, etc.). Provide safe and adequate beach access trail at Black Sands Beach trailhead.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

- € 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.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Residential Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, and assess vandalism or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will 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.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

Group events may be authorized at Mal Coombs Park on a case-by-case basis if such use is consistent with the objectives of this zone and do not unduly impact local residents and other recreational users. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with

the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.18.5 Alternative C (Preferred)

3.18.5.1 Alternative C: Backcountry Zone

Management Goal

Provide high quality non-motorized recreational opportunities. Preserve the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S. 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.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

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 are minimal in extent and transitory in nature.

Maintain a network of backcountry trails and directional signing. Other facilities will be the minimum necessary for visitor safety (commensurate with the backcountry setting) and resource protection. On-site facilities will be provided only after alternative means of addressing resource protection and safety issues have been exhausted. Facilities will not be installed for visitor convenience.

Social Setting

Provide for levels of use that allow for solitude and low levels of encounters between visitors at most locations and times of the year. Levels of use during summer weekends and at popular campsites will allow moderate levels of encounters between visitors.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency commensurate with a self-directed backcountry experience.

Management Presence

The majority of management actions will occur off-site so that visitors can experience freedom to choose travel and camping locations once they enter the backcountry. Management actions will prepare visitors to enter and use the backcountry safely and with minimal impacts to resources and other visitors.

Management presence on-site is subtle, with moderate levels of direct visitor contact by BLM backcountry ranger and intermittent patrols by law enforcement rangers.

Allowable Uses

Non motorized 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. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial non-motorized recreational use, if consistent with zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, developing facilities for resource protection, maintaining a trail system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use, and resource monitoring, and identification of special management areas. Specific actions are detailed below.

Visitor Use Management

a) Use Allocation. Within five years of plan completion, a comprehensive visitor use allocation plan will be developed to manage anticipated increasing visitor numbers, particularly along the Lost Coast Trail. This system will be designed to prevent unacceptable resource impacts and ensure continued high quality visitor backcountry experience. The visitor use allocation system will attempt to redistribute use to off-peak periods as one means to reduce resource impacts and visitor encounters.

Visitor use allocation will be based on existing and projected visitor use numbers and measurable resource impacts. This allocation system is an adaptive strategy that will 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, to year round permits, as future increases in visitation necessitate. The visitor use allocation system will include, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Range of allowable visitor numbers within the Backcountry Zone as a whole, along the 25 mile Lost Coast Trail, and from each trailhead.
2. Percentage of visitor use allowed by commercial groups, non-commercial organized groups, and private parties.
3. Maximum allowable group size limits along the Lost Coast Trail and on the upland trails.
4. 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.)

5. Indicators of change will be identified 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.

The BLM is attempting to balance the accommodation of backcountry users wishing to explore and enjoy the King Range backcountry 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. Achieving this balance is a formidable task and the step of moving to a more regulated use allocation system is a sensitive and often controversial issue. The need for such a system may be 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 burden (i.e., additional time and money) for the BLM. Establishing this use allocation will 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.

b) Special Recreation Permits and Interim Group Allocation Measures. In response to concerns over increasing visitation and overcrowding on peak weekends, the following interim actions will be implemented. They will be adjusted if needed based on the final allocation plan:

1. Holiday Use: Commercial outfitters will not be allowed to operate during Memorial Day or Fourth of July weekends.
2. Group size limit: The existing requirement of no more than 25 people (organized group use only) leaving from each trailhead will be increased to 30 people to accommodate two groups having the maximum of fifteen group members each.
3. Upland trail use limit: Increased to fifteen maximum to allow upland trail camping, particularly for those groups combining use of both the upland trail and Lost Coast trail sections.
4. Interim Permit System: An interim permit system will be implemented to ensure better information dispersal to the public and to improve visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the visitor use allocation plan. The initial system will be a non-fee self registration permit system with permits available at each trailhead.
5. Group Use Areas: Organized groups and commercial outfitters will 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 will be an integral part of the visitor use allocation plan 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):

- € Big Flat/Miller Flat: As an interim policy until the visitor use allocation plan is completed, require permitted groups having multiple layover days to camp at Big Flat/Miller and encourage 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.
 - € 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 will be promoted over other, less spacious locations in the interim until more specific management guidance is developed in the visitor use allocation plan.
6. 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 visitor use allocation plan is completed), limit and discourage commercial and organized group camping at Cooskie, Buck, and Shipman Creeks through the Special Recreation Permit process.
 7. Competitive Events: Disallow competitive recreational permits within the Backcountry Zone.

Unforeseen changes in recreational uses, patterns, and technologies force us to remain flexible and adaptive in managing such emerging uses. Within the goal of managing the Backcountry Zone to protect its primitive, non-motorized, more self directing recreation opportunities, the BLM will try to allow new or expanded activities (such as geo-caching) as long as they do not unduly interfere with visitor safety, resource protection or conflict with other recreational pursuits. The concept of managing specific areas within the Backcountry Zone for higher or lower visitation is an attempt to accommodate organized groups and an optimum number of visitors while protecting the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation that is so cherished by visitors. Big Flat, in particular, can accommodate higher use levels due to its spacious setting, higher level of existing development (i.e., private dwelling, airstrip, and driftwood shelters), an abundance of suitable campsites, and its popularity as a recreational destination for a wider range of recreational visitors. Competitive events are not considered appropriate for the backcountry use goals and objectives.

c) Visitor Use Fees. A nominal fee could be established for overnight backcountry use. No fees would be charged for day use. All fees would be reinvested into management and protection of backcountry resources, providing maintenance, and visitor services.

d) Hunting Season. Coordinate with California Department of Fish and Game to determine the feasibility of changing the hunting season for the King Range to begin after Labor Day weekend. This would serve to reduce conflicts and potential safety concerns during the holiday weekend.

e) Special Use Management. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management goals. Such uses (i.e., geocaching, paragliding, etc.) will 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.

