STUDY OF A NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

MATTOLE—HUMBOLDT CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD

Presented herewith is the first of a series of intensive studies for proposed National Seashore Recreation Areas, situated along our Pacific Coast. Following a preliminary report for the whole Oregon Coast front, prepared by the writer September 10, 1954, similar areas are now being considered more in detail and are being submitted for California in logical sequence, from north to south. It is not claimed that any of the regions chosen necessarily include extraordinary features, such as are found in our finer National Parks. It is felt, however, that these areas embrace much varied beauty, manifold interests and inspirational elements, and are conceived on so grand a scale that they are of interstate and national significance.

The Humboldt-Mattele area, broad sweeping in scope, diversified in topography, cover types and climate, is richly endowed with elemental beauty and primitive values. It thus may prove to be worthy of selection in California, as answering to the needs and high standards of the National Park Service, for a recreational region of a new order or classification designated as National Seashore Recreation Areas.
Some thoughtful persons, including some authorities, feel that already we have set aside ample recreational areas in each state to care for demands far into the future. It is also claimed that administration responsibilities are heavy and maintenance costs burdensome. For certain sections of the United States this might be true. Then, however, we pause to consider the swift settlement, development and population increase of our Pacific States in the past sixty years, and then consider recent slowing down in population increase, we realize how almost impossible it is to plan wisely for growth for even one generation hence.

Vital energy is inherent in our people who always find rest in open air pursuits. Our west is very young in recorded history of these United States, and also young in geological time. In this youth lies its hope and strength. Wilderness space, seemingly limitless, is one of our precious remaining possessions. If we act promptly to preserve such remarkable primal areas for all future time, there need be no regret when generations to come seek healthful exulting freedom from our dense, noisy centers of human congestion.

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* This slowing down in population increase, possibly only temporary, is due to three factors. First, a severe restriction on immigration in California; second, a distinct reduction in the birth rate. It is felt that simultaneously with the return of better times, when families are freed of economic concern there will be a strong upward trend in the birth rate. Third, the western movement will naturally accelerate with the return of normal times.
MATTOLE—HUMBOLDT
CALIFORNIA
NATIONAL BEACHES RECREATION AREA

GENERAL

This area embodies the Mattole River, Bear River and minor watersheds from the Mendocino-Humboldt County line northward almost to Ferndale, and from the Pacific Ocean front inland to the Redwood Highway and Full Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park boundary.

Many of the inhabitants secure their living by the raising of cattle and sheep, goats and hogs, the treeless windswept hills fronting the coast and grassy uplands alternating with forest cover further inland affording feed and range country. Lesser groups engage in dairying, and the growing of fruits and vegetables. Limited numbers engage in the sea food industry.

On the coast rise rocky bluffs, precipitous hills, and mountains. The sea front varies from smooth sandy beaches to pebbly types, or strewn with ponderous boulders. In the north sector of this area, Cape Mendocino juts furthest west of any point on our California coast. In the south, Shelter Cove is a haven for fishing and small craft. Interior lands include much abrupt topography covered with Douglas Firs, Pines, Madrones, Ten Oaks, Live and Mountain Oaks, and Bays,
all with an understory of dense brush. River and creek bottoms include fine Alders, Cottonwoods, Elms, Maples, and Willows. High rolling mountain meadows or grass prairies intervene. Lands eastward nearer the Redwood Highway include Redwoods, and would unite with the Bull Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park, to form a logical integral whole.

Scenic character varies from pastoral charm along river valleys to abrupt forest slopes and windswept mountains. The sea coast in general is barren, rugged, and primal, but noble in color, geological form and in scale.

In adopting the proposed boundaries for this area, effort has been made to include a sound, comprehensive coverage so that the area will comprise a complete unit when considering administration, scenic, biological and kindred factors controlling the design and use of such a recreational region. For example, the coastline has been carefully studied in relation to the Redwood Highway and also the Bull Creek area of Humboldt State Redwood Park, besides logical limits both north and south. (The south Boundary is not arbitrary, for in such direction the wilderness area can be freely consistently extended.) The resulting National Seashore Recreational Region will not only effectively protect all scenic and wildlife areas included, but will also unite with and supplement existing state park areas to the mutual
advantage of both ownerships. The fact that no major highway penetrates or traverses the region tends to enhance its intrinsic primitive values.

