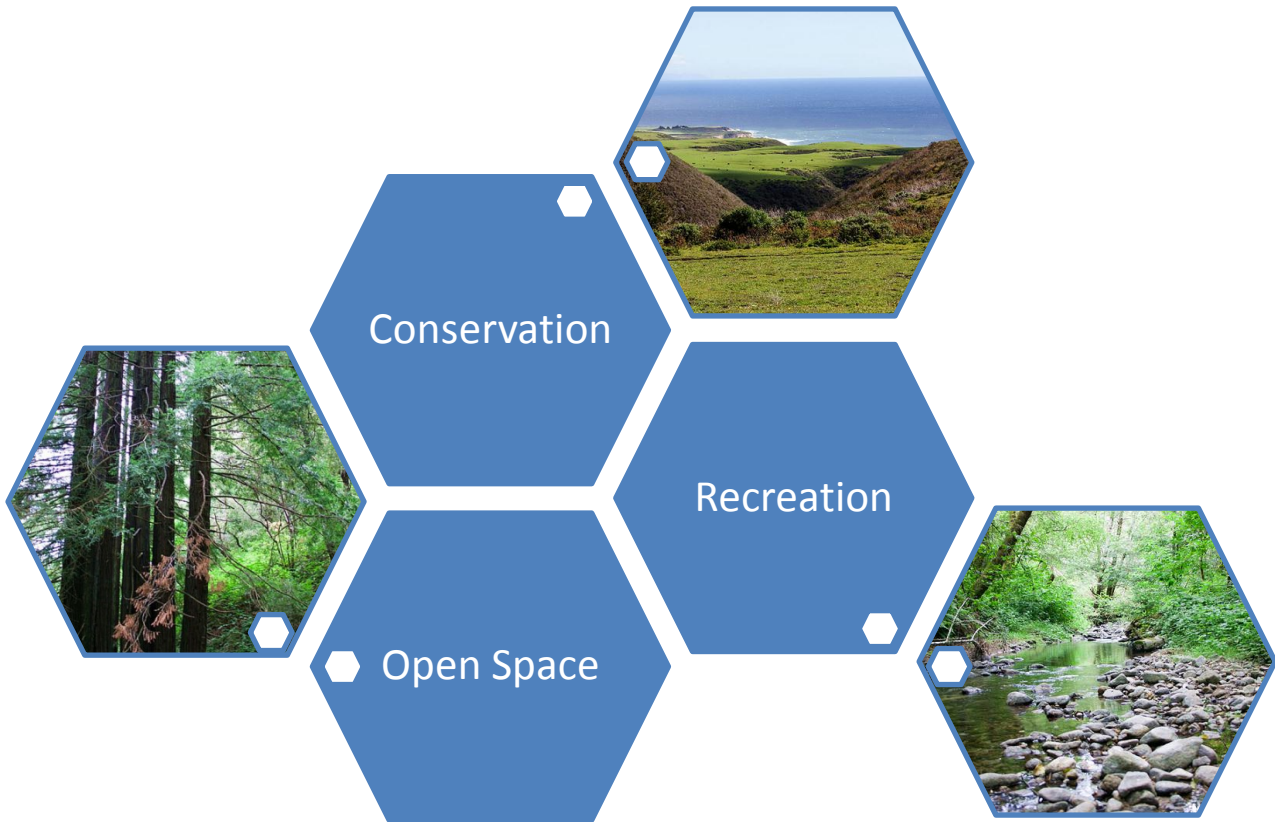


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
HOLLISTER FIELD OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA
Coast Dairies Interim Management Plan



CASE FILE/SERIAL NUMBER: CACA 045508

PROPONENT: BLM

PROJECT: Coast Dairies Interim Management Plan

LOCATION: Davenport, CA

AFFECTED ACREAGE: Approx. 5,843 acres

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Davenport and Santa Cruz

LAND STATUS: Public

SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREA: NA


AUTHORITY: Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA)

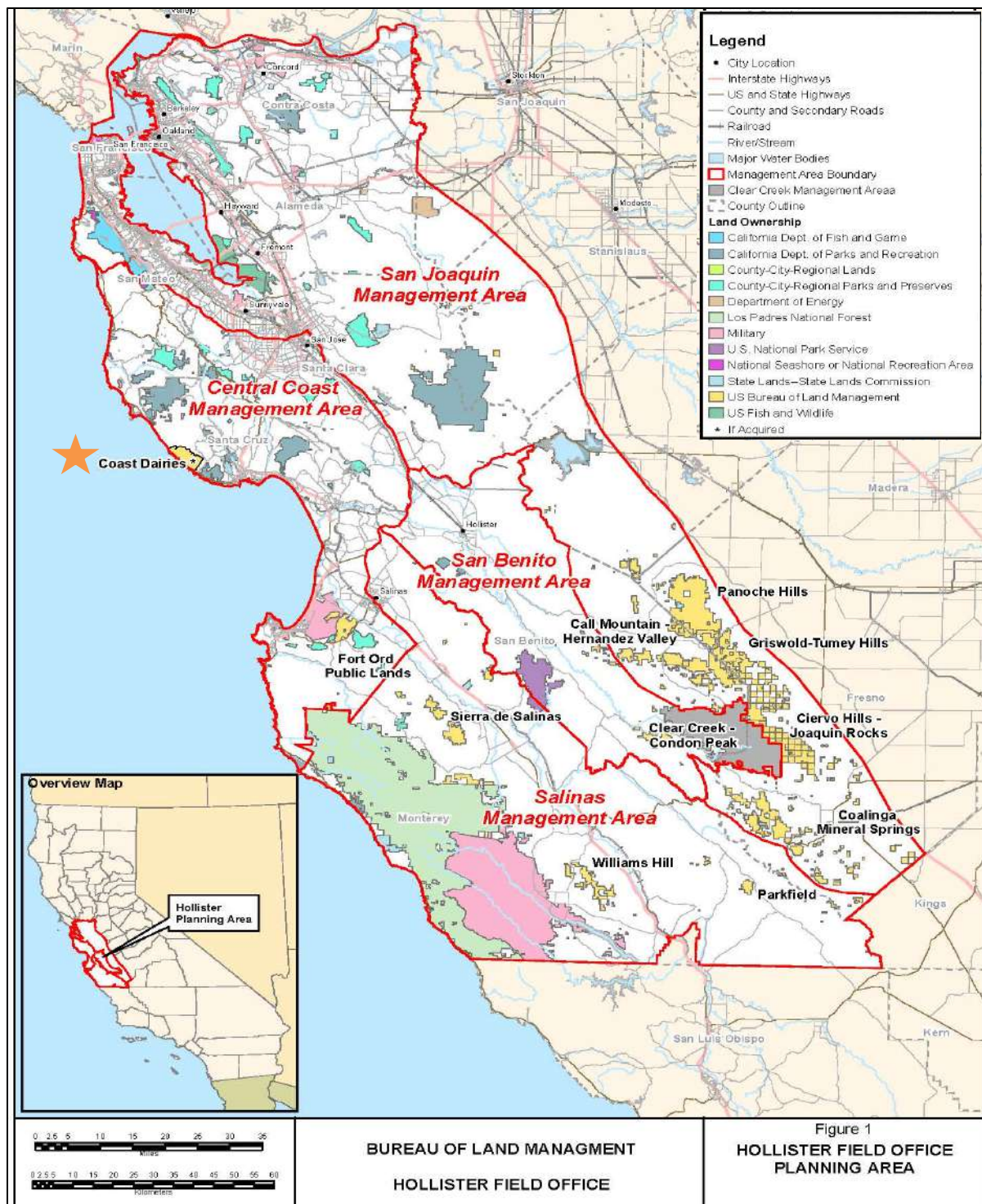
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INTRODUCTION

The Coast Dairies Property (Property) is located along California's central coast in northern Santa Cruz County and surrounds the town of Davenport. The property hosts an array of natural and cultural resources and has the potential to support diverse recreational opportunities. Map 1 (below) identifies the location of the Coast Dairies Property ().



Map 1. Coast Dairies Locator Map

For years, the California Coastal Conservancy, the County of Santa Cruz, the California State Parks (CSP), and others interested in coastal preservation expressed concerns about commercial real estate development plans to subdivide and construct more than one hundred residential homes on the Property.

As a result, the non-profit organization The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) purchased the Property on October 26, 1998. In August of 1998, CSP and BLM agreed with TPL to be the permanent stewards of the coastal and upland portions of the Property, respectively. BLM, CSP, and TPL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 8, 2000 that outlines the roles, expectations, and obligations of the parties related to interim management and development of a land use plan to establish long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property, subject to certain deed restrictions.

PURPOSE AND NEED

In April 2014, TPL transferred the Property into public ownership for BLM to preserve the lands as open space, with a natural forest reserve, and to maximize the opportunities for recreation and enjoyment in perpetuity. The Coast Dairies transfer agreement between BLM and TPL recognizes the following restrictions regarding the Property's future use:

1. The land shall be used and managed for open space and public recreation in a manner consistent with the protection and preservation of natural resources.
2. No commercial timber harvest operations shall be allowed.
3. Except for management, health, safety or emergency purposes the use of off-road vehicles shall not be permitted on land outside established roadways.

The purpose for the proposed interim management plan is to provide sustainable management strategies that can be implemented to balance and protect natural, cultural, and social resource attributes for the Property. The interim management plan is necessary to support public access and existing economic uses of the Property, and to protect natural and cultural resources during the development of a long-term resource management strategy.

CONFORMANCE WITH BLM LAND USE PLANS

The preferred alternative is subject to and in conformance with the Hollister Resource Management Plan for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California (2007) in accordance with Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-3. In particular, the management plan identifies the following management action to achieve the goals for management of lands and realty:

LUSE-COM6. Honor valid existing rights and easements that have been acquired through land acquisitions. Serialize and enter into the automated record all rights-of-way, easements, or other third-party authorizations.

Additionally, the management plan identifies the following management actions to achieve the goals for recreation management:

REC-VIS-COM1. Establish boundary posting and visitor use patrols in recreation areas concurrent with access development or enhancement.

REC-VIS-COM2. Install and maintain informational and directional signs to orient visitors to the rules and regulations on BLM public lands.

REC-VIS-COM5. Allow development of facilities to protect public safety and allow for interpretation of natural and cultural values.

REC-VIS-COM6. Rehabilitate or temporarily close recreation sites where resources are being degraded.

REC-VIS-C1. Manage existing recreation sites and allow expansion of existing facilities. Establish new recreation sites to meet increased recreation demand while protecting natural and cultural values and providing for public safety.

REC-INT-COM1. Provide recreation information such as maps, brochures, and educational opportunities to enhance visitors' experience on BLM public lands.

REC-INT-COM3. Cooperate with adjacent landowners on land management activities to the extent possible.

REC-INT-COM4. Design and construct outdoor kiosks and displays to provide current, accurate, and descriptive information to facilitate a safe and enjoyable experience on BLM public lands while minimizing negative impacts on resources and surrounding communities.

REC-INT-COM5. Establish an education program addressing impacts and the minimization of impacts of dogs and cats on BLM lands.

REC-INT-COM7. Collaborate with various entities to provide interpretive opportunities, such as museums, which offer the best opportunities for developing cooperative cultural resources educational and interpretive programs.

