STUDY OF A NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

BUTANO--GAZOS
CALIFORNIA

AUTHORIZED BY
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In offering this study, the third in a series devoted to National Seashore Recreational Areas proposed for the Coast of California, our objective is threefold. First, is that of securing an adequate region suitable for both shoreline and inland recreation — simultaneously protecting wildlife — close to the congested population of the San Francisco Bay cities. Second, is that of selecting choice lands readily accessible from the San Joaquin and other hot interior valleys of central California. Such a release will prove invaluable to the health and social welfare of residents in that region as well as visitors from greater distances. Third, the boundaries suggested will not hinder the normal growth and fulfilment of an ideal unit for the adjacent existing California State Redwood Park, better known as Big Basin, a unit already comprising over ten thousand acres.

Our proposed recreational area will permanently protect an ocean frontage of approximately twenty miles, westward from Big Basin, and include lands to the north, west, and south sufficient to round out and complement the present state park holdings so that the combined areas will
total some 73,600 acres. The watersheds of Butano, Gazos, Whitehouse, and Ano Nuevo Creeks, together with several smaller streams, will be preserved for all time, including their noble cover of Redwoods, Live and Tenbark Oaks, Bays, Buckeyes, Madrones, and Chaparral, together with a richly varied animal and bird life.

Guarded by bold bluffs, the beaches, although not remarkable in character are of such excellence as to become precious to humanity as population increases, and when existing public beaches closer to Santa Cruz, which are better protected topographically, become overtaxed as a result of dense human settlement. There are many ways of enjoying beaches other than the pleasures of bathing, that can find expression on the coast line of the proposed Butano-Gazos area. It is impossible to estimate the extreme importance of these beaches to citizens of so short a period as half a century hence.

Wholesome pastimes of great potentiality for health, quickened minds and of inspiration are available in the hinterlands where long ridges rise to over two thousand feet elevation, opening wide sweeping vistas to wondering and reverent souls. The ancient Redwood forest sanctuaries of San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties are steeped in vital, ever-changing beauty, waiting to be revealed to sensitive persons of all ages. This extensive wilderness, instinct with charm, and still retain-
ing most of its pristine qualities can be reached by a drive
of but two or three hours from the San Francisco Bay cities.

The present intensive, concentrated and destructive
use of the heart of Big Basin should emphasize the critical
need of securing this surrounding area for the people before
the opportunity is lost. Otherwise, the coast frontage, par-
ticularly, is doomed to unsightly private and commercial dev-
evelopment resulting in rude scars defacing nature.

It is to be hoped that the funds, and means will be
found for acquisition of these valuable lands which are of
such high scenic and recreational worth that they must be ex-
plored for fullest appreciation. Such a consummation will
add one more link to the chain of natural park areas along
our California coast, to remain available for all time for
the free use, health and pleasure of the people.
This area embodies the watersheds of Butano, Gazos, Whitehouse, Año Nuevo, Scott Creeks and accompanying Pacific coast frontage.

Many of the inhabitants secure their living by engaging in the sea-food industry. Others by fashioning redwood timber into ties, fence posts and grapestakes. Crops include oats, artichokes, beans, peas, cabbages and cauliflower. Communities within this selected area are so insignificant as to be practically of no consequence. This region, including lands in south San Mateo County and north Santa Cruz County, would serve the densely populated area of San Francisco, the Santa Clara Valley, towns of Santa Cruz County, Monterey Bay, and Salinas.

On the coastline, the land at intervals slopes gently upward from the beaches, but more often is forcefully broken by sheer bluffs, ranging up to 100 feet high. Beaches are extra wide near the outlets of creeks and great dunes lie on Point Año Nuevo. Agricultural lands lie back of the cliffs in belts of varying width, while further inland rise broad slopes covered with chaparral and mixed forest.
This expansive, versatile area extends from sea level to ridges over two thousand feet high. In fixing upon the proposed boundaries for this area, an effort has been made to include the proper amount of acreage so that the area will comprise a complete unit from the standpoint of administration, scenic, biological, and similar factors controlling the design and use of such a recreational region. Because of the peculiar manner in which the present California State Redwood Park nearly separates the proposed area into two parts and almost bisects it close to the point where the San Mateo-Santa Cruz County line meets the ocean, it might prove logical to establish administration headquarters near this line. No communities of any consequence lie within the boundaries. Considering the generally rugged character of the country and the feeling of spaciousness it is remarkable that the heart of the area lies only forty miles distant from San Francisco by airline.