1. **Mountain bike use:** Mountain biking will be treated as a special use in this zone. Mountain bike use will be allowed on existing trails in the backcountry, but will not be encouraged or promoted based on the area's Wilderness Study Area status. Prohibit mountain bike use on new trails (including the Chinquapin Trail and Horse Mountain Creek Trail) inside the Wilderness Study Area (WSA), to meet official BLM policy.
2. **Motorized watercraft landings:** The shore landings of motorized watercraft, including boats, zodiacs, jet skis, and other craft powered with internal combustion engines, is incompatible with the primitive recreation use objectives of the Backcountry Zone and would be prohibited. This would not effect offshore anchorages or emergency landings.
3. **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. Airplane and helicopter use for touring flights has become a major impact in many highly scenic backcountry areas.

Facility Development

Minimal backcountry facilities will be developed as required to provide a level of visitor safety commensurate with a self directed, coastal backcountry experience for resource protection, but not for visitor convenience. Facilities will be installed in the backcountry only after other management techniques have been proven ineffective at resource protection. Potential actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Provide primitive backcountry campsites along the upland trails through maintenance and possible expansion of existing campsites, and developing additional sites, as needed, to prevent resource impacts from increasing backcountry use levels.
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.
3. Develop springs for potable water sources, where feasible, near existing or future upland backcountry campsites. (Note: There is not a water issue on the beach).
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 would be installed only if aggressive promotion and enforcement of bear canister use is not adequately solving the problem.
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. They will use design concepts employed for facilities in designated wilderness

- locations to allow for maintenance using minimum tools commensurate with the primitive, backcountry setting of the Lost Coast.
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 or maintenance.

The management goal and overwhelming public scoping feedback identifies the Backcountry Zone as an area to be managed 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, will accommodate visitor use and spread out 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. Many miles of barbed-wire fencing and a number of buildings in various states of upkeep are located within the KRNCA. Some of these structures present visitor safety impacts or are visual intrusions, and need to be evaluated for removal.

Trails

Maintain network of backcountry trails for primitive and predominantly self-directed hiking/backpacking and equestrian use to offer a diversity of backcountry use opportunities. Specific actions proposed may include but are not limited to:

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.
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.
3. Develop additional trails, as needed, to complement existing trail system. Identify opportunities to provide easier level (reduced grades) of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users. 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.
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.
5. Develop a low gradient, easier 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.

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, we will evaluate the potential for easier trails where appropriate and feasible.



Cooskie Creek Trail offers opportunities for equestrians.

Signage and Interpretation

Minimal backcountry signs and interpretive information will be installed and maintained, as required to provide for visitor safety and resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will be aesthetically pleasing (i.e., natural wood routed signs rather than metal) with consistent style by sign type. Proposed actions include but are not limited to the following:

1. Provide directional signs at all trail junctions.
2. Install identification signs, where necessary, to post private land boundaries to help prevent trespass onto private lands.
3. 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.

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 will provide visitor safety commensurate with the desired self directed primitive recreational experiences.

Monitoring

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 zone management objectives. The monitoring program will include the following:

1. 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.
2. Collection of resource impact information, particularly along trails and campsites. This would 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.
3. Survey of visitor preferences and experiences. This survey should 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 our visitor use data.
4. 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.

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.

3.18.5.2 Alternative C: Frontcountry Zone

Management Goal

Provide a mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences. Allow recreational facilities and vehicular access for camping, day use, and backcountry trailhead access at a level which maintains the high visual quality of the area and protects the area's natural resources. Manage for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

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.

Maintain a system of on-site facilities to allow visitors opportunities for camping, day use and trailhead access to the backcountry trail system. Provide 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.

Social Setting

Provide for types and levels of recreational use that provide less rugged, primitive opportunities emphasized within the Backcountry Zone. The Frontcountry Zone will also provide visitors choices in where they may access the Backcountry Zone.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following 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 Presence

Management actions will occur both on-site and off-site so visitors can experience a mix of personal freedom and security. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of campgrounds (including fee collections), 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, and other tasks.

Allowable Uses

A mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses including car camping, driving for pleasure, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, hunting, fishing (restricted to certain areas), nature study, wildlife viewing, and other activities compatible with the management objectives for this zone. Emphasize uses not available or compatible in the Backcountry Zone. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial recreational use, if appropriate to meet zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve 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. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Management

a) Use Capacity. Incorporate the Lost Coast segment from Mattole trailhead to the Punta Gorda Lighthouse into the backcountry visitor use allocation program. Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, maximum numbers of people and stock will be determined for each developed facility in the Frontcountry Zone, most notably campgrounds. If existing facilities are expanded or new ones constructed, changes in

allowable use will be made. Maximum numbers of people per campsite (presently eight per site), group size limitations for reserved campgrounds (such as Nadelos, present maximum sixty people) and allowable numbers and locations of stock use will be determined site by site.

