

0304.2.5 Natural Preserve

Natural Preserves [PRC § 5019.71] are distinct areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance established within the boundaries of other State Park System units.

The purpose of Natural Preserves shall be to preserve such features as rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystems, representative examples of plant or animal communities existing in California prior to the impact of Euro-American modifications, geological features illustrative of geological processes, significant fossil occurrences or geological features of cultural or economic interest, or topographic features illustrative of representative or unique biogeographical patterns.

Natural Preserves shall be managed to allow natural dynamics of ecological interaction to continue without interference, where possible. Habitat manipulation shall be permitted only in those areas found by scientific analysis to require manipulation to preserve the species or associations that constitute the basis for the establishment of the Natural Preserve. Motor vehicle use is prohibited in Natural Preserves (see DOM Section 0304.5.2).

5001.65. Commercial exploitation of **resources** in units of the state park system is prohibited. However, slant or directional drilling for oil or gas with the intent of extracting deposits underlying the Tule Elk State Reserve in Kern County is permissible in accordance with Section 6854. Commercial fishing is permissible, unless otherwise restricted, in state marine conservation areas, state marine cultural preservation areas, and state marine recreational management areas.

Qualified institutions and individuals shall be encouraged to conduct nondestructive forms of scientific investigation within state park system units, upon receiving prior approval of the director.

The taking of mineral specimens for recreational purposes from state beaches, state recreation areas, or state vehicular recreation areas is permitted upon receiving prior approval of the director.

5001.8. (a) The use of motor vehicles in units of the state park system is subject to the following limitations:

(1) In state wildernesses, natural preserves, and cultural preserves, use is prohibited.

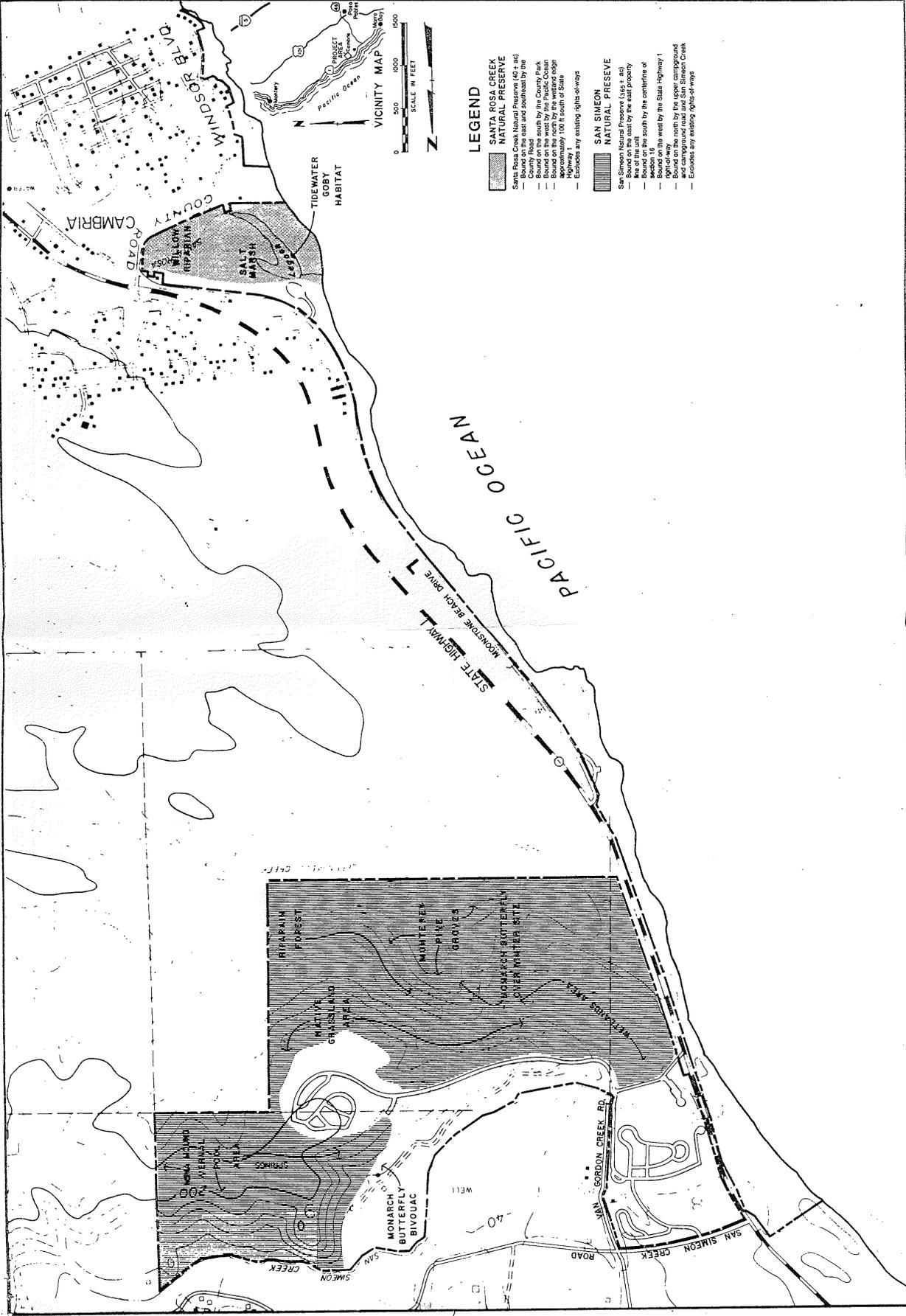
(2) In state parks, state reserves, state beaches, wayside campgrounds, and historical units, use is confined to paved areas and other areas specifically designated and maintained for normal ingress, egress, and parking.