The Hollister RMP also approved the following management actions for cultural resources management:

CULT-COM1. Determine National Register eligibility for any areas of high cultural, historical, or archeological significance;

CULT-COM2. Protect archeological sites or contemporary ethnographic-use areas with the Best Management Practices (BMPs) available, either through the use of administrative action, on-the-ground measures, or a combination of the two (e.g., temporary closures, permanent fences, and capping);

CULT-COM3. Conduct data retrieval (recordation and excavation) at archeological sites as necessary to mitigate unauthorized excavation/vandalism and incorporate research institutions and avocational societies to the extent possible;

CULT-COM4. Continue intensive site-monitoring programs with volunteers and Law Enforcement Officers LEO/Park Ranger patrols at archeological or other cultural sites as needed;

CULT-C1. Protect archeological sites using a combination of on-the-ground and administrative measures including monitoring at-risk sites;

CULT-C2. Accommodate requests for access by the Native American community and work in coordination with tribal communities and groups to identify issues and achieve better access policies;

CULT-C3. Promote opportunities with academic, professional, and avocational groups and institutions for anthropological, archaeological, and ethnographic studies;

CULT-C4. Physically protect all known archeological sites and Native American use areas with demonstrated use conflicts, or avoid through project/route redesign, as appropriate.

CULT-C6. Fence and monitor impacted archaeological sites. Identify and protect Native American use areas (USDI-BLM 2007:3-30,3-31).

RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND OTHER PLANS

The Coast Dairies Long-term Resource Protection and Access Plan (TPL 2004) provides general direction to land managers based on public feedback from individuals, organizations, and local, State, and Federal government agencies. The Access Plan identifies a three stage access program with a brief description of how each stage determines access and what additional planning documents and approvals are necessary. For the purposes of this EA, the term “access” comprises both public access and other uses. The simplest and most benign uses, or those which can be considered identical to existing conditions on the Property, are allowed first. As funding becomes available during the interim management stage, additional access may be provided, but only to the extent that significant impacts to the environment can be avoided.

In the long term, BLM will develop an amendment to the Hollister Resource Management Plan that will identify allowable uses and other land use allocations. Even at this long-term access stage, future specific projects or implementation plans that interpret the general planning direction will require additional site-specific environmental review and analyses.

Environmental Science Associates, the consultant that prepared the Coast Dairies Long-term Resource Protection and Access Plan (2004), also prepared a supplementary Existing Conditions Report for the Coast Dairies Property (TPL 2001) that provides valuable information regarding the natural and cultural resources on the Property that has been incorporated into this EA.

The range of alternatives and the preferred alternative described in this EA are consistent with federal and state laws; and other local plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies, Tribes, and/or governments to the extent practical based on BLM regulations and policy.



Photo: Mixed oak and redwood forests on the Coast Dairies Property.

TIERING TO EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

In accordance with 40 CFR 1502.20, this Environmental Assessment (EA) is tiered to the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California, published by the BLM Hollister Field Office in June 2006.

A description of opportunities, affected resources, and environmental impacts related to management of Coast Dairies can be found in the 2006 PRMP/FEIS. Each individual resource section in the EIS further describes the potential impacts of BLM management activities on Coast Dairies resource values. This information is incorporated into this EA by reference here and in other relevant resources sections within the document.

The description of natural and cultural resources conditions on the Property in this EA is also heavily tiered to the Existing Conditions Report for the Coast Dairies Property, prepared for the Trust for Public Land, by Environmental Science Associates in June 2001.

ISSUES AND SCOPING

This EA incorporates individual planning efforts that began previously with the Coast Dairies and Hollister RMP/EIS planning projects, as described herein. On March 9, 2001, the BLM published the "Notice of Intent (NOI) to Participate in a Multi-Jurisdictional Land-Use Planning Effort, With Environmental Impact Analysis, for the Coast Dairies Property, Santa Cruz County, CA, and Prepare an Amendment to the Hollister Resource Management Plan" (Federal Register, Volume 66, Number 47). This ushered in a series of scoping meetings and led to the development of the Coast Dairies Long-Term Resource Protection and Access Plan (TPL 2004). On March 30, 2004, the BLM published the "NOI to Prepare a Resource Management Plan Revision/ Environmental Impact Statement for the Hollister Field Office" in the Federal Register (Volume 69, Number 61). Following the NOI, the BLM hosted three public scoping workshops to increase public involvement in the development of this revised Hollister RMP.

More recently, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), Sempervirens Fund, and Save the Redwoods League announced they are developing a plan to provide public access for recreational use of privately owned lands known as the Cemex Redwoods (or Cemex Forest), which is adjacent to and would complement visitor use and enjoyment of the Coast Dairies Property. In 2014, LTSCC released a report that summarizes issues and concerns identified by community members regarding public access to the Cemex Redwoods and the Coast Dairies properties. The issues and concerns outlined in the LTSCC's report are nearly identical to the public comments BLM received during previous planning efforts related to Coast Dairies.

According to LTSCC, questions about responsibility for management, including provision of public safety services overarched all other concerns. Fire was the single greatest and most consistent concern. Numerous participants also suggested that traffic associated with opening the property to public access would increase hazards and reduce safety of roads in the vicinity, including Highway 1 and Bonny Doon Road.

Many participants expressed concern about how the public would access the property: where they would park and where the trailheads would be located; and that hikers, bikers, equestrians and dog walkers could not share the same trails. Some neighbors indicated that the provision of a parking lot close to their homes would bring noise, trash and undesirable people who might commit crimes. Many recreational users also expressed concerns that road shoulder parking is unsafe, and that the residential streets in Davenport and Bonny Doon Road would be inappropriate for road shoulder parking.

Last, but not least, participants expressed concerns related to natural resources and the impact of too many users on those resources. For example, Davenport residents expressed concerns about impacts on the quality of drinking water, which is sourced on the property. Water resource agency staff also expressed concerns about potential impacts to the City of Santa Cruz water supply (LTSCC 2014).

BLM anticipates the Interim Management Plan will address issues and concerns that were identified during these planning efforts. For example, BLM may propose to develop a parking area, or other facilities for public access and recreational uses of the Property, during the interim management stage. However, a planning document is required, along with all the associated analyses, permits, consultations and public involvement. Therefore, prior to establishing a parking area at a trailhead, BLM will design project details and make refinements that would be available for public review and comments prior to approval and implementation. The assumption is that the provisions of the interim management plan are designed to avoid potential adverse impacts and all project proposals will be reviewed under appropriate environmental regulations.



Photo: An aboveground pipeline on the Coast Dairies Property supplies water for the City of Santa Cruz.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Preferred Alternative

BLM's preferred alternative is described below. The preferred alternative is designed to support BLM's management of the area until a land use plan to establish long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property is complete.

Interim Management Plan

Under the preferred alternative, the main emphases of the Interim Management Plan would be:

- A. Protection of special status species and their associated habitats;
- B. Recreation use of the Property consistent with the ability of the BLM to provide services and infrastructure necessary to ensure public health and safety and the protection of special status species;
- C. Continuation of livestock grazing and other existing uses of the Property, consistent with legal and regulatory requirements and the protection of special status species; and
- D. Collaboration with community groups regarding strategies for management of the Property, and provision of services such as patrol, cleanup, and monitoring.

Specific Management Actions:

- A. To protect special status species and their associated habitats:
 - 1. BLM would support efforts to protect spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and coho salmon in Coast Dairies streams in cooperation US Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service;
 - 2. BLM would support efforts to protect California red-legged frog breeding habitat, as well as habitat for other sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- B. To ensure recreational use of the Property is consistent with the ability of the Department, BLM, and other agencies to provide services and infrastructure necessary to ensure public health and safety and the protection of special status species, BLM would enforce the following interim rules:

- 1. The following trails are designated open for pedestrian access for day use only (see Map 2 below):
 - i. Liddell Creek Trail,
 - ii. Molino Bank Trail, and as permitted in writing by the authorized officer.
- 2. Visitors must stay on designated open trails, as indicated on BLM trail maps and signage at key points along the trail.



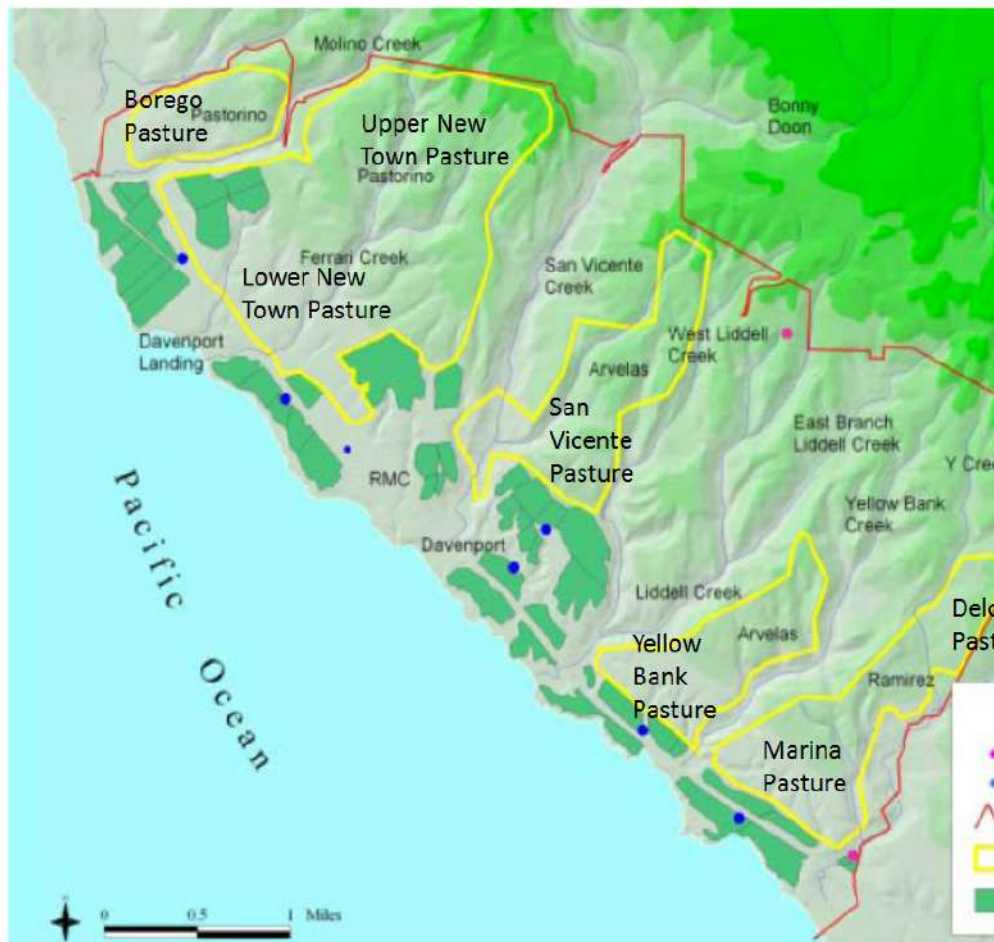


Map 2. Interim Access Map: This map depicts the trails designated open for pedestrian day-use only (and proposed parking areas/trailheads) under Alternative 1. BLM would also provide limited opportunities for the general public to join tours of the property and/or support volunteer efforts that will be announced through local media and posted on the Hollister Field Office web site.

3. Individuals or entities with existing rights-of-ways through the Property that include the use of motorized vehicles are restricted to paved roads and/or designated routes.
4. Use and/or discharge of firearms is prohibited within 150 yards of recreation facilities, including public parking areas and designated trails.
5. Campfires or other open flame fires are prohibited.
6. Littering and the disposal of any commercial, industrial, or household waste is prohibited.
7. The possession or discharge of fireworks or any explosive device or materials is prohibited.
8. Collection of resources on public lands, including but not limited to forest products (i.e. wood, vegetation, mushrooms, etc.), geologic materials (i.e. rocks, soils), or fish & wildlife (i.e. insects, amphibians, etc.) is prohibited.
9. Unauthorized disturbance to any archeological or historic site or structure is prohibited; collection of any historic or cultural artifacts, features, objects, or fossils without a permit is prohibited.