Facility Development

Recreation facilities will be developed to meet the needs of visitors to the King Range, to protect resources, and to promote visitor safety and knowledge of the area. The overall goal of facilities will be to serve as basic staging areas and access corridors to allow visitors to enjoy the remote scenic character of the Lost Coast, and not to provide for a high level of comfort and convenience. Potential facilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Develop (if feasible) trailhead along Bear Creek near the Shelter Cove Road/Chemise Mountain Road intersection.
2. Provide and maintain trailhead facilities including parking and informational kiosks at all trailheads.
3. Maintain existing campgrounds at Nadelos, Wailaki, Tolkan, Horse Mountain, and Honeydew. Provide drinking water, where possible, at all campgrounds. Upgrade Horse Mountain Campground to meet Universal Accessibility standards. Tie in expanded mountain bike road/trail system (see trail section) to Horse Mountain Campground and promote this campground for mountain bike use. Where feasible, ensure that restrooms and other facilities are retrofitted to best meet Universal Accessibility standards.
4. Upgrade Mattole Campground to better delineate individual camping units and provide for maximum degree of Universal Accessibility. Ensure good source of drinking water and adequate parking for backcountry users. Manage camping in undeveloped areas surrounding Mattole Campground to prevent damage to sensitive resources, reduce fire danger, and prevent littering, sanitation, and other problems as necessary. Evaluate possibility of a less developed group camping and/or overflow camping area along the Mattole River close to the existing campground.
5. Provide small overlook/picnic sites at scenic view points such as along Saddle Mountain and Paradise Ridge roads.
6. 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.
7. Maintain the Punta Gorda Lighthouse for preservation as an historical landmark and interpretive site.

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.

Trails

Establish and maintain a network of trails connecting to the Backcountry Zone trails and for use in the frontcountry. Emphasize uses that are less available in the Backcountry Zone. Emphasize lower difficulty hiking use and interpretive/environmental education use for frontcountry trails to complement the more rugged network of the Backcountry Zone trails. Specific actions proposed may include but are not limited to:

1. Develop additional trails, as needed, to complement existing trail system. Identify opportunities to provide easier level of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users. Establish loop trail opportunities for mountain bikes and equestrian use, linking Paradise Ridge road to King Peak road, possibly via the old Queen Peak road and/or other locations, and tie in this trail system to Horse Mountain and/or Tolkan Campgrounds.
2. Improve trail linking the northern portion of the Lost Coast trail with the Chemise Mountain/Sinkyone portion of the trail, if feasible.
3. Expand and improve interpretive trail between Wailaki and Nadelos Campgrounds by developing a loop trail and making the entire loop trail wheelchair accessible.
4. Re-establish trail from Tolkan Campground to Bear Creek.
5. Provide adequate trail maintenance and barriers against illegal OHV use while still providing horse passes for equestrian use.

Trails within the Frontcountry Zone are 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 possible future exclusion of mountain bikes from areas designated in the future as wilderness; and 3) the identification of the need for easy, accessible, interpretive trails. Accommodating these needs as well as linking up major components of the backcountry trail system will enhance the overall trail system in the King Range and provide trail opportunities for a wider range of visitors.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate frontcountry signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Provide directional signs at all road junctions, trailheads, and trail junctions.
2. Provide adequate visitor safety and regulatory signs, as needed, along roads and at trailheads and campgrounds.
3. Provide signs, where necessary, to identify private land boundaries and roads closed to public use.
4. Provide signing, where necessary, to identify water sources, sensitive resource areas, or other important features.

5. 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.

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 hopefully promoting responsible stewardship of the area.

Monitoring

The monitoring program described for the Backcountry Zone will be applied to the coastal segment from Mattole trailhead to the Punta Gorda Lighthouse. Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Frontcountry Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at trailheads, campground fee collection information, observation sheets, patrol logs, and direct visitor contact.

Special Uses and Use Areas

Specific areas may be identified as special use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs such as equestrian camping. Nadelos Campground may be reserved for group use under special permit. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.18.5.3 Alternative C: Residential Zone

Management Goal

BLM lands within the Shelter Cove subdivision serve as major coastal access points and parks in the community. They will be managed to offer recreation and environmental education opportunities to visitors who want a taste of the Lost Coast without roughing it, or spending extended time in the backcountry. The 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. Management will focus on interpreting the significant natural and cultural resources of the area through community partnerships. The BLM will also provide more developed opportunities for group gatherings and individual use while still maintaining open space and scenic quality of the area. An equally important management goal will be to protect the sensitive resources such as tidepools; high levels of use and easy access will require careful monitoring of these resources.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Complement the development of Shelter Cove by maintaining some open space and protecting the unobstructed scenic ocean views at select locations.

Maintain a system of on-site day use and overnight parking facilities to allow visitors access to the beach and tidepools, provide more developed recreation opportunities, and provide information and interpretive resources to promote environmental education and appreciation for the KRNCA.

Social Setting

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 the recreational facilities and surrounding landscape.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the area and respect the rights of others.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur mainly on-site although information concerning recreation opportunities will be available for people before arriving in Shelter Cove. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of day use facilities and 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. There will be a greater focus on guided activities (i.e., interpretive walks, environmental education programs, etc.) in this zone.