Wherever the land flattens enough for gentle slopes between the ocean bluffs and the hills, the soil seems capable of cultivation and many acres are devoted to such crops as oats, artichokes, peas, beans, cabbages, and cauliflower. Beaches of excellent quality varying from 50 to 200 feet wide extend along approximately 90% of the seafront. Near running creeks along wooded canyons, the undergrowth is luxuriant
and all the landscape intimate and inviting.

Here is an area which seems to possess many advantages for recreational purposes; surf bathing, swimming, diving, limited boating in the Arroyo de los Frijoles, camping, climbing and nature exploration. Such an area will also serve as a much needed preserve for wild waterfowl and upland game.

This region, proposed for acquisition, comprising a total of approximately 56,580 acres and including two great blocks of land to the north and south of California Redwood Park with connecting sea frontage, is estimated to cost $1,971,000.00.

The Butano-Cazos area would serve the densely populated areas of San Francisco Bay Region, all hot interior valleys of central California and could also care for recreationists from southern California, Nevada, and Arizona.
REGIONAL MAP  
INCLUDING  
COVER TYPES  

BUTANO-GAZOS  
CALIFORNIA  

NATIONAL SEASHORE  
RECREATIONAL AREA  

SCALE OF MILES
Location: The Buena Vista Area is situated in the southwesterly corner of San Mateo County and the northwesterly portion of Santa Cruz County, and approximately forty miles south of San Francisco.

Present Means of Access: It is reached by State Highway No. 1 northwesterly from Santa Cruz and southerly from San Francisco, via U.S. Route 101, Bayshore Highway, or Skyline No. 5 Highway, and via Half Moon Bay, La Honda-San Gregorio and La Honda-Pescadero Roads. The heart of the area is reached from San Francisco in a drive of some 50 miles and from Oakland and other East Bay cities, by motorin 60 to 70 miles via transbay bridges. The nearest train service is via daily scheduled trains over the Southern Pacific Railroad to Santa Cruz. The distance by highway from Santa Cruz to the south end of the area is about fifteen miles.

Extent of Area: The length of the beach development will be approximately twenty miles. By purchasing the arable lands back of the ocean bluffs and upland areas of chaparral, Redwood, Douglas Firs and mixed woodlands, for an average distance
of four miles from the shoreline, a Seashore Recreational Area of high significance and generous size may be secured.

**Scenic Values:** The scenic value of this area is predominantly seacoast. The mesa and hill lands above the sea are often of such open character that fine views of the ocean are commanded even when some distance from the shore. Inland the watersheds of several winding creeks with pure constant running water are abundant with Alders, Maples, Willows, Bays and Buckeyes. Near these creeks, but often on higher ground, are groves of Redwoods, some virgin, others second growth. Douglas Firs thrive in groves on less moist ground. Mixed woodlands of Tanbark Oaks, Live Oaks, Madrones, and Buckeyes and Toyen add variety to the luxuriant cover. Scenic advantages will include marked contrasts because coastal views will be wide-sweeping and stimulating, while those of the interior will be of a hushed seclusion in the depths of the forest.

**Character of Beaches:** These vary in width from 50 to 200 feet, adjacent to which on Point Año Nuevo is an area of impressive sand dunes about a mile in length. The sand is medium good character, being for the most part a light tan or buff color but in some short stretches of a grayish cast.
The slopes of the beaches vary, but are in most cases gradual. Possibly there may be instances where undertow exists but along the greater portion of this twenty mile front the beach is suitable for bathing. It will not be necessary to construct any protection for these beaches, as far as erosion is concerned, owing to the generous width of the sand areas. The bluffs backing them seem to be of such firm texture as to suffer little from erosion.

