



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

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

4.9 DARK GULCH TO NAVARRO RIVER PLANNING AREA (Albion Planning Area)

The Albion CAC area covers 35 square miles, much of it in timberland, though the view from Highway 1 consists of vistas of grassy hills on the headlands, coastal terraces and meadows. The coastal zone extends three miles up the Albion River which is estuarine and navigable by canoe, and four miles along the Navarro River. In addition to Albion Village and Albion Flats, which date from the lumber boom of the 1850's there are communities on Albion Ridge, Middle Ridge, Navarro Ridge and in the Pacific Reefs Subdivision.

Minor highway improvements, such as adding 2 to 4-foot bike lanes, are desirable where the terrain allows. A hazardous turn immediately to the North of the Albion Bridge is the site of numerous Highway 1 accidents. Spot improvement of this turn should be given high priority by Caltrans.

The need for preservation of visual resources also affects future development, for much of the planning area both west and east of Highway 1 has been designated as "highly scenic" where development must be subordinate to its setting. Navarro Head, no more scenic than many other headlands, is especially important because it is many visitors' introduction to the Mendocino coast. To travelers emerging from the dense redwood forest of Highway 128, the fog, wind, winding road and grassy hillsides above the high bluffs and surf convey the vastly lonely coast that makes the drive worthwhile.

The view has not been substantially degraded, although some would argue that the two or three house on the bluff below the road are a significant intrusion. Trees to screen buildings on the point should be planted near the buildings so that some trees near the road can be removed to open views. The main concern is to maintain this visual gateway to the coast.

On the west side of the highway, four parcels between Navarro Ridge Road and the developed parcel at the southern tip of the headland also are of particular concern. One housing unit can be built near the bluff on each of these parcels if by siting at a low point, by earth sculpture, or by trees planted near the building, the house can be subordinate to the setting. The term subordinate applied to this location should mean that the cumulative effect of one house on each of the four parcels will result in no significant change in the appearance of the coastal terrace as seen from the highway.



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



Albion Village

Approaching from the north, motorists see one of the coast's most striking townscapes: a wood-trestle bridge in the foreground of a small village that clings to the edge of the hill. This village is composed of two segments-the cluster of dwellings off Albion Ridge Road and the group of buildings on Albion-Airport Road north of the bridgehead.

Coastal Element Policies: Albion

- 4.9-1 The Albion community north of the bridge shall be designated Rural Village.

The Albion community at the south end of the bridge shall be designated Rural Village. Retail establishments shall be limited in type and size; new stores shall be located only in the areas designated commercial.

- 4.9-2 In order to maintain the special community character, building permits shall require that building materials, color and architectural forms of new structures exposed to public view be similar to those existing buildings. Existing buildings shall not be remodeled in a manner that would detract from their historic character.

Albion Harbor - North and South

Albion harbor-north and south is the harbor for about 100 full-time commercial boats. The shallow harbor entrance limits boat size and requires entry and exit at high tide. Two small fish wholesalers operate on the flat. Full time boats concentrate on sea urchins and bottom fish in winter and salmon in summer. Facilities are minimal, and currently there is no assured public access to the water, even for a fee. Dredging, paved access, and slips with electricity and water are needed, but commercial fishers are concerned that improvements could result in commercial boats being forced out by pleasure boats.

Albion Flats and Harbor

The Albion Flats and Harbor area is the port for the Albion Fishing community. The land is privately owned. The public has had traditional access to the beach, ocean, river and up river by road to the estuary, but access is presently a problem and is often blocked.

The existing use consists of boat launching, fishing, diving, docks, residential trailers, a small store and gas pump, sanitary facilities and showers, fee parking, a boat barn and a few small



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



dwellings formerly housing a restaurant, now a canoe rental and seasonal camping. There are year round boats (approximately 100), that fish out of Albion, with a sizeable increase in the summer. The only access from Highway 1 to the north side, to the flats, is a steep narrow road. There is a limited access further upriver on the south side to the Mendocino Biological Field Station road through Albion Village. There is currently access via privately owned road "D" to the south side of Albion River which is not maintained. The Planning Commission would recommend that this potential access be maintained.

The Coastal Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, California Fish and Game in their report "Albion River Development-Impacts and Recommendations" states that "...The Albion River estuarine area-land and water-has reached its carrying capacity insofar as intensive development will adversely affect the ecological aspects which should be given first priority of management." The physical constraints on development are also addressed in Mendocino County Planning Department's report on proposed use permit U 84-77 of September 2, 1977, by planner Charles Hudson. These constraints still exist.

Coastal Element Policies: Albion Flat

- 4.9-3 Any development in the Albion Flats fishing village shall currently be limited to uses directly related to the fishing, boating, boat building and diving occupations and the support systems required to maintain them. An Albion Harbor District or Commission should be established by the County to coordinate all land and water uses within the area designated Fishing Village and Albion Cove on the Land Use Plan, including the flats, the river and the ocean beach. See also Policy 4.9-6 and Policy 3.10-1.
- 4.9-4 Due to their negative impacts, off-road vehicles shall be prohibited from the Albion Beach.
- 4.9-5 Only one narrow access road exists now on the north side which could be blocked by accident. The old Highway 1 access on the south side should be reopened as the emergency evacuation road.

