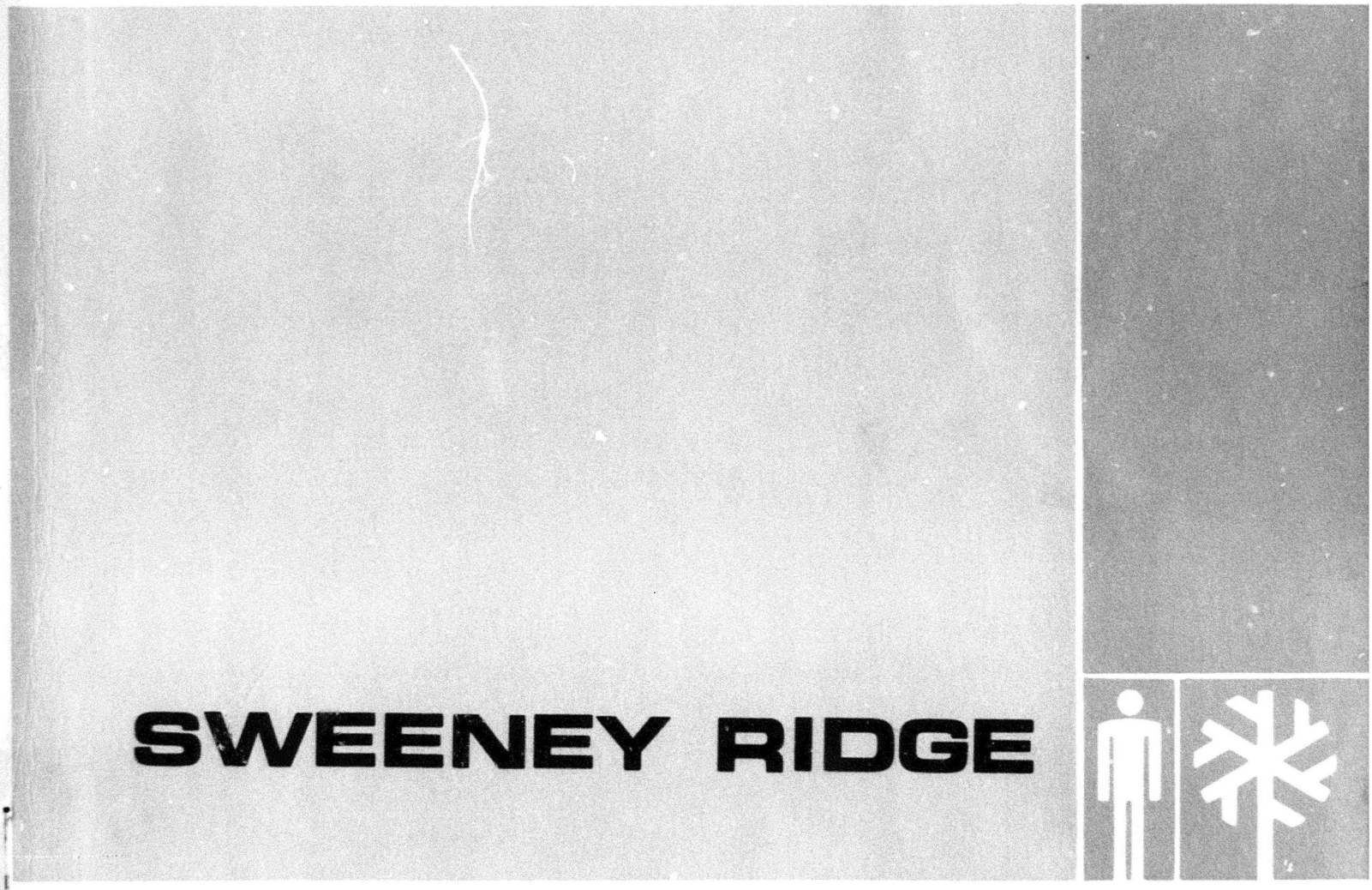
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new area
june 1979

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Proposed



SWEENEY RIDGE

CALIFORNIA

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Publication of this document should not be construed as representing either approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior. This document provides information to the Secretary of the Interior for his consideration in making his recommendation to the Congress. This document also provides information for further consideration of the area as a potential submission to the Congress in compliance with Section 8 of the General Authorities Act of 1970, as amended by Public Law 94-458.