(3) In state recreation areas, use is confined to specifically designated and maintained roads and trails.

(b) The use of motor vehicles on lands in the state vehicular recreation areas is confined to areas and routes designated for that purpose.

5001.9. (a) Any improvement existing within the state park system as of January 1, 1979, which fails to comply with the provisions of former Section 5001.5 as they read immediately prior to January 1, 1979, or Article 1.7 (commencing with Section 5019.50) of this chapter shall not be expanded.

(b) No new facility may be developed in any unit of the state park system unless it is compatible with the classification of the unit.



LEGEND

SANTA ROSA CREEK NATURAL PRESERVE

- Santa Rosa Creek Natural Preserve (40 + 80)
- Bound on the east and south by the County Road
- Bound on the west by the Pacific Ocean
- Bound on the north by the watershed boundary 100 feet south of State Highway 1
- Excludes any existing rights-of-ways

SAN SIMON NATURAL PRESERVE

- San Simeon Natural Preserve (100 + 80)
- Bound on the east by the east property line of the unit
- Bound on the south by the centerline of section 16
- Bound on the west by the State Highway 1 and campground road and San Simeon Creek
- Bound on the north by the upper campground and San Simeon Creek
- Excludes any existing rights-of-ways

Declaration of Purpose

San Simeon State Beach is established to make possible public use and enjoyment of the ocean beach and related uplands near the mouths of San Simeon and Santa Rosa creeks, on the San Luis Obispo County Coast. The objective is to provide for protection and interpretation of the beach environment, including the nearby scenic uplands (with their Monterey pine forests) and the headlands, and to make possible optimum public use of the beach lands for outdoor recreational purposes, in ways that do provide due respect for the scenic, cultural, or natural integrity of the area.



Declaration of Resource Management Policy

To preserve the scenic integrity of the narrow strip of land between State Highway 1 and the ocean, it is the management policy of the department to restrict development to areas that will not impair the views of the ocean and shoreline for passing motorists.

To protect the scenic values of the area, it is the management policy of the department to locate overnight developments where they will not be readily visible from State Highway 1, or where they can be adequately screened by plantings.

To protect the fragile ocean bluffs from excessive erosion, it is the management policy of the department that any development constructed in the area will be designed so collected runoff from the development will not be allowed to flow on unprotected soil or vegetated areas, and/or so the runoff will be spread to where no erosion damage will occur. Bluff access is to be located away from ecologically fragile areas.