Allowable Uses

Group picnicking and events such as weddings, memorial services, etc. sightseeing, picnicking, environmental education, wildlife viewing, tidepool exploration, staging for backcountry use, and other activities compatible with the management goal and objectives for this zone.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility condition monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Management

a) Visitor Capacity. Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, 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) will 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.

Facility Development

Recreational and interpretive facilities will be developed, as required, to accommodate growing visitation, public need for information and education and staging facilities for recreational activities. Facilities will be installed to provide adequate day use recreational opportunities and overnight parking for backcountry users consistent with maintaining an overall natural, aesthetically pleasing landscape. Potential facilities include, but are not limited to:

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.
 - € Maintain existing pedestrian access to tidepools. Provide information and interpretation for tidepool ecology and the need to preserve tidepool diversity.
2. Maintain existing Black Sands Beach parking facility. Improve landscaping, views from overlook, and visitor safety along cliff. 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. Require commercial groups to camp at least ¼ mile from Black Sands Beach trailhead and individuals and non-commercial groups to camp north of Telegraph Creek.
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.

Trails

Maintain wheelchair accessible trail in Mal Coombs Park to provide access between facilities (restroom, Mario's statue, Lighthouse, picnic areas, interpretive signs, parking area, etc.). Provide safe and adequate beach access trail at Black Sands Beach trailhead.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

- € 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.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Residential Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will 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.

Special Use and Use Areas

Specific areas and sites may be identified as special use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs. Development of a group use area in Mal Coombs Park will accommodate desired group events not available or as desirable at other BLM locations. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.18.6 Alternative D*3.18.6.1 Alternative D: Backcountry Zone***Management Goal**

Provide high quality non-motorized recreational opportunities. Preserve the area's unique character and identity as one of the few remaining coastal backcountry recreation areas in the U.S. Allow for levels of predominantly self directing recreational use that protect the overall diverse scenic and natural resources while imposing relatively minimal constraints on the visitor.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Maintain an overall 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 are subordinate to the primitive nature of the landscape.

Maintain a comprehensive network of backcountry trails and directional signing. Other facilities will provide for enhanced visitor safety (commensurate with the backcountry setting) and resource protection.

Social Setting

Provide for levels of use that allow for moderate numbers of encounters between visitors throughout the year. Levels of use will be allowed to the extent that they do not result in substantial resource impacts.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility and self-sufficiency commensurate with a self-directed backcountry experience.

Management Presence

Substantial management actions will occur both on-site and off-site so that visitors can experience the maximum freedom to choose travel and camping locations. Management actions will prepare visitors to enter and use the backcountry safely and with minimal impacts to resources and other visitors.

Management presence on-site is fairly substantial, with moderate levels of direct visitor contact by BLM backcountry and law enforcement rangers.

Allowable Uses

Non motorized recreation activities including hiking, backpacking, surfing, surf fishing, equestrian use, camping, environmental education, wildlife viewing, and other activities consistent with the goal of emphasizing backcountry experiences. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial non-motorized recreational use, if consistent with zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, facility development, maintaining a trail system, signing and interpretive information, visitor use, and resource monitoring, and identification of special management areas. Specific actions are detailed below.

Visitor Use Management

a) Use Allocation. Within five years of plan completion, a comprehensive visitor use allocation system will manage anticipated increasing visitor numbers, particularly along the Lost Coast Trail. Under this alternative, this system will be designed to emphasize prevention of unacceptable resource impacts rather than promoting high quality opportunities for solitude. The visitor use allocation system will attempt to redistribute use to off-peak periods as one means to reduce resource impacts.

Visitor use allocation will be based on existing and projected visitor use numbers and measurable resource impacts. This use allocation system is an adaptive strategy that will 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, to year round permits, as future increases in visitation necessitate. The visitor use permit system will include, at a minimum, the following components:

1. Range of allowable visitor numbers within the Backcountry Zone as a whole, along the 25 mile Lost Coast Trail, and from each trailhead.
2. Percentage of visitor use allowed by commercial groups, non-commercial organized groups, and private parties.
3. Maximum allowable group size limits along the Lost Coast Trail and on the upland trails.
4. 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.)
5. Indicators of change will be identified to monitor and implement use allocation strategies. These indicators include: visitation increases, activity preference shifts (including boat use at Big Flat), new technologies, changes in commercial use (i.e., outfitter and guide service), economic factors, demographic shifts, and levels of resource impacts.
6. In response to immediate concerns over increasing visitation, the following interim actions are being implemented prior to completion of the use permitting plan:
 - € The existing requirement of no more than 25 people (organized group use only) leaving from each trailhead will be increased to 45 people to accommodate three groups having the maximum of fifteen group members;
 - € Upland trail use limit will be increased to fifteen maximum to allow upland trail camping, particularly for those groups combining use of both the upland trail and Lost Coast trail sections. Upland trail backcountry campsites will be expanded, as necessary, to accommodate such groups.
 - € Interim Permit System: An interim permit system will be implemented to ensure better information dispersal to the public and to improve visitor use statistics for inclusion in developing the visitor use allocation plan.
 - € Group Use Areas: Organized groups and commercial outfitters will 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 will be an integral part of the visitor use allocation plan 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):

1. Big Flat/Miller Flat: As an interim policy until the visitor use allocation plan is completed, require permitted groups having multiple layover days to camp at Big Flat/Miller and encourage 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.
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 will be promoted over other, less spacious locations in the interim until more specific management guidance is developed in the visitor use allocation plan.