**Present Development:** There is at present almost no development along the beaches proper. Just back of the bluffs are cultivated lands with widely scattered farm houses and barns, time weathered and often in a rather run-down condition. It is understood that these ranches are mostly operated by thrifty Portuguese and Italians. The small settlement of Swanton near the south end of the project near the shore of Scott Creek, has an environment of cultivated level creek bottom lands along the east bank. The south boundary of the project might be shifted to the center of the creek to avoid including these cultivated areas and settlement buildings. Lighthouses are maintained at Pigeon Point and upon the island opposite Año Nuevo Point. Otherwise, development is limited to isolated ranches and smaller settlements on mesas or in canyons.
Possibilities of Boating: Boating will be limited to the small lagoon at the mouth of Arroyo de los Frijoles. This region, being in general without lagoons, lakes or navigable streams and exposed to direct west winds, is mostly unsafe and unsuitable for boating. It is felt that the many other excellent advantages of the area compensate for this lack and render it worthy of being created a National Seashore Recreational Area.

Forest Values: Limited stands of virgin Redwoods remain in the region. Considerable areas of second growth Redwoods are included, some cut over lands and considerable groves of Douglas Firs. The forest character is varied and enriched by such cover types as Live Oaks, Tankark Oaks, Madrones, Laurels and Buckeyes. Along creeks Alders, Maples and Willows abound.

Wildlife Values: The area is rich in birds and mammals as will be discussed by Mr. A. C. Browne, Wildlife Technician, Region VIII, near the close of this report. It should be desirable to secure the whole region as a wildlife preserve in the form of a National Seashore Recreational Area.

Estimated Acreage: Taken from U.S.G.S. maps and standard
road maps, it is estimated that the total amount of shore
land is 600 acres and the total inland area is 55,720 acres.
By including present holdings in California Redwood Park
comprising over 10,000 acres and additional lands which it
is assumed the California State Park Commission will acquire
to round out the park as an integral unit a state park of
17,260 acres will be consummated. By adding this amount to
our proposed National Seashore Recreational Area, a grand
total combined unit for park and seashore recreational pur-
poses will include 75,600 acres.
NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA
"PUTANO--GAZOS", CALIFORNIA
EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Increasingly the ocean front of California, wherever not so fenced by private interests as to exclude the eager adventurer, is becoming a valued playground of the people. Even where climatic conditions are more rugged and far less balmy than those of milder southern California, the easy accessibility of central California beaches to the hot neighboring counties of the interior results in augmented use of the beaches, during a season of four or five months. During other seasons, winds and rain storms will reduce use of the area to a low minimum.

The frontage of this area is conspicuous for an absence of offshore rocks, Año Nuevo Island being about the only area of this character. Consequently, there is comparatively little protection or sanctuary provided by nature for sea birds. Lagoons and marshes are so limited as to be almost negligible. Notwithstanding this, large areas of forest and woodland in the region will assure protection for birds and mammals after the creation here of a National Seashore Recreational Area. The rugged topography of the hinterland is such that recreational use there will probably never be-
come over-concentrated, thus giving promise of permanent protection to wildlife.

The entire twenty-mile frontage of this area has never been developed, chiefly because lower standard roads render it less easy of access from the population centers of San Francisco and Santa Cruz, both of which have extensive beaches with very concentrated use. There is no doubt, however, that as times improve and population amplifies there will be a marked and insistent demand by our public for these very areas. Next to the Point Reyes Peninsula Area, this Bodega-Gazos beach unit is the finest in calibre and lies nearest in point of distance from the San Francisco metropolitan area. Any development in the nature of centers for bathing, picnicking, and camping would be most carefully planned. Construction of facilities should be gradual, only on demand. This same procedure should be followed with respect to areas suitable for picnicking and camping along the wooded creeks of the region.

The paved State Highway following the coast is in fairly good shape. Roads already exist up the courses of Gazos and Whitehouse Creeks, connecting with California Redwood Park, or Big Basin area. These should be sufficiently improved, not only for fire protection purposes but also for the pleasures they can afford as minor park roads, linking
the two areas with the sea. For precisely the same reasons, roads should be developed up both Año Nuevo and Waddell Creeks. These should be located, planned and developed with infinite care, so as to preserve all inherent scenic values as well as botanical and biological interests.