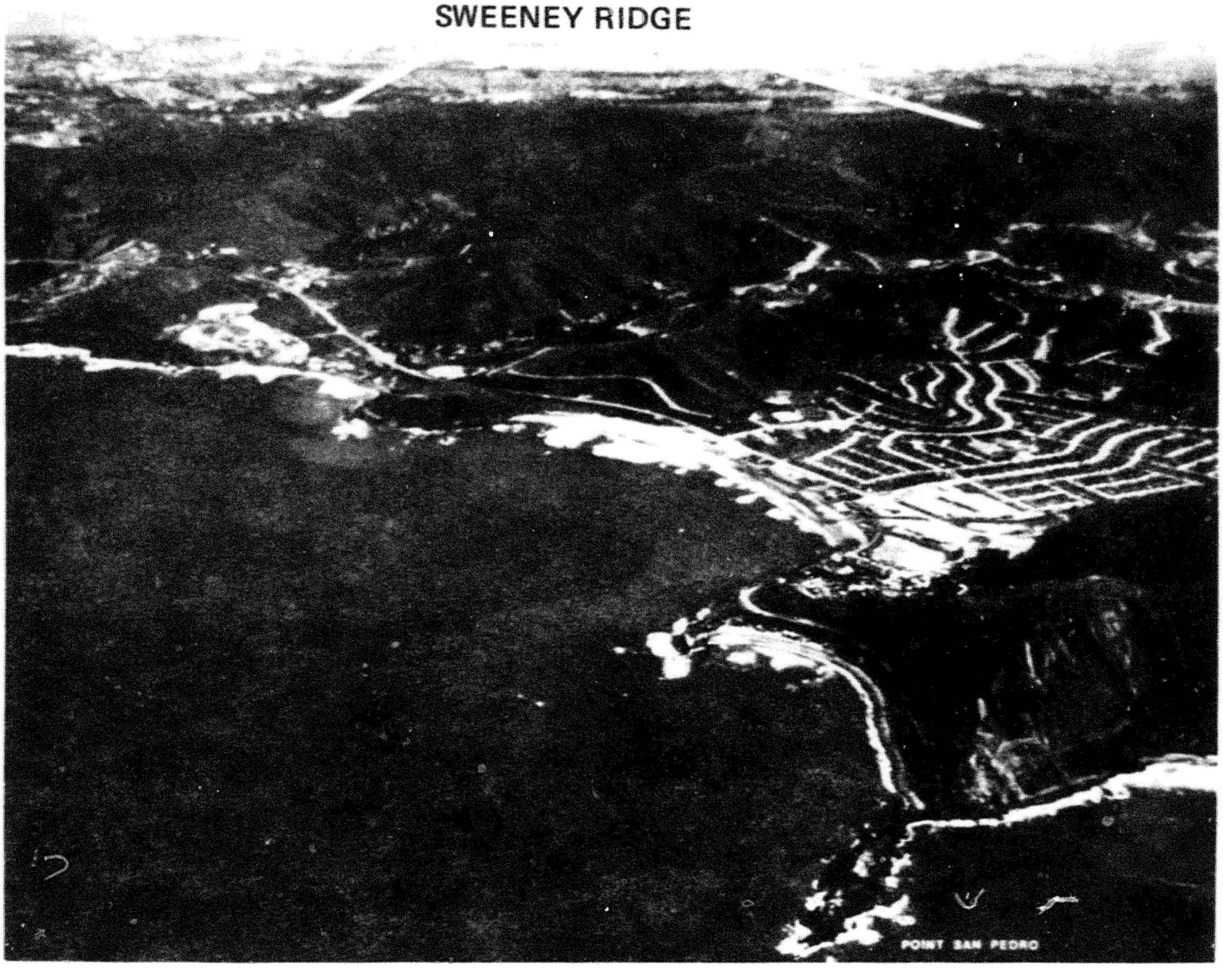
As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES
NEW AREA

SWEENEY RIDGE
CALIFORNIA

United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service

SWEENEY RIDGE



Sweeney Ridge and other connecting ridgelines embrace the City of Pacifica. San Francisco Bay is visible along the horizon.