Recreational advantages are extremely varied and of high potentiality. Bathing, swimming, diving, and boating will be limited on the coast due to its rugged frontage and much cooler air temperatures than those of more favored points further south in California. Fishing and clam digging can offer excellent pastimes. Beach sports such as running, tumbling, and cliff climbing will test endurance. Inland camping, picnicking and hiking, exploration and nature studies should be of absorbing interest. Swimming pools can be created along river courses. Such interior lands will also serve as a valuable permanent preserve for water fowl, forest and upland game.

This region, comprising a total of approximately 460,000 acres, or 720 square miles, it is estimated will cost $6,500,000.

The whole should serve the recreational needs of the densely populated San Francisco Bay area, the hot interior valleys of Central and Northern California, the North Coast counties, western Nevada and southern Oregon. This is a significant and timely opportunity for planning for a future period when California's population is sure to become far more
dunes. There is no other integral unit now privately owned of undisturbed wilderness potential park land of such size, scale, and importance available anywhere on the north coast of California. It is of interstate and national significance.
NATIONAL SEASHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

Location: The Humboldt Coast-Mattala River area is located in the southwestern section of Humboldt County, on California's north coast. It extends northward almost to Ferndale, south to the Mendocino County line, and inland to unite with the Bull Creek-Humboldt State Redwood Park area and the Redwood Highway.

Present Means of Access: It is reached by the Redwood Highway, Route 101, and is penetrated by good dirt roads from Ferndale on the north, Eureka and Garberville on the east and by way of Fort Bragg from the south. By using San Francisco Bay Ferries this area is 240 miles from San Francisco, Berkeley, or Oakland. The distance to Sacramento is about the same. The Northwestern Pacific R.R. operates trains twice daily through South Fork near Garberville to Eureka.

Extent of Area: The length of the seafront included in this scheme is approximately 68 miles, from Garberville, west of Ferndale, southward to Gomis Mountain below Shelter Cove. By purchasing the lands between the coast and the Bull Creek area of Humboldt State Redwood Park, the width of the area will range from 10 to 20 miles with a probable average width of 16 miles.
Scenic Values: The scenic values of this area are richly varied. A rugged south coast with rocky shores, stern chiseled cliffs and sharp rising hills, is relieved gently at intervals by excellent stretches of sandy beaches. Along the north coast exposed rolling hills and mountains include the finest of pasture lands. Interior valleys offer peaceful charm and friendly streams. Most of the hinterland consists of hills and mountains partially clothed with Douglas Fir, Live and Ten Oaks and native brush, alternating with open prairies or grasslands on steep slopes. Redwoods predominate along the east and south borders only. Remoteness, and primitive ruggedness are its forceful characteristics.

Character of Beaches: These vary in width from 50 to 100 feet with no dunes in evidence. Some have gray-black coarse sand and pebbles; but others less steep and sandy are of a pleasing tan or buff color. Time for survey did not permit obtaining length measurements of these stretches. Bathing is not likely to become prevalent for years to come, partly because of the more chilly summer climate of our North California coast and partly because other suitable beaches sufficient to meet present needs lie closer to our population centers.

Present Development: There is very little develop-
ment along this whole front, the chief instance being that
of Shelter Cove with its wharf, compact cluster of buildings
and small crescent harbor. A few old ranch houses lie close
to the coast. No towns or even communities of appreciable
size are located anywhere along this whole unit front. Its
virgin character is its chief asset.

Possibility of Boating: The rocky front of this
area in Humboldt County is not conducive to boating. The
region does not abound in lakes, so any use of boating
would be very limited, possibly along the lower reaches of
the Mattacle River. Boating, therefore, cannot become a sig-
nificant pastime here.

Forest Values: In a considerable cover of native
conifers Douglas Fir predominate, while almost pure stands
of Redwoods clothe slopes of lesser extent. On higher
ground are found groves of Madrones, Tan Oaks, Live Oaks
and Mountain Oaks. In contrast, alders, Willows, Maples,
Cottonwoods, Bays, Laurels and White Oaks make pleasant the
valleys. This tree growth is high in scenic value and of-
fers the best wild life cover.

Wild Life Values: Deer are plentiful, bear less
so, but a great abundance of the lesser animals are found
besides a well balanced variety of native birds including
California quail and wild ducks. The seashore offers salt
water and shell fishing and the interior streams fresh water fishing. The major portion of this great area should become a permanent Wild Life Preserve.