C. To support existing uses of the Property, BLM would authorize current grazing operations to continue, as prescribed below.

1. Maintain the following agreements for grazing on approximately 1,200 acres of pasture lands consistent with legal and regulatory requirements and the protection of threatened and endangered species (Refer to Map 3):



D. To provide visitor use facilities and support services such as patrol, cleanup, and monitoring, BLM would:

1. Develop parking areas off of Swanton Road and Bonny Doon Road to ensure safe ingress and egress for public land visitors at the designated trailheads (Refer to Map 2).
2. Install refuse collection and sanitary facilities at trailheads;
3. Post signage, boundary markings, and public information at appropriate locations to reach out to public land visitors;
4. Promote and coordinate volunteer efforts to cleanup of litter and illegally dumped materials;
5. Provide fire, search and rescue services; as well as law enforcement patrols; and
6. Authorize permits for special events and large gatherings.

ALTERNATIVE 2: Interim Closure Order

Under this alternative, the main emphases of the Interim Management Plan would be:

- A. Protection of special status species and their associated habitats;
- B. Continuation of livestock grazing and other existing uses of the Property, consistent with legal and regulatory requirements and the protection of special status species; and
- C. Collaboration with community groups regarding strategies for management of the Property, and provision of services such as patrol, cleanup, and monitoring.

In addition, BLM would issue a closure order to restrict all public use and forms of entry on the Coast Dairies Property under the authority of section 303(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1733(a)) and 43 CFR 8364.1.

Persons who are exempt from these rules include:

- 1) Federal, State, or local law enforcement officers or employees while engaged in the performance of their official duties.
- 2) BLM personnel or their representatives while engaged in the performance of their official duties.
- 3) Any member of an organized rescue or fire-fighting force, and/or emergency medical services while in the performance of an official duty.
- 4) Any member of a federal, state, or local public works department while in the performance of an official duty.
- 5) Any person in receipt of a written authorization of exemption obtained from the Hollister Field Office.
- 6) Private landowners, persons with valid existing rights or lease operations, or representatives thereof who have a responsibility or need to access their property or to continue their operations on public land.

Specific Management Actions:

- A. To protect special status species and their associated habitats:
1. BLM would support efforts to protect spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and coho salmon in Coast Dairies streams in cooperation US Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service;
 2. BLM would support efforts to protect California red-legged frog breeding habitat, as well as habitat for other sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- B. To support existing uses of the Property, BLM would authorize current grazing operations to continue, as prescribed below.
1. Maintain the following agreements for grazing on approximately 1,200 acres of pasture lands consistent with legal and regulatory requirements and the protection of special status species (Refer to Map 3):
- C. In collaboration with community groups BLM would analyze and approve the following undertakings on a case-by-case basis for provision of services such as patrol, cleanup, and monitoring under the preferred alternative.
1. Post signage, boundary markings, and public information at appropriate locations about the closure order and Coast Dairies planning opportunities;
 2. Promote and coordinate volunteer efforts; and
 3. Provide fire, search and rescue services; as well as law enforcement patrols.

ALTERNATIVE 3: No Action (Current Management)

Under the No Action Alternative the BLM would manage the Property in conformance with the resource management goals and objectives identified in the Record of Decision for the Hollister RMP for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California (BLM 2007) until a long-term resource management plan is established for the Property.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Critical Element	Affected		Critical Element	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Species		X
ACECs		X	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid		X
Cultural Resources		X	Water Quality (ground/surface)		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X
Floodplains		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Environmental Justice		X	Invasive Weeds		X
Native American Values		X	Wilderness		X
Recreation		X	Visual Resources		X

Biological Resources

The central coast has a Mediterranean climate and is a mosaic of upland oak, mixed evergreen, and redwood forests, native and exotic grasslands, upland scrub, coastal scrub, wetland communities, and riparian scrubs and forests. The Property is within the range of several species common to the Bay Area-Delta and South-Central Coast bioregions.

Vegetation

The Property currently supports 19 distinct native vegetation communities and four communities dominated by introduced nonnative species (TPL 2001). These include: two dune communities (active coastal dunes and northern foredune); two grassland communities (California annual grassland series and purple needlegrass series); four scrub and chaparral communities (central dune scrub, California sagebrush series, blue blossom series, and coyote brush series); six upland woodlands and forests (coast live oak woodland, mixed evergreen forest, mixed conifer series, knobcone pine series, redwood series, and eucalyptus/Monterey cypress forest); three riparian communities (coast live oak riparian series, arroyo willow series, and red alder series); and two seep and marsh communities. These plant communities vary in terms of diversity.

Several significant vegetation communities, including northern coastal salt marsh, ponderosa pine series, Monterey pine forest, and northern interior cypress forest are documented as occurring within the vicinity of the Property (TPL 2001). None of these plant communities have been observed on Coast Dairies, although individuals belonging to the dominant species comprising them do occur. A number of other sensitive plant communities are present, including California sagebrush series, blue blossom series, arroyo willow series, coast live oak series (riparian and upland), central dune scrub, coast live oak series, freshwater seep, northern foredune, purple needlegrass series, red alder series, and redwood series. Sensitive plant communities with occurrences are listed in the ECR (TPL 2004).

Special Status Plant Species

As discussed below, a number of species known to occur on or in the vicinity of the Coast Dairies Property are accorded “special status” because of their recognized rarity or vulnerability to various causes of habitat loss or population decline. Some species are formally listed and receive specific protection defined in federal or state endangered species legislation. Other species have no formal listing status as threatened or endangered, but are designated as “rare” or “sensitive.” These designations are made on the basis of policies adopted by federal or state resource agencies, or by local governmental agencies to meet local conservation objectives, or by organizations with acknowledged expertise, such as the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). These species are referred to collectively as “special-status species”, following a convention that has developed in practice but has no official sanction. BLM policy requires that “special status” or “sensitive” species receive the same level of protection and consideration afforded species listed as threatened or endangered, except that formal consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is not required. Six non-listed special-status plant species were found during surveys conducted on the Property for the development of the ECR (TPL 2004). Santa Cruz clover (*Trifolium buckwestiorum*) is a CNPS List 1B species; California bottlebrush grass (*Elymus californicus*), Santa Cruz Island oak (*Quercus parvula* var. *parvula*), and Michael’s rein orchid (*Piperia michaelii*) are CNPS List 4 species.

Federal and State Listed Species

Based on an examination of general distribution and habitat requirements, as well as an assessment of available habitat on the Property, the following species were determined to have moderate potential for occurrence on the Property.

- Monterey spineflower (*Chorizanthe pungens* var. *pungens*)
- Scotts Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe robusta* var. *hartwegii*)
- Robust spineflower (*Chorizanthe robusta* var. *robusta*)
- Santa Cruz tarplant (*Holocarpha macradenia*)
- San Francisco popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys diffusus*)
- Hickman's potentilla (*Potentilla hickmanii*)

Invasive Plants

Non-native and invasive plants of concern on the Property include French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*), tocolate (*Centaurea melitensis*), yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). Infestations of broom and pampas grass are centered in areas of historic mining activity, while infestations of star thistle are commonly associated with grazing lands.

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

Fish and wildlife habitats are not as well delineated as vegetation communities, which are characterized by certain plant species adapted to specific environmental conditions. Fish & wildlife habitats are comprised of various vegetative communities that support different life-cycle needs, such as foraging areas, nesting areas, and shelter from predators. High-quality fish & wildlife habitat on the Coast Dairies Property is present in all of those areas not directly affected by agriculture and structures.

Anadromous Fisheries

The Coast Dairies Property contains multiple distinct watersheds that support biological resources of national, state, and regional economic importance. For example, San Vicente Creek not only supports a self-sustaining population of federally threatened steelhead, but also contains one of the last remnant spawning runs of the endangered coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay.

The central California coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Ecologically Significant Unit (ESU) is federally listed as threatened, and is a California Species of Concern. Two reproductive forms of steelhead are recognized, the "stream maturing" and "ocean maturing" forms (also termed summer-run and winter-run, respectively), which describes the level of sexual development following return to the freshwater environment. The central California coast ESU consists entirely of winter-run steelhead (TPL 2004).

The ECR (TPL 2004) reports that the presence of steelhead have been confirmed in three Coast Dairies streams: San Vicente Creek, Liddell Creek, and Laguna Creek. The surveys by Harvey & Associates showed that San Vicente Creek contained the highest steelhead density while steelhead were least abundant in Liddell Creek.

In addition to these confirmed steelhead occurrences, young-of-the-year and/or yearlings were observed in all surveyed creeks. As a result, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) designated critical habitat for central California coast steelhead in 2000 that includes all Coast Dairies streams.

Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) that are part of the central California coast ESU are federally listed as threatened and state listed as endangered south of San Francisco Bay. Adult coho salmon have occasionally been observed in San Vicente Creek, one of nine streams south of San Francisco Bay identified by CDFW as potentially instrumental in restoring the region's coho runs to a state of sustainable viability. As reported in the Draft Strategic Plan for Restoration of the Endangered Coho Salmon South of San Francisco Bay (1998), CDFW does not consider coho in San Vicente Creek as a reproducing and self-sustaining population. Regardless of whether or not coho salmon occur on any other Coast Dairies streams, NMFS designated critical habitat for central California coast coho salmon in 1999 and all Coast Dairies streams are included in this listing.

Although anadromous (ocean-maturing) salmonids (salmon and steelhead) have been observed in only a few of the Coast Dairies streams during recent surveys, there is little doubt that (a) historic populations were significantly larger than those recently reported, and (b) most, if not all, of the six streams historically supported salmonid populations.

Special-Status Animal Species

The ECR (TPL 2004) contains a list of special-status animal species reported to occur within the vicinity of the Property based on data in the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), review of biological literature of the region, and consultation with local experts. More detailed discussion of the most significant of these species and groups of species is provided below.

California Red-Legged Frog

The California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) was federally listed as threatened on May 26, 1996; and critical habitat was designated on the Property effective April 16, 2010. Specifically, the North Coastal Santa Cruz County unit (SCZ-1) is comprised of approximately 72,249 acres located along the coastline from approximately Green Oaks Creek to Wilder Creek. The unit includes the following watersheds: Green Oaks Creek, Waddell Creek, East Waddell Creek, Scott Creek, Big Creek, Little Creek, San Vicente Creek, Laguna Creek, and Majors Creek.

As designated critical habitat, San Vicente Creek and Laguna Creek are known to contain features that are essential for the conservation of the species, and they provide connectivity between occupied sites along the coast and farther inland. In addition, they contain high-quality habitat, indicated by high density of extant occurrences, permanent and ephemeral aquatic habitat suitable for breeding, and accessible upland areas for dispersal, shelter, and food.

The unit represents one of two areas designated for critical habitat in Santa Cruz County and is the northern extent of the central coast recovery unit. The unit consists of 226 acres of Federal lands, 20,562 acres of State lands, and 51,460 acres of private lands.

The physical and biological features essential to the conservation of California red-legged frog in the SCZ-1 unit may require special management considerations or protection due to water diversions, which may alter aquatic habitats and thereby result in the direct or indirect loss of

egg masses, juveniles, or adults. Refer to the Special Management Considerations or Protection section in the “Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for California Red-Legged Frog; Final Rule” for a detailed discussion of the threats to California red-legged frog habitat and potential management considerations (Federal Register /Vol. 75, No. 51).