Trails located and planned with care may finally be laid out along the bluffs and to connect the ocean with the fascinating hinterland both of this region and the adjoining Big Basin system of trails. A few should attain commanding peaks offering wide-sweeping, inspiring views. Benches and shelters of limited number should be situated at strategic positions. It should be borne in mind that wildlife values will suffer least and the climber will enjoy a greater sense of remoteness and the thrill of the wilderness if all such development be held to the minimum.

Possibly, as demand arises, a small boat house and concession might be developed on the shore of Arroyo de los Frijoles.

This area should be studied in relation to potential beach recreational areas both northward and southward. Most important is the problem of fixing upon suitable boundaries between this Butano-Gazos area and California Redwood Park. This latter area, although already consisting of over 10,000 acres, is still peculiarly incomplete. It possesses
one solid integral unit, that of Big Basin. To the west and south are many isolated units ranging from 40 acres to several hundred acres in extent, all belonging to California Redwood Park. Some of the intervening areas are valuable both scenically and for their stands of superb redwoods. Berry Creek Falls is included in one such valuable unit. When these missing portions are acquired by the California State Park Commission, they shall have achieved a well rounded park of 17,280 acres. Our purpose in this instance is not to confuse our logical acquisition program with that of the State. As shown on our Regional Map we propose to build up an adequate and sound area to the north, west and south of their limits so as to form one great satisfying National Seashore Recreational Area with a significant total of 72,600 acres.

This region has the advantage of being close to the large industrial centers of the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area, and those of the central California valleys. It is also convenient by not over one day's drive from the Los Angeles metropolitan area and towns of western Nevada. San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Stockton, San Jose, Santa Cruz, and Salinas are within one hundred miles of the area; Ukiah, Marysville, Sacramento, Carson City, Fresno and San Luis Obispo are within two hundred miles, while Eureka, Reno, Bakersfield, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and part of the Los Angeles
metropolitan area, are in the three-hundred mile circle. The San Francisco metropolitan area is only forty to sixty miles by automobile.

Many people residing in the large cities would seek vacations where they can enjoy here the advantages of the ocean beaches, the interior forested slopes and deep wooded canyons, if the distance from their homes is not over one day's travel by automobile.

The Butano-Cazos region is one of the last available seashore areas of large extent within fifty to sixty miles of San Francisco and Oakland. It would serve as a vacation area for people residing in large industrial and commercial cities who cannot afford extensive travel to recreational regions located at greater distances.
LAND COSTS

Estimated Cost of Acquisitions: The area under consideration for purchase consists of approximately 56,320 acres of mainland, of which roughly 600 acres are shoreland and the remainder hinterlands.

It is estimated that this entire area including improvements can be purchased for the following amount:

56,320 acres mainland @ $35.00 per acre: $1,971,200.

The above estimate does not include the settlement of Swanton or any other of the insignificant communities in the region.

The unit shown above is based on assessments, opinions and a study of actual sales to establish the ratio between assessed values and true values.

The unit of thirty-five dollars per acre for this mainland was determined as follows:

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<th>State</th>
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<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Estimated Value</th>
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<td>California</td>
<td>56,320</td>
<td>$985,600</td>
<td>$1,971,200.00</td>
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In this estimate, thirty-five dollars per acre is used for the mainland.
This estimate does not include any of the land belonging to Pigeon Point and Año Nuevo Point Lighthouses, which already are government owned and will take their places significantly in this national recreational area picture.

No communities of any consequence lie within the confines of the area so that no cost problems are thereby entailed.

Possibly the only difficulties to encounter in the acquisition of the area would be those of dealing with owners who hope eventually to commercialize on seafront property for low standard resorts and cheap concessions. It is expected that these will hold out for a beach frontage price as high as possible. One other barrier might be met in the attitude of small ranchers along this coastal front. Public access to the beaches by acquiring easements through the properties, and permits to continue using the land for the growing of artichokes, peas, beans and cabbages, might be arranged to cover a certain term of years. Certain of these lands would ultimately be requisite for parking spaces.
A population survey discloses the following distribution:

Within a radius of 100 miles . . . . 1,824,433
Within a radius of 200 miles . . . . 2,395,208
Within a radius of 300 miles . . . . 2,870,993

It will be noted that the three-hundred mile circle cuts through the northern corner of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. By adding and including the remainder of this dense area the population figure will be increased to over five million persons virtually within this three-hundred mile circle.