Estimated Acres: Taken from available data it is estimated that the total acreage desirable for acquisition is 460,000 which includes 26,250 acres lying within the Public Domain. It would, therefore, be necessary to purchase 433,750 acres.
NATIONAL BEACHORE RECREATIONAL AREA

MATTOL--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

EXPLANATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Mattole River watershed area on the Humboldt
Coast while well known and sought by hunters and fishermen,
is so little known by our general public as to remain essen-
tially wilderness if not actually a primitive region wherein
wild life is now fairly secure. The little settlements
found within the heart of this proposed recreation area such
as Capetown, Petrolia, Etterson, Ericsland and Shelter
Cove are so small and picturesque that they may be considered
more hamlets.

The region is so ample that various recreational
pursuits may be followed simultaneously without confusion
and also without interference with or harm to wild life val-
ues. Provided road and trail development is wisely planned
with the aim of due restraint these precious values can be
retained. The time has already arrived for keenly appreciat-
ing the rare privilege of following remote winding roads,
now undulating over friendly pastures, now sharply rising
against slopes, where feelings of expectation, wonder and
surprise are awakened. Should we not try to guard such ex-
amples of natural abandon and spontaneity against aggressive
modern road treatment where fundamental elements of poetry

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seem almost too frequently forgotten?

A vital objective in this plan is that of rendering this remarkable wilderness region reasonably convenient of access from the Redwood Highway, thereby offering a contrast between the character of intensive development for camping, picnicking and other sports found along the major artery—and the rugged primitive fastnesses of this region and its coast.

Just here it seems fitting to sound a warning suggesting the adverse effects upon scenic and wild life values as a result of any great highway being pushed either along the ocean margin or through the heart of this area. It is recognized that increased coastal traffic in future years might justify a major highway from San Francisco via Fort Bragg, into this Mattole-Humboldt wilderness region. Due to the high cost of developing a broad road along severely rough topography fronting this area, it is hoped that when such an artery finally penetrates it from the south, it might be diverted via the existing Thorn-Riceland road to join the Redwood Highway, Route 101, at Garberville.

This hope is expressed because delicate adjustments in this vast wild life sanctuary would be rudely disturbed in many ways if any highway is permitted to bisect its entire length, thus separating the whole into two dis-
tinct portions. Timid animals hesitate to cross such a
broad man-made way and if they so attempt they risk and
often lose their lives. Unless observing persons carefully
ponder this matter, they can scarcely appreciate the detri-
mental effects of a major highway created here with exact-
ing standards, including long tangents, stiff upper cuts,
deep fills, and broad artificial lanes across ridges, or
through forests—all of which tend to make the traveller
watchful of the road, rather than enjoy its environment.

Shelter Cove is the only minor harbor on the
Pacific front of this area. Since California north coast
waters are often rough, boating will assume little import-
ance in this development scheme. Camping and picnic areas
should first be developed with moderation. Later they can
be amplified with increased demand. Ideal situations for
these exist in the sheltered valleys of Bear River, the
Mattole River and its branches, McKee and Redwood Creeks.
Because of the exposed character of the coast front it is
assumed that any development for recreational use such as
picnicking and camping will be limited and in answer to
direct growing needs. This entire problem deals with an
area so vast that any dependable comment or thoughtful plan
can only result from intensive future study. It is urged
that all development work, road and trail construction
be held to an extraodinate minimum because only by such procedure can inherent values be soundly preserved.

This region is not very close to or quickly available to existing population centers. Still, the use of the Redwood Highway is heavy over a long summer season insuring a ready and inspiring gateway to this area. Cross roads give easy access from California's hot interior valleys.
The advantages of this region can easily be enjoyed now by the time expenditure of one day's automobile travel from our more densely populated San Francisco Bay Region. The value of this area to the people of future generations will be high beyond calculation.
NATIONAL SEASORES RECREATIONAL AREA

HAPTOLE--HEMELIH, CALIFORNIA

LAND COSTS

Estimated Cost of Acquisition: The region under consideration consists of approximately 460,000 acres of land, of which 25,000 acres are lands withdrawn from entry, now lying in the Public Domain.

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

435,720 acres of private holdings @ $15.00 per acre

or Total Estimated Cost of $6,530,880.00.