According to the ECR (TPL 2004), California red-legged frogs are widely distributed on the Coast Dairies Property, particularly at the lower elevations. Breeding sites are found in all watersheds, except Laguna Creek, and all named creeks provide non-breeding habitat. It is important to note that no bullfrogs were observed on the Coast Dairies Property. This non-native species has been implicated in the decline of red-legged frog throughout much of its range.

Peregrine Falcons and Other Raptors

Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) were formerly federally listed as endangered. They were delisted in 1999 by the USFWS, but are still considered endangered by the State of California. Peregrines were observed twice during the 2000 ECR nest surveys. On May 22, 2000, a molting adult peregrine was observed (from Swanton Road) soaring over the coastal cliffs and sloping terrain east of Molino Creek. The second sighting was a sub-adult (one-year-old bird) observed soaring over the coastal cliffs north of Bonny Doon Beach.

Water Resources

There are six perennial streams on the Coast Dairies Property: Molino Creek, Ferrari Creek, San Vicente Creek, Liddell Creek, Yellow Bank Creek, and Laguna Creek. All of them, except Laguna Creek and San Vicente Creek, have their watershed entirely or almost entirely on the Property. The TPL’s Existing Conditions Report (Section 4.1.4) includes an investigation into the hydrology of the region, the Property, and in particular these six streams. The ECR (TPL 2004) describes the physical characteristics of each stream and its watershed; the general condition of each stream and its watershed; the sensitivity of each of the six watersheds to disturbance; and the natural and human-induced disturbance conditions within each watershed that indicate the stream’s suitability for salmonids.

For the purpose of this EA, the following information provides a summary of the information in the ECR (TPL 2004) on regional precipitation and topographic features that affect Molino Creek, San Vicente Creek, and Liddell Creek, where potential effects from public use and BLM management activities are most likely to occur. Please refer to the ECR (TPL 2004) for specific stream data for Ferrari Creek, Yellow Bank Creek, and Laguna Creek.

The Santa Cruz Mountains, like most of central California, are marked by winter rains and summer drought. The largest of the Coast Dairies watersheds, San Vicente, has an area of just under 12 square miles. Most of the streams draining the west side of the Santa Cruz Mountains flow through steep-walled canyons to the Pacific Ocean. These streams tend to exhibit “flashy” (rapidly rising and falling) winter flows in response to storm events, which themselves are intensified by the orographic effect of the mountains. As the dry season progresses and the soil dries out, the streams continue to be fed by seeps and springs.

The Property spans an area with a range of mean annual precipitation from about 25 inches near the coast to about 40 inches at the inland property line. The upstream migration and spawning of salmonids, and the large flood events that change the form of stream channels, both occur in late fall through early spring. Therefore, rainfall during the months of December, January, February, and March have the greatest effect on salmonid migration and spawning.

Precipitation records for the region are provided in the ECR (TPL 2004). Real-time precipitation data are also available on-line for precipitation stations in southern Santa Cruz County.

The summary of general stream characteristics for Molino Creek, San Vicente Creek, and Liddell Creek is derived from the ECR (TPL 2004), which may be referenced for complete data on all streams on the Property. The approximate locations of the stream reaches are depicted in Figure(s) 3, 4, and 5.

MOLINO CREEK

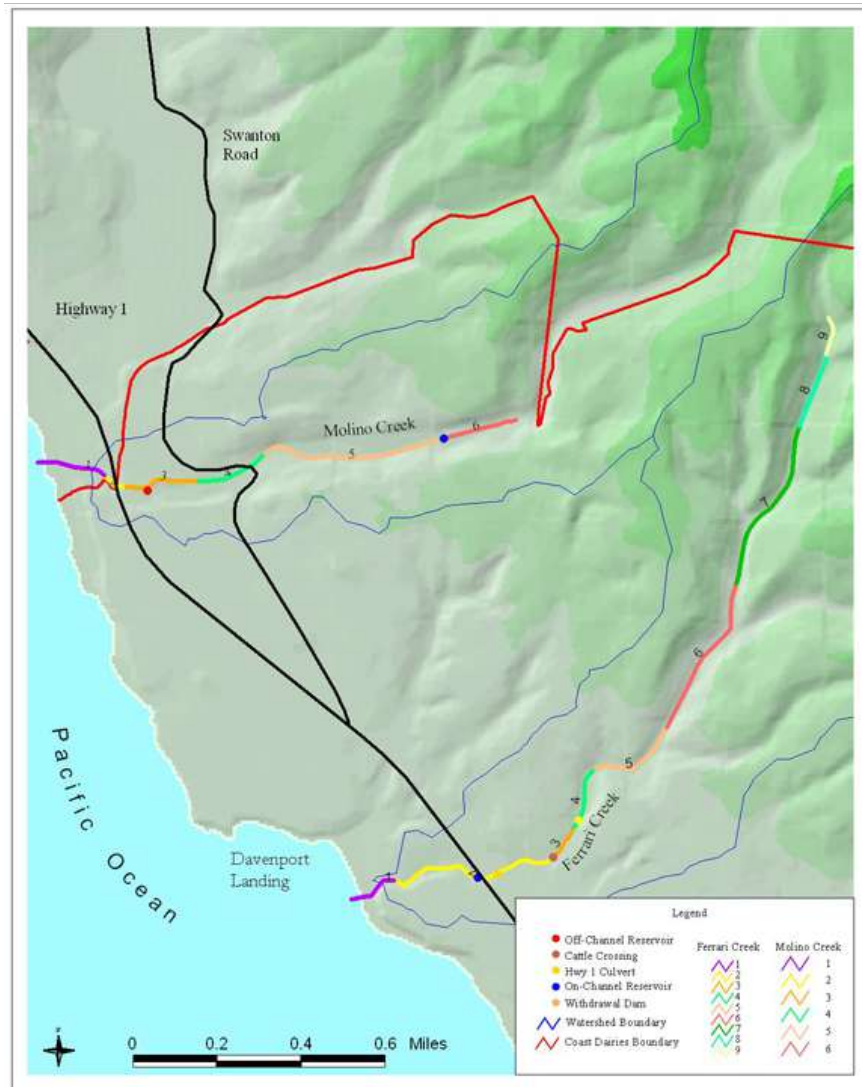


Figure 3. Molino Creek

Molino Creek is the northern-most stream located on the Property (Figure 3). Based on visual inspection, the outlet of the concrete box culvert under Highway 1 (Reach 2) does not appear to present a migration barrier, although stream velocities during storm events are expected to be very high. Reach 3 is a natural channel with a good mixture of minor pools, riffles, and runs, providing both spawning and rearing habitat.

Approximately 10 salmonids were observed in this section of the stream. An off channel reservoir is located near the southern bank of Reach 3. The inlet to the reservoir (start of Reach 4) consists of an unscreened 12-inch culvert. Bank undercut has resulted in localized failures in Reach 4. Reach 5 extends up to the foot of an on-channel reservoir, which is currently not being operated due to partial dam failure during the 1999-2000 winter. Even in its current flow-through condition, the reservoir presents a formidable migration barrier since the outlet culvert is located 6 to 7 feet above the downstream channel. Below the reservoir, the reach consists primarily of small riffles with some shallow pools.

Although the channel flowing through the currently non-storing reservoir is incorporated into Reach 6, the portion upstream of the reservoir becomes increasingly narrow with dense riparian vegetation of willows and alders. The predominant substrate size class in this reach is cobbles, which provide sub-optimal spawning habitat. The region upstream of Reach 6 was not surveyed due to its inaccessibility.

Although the stream length and watershed size of Molino Creek are relatively small compared to other coastal streams in the region (e.g., Scotts Creek, San Vicente Creek), the stream does provide limited habitat for anadromous salmonids and appears to contain no impassable barriers downstream of potential spawning and rearing sites (Reaches 3 through 5). The primary limiting factor on Molino Creek may be natural – the small watershed area does not appear to produce sufficient storm run-off to maintain optimal water depths throughout the spring, even with the upstream on-channel reservoir being operated as a flow-through system. Below average rainfall during the 2000-2001 wet season, combined with diversions to the off-channel reservoir may have contributed to the low water levels observed in May, 2001 but are not likely to be solely responsible for these conditions.

About 84 percent of the 1.5 square mile watershed is underlain by the Santa Cruz Mudstone formation. The Santa Margarita Sandstone underlies about 7 percent of the watershed. The outcrop of the Santa Margarita Sandstone lies along the upper 5,000 feet of Molino Creek. However, there is a ribbon of quartz diorite rock along the stream channel that is about 2,000 feet long and within the sandstone outcrop. The Santa Margarita Sandstone is very erosive if disturbed. Exposures of the sandstone in the creek have the potential to provide sediment directly to the creek. The highest point in the watershed is 1,690 feet. Eighty-five percent of the watershed lies below 1,030 feet in elevation.

SAN VICENTE CREEK

San Vicente Creek flows through the town of Davenport on its way to the ocean (Figure 4). Reach 1 consists of the mouth of the creek flowing across the beach. Reach 2 includes the railroad crossing (an artificial bore through bedrock), the Highway 1 crossing (a box culvert) and the short, open stretch between the two. Reach 3 is relatively wide and consists primarily of riffles with a few pools approximately 2 to 3 feet deep. Slack water habitat for young-of-the-year salmonids is abundant and between 500 and 700 recently emerged steelhead were observed. Yearlings-and-older salmonids were also observed in some pools.

An offchannel reservoir located in Reach 3 contained about 500 young-of-the-year steelhead and has been identified by previous researchers as excellent rearing habitat. However, while small fish can easily enter this pond, escapement of smolts is not as certain. Therefore, officials with the National Marine Fisheries Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have made several attempts to remove vegetation and reconstruct the inlet and outlet to allow passage for all salmonid life stages since 2001.



Figure 4. San Vicente Creek

Reach 4 has similar channel dimensions, habitat diversity, and substrate composition as Reach 3, although riparian shading in this section amounts to only about 50 percent. Young-of-the-year and yearlings were observed throughout. The reach offers good salmonid habitat, including several deep pools installed during a restoration project in 1999 where a large adult steelhead was observed in a pool under a bridge in the upstream portion of the reach. Several smolts were seen in the same location in the spring of 2001.

Reach 5 continues with similar channel dimensions as the previous two reaches, but the vegetation quickly transitions from a deciduous riparian zone to mixed evergreens, primarily redwoods. Riffles and runs dominate the reach, with significant pools being fairly sparse (again, most significant pools are associated with CDFW restoration structures). Isolated bank failures have occurred adjacent to the access road running alongside the channel. The average width of Reach 6 is somewhat narrower than previous reaches, but substrate and embeddedness (50-60 percent) characteristics are similar. The reach also contains further bank failures associated with the access road.

Eighty-five percent of the watershed has an elevation of less than 1,960 feet. About 64 percent of the watershed is in the 0-10 percent slope class. Only about 5 percent of the watershed has slopes in excess of 20 percent.

Approximately 61 percent of the watershed is underlain by quartzdiorite, an igneous rock that is similar in chemical composition and appearance to granite. Only about 10 percent of the watershed is underlain by the Santa Cruz Mudstone. Therefore, most of the rocks transported by San Vicente Creek will have a density of close to that of the igneous rock. Consequently, eggs laid by salmonids will be less likely be washed away by flood events compared to eggs laid in a stream dominated by mudstone. In general, a watershed dominated by igneous or metamorphic rocks supplies bed material to its streams that are more suitable for salmonids than a watershed dominated by finer grained sedimentary rocks. About 23 percent of the watershed is covered by the Santa Margarita sandstone. However, most of the sandstone is located in the upper watershed on slopes of less than 10 percent. The lower relief (shallower slopes) of the Santa Margarita sandstone helps minimize its susceptibility to erosion within this watershed. Active slide complexes cover both sides of upper San Vicente canyon, demonstrating the unstable nature of the geologic material exposed in this area. With this said, there is an existing road that parallels the creek and cuts across these slides allowing access and the ability to observe the dynamic nature of this portion of the watershed.

