



CHAPTER 3 -- THE LAND USE PLAN: RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

3.5 VISUAL RESOURCES, SPECIAL COMMUNITIES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

[Policies](#)

Coastal Act Requirements

Protection of visual resources is a specific mandate of the Coastal Act:

30251. The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas to minimize alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

30253(5). New development shall, where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods which, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.

30244. Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

Definitions

Special Communities and Neighborhoods. The LCP Manual (not mandated by Coastal Act) defines these to include the following:

- areas characterized by a particular cultural, historical, or architectural heritage that is distinctive in the coastal zone;
- areas presently recognized as important visitor destination points on the coastline;
- areas with limited automobile traffic that provide opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle access for visitors to the coast;
- areas that add to the visual attractiveness of the coast.



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



Highly Scenic Areas to include:

- those identified on the Land Use Maps as they are adopted.
- other scenic areas and historical districts as designated by county.
- landscape preservation projects designated by the State Department of Parks and Recreation in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan of 1971 as amended.

Visual Resources, Special Communities, and Archaeological Resources Issues

Mendocino's coast includes beaches, dunes, high bluffs, seawalls, jutting headlands, wetlands, heavily wooded gulches, grassy upland terraces, pygmy forests, serene river estuaries and rocky streams. Several 19th century villages, each with a distinct character, complement the natural landscape. The beauty and accessibility of the Mendocino coast have made it a heavily used tourist and recreational area. The Mendocino coast attracts people to sightsee. Scenic resources are the basis of the coast's tourist and retirement economies as well as a source of continuing pleasure for residents.

However, the coast's visual qualities are vulnerable to degradation through improper location and scale of buildings, blockage of coastal views, alteration of natural landforms and by poor design or placement of roadside signs and utility lines.

In rural areas, outside the coastal villages, the most critical concerns are preservation of coastal views and assuring the compatibility of new development with the natural landscape. The primary views to be considered are those seen from public areas.

Specific policies in this section apply to three types of areas of particular visual importance:

Highly Scenic Areas: Highly scenic areas as described in Section 30251 of the Act.

Special Communities: The Town of Mendocino is the only recognized special community in the Local Coastal Plan.

Special Treatment Areas: Other sites of visual importance include Special Treatment Areas shown on the Land Use Plan. Timber harvesting regulations within STA's are intended to minimize changes in appearance (see definition, Section 3.1). The special Treatment Area running parallel to Highway One from the Ten Mile River to the Sonoma County line is not shown on the land use maps.

Coastal archaeological sites and areas subject to archaeological surveys have been mapped by the California Archaeological Sites Survey, and the data is kept in the Cultural Resources Facility, Sonoma State University. These records, the most complete available, show 79 archaeological sites, distributed mainly along creek and river mouths and near present



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settlements, particularly between Cleone and Mendocino. The maps also delineate 26 archaeological survey areas ranging from 0.1 to 1,400 acres, only some of which include archaeological sites. To protect sites, the maps are confidential; however, land owners are entitled to know whether sites are located on their property. At present, residential development, public access, and timber harvesting appear to be the principal sources of destruction of archaeological sites.