The County shall encourage the provision of adequate public transit and adequate streets and roads to regional harbors.

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



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



acceptance of an offer of dedication or by purchase by an appropriate public agency or private organization as described in Section 3.6.

Albion-Little River Inland Trail

Location: County Road 403 transverses northeasterly from Highway 1 at Albion to Little River - Airport Road (County Road 404).

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

Albion Harbor Area

Location: North shore of Albion River at terminus of County Road 403A (Albion River North Side Road).

Ownership: Private.

Existing Development: River access, large unimproved parking area, gas pumps (2) to the south.

Potential Development: Restrooms to the west, improved parking would provide for more space during busy summer season.

Location: North shore of Albion river under Highway 1 bridge at beach.

Ownership: Private.

Existing Development: Walking access through campground to beach, unimproved parking area at beach.

Location: North shore of Albion River, east of terminus of County Road 403A, south of "The Pond".

Ownership: Private.

Existing Development: Boat launching, boat parking, river access.

Location: North shore of Albion River, Schooner's Landing area.

Ownership: Private.



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



Existing Development: Residential trailers, seasonal camping, boat parking, several access points along private road on north shore of river.

Location: Mendocino Biological Field Station, south shore of Albion River.

Ownership: Private

Existing Development: Pedestrian, fishing and boat launching access.

Policies:

- 4.9-6 Assurance of access to beach and river and estuary shall be obtained by agreement, by proof of prescriptive rights, consistent with policy 3.6-5, or by purchase. A boat launch ramp should be considered for development, allowing free boat launching by portage.
- 4.9-7 No cost access and parking area should be acquired to both the north and south side of the Albion River in accordance with Policy 3.6-5.

Albion South Bluff Trail

Location: West of Highway One at Albion, off Old Highway One (County Road 401 or Spring Grove Road).

Ownership: Private

Existing Development: Undeveloped coastal headlands.

Potential Development: Upland trail extending north and west from Spring Grove Road to the western most point of the headland, approximately one-third mile.

Policy:

- 4.9-8 Offers to dedicate access easement for public pedestrian access along the bluff from Spring Grove Road west to the blufftop then north to terminate at the most westerly point of the Albion Headland shall be required as a condition to permits.

Salmon Creek

Location: Old Highway 1 behind Gregory's Restaurant (County Road 401, also known as Spring Grove Road).



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



Ownership: Private; offers of dedication for lateral, blufftop access 0.5 miles south of the creek have been recorded by Shaffron-Pfeffer and Chesson-Hollowed as a condition of permit approval.

Existing Development: Northern two-thirds of road is paved, excellent blufftop views. Southern part is unimproved, narrow, one-lane road leading to sandy beach.

Policies:

- 4.9-9 Offers to dedicate an access easement for vertical and lateral pedestrian access along Spring Grove Road south to Salmon Creek Beach shall be required as a condition of permit approval.
- 4.9-10 Access offers by Shaffron-Pfeffer and Chesson-Hollowed on the south side of Salmon Creek shall be relinquished because existing development would prevent completion of a blufftop trail using dedication offers and because adequate access will exist nearby at Salmon Creek.

Navarro Ridge Road Inland Trail

Location: From Highway 1 north of Navarro River, County Road 518 transverses southeasterly to Highway 128.

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

Navarro Headland

Location: West of Highway One south of intersection with Navarro Ridge Road along blufftop.

Ownership: Private.

Potential Development: Blufftop trail along the Navarro Headlands west of Navarro Ridge Road.

Policy:

- 4.9-11 Offers to dedicate an easement for public access shall be obtained for those areas shown on the Land Use Plan Map consistent with Policy 3.6-5.

Visitor Accommodations and Services: Visitor accommodations and services are designated as a principal permitted use in the Dark Gulch to Navarro River Planning Area at the following locations:



-MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ELEMENT-



Albion River Inn	existing motel and restaurant
Gregory's	existing restaurant
Navarro Ridge Inn (1)	existing inn
Good Shepherd School	existing campground
Navarro Head, east of Highway 1 (2) (AP# 126-010-02)	proposed inn

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

North of Albion Cove, west of Highway 1	proposed inn or hostel
West of Whitesboro Cove, west of Highway 1	proposed inn or hostel

In addition to those sites designated on the land use map, the Fishing Village of Albion contains a Recreational Vehicle campground.

(1) Now known as Fensalden Inn, this site was reclassified from an *1 to an *2C in 1990, limited to twelve units maximum. Development of the site with more than twelve visitor units will require an amendment to the Coastal Element.

(2) This property is proposed for an *1 if the proposed Coastal Commission permit #80-P-78, as amended, is implemented. If the applicant applies for a substantive change, other than relief sought from the open space easement requirement, to the permit, the permitted use will change to a proposed VSF which requires a conditional use permit.