LIDDELL CREEK

Liddell Creek is located south of Davenport and enters the ocean via Bonny Doon Beach and consists of three distinct forks, the main, east, and west branches (Figure 5). The branches are discussed separately below.

Main (Middle) Branch

Reach 1 forms the mouth of the creek across Bonny Doon Beach. Reach 2 consists of a bedrock bore (reinforced with concrete) passing under both Highway 1 and the railroad tracks. The outfall of the tunnel contains two concrete barriers partially closing the opening, presumably to prevent sand build-up inside the bore. This crossing appears to be marginally passable to migrating salmonids during certain hydrologic conditions.

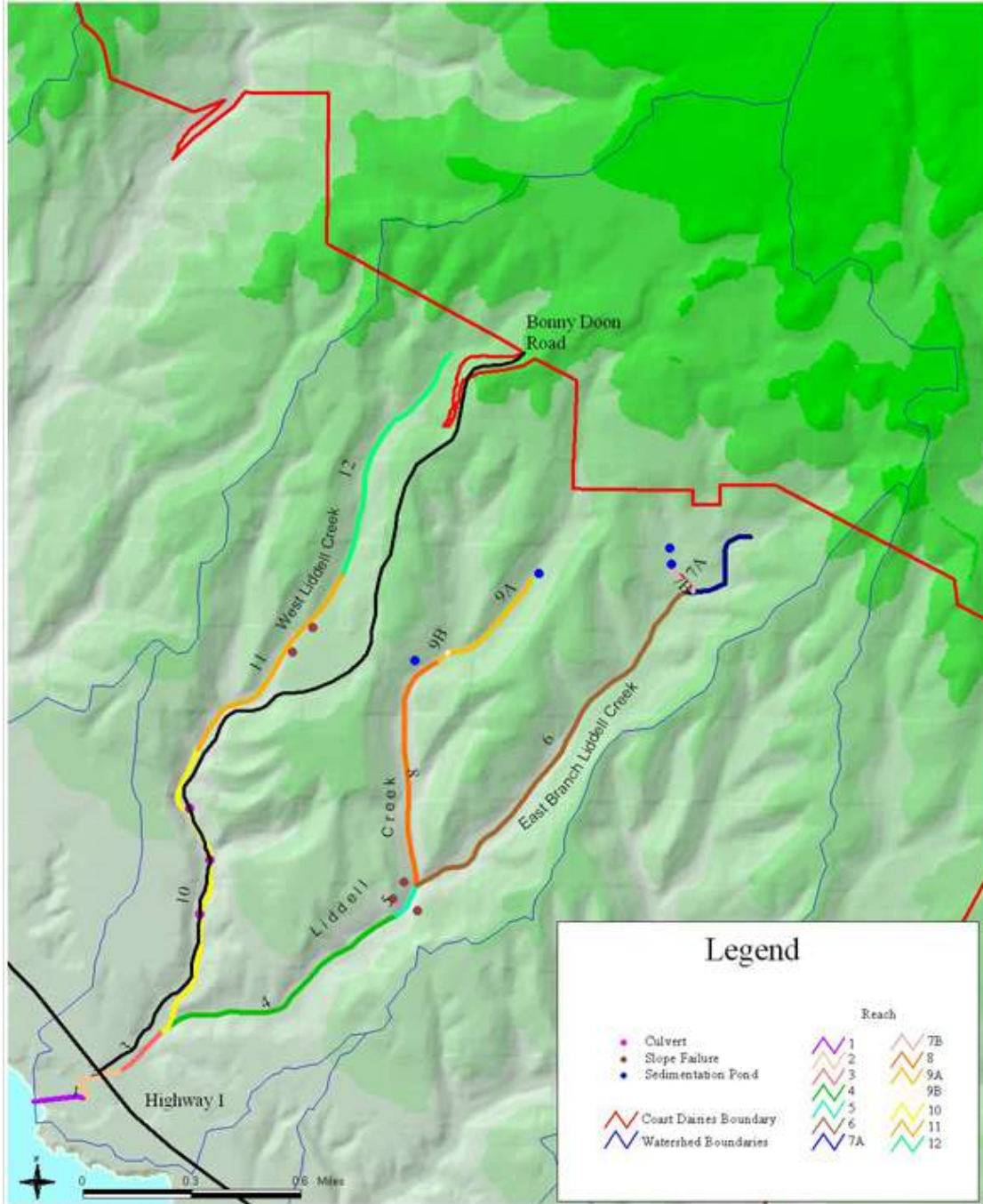


Figure 5. Liddell Creek

Reaches 3 and 4 are fairly wide and contain some minor pools. Sedimentation and minor bank failures are evident throughout the two reaches, which also contained about 50 yearling salmonids. Reach 5 also contained some yearlings and one young-of-the-year. Sedimentation is more pronounced in this reach. Road and bank failures are partially responsible for the relatively high levels of fine sediments, but the fact that the levels of sedimentation and embeddedness continue to increase throughout the upstream reaches suggest that quarry operations located in the headwaters are at least partially responsible for this condition.

Reach 8 (Reaches 6 and 7 are located on the East Branch discussed below) becomes increasingly narrow and shallow, but several yearling salmonids were observed here as well. Reach 9A forms the outfalls of two quarry-related sedimentation ponds. The outlet of one pond via a 3-foot concrete culvert contained very little suspended solids (i.e., silt), but the water exiting the other culvert from a pond spillway carried large amounts of sediments. Embeddedness here is almost 100 percent and both the water and substrate contain a deep orange “ferric” color – suggestive of groundwater contribution to the drainage. Reach 9B is assumed to be the natural course of the creek but contained too little water for detailed characterization. However, evidence of sedimentation and embeddedness in this reach are considerably lower than those observed in Reach 9A.

East Branch

Reach 6 forms the confluence of the East Branch and the Main Branch. Again, this reach contains large amounts of fine sediments and an average embeddedness of 85 percent. Only a few yearling salmonids were observed in the lower portion of this reach. Access to the upstream portion of this reach may be impossible due to the presence of a logjam waterfall. Reach 7A appears to be the natural upstream continuation of this branch. Reach 7B forms the outfall channel connecting two quarry-related sedimentation ponds to the channel. The ECR reports sediments have been drained out of the pond and into the creek, entirely covering the channel bed of Reach 7B. A sediment flow observed in Reach 7A also originated from the sedimentation ponds, as a result of the ponds overflowing.

West Branch

Reach 10 forms the confluence of the West Branch with the Main Branch. This reach contains far less fine sediments than any reach located on the Main and East branches. The substrate consists primarily of gravel and cobble and provides adequate spawning habitat. Several yearling salmonids were observed in this section. The reach passes under Bonny Doon Road via culverts in three separate locations. While Reach 10 is a gently sloped, low gradient reach, the West Branch of Liddell Creek becomes increasingly steep in Reach 11. This section contains many cascades and plunge pools. Two notable slope failures in this reach contribute to the high levels of sedimentation in this area. Some small salmonids were observed in the reach, but a 7-foot logjam with only a shallow plunge pool appears to present an impassable barrier to fish.

Reach 12 is similar to Reach 11. However, while the lower portion of the reach has an average embeddedness of about 60 percent, the upper portion contains abundant sediments and 100 percent embeddedness immediately downstream of the conveyor belt crossing. Access roads associated with the quarry operations in this area are very loose and drainage ditches are directed toward the channel. This results in a high degree of sediment input to the channel during storm events.

As discussed above, all three branches of Liddell Creek are exposed to increased sedimentation, which appears to be the primary limiting factor in this watershed, although the dense canopy cover has also been shown to limit the quality of spawning habitat for salmonids. Another significant limiting factor appears to be the City of Santa Cruz water rights for Liddell Springs #1 and #2. For a general description of run-of-the-stream conditions, see Section 3.3 of the ECR (TPL 2004). The highest point in the Liddell Creek watershed has an elevation of about 1,300 feet. Eight-five percent of the watershed has an elevation less than 660 feet. About 48

percent of the watershed is in the 0-10 percent slope class. Slightly more than 18 percent of the watershed has slopes greater than 20 percent.

The Santa Cruz Mudstone formation underlies about 58 percent of the watershed, and quartz diorite about 16 percent. The bed material in West Liddell Creek can therefore be expected to be a mixture of igneous rocks derived from the quartz diorite, and less dense sedimentary rocks derived from the Santa Cruz Mudstone.

The Santa Margarita Sandstone formation covers about 14 percent of the watershed. Most of the sandstone is on the top of the ridge and is in the 0-10 percent slope class. However, a ribbon of sandstone crosses West Liddell Creek in the vicinity of the conveyor belt. An exposed bed of sandstone follows the creek for about 1,600 feet and joins the bed that crosses the creek at or about the conveyor assembly (scheduled for removal). The Santa Margarita Sandstone is highly erosive if disturbed, and breaks down quickly into sand. The exposure of sandstone along the creek can be expected to contribute some sand to the stream. However, most of the Santa Margarita is away from the stream on the ridges and has a low slope so these units may not contribute much sand directly to the creek.

Fire Management

The ECR (Section 3.1.6.6) provides a detailed account of fire history and ecology in the Santa Cruz Mountains based on studies that indicate numerous fires occurred in the Native American era, and the Spanish and Mexican-American era.

For example, wildfires were frequent on coastal terraces as the Native Americans regularly burned off the grasslands in the fall to encourage new growth. This practice carried into the Spanish period and led to an order in 1815 to prevent burning because of the danger it posed to nearby settlements. The tradition of setting fires on the North Coast passed to the loggers when they entered the mountains in the 1850s. The increasing number of loggers in the woods combined with periodic dry years meant more fires. A huge fire in August of 1873 began beside a small mill on Scotts Creek and then roared northeast, eventually reaching Boulder Creek on the other side of Ben Lomond Mountain. As fire suppression increased, fire frequency dropped but intensity seemed to rise. Five twentieth century wildfires left scars not only in the North Coast watersheds, but also on the memories of those who lived through them. Detailed information of these accounts is provided in the ECR (TPL 2004).

Based on data reported in the ECR, Santa Cruz County has a low frequency of lightning fires compared to other counties in the state. Research suggests the regions redwood forests evolved in an environment characterized by infrequent but intense (hot, crowning) fires. The mean fire interval (MFI) under natural conditions would be 100 to 150 years, but human influence has decreased the MFI to 25-50 years. Like much of California, modern fire suppression has resulted in abnormal conditions, with periodic fire denied its regenerative role in forest ecology. The resulting vegetation changes on the Coast Dairies Property include increased fuel loading, greater tree density, and tree invasion of shrub (chaparral) areas.

Recreation Resources

The Property is complex and exemplifies the dramatic natural beauty of Santa Cruz County's North Coast. The Property's scenery and resources have elicited a sense of connection to the land for many generations of residents and visitors.

Access Routes

There are a few county-maintained roads crossing the Property, including Bonny Doon Road and Swanton Road. The only other existing routes are either farm roads or paths used by agricultural and grazing leaseholders, and maintenance roads used by the Santa Cruz Water Company. It is evident that these entities currently use and maintain these access routes, as some unimproved paths would otherwise be indistinguishable, especially to the outside visitor. The ECR includes an overview of the road network at Coast Dairies (ECR, Section 4.2.8.2 and Figure 4.2-4).

