



## **CHAPTER 4 -- THE LAND USE PLAN: DESCRIPTIONS AND POLICIES FOR THIRTEEN PLANNING AREAS**

### **SOUTH COAST CAC PLANNING AREA**

#### **4.12 IVERSEN ROAD TO SONOMA COUNTY LINE PLANNING AREA (Anchor Bay-Gualala)**

The "banana belt" section of the Mendocino Coast is distinguished by dense forests of small coniferous and broadleaf trees, extending to the cliffs at many points. Although much of the wooded shoreline is developed, the forest dominates the scene, often blocking ocean views and hiding all evidence of development except for an occasional gate or mailbox. The coastal zone boundary, following the ridge along Ten Mile Cutoff Road, is 1.4 to 3 miles inland.

Potential highway capacity is one constraint on development in the planning area. The potential for improving the highway varies significantly within the planning area. The sharp turn at Fish Rock Gulch and the nearby 9-foot lanes cannot be improved much and thus will continue to limit improvements. At other points, the roadbed can be widened to permit 12-foot lanes with a 4-foot shoulder on each side; south of Anchor Bay the full 32-foot section including 12-foot vehicle lanes and 4 foot bicycle lanes, can be built. With additional improvements such as protected left turn lanes, the volume of traffic currently passing through Gualala could be more than doubled.

The primary difficulty in assessing highway capacity is determining how much traffic will be generated by development north of the planning area and how many locally generated trips will use Highway 1 in Sonoma County. Projected growth in accord with the Sonoma County LCP could absorb available highway capacity at Jenner. Some local trips, particularly those originating on Pacific Woods Road and Old Stage Road (Brushy Opening Road) will use only very short segments of Highway 1. Some residents will use Old Stage Road and Fish Rock Road to reach Highway 101 during weekend peak hours if Highway 1 is severely congested. A high proportion of permanent residents amongst visitors will reduce travel on the highway during the summer weekend peaks when detours can be made by those familiar with local roads. In summary, the number of variable factors does not permit a precise determination of how highway capacity will affect development in Gualala. Trends must be monitored and a more detailed study prepared before any amendment to the Coastal Element is approved that increases allowable development and traffic on Highway 1.

Waste disposal, as well as highway capacity, limits development in the area; it is questionable whether individual septic systems will work for many additional small lot subdivisions. The North Gualala Water Company offers service from the County line to Anchor Bay, 3.5 miles north. An existing community sewage system serves the Anchor Bay subdivision, and was



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rebuilt without provision for expansion. The Regional Water Quality Control Board has determined that several existing lots in Anchor Bay lack potential leach fields.

No standards can be set for minimum parcel size to ensure satisfactory performance from septic systems--such a determination must be made on a lot by lot basis--but larger lots are more likely to meet water quality standards or to qualify for waivers. Inadequate septic systems created a health hazard in Gualala (documented in 1987), and the GCSD received a Clean Water Act facilities planning grant to correct the problem. The resulting system provides wastewater treatment services within a designated service area.

The initial design capacity of the GCSD system was based upon residential population growth at two percent (2%) annually for 20 years, and on increased commercial development within the Gualala area. The service area for this system is limited to a recognized district boundary (see Map #31 Coastal Element-Land Use Plan). Within the District boundary, development may proceed at higher densities specified in this plan only when water and/or sewer service is provided by an approved community system.

In addition to sewage disposal constraints and highway capacity, the availability of water may limit future development in the Gualala planning area. Domestic water in the planning area is provided by private wells and by the North Gualala Water Company, a privately-owned utility. The "Mendocino County Coastal Groundwater Study" prepared in 1982 identified areas of sufficient, marginal and critical water resources on the coast. Coastal Groundwater Development Guidelines were adopted in 1989 which establish requirements for investigation for groundwater development depending upon proposed project type, location and lot size. The requirements for proof of water and hydrological studies are intended to ensure that development is consistent with the limitations of the local water supply. According to these guidelines, a hydrological study would be required prior to any increase in the North Gualala Water Company's water diversions.