SWEENEY RIDGE, CALIFORNIA

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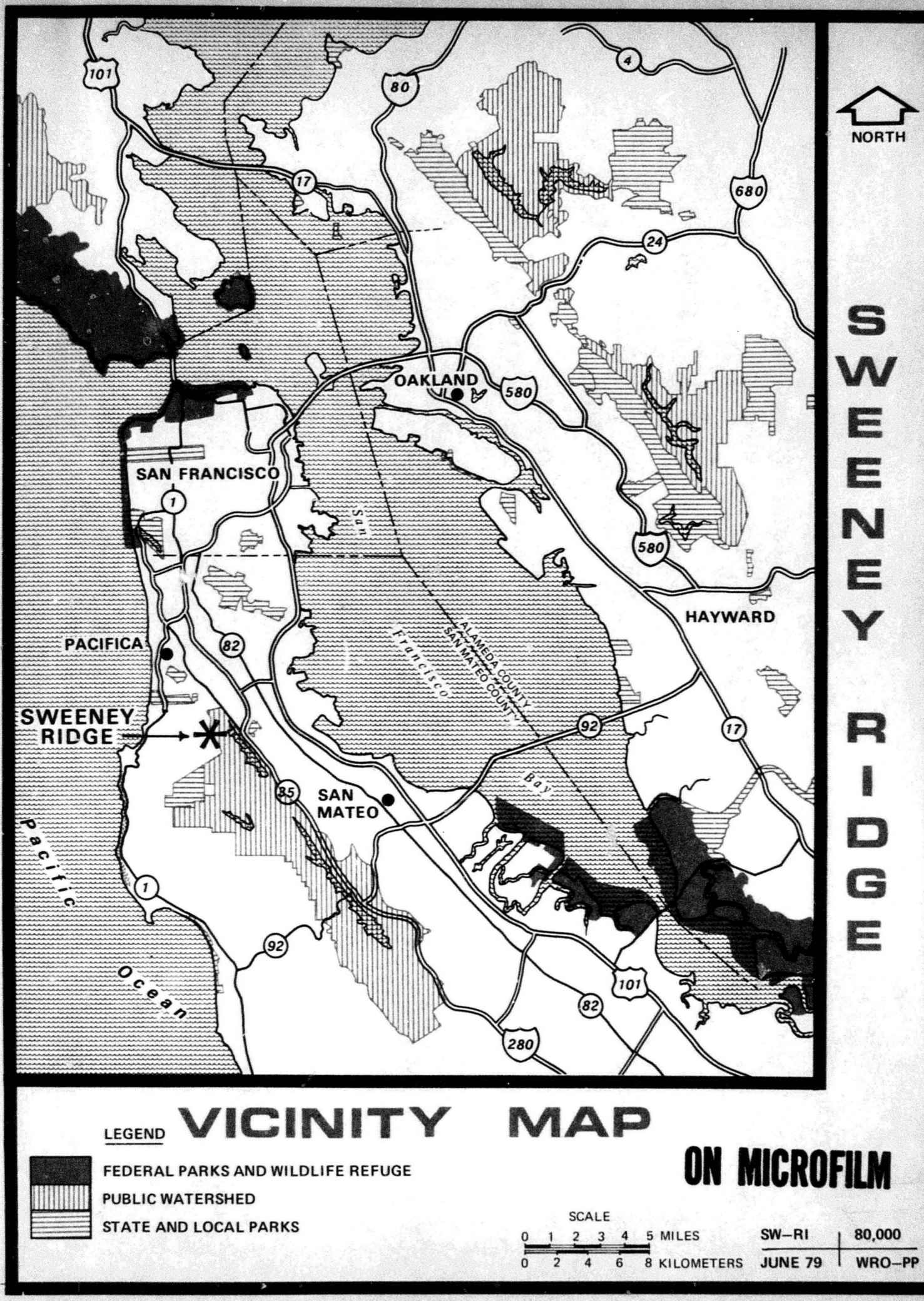
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NORTH
SWEENEY RIDGE
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80
4
17
680
24
OAKLAND
580
SAN FRANCISCO
1
San
580
HAYWARD
PACIFICA
82
Francisco
ALAMEDA COUNTY
SAN MATEO COUNTY
SWEENEY RIDGE
92
17
Bay
85
SAN MATEO
Pacific
1
92
Ocean
101
82
280
VICINITY MAP
ON MICROFILM
LEGEND
FEDERAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE REFUGE
PUBLIC WATERSHED
STATE AND LOCAL PARKS
SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES
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SUMMARY

CONDITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESOURCE

Sweeney Ridge, in combination with other connecting ridges, provides a natural backdrop for the City of Pacifica. Located in northwestern San Mateo County, the two mile, north-south running ridge consists of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 acres of coastal scrub and grass. Except for the remnant structures of an abandoned missile radar site and water tanks, the grassy level crest of Sweeney Ridge remains undeveloped. The crest of Sweeney Ridge and the crests of two lateral connecting ridges are being proposed for residential development by the property owners, the West Aspen Company, who also own the western slopes of Sweeney Ridge, altogether about 1,000 acres. The development project consists of 1,500 residential units and would extend over about 200 acres. The publically owned San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a national historic landmark, is located on the crest of Sweeney Ridge.

There are several thousand acres of public park and watershed lands all devoted to open space uses in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge. This public open space includes the 18 acre Discovery Site atop Sweeney Ridge. The resource values of these nearby public lands are similar to those identified and evaluated in this report for Sweeney Ridge. Sweeney Ridge's principal

resource values are the Discovery Site and the spectacular views which can be enjoyed from along the crest. These views currently can be viewed in a natural setting. The Sweeney Ridge area is currently being used for outdoor recreation purposes, hiking, riding and picnicking, mostly by local residents.

The proposed mixed residential development would impact resource values along the crest of Sweeney Ridge and the two lateral ridges. However, it is judged these impacts would not significantly detract from these values, due to the 18 acres in public ownership among the Discovery Site and the cluster nature of the proposed residential development. The development project has not yet been officially presented to the City of Pacifica who has jurisdiction over whether or not the project can proceed. The city is scheduled to take action on the proposal late this summer.

ALTERNATIVES

Three alternatives have been identified by the National Park Service which provide in varying degrees for the protection of the resource values associated with Sweeney Ridge. One of these alternatives provides a means for preserving natural values associated with an extensive open space area in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge.

ALTERNATIVE A - The implementation of this alternative would ensure the preservation and protection of the natural, cultural and recreational values associated with the entire Sweeney Ridge Area. This would be accomplished through the acquisition and management of the crest and the western slopes of Sweeney Ridge along with the two connecting lateral ridges, about 1,000 acres in all, by a public park agency. Under this alternative, proposed residential development along the ridge crests would be precluded. The area would be preserved, protected and open to the public for passive outdoor recreation uses. The San Francisco Bay Discovery Site would be protected by a large buffer, and the opportunity to enjoy unobstructed scenic views from Sweeney Ridge in a natural setting would remain unimpaired. An arc of protected open space would be completed around the City of Pacifica.

Assuming project approval and completion, and based on a fair market value currently estimated at $155,000,000 for the completed project along the crest of Sweeney Ridge, a maximum of $1,550,000 in property tax revenue would be lost to San Mateo County if this alternative were implemented. The City of Pacifica's share of the project revenue, estimated by consultants to the property owner at about one million dollars during the six year construction period and a small annual surplus upon full development, also would be precluded.

Acquisition cost for the 1,000 acres owned by the West Aspen Company is estimated at $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 in 1979 dollars. The escalation rate on developable lands of this type is currently 18 to 24 percent per year. Development costs of $75,000 have been estimated for recreation facilities. The annual operation and maintenance budget has been estimated to range from $50,000 to $75,000.