Independent of other considerations, areas with the highest potential to establish site-specific recreation staging areas are situated near multiple-access routes and potential parking spaces. Such recreation staging areas could be envisioned as developed trailheads with signage, scenic interpretive areas, or visitor centers with parking.

Access Points

Throughout the inland areas of the Coast Dairies Property, miscellaneous recreation uses are informally authorized. For example, San Vicente Trail and Warnella Road are two major trailheads used by the community and visitors to the Coast Dairies Property.

However, there are very few available access points for vehicles to park or pull out for temporary stops within the Coast Dairies existing route and trail network. In most cases, those parking options are available in unimproved dirt areas off Highway 1 or graded dirt/gravel buffer spaces between Highway 1 and the coast. These access points include areas where it is relatively safe or convenient for cars to stop and pull over, but most are not established parking spaces. The ECR includes a discussion of paved parking lots, unpaved parking areas, unimproved parking areas, and miscellaneous access points on the Coast Dairies Property (ECR, Section 5.4.4.2).

To date, the Coast Dairies Property, particularly the inland zones, has few direct access routes off Highway 1. Bonny Doon, Swanton, and Laguna Roads are among the more discernible access routes off Highway 1 inland. Several graded dirt roads provide moderate access within the watersheds on the inland property and have potential to become more developed trails or paths. Generally, access crossing the watersheds is limited to unimproved paths, such as cow paths across grasslands and the winding, graded dirt roads found in the Molino watershed zones. These unimproved paths could be connected within zones to create trail systems and inter-watershed loops, but would most likely be rerouted in keeping with sustainable grades and to avoid sensitive habitats.

In terms of access points, there are very few parking options available for vehicles coming from either the north or south on Highway 1. Existing (already heavily used) paved parking areas can be found in places, such as outside restaurants and shops in the town of Davenport. Graded parking areas as well as unimproved parking areas off Highway 1 have the potential to become longer-term parking lots and/or shorter-term scenic pullouts. Currently, cars park where it is relatively safe or convenient to stop, regardless of whether or not the area has been established for parking.

Lands & Realty

Historically, the Coast Dairies Property hosted a variety of uses, including agriculture, livestock grazing, and mining. Aging infrastructure that remains on the Property from these activities include roads, water diversion systems, electrical utilities, and powerlines. The Property is also traversed by three major transportation corridors connecting people and goods: north to south along CA Highway 1, and east to west on Warnella Road and Bonny Doon Road.

Land tenure encompasses private inholdings, leases and easements of the Coast Dairies Property. The ECR (Section 5.5.6.) discusses the inholdings of private landowners other than Coast Dairies adjacent to or surrounded by the Coast Dairies Property. In April 2014, BLM accepted the 5,843-acre Property subject to 65 terms and provisions, leases, or easements that are documented in the U.S. Policy of Title Insurance, Policy Number: USP-AO4008-08001007, Schedule B.

Livestock Grazing

There are currently 3 service contracts for livestock grazing (cow/calf pairs) that include approximately 1,200 acres within the Coast Dairies Properties. The terms of the three contracts are June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014. The 3 service contracts include:

Lessee	Pasture Acres	Pasture Name	# of Pair
Ramirez/Wrankle	190	Marina	
	80	Delones	
Total	270		50
Pastorino	150	Borego	
	500	Big Ranch (Lower Newtown)	
	100	Upper Newtown	
Total	750		300
Williams	180	Yellow Bank Creek	30

The Conservation Grazing Plan prepared by David Amme (1999), entitled *Range Survey and Conservation Grazing Program for Coast Dairies & Land Co.*, outlines a multi-year model program where controlled livestock grazing could be used to protect the grasslands and oak woodland habitat, increase habitat biodiversity, control exotic annuals and invasive weeds and protect wetland riparian values. The plan calls for implementation of adequate infrastructure to allow livestock to rotate between pastures, rather than free grazing, to allow native perennial grasses and herbaceous plants to recover vigor and establish seedlings.

Cultural Resources and Native American Values

The Hollister Proposed RMP and Final EIS identify significant cultural values present on the Coast Dairies Property, including prehistoric and historic archeological sites and structures. The preferred alternative [ACEC-C1] recommends: "If acquired, designate Coast Dairies lands managed by BLM as an ACEC to protect historic and cultural resources on the property and preserve critical habitat for special status species" (USDI-BLM 2006:2-20).

Several prehistoric and historic archeological sites have been documented on the Property and the adjacent lands indicating a long-term human presence that has shaped the current conditions. The “Coast Dairies” name recalls the historic activities which occurred throughout the property when it was owned by a consortium of Swiss families during the late 19th and early 20th centuries that managed the property in absentia. The landscape of Coast Dairies has been shaped by past ranching and dairying operations as well as logging, farming, mining, and even homesteading (USDI-BLM 2006:2-20).

The Native American community is aware of the numerous cultural resources along the Santa Cruz North Coast. Coast Dairies lands are squarely within the ethnographic boundaries of the California Indian tribe referred to as the Costanoans or Ohlone. Both of these names are generally thought to be incorrect, as “Costanoan” is a term derived from the Spanish word “costaño,” used to describe the indigenous coastal inhabitants that Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino and others used during the early European settlement and exploration of California (American Journeys 2003). The word “Ohlone” became popularized by Anthropologists in the 1970s as an alternative to “Costanoan” but was later revealed that ‘Ohlone’ is a linguistic-cultural subgroup of the larger Utian language family, of which the Costanoan/Ohlone peoples share a common language base (Golla 2011:162-163). The modern-day Amah Mutsun Tribal Band primarily represents the Native American interests along the North Coast of Santa Cruz, but there are other organizations like the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council that maintain an interest in the region. The Amah Mutsun has established several partnerships in the local area, including working with California State Parks at the Quiroste Cultural Preserve just north of the Property (Cuthrell et al 2009).

A thorough synopsis of the human history and cultural resources of the Coast Dairies lands was completed in 2004 (TPL 2004); the “Land Use History” section is available on-line courtesy of Santa Cruz Public Libraries (<http://www.santacruzpl.org/history/articles/381/>). The Property contains a wide range of cultural resources that represent the long span of occupation and land use that began pre-European contact and has continued into the present. Of the approximately 7,000 acres of the entire Coast Dairies lands, only about 5 percent has been surveyed for archeological resources. Twenty-four archeological sites have been recorded within and along the periphery of the Coast Dairies Property boundaries. Of those, only three sites on the Property have been the focus of limited archeological investigation by the BLM: CA-SCr-17, CA-SCr-36, and CA-SCr-365/H. These research efforts were completed in 2006 and 2008 and focused on survey (inventory) and documentation of archeological sites in an attempt to characterize the state of previously recorded cultural resources and discover new ones. There has also been a cultural resource site monitoring effort included as part the BLM investigations, specifically at the Molino Creek Dairy site and the Cheese Barn structure (in addition to CA-SCr-17, CA-SCr-36, and CA-SCr365/H).

Site CA-SCR-117, which is located adjacent to the Property, has been the subject of a number of surveys, trenching, and test excavation projects. Also known as the “Davenport Landing Site,” it is the only archeological site where extensive professional excavation has taken place. Radiocarbon dating placed the site’s occupation between ca. A.D. 1680 and A.D. 1505 (TPL 2004:III-61).

The Coast Dairies Property was most extensively used during the late 19th and early 20th centuries for livestock production and dairy operations. Dairy operations were by necessity complex. In addition to large dairy barns, the operation usually included residences, bunkhouses, milk sheds, equipment storage sheds, and corrals and pens. The dairy ranches also supported large haying operations, incorporating hundreds of acres of nearby fields into the

ranch. It is safe to assume that buried deposits such as privies, trash dumps, cellar remains, and the like are present in the area of the former dairy operations. The Molino Creek Dairy site (also known as the Cuclis Dairy) is marked by a large storage cellar ruin presumably used to store and age cheese. The dairy was operated until the beginning of World War II by the Cuclis family; Jack Cuclis was a Greek émigré from Crete, who had first worked in the quarries at the cement plant and probably dates to the 1880s (TPL 2004:III-62).

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”, states that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

Therefore, BLM has incorporated these guidelines into the environmental review process to ensure that minority and low-income populations do not experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of BLM’s proposed interim management plan for the Coast Dairies Property.

Social and Economic Considerations

According to the California Department of Transportation Santa Cruz County Economic Forecast (2013), the County has a population of 267,600 people and almost 100,000 wage and salary jobs. The county seat is located in the city of Santa Cruz. The city itself has a population of 60,342 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Approximately 50 percent of the county’s population lives in its unincorporated areas.

The California Department of Transportation’s (DOT) produces Economic Forecasts by County for the entire state. According to the DOT’s forecast, mild weather, natural beauty, a major university, and proximity to the Silicon Valley are elements that contribute to economic activity and the quality of life in Santa Cruz County. With its spectacular coastline, and accessible beaches and mountains, the county is a popular vacation and recreation area.

The DOT forecast also indicates the County is largely dependent upon tourism and recreation. Employment projections have education and healthcare, retail trade, leisure and hospitalities, and government industries dominating growth over the next 5 years. These sectors, combined, are expected to account for 61 percent of the total growth in employment.

The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) and Save-the-Redwoods League (SRL), both non-profit organizations, acquired the Property and prepared the Coast Dairies Management Plan to recommend a management strategy for BLM to preserve the natural resources and open space values on the Property once transferred into public ownership.

The TPL Plan includes social and economic data for Santa Cruz County and the community of Davenport, which is adjacent to the Property. The TPL Plan reflects the DOT forecast for Santa Cruz County, with special emphasis on the natural resource values that contribute to the local economy in Davenport. In particular, the TPL Plan suggests that Santa Cruz County’s 29 miles of coastline, beach access, 47,087 acres of state-owned parks and parkland, and 850 acres of county-owned parkland make it uniquely equipped to meet consumer recreation needs and preferences.

In addition, the TPL Plan offers the following information. “The community of Davenport (Davenport) includes the town of Davenport, New Town, Davenport Landing, and Swanton Road. According to the most recent U.S. Census (2010), the population is approximately 400 residents. The original inhabitants of Davenport were employees at the cement plant who had relatively lower income levels (TPL 2004). Over time, the coastal appeal of the Davenport area has attracted inhabitants who commute to high-paying job centers such as Silicon Valley.

Many small businesses within the community are owned and operated by Davenport residents. Davenport also has a strong local artisan industry. The primary customers for these businesses are locals, tourists, and workers coming to the Davenport area from other parts of Santa Cruz County. However, further commercial development in this community is constrained because most of the usable land within the Davenport community has already been developed.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

ALTERNATIVE 1: Preferred Alternative

Biological Resources

Public access to the Property creates potential for direct and indirect adverse effects on biological resources described in the ECR (TPL 2004) and the affected environment section of this EA. Similarly, livestock grazing has potential direct and indirect impacts on habitats for fish, wildlife, and special status species on the Property.

Therefore, the proposed interim management plan emphasizes protection of special status species; and BLM will cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement projects that protect habitat for sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. As a result, the interim management plan would provide direct short-term and long-term beneficial effects on fish and wildlife, special status species, and their associated habitats on the Property.

The specific management actions included in the preferred alternative would also provide indirect benefits to biological resources by minimizing or avoiding the potential adverse effects to special status species and their associated habitats from unmitigated recreational use off of designated trails. The preferred alternative’s proposed restrictions on parking, littering, camping, firearms, fireworks, and other explosive devices would also provide major short-term benefits to fish and wildlife populations on the Property, including special status species and their associated habitats identified in the ECR (TPL 2004) and the affected environment section of this EA.