This region has the advantage of being close to the large industrial and commercial centers of northern and central California and convenient to those of southern California. San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Stockton, San Jose, Santa Cruz, and Salinas are within one-hundred miles of the area; Ukiah, Marysville, Sacramento, Carson City, Fresno and San Luis Obispo are within two hundred miles, while Eureka, Reno, Bakersfield, Santa Barbara, Ventura and part of the Los
Angeles metropolitan area, are in the three-hundred mile circle. The San Francisco Bay cities are only forty to sixty miles distant by automobile.

Butano-Gazos Region is one of the last available seashore areas of large extent within fifty to sixty miles of San Francisco and Oakland. It would serve efficiently as a vacation area for people residing in large industrial and commercial cities who cannot afford extensive travel to recreational regions located at greater distances.
NATIONAL RECREATIONAL SEASHORE AREA

"BUTANO--GAZOS", CALIFORNIA

WILDLIFE VALUES

In cooperation with the writer, the Butano-Gazos Area was studied from the wildlife point of view by Assistant Wildlife Technician Robert T. Orr, 8th Regional Office, who prepared a detailed summary of his findings. Due to its somewhat specialized and elaborate contents, a more specific and thoughtful summary was prepared from this material by Ashley C. Browne, Regional Wildlife Technician, for inclusion in this report.

We quote Mr. Browne as follows:

"These western slopes of the Coast Range mountains owe much of their special charm and interest to their proximity to the ocean and the shifting, life-bearing fogs which drift in across the timbered slopes and through the lower summit gaps.

Now reduced to but a narrow belt along a portion of California's coast, those sentinels of time, the mighty Redwoods, are bound to their present limited area by these life-giving fogs which provide them with somewhat of the dampness, the overhead protection and equable climate which
was known in remote geologic time and upon which this group
of trees then became dependent for its very existence. Once
of world-wide distribution, the redwood now has all but dis-
appeared from the surface of the earth, the California coastal
and related Sierran groups of living specimens and the paleo-
botanical fragments with their mute echoes of the remote past
being all that have survived.

Among the more conspicuous of the forest members
who associate themselves with the enduring redwoods are the
Douglas Firs (Pseudotsuga taxifolia) which farther northward
becomes the great forest tree of Washington and Oregon. Once
widely sought and commanding a high market value, the Tanbark
Oak (Quercus densiflora) provides one of the most picturesque
and typical features of the redwood forest, which it does not
forsake. Due to the cheapness of synthetic sources of tannin,
this bark is now much less extensively sought than formerly.
The rugged Canyon Oak (Q. chrysolepis) and several species
of less conspicuous habit are closely associated with that
most beautiful of Western trees, the smooth limbed Madrone
(Arbutus menziesii) whose rich red branches reach aloft like
the tanned and weathered arms of some superbly muscled forest
athlete. As with the redwood, so with the lovely Madrone,
for it too must not stray far from the cooling ocean fogs
that in summer so often bathe its broad green leaves.
The Batano-Seujący area is one rich in botanical
cover, embracing a series of life zones running from open
fields of native grasses back of the ocean bluffs, through
the hard chaparral with its manzanita, bush poppy and wild
tulips, through to the dwarf pine, yellow Fremantia and great
tissue-like, golden-centered flowers of the lovely Matilija
poppy (Romneya) on the higher sandstone ridges, and finally
the climax, the deep cathedral spiraled groves of mighty red-
woods, so superb in their aged majesty and so quiet as to
dwarf to insignificance man's chase of trivial egotisms.
Within these hushed cloisters, a filtered sunlight penetrates
to the earth and there brings life to hosts of smaller plants;
the beds of lovely, flat leaved oxalis growing in wide green
blankets over earth's soft cover, the rich Clintonia, the
lush purple fruited huckleberry, the sweet scented western
asters, the shining leafed wax myrtle and the tiny, mauve-
colored, hairy petalied redwood mariposa, the tawny colored
iris, the regal tiger lily -- all these and many more find
ample shelter beneath these guardian redwoods.