Due to the size of the area, the significance of its resource values and its potential draw as a public park, management of Sweeney Ridge is feasible at the county or state level. Federal management of the area by the National Park Service is possible, but only on a conditional basis. The following management options have been identified as means of implementing this alternative:

Option (1) - Management by the San Mateo County Department of Parks and Recreation. Implementation of this option would be possible only if the county were provided with Federal financial assistance for acquisition, development, operation and maintenance. This is due to the effect which Proposition 13 has had on the amount of revenues now available to the county for park purposes. Therefore, costs of implementation of this option would be borne entirely by the Federal government.

Option (2) - Management by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The Department has committed its capital outlay program for parklands acquisition for the next five years. The Sweeney Ridge area is not included therein despite a preliminary survey of the resource values of Sweeney Ridge by the Department. Consequently, this option could not be implemented unless the State were provided with Federal financial assistance for acquisition. Under this alternative, the cost for land purchase would be borne by the Federal government. Any development of recreational facilities on Sweeney Ridge would be up to the State and the attendant costs would be their responsibility, as would the annual operation and maintenance costs.

Option (3) - Management by the National Park Service. Due to the relatively small size of the area and the limited significance of the resource values, it would not be feasible for the National Park Service to manage Sweeney Ridge as a separate unit of the national park system. However, the proximity of the nearby Golden Gate National Recreation Area makes it possible for Sweeney Ridge to be managed as a component of the national recreation area. Under this option, the National Park Service would have full

management responsibility for development, operation and maintenance of parklands in the Sweeney Ridge area.

ALTERNATIVE B - This alternative would provide a means for the preservation of the Sweeney Ridge area and for the preservation of certain other significant resource values located within an extensive natural area identified in this study in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge. This preservation would be carried out through designation as an Area of National Concern the 35,000 to 40,000 acres involved. Implementation of this alternative would preclude the proposed residential development along the crest of Sweeney Ridge. Through designation as an Area of National Concern, a planning body would be legislatively authorized to develop a comprehensive land use management plan for this entire area. The planning body would be made up of those units of government currently having jurisdiction over the area. The Federal government would provide technical and financial assistance to carry out the goals of the comprehensive plan. Financial assistance for land acquisition would be made available following review and approval of the plan by the Secretary of the Interior, except in certain legislatively identified areas. The Secretary would have the responsibility to ensure that all proposed Federal projects are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The property tax revenues, currently estimated at $1,550,000, generated by the residential development proposed along the crest of Sweeney Ridge would be lost to San Mateo County. The City of Pacifica, it has been estimated, would be losing about one million dollars during the six year construction period for the project. The City would also lose the estimated small annual surplus which would be accruing to them upon full development of the project. This alternative allows for selected land acquisition beyond the purchase of the Sweeney Ridge Area, so additional lands would eventually be taken off of the tax rolls.

This alternative provides $25,000,000 to $30,000,000 in Federal monies for land acquisition. The current (1979) purchase price for the West Aspen property is estimated to be in the $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 range. There are no park development or annual operation or maintenance costs associated with this alternative.

ALTERNATIVE C - Under this alternative there would be no additional action taken by the Federal government to preserve or protect the resource values associated with either Sweeney Ridge or the adjoining open space area. Consequently, there would be no costs to the Federal government associated with this alternative.

Assuming that the 1,500 units of residential development proposed along the crest of Sweeney Ridge does, in fact, take place the resource values of the crest area would be diminished. The opportunities to enjoy the scenic views in a natural setting from atop Sweeney Ridge would be reduced by that development. However, the clustering of the units means that some of the viewpoints from along the Sweeney Ridge crest would remain unobstructed. Some residential development would take place along the western boundary of the 18 acre San Francisco Bay Discovery Site. However, the basic integrity of the Discovery Site would remain intact and the "historic view" of San Francisco Bay to the east would be virtually unaffected. There would be some diminishment of the habitat of the endangered San Francisco garter snake.