### **Anchor Bay**

The cluster of subdivisions at Anchor Bay occupies high bluffs on either side of Fish Rock Creek. However, Anchor Bay's compact commercial area turns its back on the Pacific and does not take advantage of the views. Overnight accommodations or a restaurant with a view deck should be built on the blufftop. Anchor Bay's proximity to Gualala, 3.5 miles south, limits the need and opportunity for additional businesses.

### **Gualala**

The town of Gualala is a service center for the south coast of Mendocino County and for The Sea Ranch and northern Sonoma County. While serving a resident population, the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of the Gualala area attract many thousands of visitors each year.



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Gualala is a town which lacks a visual community identity. The commercial district stretches along a two-mile section of Highway 1. There is no distinctive architectural style, town center or historic context. However, Gualala is blessed by its outstanding natural setting at the mouth of the Gualala River. Magnificent views of the river and coastline are available from many locations and the forested hillsides frame the inland edges of the town.

Through a grassroots community planning process, the Gualala Town Plan was formulated to guide future development within the Town Plan area in ways that might enhance the character of the town of Gualala. The Gualala Town Plan is included as Chapter 4.14 of the Coastal Element.

### **Coastal Element Policies: Anchor Bay - Gualala**

- 4.12-1 New residential and visitor accommodation development within the Anchor Bay-Gualala Planning Area shall be dependent upon approval by the County Health Department for septic waste disposal systems installed in accordance with Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Standards. Installation of individual septic disposal systems shall be carefully monitored by the County Health Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine the cumulative impact upon coastal resources of all development within the Anchor Bay-Gualala area.

Proposed developments within the service area of the Gualala Community Services District shall be connected to that publicly-owned system, upon approval by the GCSD Board of Directors, and the County of Mendocino shall not approve development applications until such connection has been authorized by the GCSD.

- 4.12-2 The urban-rural boundary of the community of Gualala is indicated by boundary lines delineated on Land Use Map 31. The Town Plan area includes all lands within the Gualala Community Services District (GCSD) and the small lot residential subdivisions adjoining the GCSD service area. The Town Plan area was selected to identify where new development could be served by community water and/or sewer systems and where such development would minimize traffic impacts on Highway 1. A primary goal of the Gualala Town Plan is to concentrate new development within the Town Plan area.
- 4.12-3 Dedication of a sixty foot half width shall be required as a condition of any development of parcels fronting on Highway 1 within the Gualala CSD unless otherwise approved by Caltrans.



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- 4.12-4 The County shall initiate an amendment of Section 15.12.040 (B) of the County Code to prohibit parking on Highway 1 between Old State Highway and Ocean Drive.
- 4.12-5 All future development projects within the Gualala CSD shall include sufficient off-street parking area to accommodate parking demand anticipated to be generated by the proposed use.
- 4.12-6 A traffic impact analysis shall be required of all future development projects within the Gualala CSD which will generate twenty or more peak hour trips. The Institute of Traffic Engineers Trip Generation Report shall be used to determine trip generation potential of proposed projects
- 4.12-7 The County shall request that Caltrans assist in the development of a program for the funding of highway improvements in Gualala to accommodate development allowed by the Coastal Plan and made possible by the wastewater facility. Until such a program is implemented, any development project which will generate twenty or more peak hour trips shall be required to implement any mitigation measures recommended as part of the required traffic impact analysis.

### **Access Points, Trails, and Recreation Areas**

Policies for all access points, trails, and recreation areas are in Section 3.6 and 3.7. Policies specific to locations in this planning area are listed below in geographic order from north to south. Each access point (other than fee access where designated) will need to be acquired by acceptance of an offer of dedication or by purchase by an appropriate public agency or private organization as described in Section 3.6.

#### **Island Cove**

Location: South of Iversen Road.

Ownership: Private; Island Cove Estates Subdivision, recorded in 1961, includes a beach parcel "reserved for use of lot owners." The Coastal Commission, as a condition of permit approval, required one owner (Tweedie) to dedicate access rights.