Under this alternative, increased numbers of visitors will be accommodated as long as the natural and cultural resources in the area are adequately protected. Less emphasis would be placed on providing quality opportunities for solitude, particularly during the heavy use season. Establishing a permit system would be a last resort after other management actions have been implemented. This will allow for fewer constraints on the visitor, greater freedom of access, as well as lower administration costs due to delayed implementation of a use allocation system. The concept of managing specific areas within the Backcountry Zone for higher use is an attempt to accommodate organized groups and meet increasing visitor demand while providing some opportunities for solitude. Big Flat, in particular, can accommodate higher use levels due its spacious setting, higher level of existing development (i.e., private dwelling, airstrip, and driftwood shelters), an abundance of suitable campsites, and its popularity as a recreational destination for a wider range of recreational visitors. Spanish Flat is also very spacious and can more easily accommodate higher use levels.

b) Visitor Use Fees. A nominal fee would be charged for overnight backcountry use. No fees would be charged for day use. All fees would be reinvested into management and protection of backcountry resources, providing maintenance, and visitor services.

c) Hunting Season. Coordinate with CDFG to determine the feasibility of changing the hunting season for the King Range to begin after Labor Day weekend. This would serve to reduce conflicts and potential safety concerns during the holiday weekend.

d) Special Use Management. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management goals. Such uses (i.e., geocaching, paragliding, etc.) will 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.

1. Mountain bike use: Mountain biking will be treated as a special use in this zone. Mountain bike use will be allowed on existing trails in the backcountry, but will not be encouraged or promoted based on the area's Wilderness Study Area status. Prohibit mountain bike use on new trails

(including the Chinquapin Trail and Horse Mountain Creek Trail) inside the Wilderness Study Area (WSA), to meet official BLM policy.

2. **Motorized watercraft landings:** The shore landings of motorized watercraft, including boats, zodiacs, jet skis, and other craft powered with internal combustion engines would be managed under the visitor use allocation program to minimize conflicts with other backcountry users. Emergency landings would not be affected.

Unforeseen changes in recreational uses, patterns, and technologies force us to remain flexible and adaptive in managing such emerging uses. Within the goal of managing the Backcountry Zone to protect its primitive, non-motorized, more self directing recreation opportunities, the BLM will try to allow new or expanded activities (such as geo-caching) as long as they do not unduly interfere with visitor safety, resource protection or conflict with other recreational pursuits.

Facility Development

Backcountry facilities will be developed as required to provide a level of visitor safety commensurate with a self directed, coastal backcountry wilderness experience for resource protection. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Provide adequate backcountry campsites along the upland trails by expanding existing campsites and developing additional sites at strategic locations, where feasible, to accommodate increasing visitor use.
2. Install visually unobtrusive bear proof food storage facility (such as bear lockers or hanging wires) at popular heavy use locations along the coast, particularly those with a history of persistent bear encounters.
3. Install rustic, low maintenance backcountry toilets at popular sites where monitoring indicates substantial resource impacts or persistent sanitation problems. Any potential backcountry toilets would be constructed of natural materials and maintained through the use of minimum tools commensurate with the primitive, backcountry setting of the Lost Coast.
4. Evaluate existing structures like fences, buildings, etc. case-by-case (after addressing cultural and natural resource concerns and management use needs) to determine which can be removed or kept.
5. Construct or maintain fences and barriers where necessary to protect sensitive natural or cultural areas.
6. Develop springs for potable water sources, where feasible, near existing or future backcountry campsites on the upland trails. Water is generally not a problem on the beach campsites.
7. Consider establishing a rustic backcountry ranger station along the coast for emergency services and information dispersal.

Providing adequate backcountry campsites and water sources, where feasible and appropriate, will accommodate increasing visitor use and better spread out such use to help provide opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Providing backcountry toilets and bear-proof food storage containers will 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. Evaluating facilities present (i.e., fences, remains of former structures, etc.) will help reduce the man-made visual impacts in the backcountry while retaining those needed for resource protection or having historical significance. Establishment of a backcountry ranger station will allow for extended presence in the backcountry, and provide a central location for visitor information to the higher number of users anticipated under this alternative.

Trails

Maintain a comprehensive network of backcountry trails for primitive and predominantly self-directed hiking/backpacking and equestrian use to offer a diversity of backcountry use opportunities and promote visitor safety and resource protection. Proposed actions include but are not limited to:

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 passes at vehicle barriers, improve trailheads, reroute problem trail segments where possible, etc.). Maintain trails to equestrian standards, when possible, and identify additional trails suitable for equestrian use.
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.
3. Develop additional trails, as needed, to complement existing trail system. Identify opportunities to provide easier level of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users. Identified trails include extending the Miller Loop Trail to the Lightning Trailhead, and establishing a trail up Mill Creek to the Cooskie Creek Trail. Evaluate future trail opportunities along some of the major coastal drainages such as Cooskie Creek (connecting Cooskie Creek trail to the coast at the mouth of the creek), Spanish Creek, Big Creek, Big Flat Creek (beyond existing Rattlesnake Ridge trail), Shipman Creek, and Gitchell Creek.
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.
5. Develop a wheelchair accessible interpretive trail in Hidden Valley with expanded parking and adequate information at the Hidden Valley Trailhead.