The riparian and wetland areas at and next to San Simeon and Santa Rosa creeks will be protected, in conformance with the policy of the State Resources Agency to protect the wetlands of the state. A minimum buffer strip of 30 m (100 ft.) must separate any development from a wetland area.

To protect the natural environment and its scenic and esthetic values, it is the management policy of the department to allow no effluent to be released in settling and evaporation ponds, or in any other manner that would degrade the resources.

To preserve and protect the natural stands of Monterey pine, it is the management policy of the department that no facilities other than trails will be developed within these groves.

It is the management policy of the department to keep livestock off the unit, to let the area come back to the type of natural vegetation that it would normally support.

It is the management policy of the department to restrict upland development of both roads and public use facilities to the flattest grades possible, to prevent erosion and soil slippage problems.

It is the management policy of the department to encourage planting of native species for landscaping or screening purposes, if needed around development areas.

Native American prehistoric and historic resources at San Simeon State Beach are sensitive, and it is the policy of the department that no Native American resources shall be affected by development processes without prior approval of the director. These include the eleven prehistoric and five historic sites identified by the Cultural Heritage Section (except for the Whitaker Ranch complex, demolished by the State of California

in 1966). This ranch does not have enough statewide historic importance to retain what still exists of this enterprise, other than artifacts. Historic artifacts remaining include some pieces of old farm equipment, which should be preserved. The other four historic sites are stated as being of local significance.

An attempt should be made to obtain all prehistoric and historic artifacts now in private possession that originated from the San Simeon State Beach property, or from adjacent lands.

Recreational and interpretive uses of the area should be encouraged to the extent that they do not damage natural or cultural values present.

With its relatively heavy visitor use and its attractive setting, San Simeon State Beach is well suited for interpretation of many natural, cultural, and recreational topics. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

Coastal dynamics is a major interpretive theme for this unit. The ever-changing nature of coastal California is exhibited here in terms of marine terrace formation, bluff erosion, sand transport, and the action of waves and tides. In fact, geologic interpretation of one of the area's rock units (Franciscan formation) involves change on a global scale - rearrangement of the entire earth's crust through the mechanism of plate tectonics.

Marine climate might also be interpreted here, in a way that would have meaning to coastal dwellers up and down the state. The production of summer fog, the significance of temperature inversions (often very evident on the ride from the beach to Hearst Castle), and the effect of the wind and salt spray on vegetation are only a few of the possible interpretive subjects relating to climate.

A number of natural ecosystems are represented in the unit, each with its own interpretive stories to be told. Most notable, perhaps, is a natural stand of Monterey pine, a well-known species native to only three locations along the California coast. Behind this stand's restricted range is a dramatic story, involving the same set of geologic, climatic, and competitive factors that have worked to isolate plants like the coast redwood, Torrey pine, and Monterey cypress elsewhere along the coast. Other natural communities found here include: saltwater marsh, one of North America's most biologically productive and most threatened ecosystems; California prairie (now mainly introduced annual grasslands), possibly the most highly (and accidentally) altered of California's major ecosystems; coastal scrub, an aggressive invader of disturbed or degraded ecosystems; coastal strand, beautifully adapted to endure the rigors of the open coast; the complex freshwater marsh; and the water-dependent riparian ecosystem along the sides of the creeks.

The interpretation of animal life in or near the unit should certainly include: the offshore activities of sea otters and California sea lions; the great annual migrations of California gray whales, monarch butterflies, and waterfowl; and the fascinating adaptations and interdependencies found in the coastal tidepools.

The occurrence of eleven prehistoric archeological sites in the unit (including middens and bedrock mortars) makes it possible to interpret the region's early occupancy by Salinan Indians, and to examine their lifestyles in relation to the land. Interpretation of other cultural resources in this unit is of secondary importance, except for the school

house, CA-SLO-800. The ranch, an abalone processing factory, and a coal mine are generally of marginal significance, but might be interpreted, nevertheless, in terms of the settlement and economy of this section of the coast.