The above estimate does not include the tiny settlements of Capetown, Petrelia, Ettersburg, Shelter Cove, Thorn, or Erickson, nor the estimated cost to acquire fishing, abalone, or kindred rights.

The units shown above were based on assessments, dependable opinion based on intimate knowledge of the lands, and of actual sales to establish the ratio between assessed and true values.

The unit of $15.00 dollars per acre for this land was determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Estimated Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>435,720</td>
<td>$8,530,880.00</td>
<td>$6,530,880.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this estimate, fifteen dollars per acre is used.
for all of the land.

Nevada-Humboldt Area

Classification of Types of Land and Present Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Land</th>
<th>Cost Price Per Acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grazing Land, Choice, along coast</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Interior hills and mountains</td>
<td>10.00--15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Land, Redwoods</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Douglas Fir</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Tan Oaks</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertile Valley Land, Bare or unimproved</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Orchard developed</td>
<td>200.00--500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush Lands, White Thorn</td>
<td>5.00--8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barren or Low Grade Brush Lands</td>
<td>1.00--2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A precise survey, showing accurately the amount
of acreage falling under each of the above classifications
could only be secured as a result of careful and elaborate
computation. It is felt, however, that for our present
needs in arriving at the cost of this land as a whole the
figure of $15.00 per acre has been determined upon soundly.

One of the main difficulties confronting the acquisi-
tion of the area would be that of interference with established
method of livelihood of settlers in the region, in which cattle
and sheep raising play so significant a part. It is possible,
however, that leases might be transferable to present owners to continue their pursuits to the close of their lives, or that they might be issued easements on the land for such purpose for an even longer period.
NATIONAL SEASHORES RECREATION AREA

HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

POPULATION DATA

Our 1930 census population survey reveals the following distribution:

Within radius of 100 miles    16,073
   "    " 200 "    562,043
   "    " 300 "    1,978,063

This region has the advantage of being reasonably convenient to the industrial and commercial centers of the San Francisco Bay zone, the larger interior cities of Sacramento and Stockton, and the many towns of the hot interior valleys of California whose citizens socially need a change in climate and justly crave the cooler, zestful conditions this area offers. Eureka, Crescent City, and Ukiah are within one hundred miles of the area. San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Sacramento, Marysville, Klamath Falls, and Medford lie within the 200 mile circle. San Jose, Stockton, Revere, Roseburg, Marshfield, and Eugene are located within the 300 mile circle.

Mattole-Humboldt Region is one of the last available natural wilderness areas combined with pristine coast front of adequate extent within 300 miles of San Francisco Bay cities. It could serve as a vacation area for people living in large cities who cannot afford travel to regions further distant.
NATIONAL SEASONS RECREATIONAL AREA
HAYSTACK--HUMBOLDT, CALIFORNIA

WILD LIFE

This fascinating region is a haven for wild life, which when acquired and rightly administered will offer security for the propagation of game and fur bearing animals.

No Wildlife Technician had been appointed up to the time when the writer made his field study of this area. However, the following animals, birds, insects, trees, and plant materials were either observed, or known to exist.

**Animals:**
- Badgers
- Bear (black; limited)
  - (brown; *)
- Bear (wild; formerly domestic)
- Geese
- Coyotes (scare)
- Deer
- Elk (formerly)
- Fox
- Gophers
- Mink
- Mice (field)

**Birds:**
- Passerine (turkey)
- Jays (Mountain blue)
- Linnets
- Larks (Meadow)
- Quail (Mountain)
  - (Valley)
- Robins, Wood (English)
- Snow Birds (black breasted)
- Wild Ducks

**Fish:**
- Brook Trout
### Animals (cont.):
- Holes
- Panthers
- Bats (Wood)
- Raccoons
- Skunks
- Squirrels (Ground)
- Squirrels (Gray or Tree)
- Wildcats

### Insects:
- Spiders (Black Widow)
- Tarantulas
- Wasps

### Sea Life and Foods:
- Abalone
- Mussels
- Salmon
- Steel Head Trout

### Wild Flowers and Shrubs:
- Anemones
- Blue Eyed Grass
- Bleeding Heart
- Calycanthus (Pussy Bares)
- Ceanothus
- Clintonia
- Columbine
- Current (Wild)