While much of the virgin stand has been removed
by lumbering operations in years past, the reproduction now
coming back is abundant and healthy and will in time re-
create a superb forest where once the mighty monarchs of the
past have stood.
The Butano-G长沙市 area may thus be said to embrace those group associations known collectively as the redwood and coastal forests. In so brief a report as this, a full list of the plants and trees would be out of place, but the region has long proven to be a valuable and productive area to the advanced students of botany from nearby Stanford University and the University of California.

The animal and bird life, as might be expected in an area of divergent sites with several well defined cover types, is well rounded out and includes many most interesting forms. In the open meadow lands and along the borders of the few swampy areas, small vertebrates find protection, but in the chaparral and timber the black tailed deer, coyote, grey-fox, coon, spotted skunk, wildcat, and rabbit may be found. The bush-tit, Bewick wren, Allen hummingbird, California thrushes all are to be found. Some golden eagles and numerous buzzards find their proper place in the complex of life as they soar in the clear blue sky above forest and mountain ridge.

Along the coast, resting safely in the steep cliffs, the bank swallow, cliff swallow and sea pigeon look down upon the wave washed rocks of Año Nuevo Point and one of the largest sea lion rookeries of the California coast, while overhead in swerving flight the snowy plover gives its plain-
tive call.

Known for years to local residents who have come to the shore to fish, the low verbena covered dunes behind Año Nuevo Point (New Year's Point) have sheltered the remains of numerous Indians who were buried with all they possessed, in the sands they loved.

Wherever one goes throughout the Putano-Cazos area, along the shore, over the open flower-strewn bluffs, up the sun bathed chaparral slopes or through the cloistered groves of mighty trees, his ear, his eye, his every sense is alive to the infinite beauty of his environment.
CONCLUSION

We have analyzed and enlarged upon the physical, social and aesthetic advantages of the Putano-Gazos Area, at the same time emphasizing its scenic beauty and generous extent. We have further endeavored to show its importance both in relation to the sweeping beaches along the coast and to the interior California Redwood Park.

No argument justifying acquisition of the lands as a National Seashore Recreational Area could be stronger than the consideration that here is a precious unit lying strategically between the metropolitan areas of both San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as being quickly accessible to the hot interior valleys of California. In short it is a playground that can be sought and used by a potential five million persons.

Let us pause to reflect upon the years that man has been concerned with this area. First, were the hardy Indians who lived so simply and in rhythm with Nature's laws that they rarely disturbed the landscape or ecological conditions. Then followed in turn the Mexicans and Spaniards with their large ranchos, and widely scattered settlements.
Leading a colorful, indolent and unhurried existence, these peoples were inhabiting and using lands similar in character and climate to those of Old Spain and Mexico. They, too, did little to jeopardize the intrinsic values of the land and its rugged scenery. What glamour and romance in these old Spanish names still in use!

Finally the American pioneers won control and later generations took heavy toll by logging vast groves of redwoods, simultaneously showing carelessness and indifference toward forest, scenic, and wildlife protection. Hence, followed many extensive and destructive fires, and the loss of countless beautiful, timid and useful animals. It is good to realize that second growth redwoods are now fast developing new forests of noble extent.

Now we are stirred to needs of the future, even those following a cycle of a hundred years. Is it too much to have hope and faith, and further resolve that man shall then be immune to economic disturbance and distress and shall have learned to live in such accord that welfare of the mind and of the soul shall be freed for their highest expression? Under such conditions we can scarcely conceive of the physical benefits and joys of spiritual contemplation that such a promised land as this can bounteously bestow upon all of the people.
BEACH FRONTING, MOUTH OF ARROYO DE LOS FRAYOLES
MOUTH OF LITTLE BUTANO CREEK, ACROSS MEADOW.
BUTANO FALLS IN LOWER BUTANO CANYON, SAN MATTEO COUNTY
SOUTH ACROSS LITTLE BUTANO CREEK, SHOWING VARIED COVER TYPES
REDWOOD AND DOUGLAS FIR FOREST AT HEAD OF BUTANO CREEK.
WESTERLY ALONG BEACH FROM MOUTH OF ANO NUEVO CREEK
The foregoing report is respectfully submitted
to Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Officer, Region VIII.

Field studies and photographs have been made and
text of report prepared

By

Emerson Knight
Associate Landscape Architect
Inspector, Region VIII

San Francisco, California
August 3, 1935

EK/mm