Recreation-related interpretation can deal with such topics as surfing, skin and scuba diving, beachcombing, stream and surf fishing, boating and boating safety, hiking, birding, whale watching, and ordinary sightseeing. Orientation material, maps, folders, etc. and general information should also be made available.

As a tool required for judicious resource management, a resource monitoring program shall be initiated before facility development. This program will include, but will not be limited to:

- a) Establishment of permanent plots to monitor the impact of various use intensities on each ecosystem in the unit. Permanent plots will consist of 10 x 10 meter quadrants and transects, in sufficient numbers to provide statistically significant monitoring results. Plots will be monitored for abiotic and biotic environmental conditions.
- b) Air and water quality monitoring stations will be established.
- c) Macro-climatic and micro-climatic weather stations will be established.
- d) Other monitoring needs may be found necessary on approval of the General Plan for the unit.

Resource monitoring equipment and permanent plot establishment shall be funded as part of the general plan budget. Permanent plot establishment and resource monitoring shall be the responsibility of the Natural Heritage Section, with cooperation from the Development and Operations divisions.

The interpretive objectives shall reflect the declared purpose of the unit. Emphasis shall be placed on coastal dynamics and preservation of the natural resources and biotic communities. Historical relevance of cultural and archeological data shall be interpreted in relationship to the natural habitat. On-site interpretive facilities shall be kept to a minimum. Any extensive exhibits, displays, and detailed orientation material could be incorporated into the larger visitors' and interpretive center at Hearst Castle. Recreational, natural, and cultural resources that have been identified, and those yet to be identified, shall be appropriately interpreted.

Specific Recommendations for Carrying Out the Resource Management Policy

Turnouts, parking, and general access along the beach frontage should be allowed only where this activity will not significantly impair the quality of scenic vistas observed by passing motorists on Highway 1. Suitable locations would include areas not visible from the highway, areas lying below the general eye level for observing coastal scenery, areas where the coastline or ocean are not visible, areas that are generally blocked from up or downcoast viewing, and areas of such poor viewing that only the distant ocean skyline can be seen.

Telephone and power lines should be placed underground where possible, for similar reasons.

Drainage from roads and parking lots should be collected and run on or in some structure to a safe location, so erosion of the fragile bluffs will not occur. Trails on and down the bluff areas should be well planned, to get people from the parking areas to vista points or to the ocean below without causing further land stability problems. The trails should be graded so they do not collect large amounts of runoff, but if this is not possible, they should have drainage systems similar to those of the roads and parking lots. The use of a suitable hard-surface material should be encouraged, to firm the fragile soil that is highly subject to erosion forces. Volunteer trails should be blocked off and removed when possible, and should be discouraged by a trail design that protects the fragile resources.

No development should be allowed in wetland areas, other than wetland enhancement or interpretive trails.

The practice of hauling and dumping effluent to settling and evaporative ponds located in the uplands has been discontinued. These areas have been backfilled, and should be rehabilitated and revegetated. The sewage system should be completely contained.

The fencing at the back of the inland area needs to be improved, to prevent livestock trespass from adjacent ranches.

If the present overflow overnight camping area south of San Simeon Creek is developed, it should be placed far enough away from the wetland areas so it will not affect them.

Soils in the area are subject to slippage and erosion when they become wet and saturated. To reduce the chances of this occurring, roads should be well drained, with adequate culverts to carry off and spread runoff; they should be constructed to avoid switchbacks where collected water becomes concentrated, and should be constructed on the minimum grades possible to reach the desired destinations.

Visitor facilities should be developed on the flattest areas possible, and should be well drained.

All collected water in ditches, culverts, or other collection devices should be dissipated, if at all possible, before it is allowed to reach a volume that will erode the soils.

The original development at San Simeon Creek was heavily planted with nonnative species. When there is need for replacement of any of these plantings, they should be replaced with native species, with Monterey pine (from local seed sources only) given high priority.

Proposed developments near known archeological or historical sites should be checked for site impact, and should be approved by the Native American community before the start of any work.