Much of the visitor use within the backcountry depends on an adequate trail system to provide self directed primitive recreational opportunities. The existing trail network provides a comprehensive linkage between the Lost Coast trail and upland trails. Connecting Miller Camp to the Lightning Trailhead would provide a quality loop trail opportunity while developing a trail up Mill Creek from Lighthouse road to the Cooskie Creek Trail would also expand the upland trail opportunities. Public scoping input identified the need to provide easier trails for a wider range of abilities. A wheelchair accessible interpretive trail in Hidden Valley would accommodate those wanting an easier trail as well as increasing our Universally Accessible trail opportunities. Expanding the coastal trail system up some of the larger creek drainages would increase easier hiking opportunities, and help disperse recreational use to better accommodate increasing visitation. Finally, this alternative strives to ensure that trail conditions are maintained to accommodate a wider spectrum of non-motorized trail users.

Signage and Interpretation

Rustic backcountry signs and interpretive information will be installed and maintained, as required to provide for visitor safety and resource protection. All signs and interpretive structures will be aesthetically pleasing (i.e., natural wood routed signs rather than metal) with consistent style by sign type. Proposed actions include but are not limited to:

1. Provide directional signs at all trail junctions.
2. Install identification signs, where necessary, to post private land boundaries to help prevent trespass onto private lands.
3. Install identification signs, where necessary, to point out backcountry campsites, restrooms, bear-proof food storage facilities, water sources, sensitive resource areas, or other important features.
4. Provide rustic interpretive signs for public education and site protection for important features.
5. Install sign boards or mini-kiosks at major camping areas and backcountry ranger station to highlight major regulations, safety hazards, and minimum impact camping techniques.

Adequate signing is critical to ensure that visitors are aware of backcountry trail opportunities. Signs also reduce the chance of visitors getting lost, trespassing onto private land, suffering health risks (such as drinking untreated water from developed water sources), or damaging sensitive natural or cultural resources. Providing informational and regulatory signs at major use areas will reinforce the rules necessary to minimize impacts from an anticipated higher level of visitor use under this alternative. Providing important interpretive messages at a few key locations will help protect sensitive resources through enhanced visitor awareness.

Monitoring

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, to make necessary adjustments to the visitor use permitting program, and to achieve zone management objectives. The monitoring program will include the following

1. 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, and correspondence with visitors.
2. Collection of resource impact information, particularly along trails and campsites. This would include campsite inventory, evaluation of human and stock impacts on vegetation, soils, freshwater, 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.
3. Survey of visitor preferences and experiences. This survey should be conducted approximately every five 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 should involve an

aggressive approach to acquiring information with the highest level of statistical reliability possible. This survey will also improve our visitor use data.

4. 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.

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

3.18.6.2 Alternative D: Frontcountry Zone

Management Goal

Provide a mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences. Allow recreational facilities and vehicular access for camping, day use, and backcountry trailhead access at a level which maintains a high visual quality of the area and protects the area's natural resources. Manage for a variety of recreational activities to complement the primitive recreational opportunities in the Backcountry Zone.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Maintain a predominantly naturally appearing landscape with visitor access provided through an adequate network of roads and trails.

Maintain a system of on-site facilities to allow visitors opportunities for camping, day use and trailhead access to the backcountry trail system. Provide 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.

Social Setting

Provide for types and levels of recreational use that provide less rugged, primitive opportunities emphasized within the primitive Backcountry Zone. The Frontcountry Zone will also provide visitors choices in where they may access the Backcountry Zone.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area as well as the recreational facilities, and respect the rights of other recreationists and local residents.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur both on-site and off-site so visitors can experience a mix of personal freedom and security. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of campgrounds (including fee collections), 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, and other tasks.

Allowable Uses

A mix of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses including car camping, driving for pleasure, hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, hunting, fishing (restricted to certain areas), nature study, wildlife viewing, and other activities compatible with the management objectives for this zone. Emphasize recreational uses less available in the Backcountry Zone. Allow for both commercial and non-commercial recreational use, if appropriate to meet zone objectives, through established permitting procedures.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve 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. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Capacity

The visitor use allocation strategy described in the Backcountry Zone will apply to the Lost Coast segment between Mattole camp and the Punta Gorda Lighthouse. Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, maximum numbers of people and stock will be determined for each developed facility in the Frontcountry Zone, most notably campgrounds. If existing facilities are expanded or new ones constructed, changes in allowable use will be made. Maximum numbers of people per campsite (presently eight per site), group size limitations for reserved campgrounds (such as Nadelos, present maximum sixty people) and allowable numbers and locations of stock use will be determined site by site.