Existing Development: A 700-foot sand beach and sheltered cove, reached by trail from parking area.



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Policy:

- 4.12-8 Public access shall be obtained to and along this beach as shown on the Land Use Plan Map along with a public parking area consistent with 3.6-5.

### **Haven's Neck**

Location: West of Highway 1, approximately one mile northwest of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private.

Characteristics: Virtually unaltered natural habitat for a number of plant and animal species including some plants of particular botanical interest; wind sculptured rock formations.

Potential Development: Public acquisition was proposed by 1967 County General Plan and 1975 Coastal Plan. Scientists and conservationists familiar with Haven's Neck have recommended limited use as a natural reserve, such as Point Lobos State Reserve south of Carmel, or no public access.

Policy:

- 4.12-9 An offer to dedicate public access for scientific and educational purposes only, and an open space easement to an appropriate public agency for that area of Haven's Neck westerly of the narrow constriction leading to the peninsula, shall be required as a condition of permit approval.

### **Fish Rock Road Inland Trail**

Location: From Highway 1 north of Anchor Bay, County Road 122 transverses northeasterly to Highway 128.

Existing Development: Pedestrian and equestrian use; designated by County Trails Plan.

### **Fish Rock Observation Point and Trail**

Location: Approximately 1/4 mile north of the intersection of Highway 1 and Fish Rock Road.

Existing Development: Vacant parcel.

Policy:

- 4.12-10 An offer to dedicate an easement for public parking and access to



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the point for that area delineated on the Land Use Map shall be obtained consistent with Policies 3.6-5 and 3.6-7 and no signing will be done until adequate parking is created.

### **Anchor Bay Shoreline**

Location: Fish Rock Creek, immediately north of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private.

Existing Development: Campground providing fee access to beach.

Policy:

4.12-11 A guarantee of continued fee access to the public as well as guests shall be acquired consistent with policy 3.6-5 together with a provision for obtaining a non-fee accessway if the visitor serving facility should be changed to another use.

### **Getchell Gulch Access**

Location: 0.5 mile south of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private

Characteristics: Wooded headlands and small beach.

Potential Development: Blufftop trail and beach access trail.

Policy:

4.12-12 Offers of dedication for vertical beach access and blufftop lateral access shall be obtained consistent with Policy 3.6-5.

### **Serenisea**

Location: .5 mile south of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private; inn.

Existing Development: Trail leads to south side of the beach at Getchell Gulch.

Policy:



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- 4.12-13 Continued fee access to the shoreline shall be assured by deed restriction consistent with policy 3.6-5, together with a provision for obtaining a non-fee accessway if the visitor serving facility should be changed to another use.

### **St. Orres Creek**

Location: 1.1 miles south of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private.

Characteristics: 200 foot cove.

Policy:

- 4.12-14 Offers to dedicate easements for a vertical and lateral access to the cove shall be acquired for that area delineated on the Land Use Map consistent with policy 3.6-5. Caltrans should provide for a safe parking area at this location and shall be required to do so in conjunction with any highway improvement project in this area.

### **Cooks Beach**

Location: 1.3 miles south of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private.

Characteristics: A 500-foot sandy beach on south side of Glennen Gulch. Connects to Bourns Landing bluff top.

Policy:

- 4.12-15 Offers to dedicate easements for vertical and lateral shoreline access shall be acquired for that area delineated on the Land Use Map consistent with policy 3.6-5.

### **Bourns Landing**

Location: 1.5 miles south of Anchor Bay.

Ownership: Private.



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Potential Development: Trail along open bluff with long views of coast and shoreline access at small beach; connects to Cooks Beach.

Policy:

- 4.12-16 Offers to dedicate easements for a blufftop trail and shoreline access shall be acquired for that area delineated on the land use plan map consistent with policy 3.6-5.

### **Marine View Subdivision**

Location: 1.3 miles north of Gualala.

Ownership: Private; offer of dedication for 25-foot lateral access by Fager and Witt.

