



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

### **SOUTH CENTRAL CAC PLANNING AREA (Jug Handle Creek to Navarro River)**

#### **4.7 RUSSIAN GULCH TO VAN DAMME STATE PARK PLANNING AREA (Big River Planning Area)**

The Big River area includes the Town of Mendocino, defined for Coastal Element planning purposes as the area within the Mendocino City Community Services District, with the exception of the Sea Rock and Agate Cove properties (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 119-030-03, 119-030-04, 119-030-10 and 119-030-13). The Town Plan for Mendocino is described in Section 4.13.

The entire Big River Planning Area west of Highway 1 has been designated as a "highly scenic" area, requiring that all development outside Mendocino Town be subordinate to the natural environment. Fortunately, few conflicts exist, and large parcels, low densities, and wooded terrain will make it possible to subordinate new development to its setting without unduly restrictive design policies.

In support of the Town Plan policy to limit construction of additional overnight accommodations, several new conditional visitor serving sites have been designated in the Big River area. One is a proposed group campsite on Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) property. The other two are potential inn sites east of Highway 1 and south of Comptche-Ukiah Road. A limited number of visitor serving units within the vicinity of Mendocino would alleviate some of the pressures on the Town of Mendocino.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently considered acquiring portions of the Big River watershed to protect the wetlands, but this plan has now been abandoned. The agency is relying on timber harvest rules, the Special Treatment Area designation that applies to much of the area within the coastal zone, and Coastal Act policies to preserve the wetlands.

#### **Coastal Element Policies: Big River Planning Area**

- 4.7-1 New development west of Highway 1 shall be subordinate to the view shed or scenic character of the area. New development east of Highway 1 where designated as a highly scenic area shall be subordinate to its setting.
- 4.7-2 Dedication of scenic easements on undeveloped portions of parcels



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along Highway 1 or on Brewery Gulch Road should be required.

- 4.7-3 Pacific Gas and Electric Company shall be requested to consider preparing a plan for relocating power transmission lines that now intrude on views of Mendocino Town at certain locations south of Big River.

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

Policies for all access points, trails, and recreation areas are in Sections 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.

#### **Russian Gulch State Park**

(See description and policies in Section 4.6)

#### **Mendocino Town Alternative Coastal Trail**

Location: From Highway 1 on Lansing Street to Heeser Drive County Road 407FF), to Main Street, Big River-Mendocino Headlands State Park. (See Town Plan map)

Characteristics: Bluff and shoreline access and viewing areas. Public restrooms are located north of Heeser Drive.

#### **Jack Peters Creek**

Location: Intersection of Highway 1 and Lansing Street (County Road 500), north of the Town of Mendocino.

Ownership: Private (Bernhard). Offer of access dedication for the narrow northern section (150 feet long) of the property.

Characteristics: The area provides a scenic overlook and shoreline access at Jack Peters Creek.

Potential Development: Improve and enlarge view turnout.

Policy:

- 4.7-4 Offer of access dedication shall be accepted.



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### **Little Lake Road Inland Trail**

Location: From Highway 1 at Mendocino, County Road 408 transverses northeasterly to intersection of Caspar-Little Lake Road (Road 409) to State Highway 20.

Characteristics: Pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian use; designated on County Trails Plan.

### **Big River River Access and Access to Big River Beach**

Location: North shore of Big River, in Highway 1 right-of-way, east of Highway 1.

Characteristics: Unpaved parking area with access to river.

Policy:

4.7-5 The parking area shall be improved and the access point developed for boat launching be maintained. Power boats on Big River shall be prohibited, except for outboard motors traditionally used for trolling. Access to the beach and river is not considered safe access to Mendocino Bay and the ocean.

Policy:

4.7-6 The existing private logging road in this forest protection area extends along the north side of Big River could serve as an excellent trail for hiking, bicycling, fishing and equestrian access along Big River. Due to the steepness of grade of the north bank of the river as well as potential fire danger and increased noise impacts, vehicular access and parking should be limited to the first six miles. In addition, this area is to be closed to dogs in order to protect wildlife. River accessways in this area shall be consistent with Coastal Act, Section 30212(a)(2). If this private road becomes available to the public it should be acquired by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and shall be managed to provide river access.

### **Mendocino Headlands State Park**

Location: Mendocino. Park lands in this unit are divided into three separate areas: (1) west end of Mendocino Town peninsula and entire shoreline; (2) funded acquisition, east of Highway 1, north bank of Big River; and (3) east of Highway 1, south of Comptche-Ukiah Road.