Facility Development

Adequate recreation facilities will be developed as required to meet the minimal needs of visitors to the King Range, to protect resources, and to promote visitor safety and knowledge of the area. Facilities will be installed to provide adequate overnight and day use recreational opportunities consistent with maintaining an overall natural, aesthetically pleasing landscape. Potential facilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Pursue possible trailhead along Bear Creek a short distance up the former road just north of the Shelter Cove road/Chemise Mountain Road intersection.
2. Provide and maintain trailhead facilities including parking and informational kiosks at all trailheads. Expand trailhead parking, where needed.
3. Maintain existing campgrounds at Nadelos, Wailaki, Tolkan, Horse Mountain, and Honeydew. Provide drinking water, where possible, at all campgrounds. Upgrade Horse Mountain

- Campground to meet modern, Universally Accessibility standards. Tie in expanded mountain bike road/trail system (see trail section) to Horse Mountain Campground and promote this campground for mountain bike use. Expand campgrounds, if needed in the future, to accommodate increasing visitor use. Where feasible, ensure that restrooms and other facilities are retrofitted to best meet Universal Accessibility standards.
4. Expand and upgrade Mattole Campground to better delineate individual camping units and provide for maximum degree of Universal Accessibility. Ensure good source of drinking water and adequate parking for backcountry users. Develop a group camping and overflow camping area along the Mattole River close to the existing campground.
 5. Provide small overlook/picnic sites at scenic view points such as along Saddle Mountain and Paradise Ridge Roads.
 6. Maintain visitor information and interpretive center at the BLM office in Whitethorn. Extend visitor hours during high use periods to better accommodate visitors.
 7. Stabilize and maintain the Punta Gorda Lighthouse and adjacent storage building for preservation as an historical landmark and interpretive site.

The major objectives of the Frontcountry Zone are to provide access to the Backcountry Zone, to encourage certain recreational uses which may not be possible or allowed in the Backcountry Zone, and to accommodate basic visitor needs. To accomplish these goals, a sufficient number and quality of developed campgrounds, day use and overnight parking facilities, and trailheads are necessary.

Trails

Establish and maintain a network of trails connecting to the Backcountry Zone trails and for use in the frontcountry. Emphasize recreational uses that are less available in the Backcountry Zone. Emphasize lower difficulty hiking use and interpretive/environmental education use for frontcountry trails to complement the more rugged network of Backcountry Zone trails. Specific actions proposed may include but are not limited to:

1. Develop additional trails, as needed, to complement existing trail system. Identify opportunities to provide easier level of trail access for a wider range of backcountry trail users. Establish loop trail opportunities for mountain bikes and equestrian use, linking Paradise Ridge Road to King Peak Road, possibly via the old Queen Peak Road and/or other locations, and tie in this trail system to Horse Mountain and/or Tolkan Campgrounds.
2. Improve trail linking the northern portion of the Lost Coast Trail with the Chemise Mountain/Sinkyone portion of the trail, if feasible.
3. Expand and improve interpretive trail between Wailaki and Nadelos Campgrounds by developing a loop trail and making the entire loop trail wheelchair accessible.
4. Re-establish trail from Tolkan Campground to Bear Creek.
5. Provide adequate trail maintenance and barriers against illegal OHV use while still providing horse passes for equestrian use.

Trails within the Frontcountry Zone are 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 possible future exclusion of mountain bikes from areas designated in the future as wilderness; and 3) the identification of the need for easy, accessible, interpretive trails. Accommodating these needs as well as linking up major components of the backcountry trail system will enhance the overall trail system in the King Range and provide trail opportunities for a wider range of visitors.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate frontcountry signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Provide directional signs at all road junctions, trailheads, and trail junctions.
2. Provide adequate visitor safety and regulatory signs, as needed, along roads and at trailheads, campgrounds, and other facilities.
3. Provide signs, where necessary, to identify private land boundaries and roads closed to public use.
4. Provide signing, where necessary, to identify water sources, sensitive resource areas, or other important features.
5. 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.

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 hopefully promoting responsible stewardship of the area.

Monitoring

Coastal monitoring efforts described for the Backcountry Zone will be conducted along the segment of beach between Mattole trailhead and the Punta Gorda Lighthouse. Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Frontcountry Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will be conducted by use of traffic counters, counting vehicles parked at trailheads, campground fee collection information, observation sheets, patrol logs, and direct visitor contact.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

Specific areas may be designated as special use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs such as equestrian camping. Nadelos Campground may be reserved for group use under special permit. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.18.6.3 Alternative D: Residential Zone

Management Goal

Direct recreation visitors to and focus impacts on public land instead of private lands in the Shelter Cove area. Provide more developed opportunities for group gatherings and individual use while still maintaining open space and scenic quality of the area. Provide visitor information, interpretation, and environmental education programs.

Objectives

Physical Setting/Facilities

Complement the development of Shelter Cove by maintaining some open space and protecting the unobstructed scenic ocean views at select locations.

Maintain a system of on-site day use and overnight parking facilities to allow visitors access to the beach and tidepools, provide more developed recreation opportunities, and provide information and interpretive resources to promote environmental education and appreciation for the KRNCA.

Social Setting

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 the recreational facilities and surrounding landscape.

Visitors are expected to practice a level of personal responsibility in following management guidelines and regulations to protect the area and respect the rights of others.

Management Presence

Management actions will occur mainly on-site although information concerning recreation opportunities will be available for people before arriving in Shelter Cove. Management actions will inform visitors of recreational opportunities, safety concerns, and regulations designed to protect the natural and cultural resources in the area.

Management presence on-site is more apparent than in the backcountry, with regular patrols of day use facilities and 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.

Allowable Uses

Group picnicking and events such as weddings, memorial services, etc. sightseeing, picnicking, environmental education, wildlife viewing, staging for backcountry use, and other activities compatible with the management goal and objectives for this zone.