Water Resources

The underlying geology of an area plays a fundamental role in determining its sensitivity to disturbance. The soils and slope of an area are also of fundamental importance in determining sensitivity to disturbance. Among the streams analyzed in this EA, Molino Creek has the highest erosion hazard potential, Liddell #1 and Liddell #2 have a moderate erosion hazard potential, and San Vicente #1 and San Vicente #2 have a low erosion hazard potential.

Public access to the Property creates potential for direct and indirect adverse effects on water resources described in the ECR (TPL 2004) and the affected environment section of this EA. Therefore, the preferred alternative requires public to use designated parking areas, and limits use on the Property to foot-traffic for day use only. The specific management actions included in the preferred alternative would also provide indirect benefits to water resources by avoiding the potential adverse effects of unmitigated recreational use off of designated trails. As a result, the preferred alternative would provide more indirect short-term and long-term beneficial effects on Coast Dairies water resources than alternative 3, but less than alternative 2.

Fire Management

Public access to the Property increases the potential for wildfire on the Property to negatively impact local communities and sensitive receptors in the region. However, the preferred alternative provides indirect, short-term benefits to local communities and sensitive receptors in the region because the specific management actions are designed to ensure public safety and minimize potential risks of wildfire. For example, the preferred alternative would mitigate potential negative impacts of fire by prohibiting campfires and other open flames, as well as other activities that could lead to unintended ignitions, such as use and discharge of firearms, fireworks, and other explosive devices.

Additional management actions necessary to mitigate the risk of wildfire from public uses on the Property include coordination with local law enforcement and California State Parks to patrol the Property and continuing cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies, like CALFIRE, for emergency response or search and rescue operations.

Recreation Resources

There has never been legal public access to the Property. Therefore, the preferred alternative would have minor, direct beneficial impacts on recreation resources in Santa Cruz County because it provides two new recreational hiking trails open for day use to the general public.

Of course, BLM has limited staff to patrol public lands and uncontrolled vehicle parking and/or foot-traffic off of designated trails could have minor, short term negative impacts on natural and cultural resources in the immediate vicinity of trails and trailheads. Therefore, public use of designated parking areas and hiking trails would not be allowed until a site specific proposal (and funds) are available for the development of infrastructure and other actions necessary to support day-use for pedestrian access on the Molino Bank Trail and Liddell Creek Trail. Upon acquisition of funds to develop recreation facilities, BLM shall prepare a site-specific environmental review with additional opportunities for public involvement pursuant to the NEPA.

Lands & Realty

The preferred alternative would have no effects on existing leases or easements because it would honor valid existing rights and other certain uses of the Property. On the other hand, public access to the Property increases the potential for negative impacts on adjacent landowners and existing rights-holders due to increased potential for vandalism, trespass, or other illegal activities on the Property and nearby private lands. Therefore, the proposed interim management plan includes restrictions on visitor use to mitigate these impacts. For example, proposed restrictions on parking, littering, camping, firearms, fireworks, and other explosive devices would provide indirect benefits to adjacent landowners and existing rights-holders because they would minimize potential risks of vandalism, trespass, or other illegal activities on

the Property and nearby private lands until a long-term management strategy for resource protection is complete.

Additional management actions necessary to mitigate the impacts of public uses on the Property include coordination with local law enforcement and California State Parks to patrol the Property and continuing cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies, like CALFIRE, for emergency response or search and rescue operations.

Livestock Grazing

The preferred alternative would provide minor, short-term direct benefits to grazing operators on the Property because it would allow existing economic uses to continue. Similarly, the terms and conditions of the grazing service contracts would have minor, long-term beneficial impacts on rangeland resources.

Cultural Resources and Native American Values

Under the preferred alternative, the emphases of interim management would be the protection of threatened and endangered species while providing for other uses consistent with the ability of the BLM to ensure public health and safety and afford protection to resources. Emphasis is also given to the continuation of existing economic uses of the Property including grazing consistent with legal and regulatory requirements.

The proposed management actions for the protection of special status species should not have a negative effect on cultural resources because BLM's support of the efforts to protect spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead and coho salmon in Coast Dairies streams in cooperation US Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Service at present does not impact known cultural resources. Likewise, BLM's support of the efforts to protect California red-legged frog breeding habitat, as well as habitat for other sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at present does not impact known cultural resources.

The proposed continuation of existing grazing operations is likely to have negative effects to cultural resources. Currently, the practice of allowing livestock to use unfenced creeks as an available water source continues (Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District 2012). Moreover, livestock management practices are impacting both prehistoric and historic cultural resources in areas where the archeological sites and historic structures are not properly protected. For example at the historic Cuclis (Molino) Dairy site, located between the current Borego Pasture and the combined Lower New Town-Upper New Town Pasture (refer to Figure 2), there have been direct adverse impacts to the remaining historic features as a result of improper grazing practices (e.g., rotation and numbers of livestock) and/or a lack of physical protection (e.g., fencing).

Additionally, at least two archeological sites appear to have negative impacts as a result of the current grazing practices. Archeological site CA-SCr-365/H is a location with prehistoric attributes (including a bedrock mortar feature) and historic attributes (a homestead site). The Cuclis (Molino) Creek Dairy site is a historic location with most of the original buildings removed, but there retaining walls built with mortar and local shale that was likely associated with a cellar structure at the site (and likely subsurface artifacts or other features at the site). The "homestead" in the Delones Pasture referred to in the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District report may be erroneous; it looks like the site recognized to be a dairy operation

complex located on the old Coast Road, with the primary building being a 'cheese barn' and located within or adjacent to the Lower New Town Pasture (Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District 2012:5). The cheese barn building has been slowly falling into a state of disrepair from benign neglect and may require significant structural repairs in the future to save the building. Molino Creek (proper) and the Cuclis (Molino) Dairy site are not included in either the Borego Pasture or the combined Lower New Town-Upper New Town Pasture (Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District 2012). Nevertheless, the immediate area has been used regularly as a corral or pen for livestock. Continued use under the grazing management plan/agreement between The Trust for Public Lands and the current grazing operators would have direct long-term negative effects on cultural resources on the Property.

The Record of Decision for the Hollister Resource Management Plan directs BLM to protect archeological sites or contemporary ethnographic-use areas with the Best Management Practices (BMPs) available, either through the use of administrative action, on-the-ground measures, or a combination of the two (e.g., temporary closures, permanent fences, and capping) [CULT-C1], or to fence and monitor impacted archeological sites [CULT-C6].

These are possible measures to mitigate the continued negative effects of the current grazing practices on cultural resources. Also, the service contracts/agreements between TPL and the grazing operators should acknowledge the protection of cultural, historical, or archeological resources as part of the grazing covenant to establish a sustainable system of conservation grazing because it would be ironic, at best, if future livestock management has undue or unnecessary negative impacts on the Property's historic landscape.

Environmental Justice

Minority and low-income populations would not experience disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of BLM's proposed interim management plan for the Coast Dairies Property because the proposed acquisition and development of a strategy to maximize recreational access and conservation of natural and cultural resources would have no adverse impacts on economic or social values in Santa Cruz County.

Social and Economic Conditions

BLM's proposed acquisition and development of a strategy to maximize recreational access and conservation of natural and cultural resources for the Coast Dairies Property would have minor beneficial impacts on economic or social values in Santa Cruz County because it would add to the portfolio of open space and conservation lands in the region, but it would not provide any additional recreation opportunities during the interim management stage.

ALTERNATIVE 2:

Biological Resources

The potential impacts of BLM management activities would be the same as Alternative 1. However, under alternative 2, the closure order would provide more indirect, short-term beneficial effects on fish and wildlife, special status species, and their associated habitats on the Property than alternative 1 because it would prevent adverse impacts of visitor use on sensitive biological resources.

Water Resources

The main emphases for management of the Property would be protection of special status species; and other uses and authorization commensurate with BLM's ability to provide services and ensure public health and safety. However, under alternative 2, the closure order would potentially provide more indirect, short-term beneficial effects on water resources than alternative 1 because it would prevent adverse impacts of visitor use on roads and trails.

Fire Management

Alternative 2 would provide more indirect short-term and long-term benefits for fire protection than both other alternatives analyzed in this EA because the proposed closure order would reduce the potential for wildfire on the Property from public visitor use and negative impacts of wildfires on local communities and sensitive receptors in the region.

Recreation Resources

The proposed closure order under alternative 2 would have no effects on recreation resources in Santa Cruz County because there has never been legal public access to the Property. However, the closure order would have minor negative impact on public use and enjoyment of the Property compared to the other alternatives analyzed in this EA because there would be no new recreation opportunities for the general public.

Lands & Realty

The proposed closure order would provide direct benefits to adjacent landowners and existing rights-holders because it would reduce potential for vandalism, trespass, or other illegal activities on the Property and nearby private lands. The proposed closure would also provide indirect benefits to the general public because it would ensure public safety and resource protection until a long-term management strategy is complete. Management actions necessary to implement the closure include coordination with local law enforcement and California State Parks to patrol the Property and continuing cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies. BLM would also work with agencies and non-governmental organizations to monitor and collect data for resource management and land use planning activities to determine appropriate future uses of the Property.

Livestock Grazing

The proposed closure under alternative 2 would have no adverse impacts on livestock grazing because it would allow existing economic uses to continue. The effects of livestock grazing would be the same as alternative 1 and 3.

Cultural Resources and Native American Values

Under alternative 2, the proposed closure would have an indirect beneficial effect on the physical conditions of known archeological sites in that they will be more difficult for people to intentionally or unintentionally collect artifacts or otherwise impact sites, as compared to alternative 1 and 3.

Environmental Justice & Socio-Economic Conditions

Minority and low-income populations would not experience disproportionately high and/or adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of BLM's proposed closure order for the Coast Dairies Property because the closure order applies equally to the general public.

ALTERNATIVE 3:

Biological Resources

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure management of vegetation communities and habitats for fish and wildlife conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (BLM 2007). However, there would be greater potential for direct and/or indirect adverse effects on biological resources under the no action alternative compared to both action alternatives because the Property would be subject to the general land laws.

Water Resources

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure management of water resources conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (BLM 2007). However, there would be greater potential for direct and/or indirect adverse effects on water resources under the no action alternative compared to both action alternatives because the Property would be subject to the general land laws.

Fire Management

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure fire management conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (BLM 2007). However, there would be greater potential for direct and/or indirect adverse impacts on public land resources and private properties from wildfires under the no action alternative compared to both action alternatives, because public use and the associated fire dangers increase the risk to nearby residents, like those in the Davenport and Bonny Doon.

Recreation Resources

Under this alternative, BLM would allow all forms of non-motorized recreation, including firearms, mechanized equipment, and equestrian uses on the Property. Allowing these uses on existing trails identified in the ECR (TPL 2004) could result in direct and indirect negative impacts to public safety and sensitive resources on the Property. Currently, development of infrastructure and other actions necessary to support equestrian use and mechanized use(s) on the Property are not economically feasible because BLM has limited staff and funds available to properly manage these activities on existing routes and trails on the Property.

As a result, there would be greater potential for direct and/or indirect adverse impacts on public land resources and private properties from recreation activities under the no action alternative compared to both action alternatives.

Lands & Realty

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure management of lands and realty conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (USDI-BLM 2007). The potential for direct and/or indirect adverse effects on private landowners and/or existing rights holders is the same under the no action alternative as both action alternatives because the Property would be subject to the general land laws until a long-term resource management plan is complete.