Ownership: DPR; portion is private, but acquisition is funded.

Existing Development: Trail access through existing park areas on headlands north of river include blufftop and shoreline access to Mendocino Bay. Public restrooms available north of Heeser Drive.



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Potential Development: DPR proposes 5 group camps accessible from Comptche Road in southern portion of park.

### **Policy:**

- 4.7-7 California State Department of Parks and Recreation shall be requested to review and revise its General Development Plan for Mendocino Headlands State Park with the participation of the community. Group campsites in the southern portion of the Mendocino Headlands State Park shall be a conditional use. A hostel may be submitted for up to half of the group camp capacity in this area, if the park management plan so provides.
- 4.7-8 The California Department of Parks & Recreation should complete the funded acquisition of the riverside property and prepare a management plan that provides for the improvement of the existing parking area and development of the access point. The use of power boats on Big River shall be prohibited except for outboard motors traditionally used for trolling (less than 10 horsepower).

### **North Brewery Gulch Road (McMillen Access)**

Location: South of Big River mouth, west of Comptche-Ukiah Road intersection with Highway 1.

Ownership: McMillen has recorded an offer of dedication for shoreline access over the portion of his property west of Brewery Gulch Road.

Existing Development: Wide bluff area with access to rocky intertidal area.

### **Policy:**

- 4.7-9 Offer of access dedication by McMillen shall be accepted.
- 4.7-10 Brewery Gulch Road south of Big River on the west side of Highway One shall be preserved as an existing bluff top access affording spectacular views of Mendocino Bay and the town of Mendocino. These views shall be protected and enhanced by possible future relocations of power lines as indicated in Policy 4.7-3.

### **Comptche-Ukiah Road Inland Trail**

Location: From Highway 1 south of Big River, southeasterly to Orr Springs and Low Gap Roads.



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Characteristics: Pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian use, designated by County Trails Plan.

### **Mendocino Bay Alternative Coastal Trail**

Location: Old Highway 1 (Brewery Gulch Road) south of Big River, west of Highway 1.

Characteristics: Turnouts with spectacular views of Mendocino.

### **Van Damme State Park Trail**

Location: West of Highway 1, north entrance is located just south of Mendocino Bay transversing along the bluffs to just north of Little River.

Ownership: DPR, 153 acres; private agricultural parcel between two DPR parcels.

Existing Development: Coastal terrace grassland with some trees and 2,800 feet of shoreline; undeveloped.

Potential Development: Parking area, trail, shoreline access.

#### **Policy:**

- 4.7-11 The California State Department of Parks and Recreation shall be requested to prepare a general plan for Van Damme State Park including parking, day use facilities, and shoreline access on the two northern parcels.
- 4.7-12 An easement across the intervening private property shall be obtained consistent with Policy 3.6-5 to provide a continuous loop hiking trail, as indicated on the Land Use Plan. This loop trail shall connect with Brewery Gulch Road trail to the north consistent with Policy 3.2-14. There shall be no bluff top trail until the ag land use changes.

### **Little River Blowhole Vista Point**

Location: West of Highway 1, north of Little River Cemetery on existing private drive.

Ownership: Private

Potential Development: Vertical access trail to the blufftop



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### Policy:

- 4.7-13 An offer to dedicate an easement to the public for access shall be obtained for those areas shown on the Land Use Map consistent with Policy 3.6-5.

(See Little River Area Section 4.8, for policies for the remainder of Van Damme State Park).

**Visitor Accommodations and Services:** Visitor accommodations and services are designated as a principal permitted use in the Russian Gulch to Van Damme State Park Planning Area at the following locations:

Ames Lodge	existing inn
Blackberry Inn	existing motel
Sea Rock Motel	existing motel
Catch-a-canoe	existing service
Big River Lodge	existing motel
Mendocino Campground	existing campground
Van Damme Beach State Park	existing campground
Glendeven Inn	existing inn
Rachel's Inn	existing inn
Mendocino Farmhouse	existing inn

The following sites have been designated as a conditional use for visitor serving facilities:

South of Mendocino Campground	proposed inn or hostel
Mendocino Headlands State Park	proposed campground
East of south entry to Brewery Gulch Road	proposed inn or hostel
Zimmer property, next to Glendeven Inn	proposed inn

Mendocino Town contains numerous inns and other visitor serving facilities. The Mendocino Town Plan is located in Chapter 4.13.