Management Actions

Actions proposed to achieve zone management objectives include permit systems, developing facilities to accommodate visitor needs and resource protection, signing and interpretive information, visitor use and facility condition monitoring, and facility patrols and maintenance. Specific actions are detailed below:

Visitor Use Capacity

Although the major emphasis of the proposed visitor use allocation system within the King Range will be in the Backcountry Zone, 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) will be determined.

Facility Development

Adequate recreational and interpretive facilities will be developed, as required, to accommodate growing visitation, public need for information and education and staging facilities for recreational activities. Facilities will be installed to provide adequate day use recreational opportunities and overnight parking for backcountry users consistent with maintaining an overall natural, aesthetically pleasing landscape. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

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 do not conflict with other proposed projects and provide adequate visitor safety.
 - € Maintain existing pedestrian access to tidepools. Provide information and interpretation for tidepool ecology and the need to preserve tidepool diversity.
2. Maintain existing Black Sands Beach parking facility. Improve landscaping, views from overlook, and visitor safety along cliff. Actively pursue all opportunities to expand facility to include additional parking and parking for horse trailers. This may include the purchase of an

- additional nearby lot(s), 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.
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.

Trails

Maintain wheelchair accessible trail in Mal Coombs Park to provide designated access between facilities (restroom, Mario's statue, Lighthouse, picnic areas, interpretive signs, parking area, etc.). Provide safe and adequate beach access trail at Black Sands Beach trailhead.

Signage and Interpretation

Adequate signs and interpretive information will 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. Proposed actions include, but are not limited to:

- € 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 Black Sands Beach, Seal Rock, Mal Coombs Park overlooking the tidepools, and other educational features.

Monitoring

Although monitoring efforts will be focused primarily within the Backcountry Zone, some monitoring of the Residential Zone is necessary to determine visitor use levels, vandalism, or deterioration of recreational facilities, potential visitor safety problems, and resource damage. Monitoring of visitor use will 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.

Designation of Special Use and Use Areas

Specific areas may be designated as special use areas to accommodate specific visitor needs. Development of a group use area in Mal Coombs Park will accommodate desired group events not available or as desirable at other BLM locations. Non-traditional and newly emerging recreational uses will be allowed as long as they are consistent with the zone management objectives. Such uses will be monitored to assess potential conflicts, impacts to sensitive resources, or visitor safety issues.

3.19 INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

3.19.1 Introduction

The interpretive and educational programs in the King Range currently revolve around several major themes:

- € 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 will be encouraged to travel in the area in a way that is respectful to the neighborhood.
- € People will be 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.

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. As a result, the management goals, objectives, and actions are common across all alternatives, following the “no action” continuation of current management.

3.19.2 Common to All Alternatives

3.19.2.1 Goals

- € To provide current, accurate, and descriptive information to visitors that facilitates a safe, enjoyable trip to the King Range while minimizing negative impacts on resources and surrounding communities.
- € Engage children and adults in learning about the cultural and natural history of the King Range and encourage stewardship of these lands.

Rationale

People that are well informed of what to expect when they come to the King Range are more likely to achieve their recreational goals and are more likely to 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 world and an appreciation for other cultures. It is through these connections that a sense of respect for and stewardship of these resources will likely arise.

3.19.2.2 Objectives

1. Provide information through a variety of formats and venues to assist potential visitors in planning a trip to the King Range.
 - € 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. This will reduce the number of visitors who access the area that are not prepared for the remote rugged nature of the Lost Coast.
 - € Provide detailed orientation information to permitted groups and to visitors seeking information about the King Range (i.e., “Lost Coast Adventure” video, website, brochure).
 - € Coordinate with local chambers of commerce, parks, and other information centers or organizations to provide updated information on changing conditions such as road/trail status on a regular basis.
 - € Coordinate with organized outdoor groups and retail stores to provide updated information to them.
 - € Participate in offsite presentations about low impact camping in the King Range to interested groups (CCCs, high schools, boy scouts).
2. Provide sufficient safety and orientation information to visitors before they enter the backcountry.
 - € Maintain information kiosks at trailheads and campgrounds to provide adequate information on recreation facilities and opportunities in the King Range.

- € Maintain adequate signing on roads and at trailheads so that people can distinguish public from private land.
 - € Backcountry ranger/interns/staff patrols on the Lost Coast and other trails to respond to information requests.
 - € Maintain adequate staffing of the King Range Office front desk in order to respond to requests for special recreation permits and other information needs.
3. Provide support for BLM King Range programs and policies utilizing a variety of outreach approaches.
- € Communicate changing conditions and other critical announcements with a wide audience through Public Service Announcements, KRNCA webpage, and other forms of media.
 - € Coordinate with resource specialists to identify opportunities to share an aspect of their work with schools kids, locals, and visitors.
 - € Use volunteers, wherever possible, to perform tasks.
 - € Give guided natural/cultural history programs.
 - € Placement of wayside exhibits to interpret resources (i.e., using temporary exhibits to explain a work-in progress such as road removal, interpretive signs at overlooks).
 - € 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.
4. Engage children in learning about the King Range by developing curriculum based education opportunities.
- € Establish outdoor field school sites/research opportunities and begin to gather baseline data such as monitoring diversity of the tidepools.
 - € Encourage stewardship of the King Range by providing opportunities for school credit, volunteerism, and employment (i.e., School to Work program, train young docents, hire students).
 - € Coordinate with partners such as Mattole Restoration Council to provide school programs and curriculum related to the King Range.