The completed development would provide housing for about 3,500 people and according to consultant estimates would result in a small annual surplus accruing to the City of Pacifica. In addition, the consultant has indicated the city would realize an estimated one million dollars during the six year construction phase. As part of the development, a four lane access road including an interchange would be built by the developer to provide connection with the coast highway. San Mateo County would gain an estimated $1,550,000 in property tax revenue from the project.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in the preservation and protection of the resource values of Sweeney Ridge has been expressed by a considerable number of people, most of them residents of Pacifica and other nearby communities in San Mateo County. This includes a formal request by the Pacifica City Council for their Congressman to sponsor the undertaking of a feasibility study of Sweeney Ridge by the National Park Service. Responding to this interest, several Congressional requests were subsequently directed to the National Park Service for a study of Sweeney Ridge to determine if the resource values present there were significant enough to qualify the area for possible inclusion in the national park system. In January 1979, the Secretary of the Interior, by letter, indicated that the National Park Service's Western Regional Office would proceed with a feasibility study of Sweeney Ridge. The Secretary stated that this study would commence in mid-January 1979 with a projected completion date of six months.

In carrying out this study, the National Park Service has consulted and coordinated with officials of State, county and city governments, as well as with representatives of property owners, members of citizen groups and interest individuals for

for needed information on resource values and socio-economic conditions. This information and data form the basis for alternative ways to ensure preservation of the significant resources identified in this study. These alternatives have been evaluated in terms of their environmental and socio-economic impacts, including the costs associated with their implementation. The purpose of this study report is to provide the necessary information to enable the Secretary of the Interior to make his recommendation to Congress regarding appropriate future uses of Sweeney Ridge.

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Sweeney Ridge is an undeveloped topographic feature about two miles long situated above the City of Pacifica. Sweeney Ridge, in combination with connecting ridges, provides the natural backdrop for that city.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Sweeney Ridge is located in San Mateo County, a 450 square mile area bordered by San Francisco County on the north and Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties on the south. The Pacific Ocean forms the county's western boundary and the eastern boundary extends out into San Francisco Bay.

San Mateo County occupies most of the San Francisco Peninsula and is split east and west by the San Andreas Rift Zone and the hills of the coast range. East of the rift, the hills slope down, merging with the narrow plain surrounding San Francisco Bay. Most of this part of the county is covered by the long-established, affluent, bedroom communities of the Peninsula. These communities extend down to Santa Clara County and form an almost unbroken line of development from San Francisco south to San Jose. The San Francisco International Airport and some industrial development occupy the northern bayshore of the county.

West of the rift, San Mateo County remains largely undeveloped except for the suburban communities of Daly City and Pacifica in the northwest. South of Pacifica, the county is still in open space, except for a series of small coastal communities linked by the coast highway. The terrain here is ocean terraces backed by large expanses of steep forested ridges broken up by canyons.

Population growth for San Mateo County as a whole has declined, both percentage-wise and numerically. One of the reasons for the decline is the scarcity of relatively flat, inexpensive land suitable and available for residential development. In the northern part of the county, which includes Pacifica, population increased by about one-third during the Sixties. Nearly all of the large tracts of easily-developable land in the northern part of the county have gone over to residential development. San Bruno Mountain is the largest single remaining tract of undeveloped land in the developed northern part of the county.

Most of the mountain has been recently purchased by the County, and the State is proposing to acquire more. Some limited residential development will probably take place on the remainder of San Bruno Mountain. The only other undeveloped parts of northern San Mateo County are the hills of Pacifica, of which Sweeney Ridge comprises the largest part and where large-scale

residential development is most imminent.

The specific area referred to by maps as Sweeney Ridge is more than two miles long and approximately 1,500 to 2,000 acres in size, with a maximum elevation of 1,220 feet. Sweeney Ridge forms part of a series of similar connecting ridges which run north and south parallel to the San Andreas Rift Zone. There are also lateral east-west ridges branching off from the northern and middle portions of Sweeney Ridge. The ridge crest and its steep western slope are within the City of Pacifica and, except for about 20 acres, in private ownership. On its western side the rather level ridge top slopes steeply down to the residential development of Pacifica. The eastern slopes of Sweeney Ridge are public watershed lands. There is a considerable amount of public land, parks, and watershed on the other sides of Sweeney Ridge.