### Grasses and Ferns:
- Oxalis
- Red Top Rye
- Iris
- Ferns (Sword)
  - Woodwardia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wild Flowers and Shrubs (cont.)</th>
<th>Trees:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delphinium (Larkspur)</td>
<td>Alders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Solomon Seal</td>
<td>Bay (Laurel or Pepperwood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilia</td>
<td>Chinquapin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huckleberry (Black)</td>
<td>Cottonwoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Paint Brush</td>
<td>Dogwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupine</td>
<td>Elderberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymenocallis</td>
<td>Fire (Douglas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard (Wild)</td>
<td>Hazelwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manzanita</td>
<td>Madrones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthocarpus (Butter and Eggs)</td>
<td>Mapleos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas (Wild)</td>
<td>Oaks (Live, and Mountain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poppies</td>
<td>&quot; (Tan, and White)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pimpernell (Scarlet)</td>
<td>Pines (Knob cone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salal</td>
<td>&quot; (Sugar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedum</td>
<td>&quot; (Western Yellow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmonberries</td>
<td>Redwoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowberries</td>
<td>Willows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting Stars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trillium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thimbleberries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle (Fall)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorn (White)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Ashley C. Brown, Wildlife Technician, Region VIII, offers the following comment on this area.

"Primitive areas conceived as part of National Sea-
shore Recreation Areas owe much of their charm, their educa-
tional value and their scientific interest to the birds and
animals that inhabit them. While those who visit these quiet
sanctuaries for a few days out of each year, do so with the
expectation of living in the open, bathing in clear cold
streams, tramping mountain trails or watching sunsets from
chosen beauty spots, they also anticipate that rarest of all
joys, an opportunity to become a little familiar with the
native wild life.

No one fails to thrill at the sight of a doe with
her spotted fawns, a glimpse of a proud pair of quail with
their precious downy brood, the discovery of two white eggs
in the dove's nest, or the knowledge that a big old speckled
tROUT lives in a shaded pool beneath a certain gnarled root.
These precious glimpses, fleeting though they may be, leave
impressions not soon to be forgotten. They are an intimate
and inseparable part of the forest and its abundant associa-
tion for which the city dweller so often hungered.

The Mattole-Humboldt area has long been known as
one of California's richest coastal regions, possessed of an
abundance of wild life still maintaining its normal associa-
tion balance. Truly it is a storehouse of Nature's resources,
filled with so much that has in other areas been destroyed or driven out by man's continual and relentless encroachment on the fast diminishing wilderness. Most fortunate is the fact that the area as a whole is of sufficient extent to include within its limits the complete ecological associations of large groups of both birds and animals. Wide differences in elevations, sites, cover types, and ranges are sufficient and varied enough to provide the annual requirements of the many forms animals and a large number of the birds as well.

Botanically, the range includes many of our most interesting plant forms, annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees, all here finding happy shelter or the association necessary to their normal welfare. High, steep ocean cliffs, brush covered hillside, steep rocky canyons, cool creek sides, lofty peaks and upthrust hills are densely covered with that crowning wealth of native plants peculiar to the coastal area."

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CONCLUSION

The American spirit still yearns for adventure and finds scope for rugged pioneering in the west. Adventure, spurred by hope, builds character and finds expression through development and test of man's highest powers. We are at the threshold of a new era in which the subtler aesthetic phases of man, long latent can flower. The amenities of life shall hold high place in our new scheme of living. Among the supreme gifts of such a life, our vast parks, national in scope, must be included for they can offer through shore forest and mountain, sequestered wilderness and freedom. In them strong forces are dormant—forces of soul vitality and such joyous uplift for all that they might be regarded as gigantic storage batteries for recharging the ideals and loftier energies of the people. Let us so preserve, administer and perpetuate these areas that they may become constant sources of delight and inspiration for those large numbers, who when seeking the open, find there also the sublime pattern for a life that moves with rhythmic beauty forward and upward, to poise, truth and the noblest existence.
LOOKING UP MATTOLE VALLEY AT PETEOLIA
MATTOLE RIVER BRIDGE EAST OF PETROLIA
OPEN GRAZING AND FOREST LANDS, WINDY NIPGAP
The foregoing report is respectfully submitted
to Lawrence C. Merriam, Regional Officer, Region VIII.

By [Signature]

Emerson Knight
Associate Landscape Architect
Inspector, Region VIII