Livestock Grazing

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure management of livestock grazing conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (USDI-BLM 2007). The potential for direct and/or indirect adverse effects on natural and cultural resources under the no action alternative would be similar to both action alternatives because livestock grazing would be managed consistent with legal and regulatory requirements for the protection of cultural resources and special status species.

Cultural Resources and Native American Values

Under this alternative, BLM would ensure management of cultural resources conforms to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (USDI-BLM 2007). However, there would be greater potential for direct and/or indirect adverse effects on cultural resources under the no action alternative compared to both action alternatives because the Property would be subject to the general land laws with existing conditions and practices.

Environmental Justice & Socio-Economic Conditions

Under this alternative, BLM management would conform to Federal statutes and the planning decisions established in the Hollister RMP (USDI-BLM 2007). As a result, the no action alternative would be unlikely to have disproportionate adverse effects on low-income or minority populations.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative effects on natural and cultural resources under the preferred alternative are considered based on the time necessary for BLM to develop a long-term management strategy for the Property. As noted in this EA and the ECR (TPL 2004), there is a well-documented history of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future uses on the Property. Under the range of alternatives analyzed in this EA, there is potential for BLM management activities and land use authorizations to have minor negative cumulative effects on natural and cultural resources. Therefore, regardless of the alternative, BLM would need to monitor resources and use adaptive management as a tool to work in conjunction with operators, visitors, and nearby residents to identify ways to minimize or avoid impacts to public lands resource values. Ultimately, the development of a strategy to maximize recreational access and conservation of natural and cultural resources would have major indirect and long-term beneficial cumulative effects on natural, cultural, and recreational resources in the region.

PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

Coast Dairies & Land Co.
Trust for Public Lands
Save-the-Redwoods League
Sempervirens Fund
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Peninsula Open Space District
California Coastal Commission
Santa Cruz County
Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District
California State Parks
CALFIRE
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US National Marine Fisheries Service

CONSULTATION


Consultation for the potential land acquisition was initiated in 2004 during the development of the Hollister Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated environmental impact statement (EIS). Continued consultation efforts were on-going throughout the Hollister RMP/EIS project planning process and included site visits with representatives from federal and state wildlife agencies, and face-face meetings with tribes.

Upon acquisition, BLM will reinstate government to government consultation, as appropriate, with US Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and with American Indian tribes under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 16 U. S. C. Section 470f).

LIST OF PREPARERS

ID Team Member	Title	Organization
Sky Murphy	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	BLM
Michael Westphal	Wildlife Biologist	BLM
Michael Powers	Natural Resource Specialist	BLM
Ryan O'Dell	Botanist	BLM
Stacey Schmidt	Range Management Specialist	BLM
David Moore	Outdoor Recreation Planner	BLM
Michael Chiodini	Fire Education Specialist	BLM
Christine Sloand	Lands & Realty Specialist	BLM
Gregory Middleton	Geologist	BLM
Erik Zaborsky	Archeologist	BLM
Susan Hubbard	Weed Management Specialist	BLM
George Hill	Associate Field Manager	BLM

DOCUMENT REVIEW



Planning and Environmental Coordinator

6/03/2014
Date

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United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Hollister Field Office
20 Hamilton Court
Hollister, CA 95023
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/hollister>



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA
Coast Dairies Interim Management Plan
DECISION RECORD

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management proposes to approve an interim management plan for the recently acquired the Coast Dairies Property, in Santa Cruz County, California. The BLM's interim management plan is designed to ensure public safety and protect natural and cultural resources while a long-term plan is developed for the Coast Dairies Property (Property). Based on DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA and associated Finding of No Significant Impact, the following constitutes my decision.

Decision

It is my decision to approve the interim management plan and the specific management actions described under Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) in DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-029-EA.

Alternatives Considered but not Selected

BLM analyzed an alternative to issue a closure order that would restrict all public uses on the Property during development of a long-term resource management plan. A no action alternative was also considered to allow all non-motorized recreation activities that conform to the Hollister RMP.

Decision Rationale

Based on information in the EA and consultation with my staff, I have decided to approve the preferred alternative in the EA. The interim management plan and specific management actions on the Coast Dairies Property provide a sustainable management strategy that can be implemented to balance and protect natural, cultural, and social resource attributes for the Property. The preferred alternative best meets the purpose and need identified in the EA because it provides limited recreation opportunities while ensuring public safety until a land use plan to establish long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property is complete.

Consultation and Coordination

Consultation on the Coast Dairies Property was initiated in 2004 during the development of the Hollister Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated environmental impact statement (EIS). Consultation efforts continued throughout the Hollister RMP/EIS project planning process and included site visits with representatives from federal and state wildlife agencies, and with tribes.

The main emphasis of the interim management plan, is to protect threatened and endangered species and their associated habitats. Accordingly, BLM will cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect habitat for sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

BLM will reinitiate government to government consultation, as appropriate, with US Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and with American Indian tribes under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 16 U. S. C. Section 470f) for interim management activities and the development of a long-term management strategy.

Additional requirements for tribal consultation can be found in the Native American Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), Executive Order 13175: “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments”, Executive Order 13007: “Indian Sacred Sites” (1996), and Executive Order 12898 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (1994).

Public Involvement

As described in DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA, public involvement in management of the Coast Dairies Property began in 2001 and continues into 2014. The EA summarizes issues and concerns identified by community members during previous planning efforts for the Coast Dairies Property.

Additionally, BLM announced a 30 day public review and comment period for DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA that was open from May 1 – May 30, 2014. The announcement was posted on the community bulletin board that is located outside the U.S. Post Office in Davenport, CA. BLM’s announcement was also posted on the bulletin board in the Hollister Field Office public room/waiting area and on the BLM website linked here:

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/forms/nepa/search.php?ud=DESC&fo=Hollister>

No public comments were received by the Hollister Field Office. Nonetheless, BLM anticipates the Interim Management Plan will address issues and concerns that were identified during previous planning efforts because it is designed to avoid potential adverse impacts and all future project proposals will be reviewed under appropriate environmental regulations.

Opportunities for additional public involvement in BLM-decision making process for the Property will be announced by the Hollister Field Office as they prepare a long-term management plan for Coast Dairies and an associated amendment to the Resource Management Plan for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California (2007).

Plan Consistency

Based on information in the EA, the project record, and recommendations from BLM specialists, I conclude that this decision is consistent with the Hollister Field Office Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California (2007), the Endangered Species Act; the Native American Religious Freedom Act; other cultural resource management laws and regulations; Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice; and Executive Order 13212 regarding potential adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal

and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, 2800 Cottage Way, Rm E-1712, Sacramento, CA 95825.

Rick Cooper

Rick Cooper
Hollister Field Manager

6/04/2014

Date



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Hollister Field Office
20 Hamilton Court
Hollister, CA 95023
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/hollister>



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA
Coast Dairies Interim Management Plan
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

BACKGROUND

The Coast Dairies Property (Property) is located along California's central coast in northern Santa Cruz County and surrounds the town of Davenport; the community of Bonny Doon is located to the northeast. The 5,843-acre Property is accessed via State Highway 1 and is approximately eight miles north of the city of Santa Cruz, approximately 34 miles south of Half Moon Bay and about 50 miles south of San Francisco.

For years, the California Coastal Conservancy, the County of Santa Cruz, the California State Parks (CSP), and others interested in coastal preservation sought the acquisition of the Coast Dairies Property. As a result, the non-profit organization The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) purchased the Property on October 26, 1998. In August of 1998, CSP and BLM agreed with TPL to be the permanent stewards of the coastal and upland portions of the Property, respectively. BLM, CSP, and TPL signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on August 8, 2000 that outlines the roles, expectations, and obligations of the parties related to interim management and development of a land use plan to establish long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property, subject to certain deed restrictions.

In April 2014, TPL finally transferred the Property to BLM to preserve the lands as open space, with a natural forest reserve, and to maximize the opportunities for recreation and enjoyment in perpetuity. Through public outreach and internal review, BLM has identified several management issues and concerns on the Property associated with past and present uses on the 'working landscape'. Therefore, an interim management plan is needed to ensure public health and safety are adequately protected and that sustainable management strategies can be implemented to balance and protect natural, cultural, and social resource attributes until long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property are established.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the preferred alternative will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Hollister Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (2006); (2) the preferred alternative is in conformance with the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California (2007); and (3) the preferred alternative does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA.

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts from the Coast Dairies acquisition and interim management plan decisions relative to the following ten (10) areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

Potential impacts include protection of natural and cultural resources, including habitats for listed species and archeological sites associated with historic and prehistoric uses on the Property. There is potential for negative impacts to riparian resources and/or cultural resources due to livestock grazing. However, none of these impacts would be significant at the local scale or cumulatively because the interim management plan is designed to provide sustainable management strategies that can be implemented to balance and protect natural, cultural, and social resource attributes for the Property.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.

No aspects of the project have been identified as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health or safety. Actually, the project is designed to ensure public health and safety are adequately protected until long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property are established.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The Coast Dairies Property is marked by a pastoral landscape, formed on broad marine terraces traditionally used for livestock grazing and agriculture. It extends two miles east, stretching from ocean beaches into large stands of redwood and oak trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Coast Dairies Property contains multiple distinct watersheds, biological and cultural resources of statewide importance, and farming and mining activities that support community economic stability. The Property is complex and exemplifies the dramatic natural beauty of Santa Cruz County's North Coast. The Property's scenery and resources have elicited a sense of connection to the land for many generations of residents and visitors. At Coast Dairies, one sees the interface of the natural rugged coastline, coastal marine terraces, pastoral grasslands, densely forested upland and riparian corridors, and the developed uses of coastal agriculture, mining, Highway 1, and the town of Davenport.

Coast Dairies is the centerpiece of a regional network of conservation open space, providing opportunities for regional trail development and other recreational linkages as well as vital biological "corridors" that mitigate the effects of habitat fragmentation. The proximity of coastal mountains has isolated the Santa Cruz County shore and resulted in a high degree of biodiversity. The Property has six perennial watersheds situated partially or entirely within its boundaries. Among them, San Vicente Creek not only supports a self-sustaining population of federally threatened steelhead, but also contains one of the last remnant spawning runs of the endangered coho salmon south of San Francisco Bay.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

No anticipated effects have been identified that are scientifically controversial. As a factor for determining within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4) whether or not to prepare a detailed environmental impact statement, "controversy" is not equated with "the existence of opposition to a use." *Northwest Environmental Defense Center v. Bonneville Power Administration*, 117 F.3d 1520, 1536 (9th Cir. 1997). "The term 'highly controversial' refers to instances in which 'a substantial dispute exists as to the size, nature, or effect of the major federal action rather than the mere existence of opposition to a use.'" *Hells Canyon Preservation Council v. Jacoby*, 9 F.Supp.2d 1216, 1242 (D. Or. 1998).

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The analysis contained in DOI-BLM-CA-0900-2014-29-EA does not show that the preferred alternative would involve any unique or unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

BLM's interim management plan is not precedent setting because it is designed to ensure natural and cultural resources are adequately protected until long-term resource management and protection goals for the Property are established.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

No significant site specific or cumulative impacts have been identified. The project is consistent with the actions and impacts anticipated in the Hollister Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (2006).

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

The Property does not include any sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places or sites known to be eligible.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The primary purpose for the transfer of the Coast Dairies Property into public ownership, and the main emphasis of the interim management plan, is to protect threatened and endangered species and their associated habitats. Accordingly, BLM will cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect habitat for sensitive, rare, threatened, and endangered species, consistent with the results of consultations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

There is no indication that this decision will result in actions that will threaten such a violation.



Rick Cooper
Hollister Field Manager

6/04/2014
Date