Policy:

- 4.12-17 Offers by Fager and Witt shall be relinquished because no blufftop trail is proposed and accessway would not be reachable by an existing or proposed vertical access.

### **Gualala-Anchor Bay Trail**

Location: Between Gualala and Anchor Bay, primarily along Highway 1 and Old Coast Highway (CR #513) rights-of-way, connecting the pedestrian walkways shown on the Highway 1 Streetscape Map of the Gualala Town Plan to coastal access points identified in the Coastal Element and traversing the Old Milano Hotel property along the northwest property line.

Ownership: Public rights-of way; Private

Potential Development: A trail linking Gualala and Anchor Bay commercial districts

Policy:

- 4.12-18 Easements along public rights-of-way and offers to dedicate easements for public access shall be obtained consistent with Coastal Element Policy 3.6-5 to establish a trail linking Gualala and Anchor Bay.

### **Gualala Bluff Trail**

Location: Central Gualala to Gualala River Bridge.





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**Ownership:** In September 1994, the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy acquired the 25-foot-wide, public access easements along the bluff of the Gualala River which were required by the California Coastal Commission as conditions of development approvals. A five-foot-wide, vertical access easement from Highway 1 to the blufftop was also acquired. The Land Conservancy intends to develop and manage the Gualala Bluff Trail on these easements.

**Policy:**

- 4.12-19 Offers to dedicate easements for public access shall be obtained, in consultation with the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy, to provide for the completion of the Gualala Bluff Trail. Offers to dedicate easements for public access shall be obtained consistent with Coastal Element Policy 3.6-5 and Policy 4.12-14.

### **Gualala River Bridge**

**Location:** North bank of Gualala River; just west of Highway 1.

**Ownership:** Private.

**Potential Development:** Development of Gualala Bluff Trail; fish and wildlife habitat management; limited parking for public fishing; and access for such craft as canoes, rowboats or small boats utilizing trolling-type motors.

**Policy:**

- 4.12-20 This parcel should be acquired for protection of natural resources and public access purposes by the County, State Parks, Caltrans, a non-profit land trust, or some other public or private agency, or managed for protection of natural resources and public access by its owners. If and when such acquisition occurs, the parcel shall be classified as Open Space in the Land Use Plan. Prior to development of any public access facilities on the site, a management plan shall be prepared in accordance with Coastal Element Policy 3.6-26 to ensure the long-term protection of natural resources and maintenance of the property. Development of the Gualala Bluff Trail on this parcel may involve use of the Highway 1 right-of-way or acquisition of an easement along the bluff of the Lower Mill site east of Highway 1 to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas along the Gualala River estuary/lagoon.

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Location: On the north side of the Gualala River, from Highway 1 to the east boundary of the Gualala Arts Center property.

Ownership: Private

Potential Development: A pedestrian trail providing public access to the Gualala River for fishing, hiking, swimming, etc.

Policy:

4.12-21 Offers to dedicate easements for lateral access on the north side of the Gualala River shall be acquired consistent with Policy Coastal Element 3.6-5.

**Visitor Accommodations and Services:** Visitor accommodations and services are designated as a principal permitted use in the Iversen Road to Sonoma County Line Planning Area at the following locations:

The Sea Urchin	existing service
Mar Vista Motel	existing motel
Whale Watch	existing inn
Serenisea Motel	existing motel
Re-Newell Center	existing motel
St. Orres	existing inn and restaurant
Old Milano Hotel	existing inn
Gualala River Redwood Park	existing campground

In addition, the following sites have been designated as a conditional use for visitor serving facilities on the land use map:

Getchell Gulch	proposed inn or hostel
East of Serenisea access	proposed inn or hostel
Cooks Beach, south	proposed motel
Bourns Landing	proposed motel
Gualala Point, west of bridge	proposed campground
Gualala Point, east of bridge	proposed campground

A variety of visitor serving facilities are located in the commercial areas of Anchor Bay and Gualala, which are not designated on the land use map.