For purposes of this feasibility study of Sweeney Ridge, the National Park Service has examined the significant park and open space resources in a region generally encompassing the northern portion of San Mateo County down to State Route 92. Particular attention, however, was focused on identifying and evaluating the natural, cultural, and recreational values associated with Sweeney Ridge.

LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

Land use in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge is predominantly public park and watershed. The northwestern end of the more than 20,000 acres of watershed land owned by the City and County of San Francisco flanks the eastern slopes of Sweeney Ridge and also forms its southern boundary. To the north of Sweeney Ridge are two large park and open space areas maintained by San Francisco and San Mateo Counties.

The level crest and the steep, western slopes of Sweeney Ridge itself are in private ownership. The grasses found along the crest are currently being grazed by horses under the terms of a lease arrangement with the owners, the West Aspen Company. All of the crest of Sweeney Ridge, its western slope and the two connecting lateral east-west ridges, encompassing over 1,000 acres in all, are owned by the West Aspen Company. Portions of the lower western slope are in private ownership in five separate parcels. The eastern side of Sweeney Ridge is owned by San Francisco and administered as watershed. The city has a 150 foot wide open space easement along its common border with the West Aspen property. The purpose of the easement is to protect the watershed. Except for the remnant support facilities of the now abandoned U.S. Army's leased missile radar site (several buildings, a parking area, chain fence and access road) and water tanks, Sweeney Ridge remains undeveloped.

The Pacifica residential communities of Vallemar and Park Pacifica occupy the valleys below the western slope of Sweeney Ridge. Residential development, occurring here initially in the level valley floors, has gradually moved up the canyons. This is particularly evident in the Park Pacifica area immediately to the south of Sweeney Ridge. The Coastside Corral, a horse rental operation, occupies the upper end of the Park Pacifica area. Terra Nova High School, which includes a large open space area, is adjacent to the lower western slopes of Sweeney Ridge.

Next to the high school a small truck farming operation is still being carried on, the remnant of a larger farm which disappeared when the high school was built. A nursery, specializing in exotic plants, is being operated on lands leased from CalTrans located at the terminous of the northern lateral ridge connecting with Sweeney Ridge.

TRANSPORTATION

Present highway access to southern Pacifica and Sweeney Ridge is rather limited. The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) System terminates in Daly City, just to the south of the San Francisco line. Principle access from San Francisco is presently via State Highway 1, the coast highway, which connects Pacifica

with San Fr o to the north through linkages with I280, State Highway 35, and U.S. 101. Several miles south of Pacifica, the coast highway intersects State Highway 92 at Half Moon Bay. This highway and Sharp Park Road just to the north of Sweeney Ridge provide the only connection for Pacifica with the bay side Peninsula communities.

The California Department of Transportation's project for the completion of I380 from its intersection with I280 in San Bruno to the Coast Highway in Pacifica has now been officially dropped from the State Highway Plan. Following a formal public hearing, the California Transportation Commission voted not to complete the construction of I380 from I280 to State Highway 1. The Commission's decision supported recommendations of the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). A CalTrans feasibility report (January 12, 1979) recommended that I380, between Route 1 in Pacifica and Interstate 380 in San Bruno, be rescinded as a freeway route and that instead improvements be made on Sharp Park Road to take care of east-west traffic to and from Pacifica.

The CalTrans' report also recommended that Sharp Park Road not be included in the State Highway system; that portions of Skyline Boulevard be widened; that both the Sharp Park and

and Skyline improvements be financed with Federal funds and that lands earlier purchased by the State to complete I380 should now be sold.

Following the hearing, the State indicated that it would be seeking funds, mostly Federal, to make possible the called for improvements of Sharp Park Road. Pacifica's position on I380 was that the State not rescind the route and not dispose of the already acquired rights-of-way so as to be able to reconsider the extension of I380 at a future time. They do not believe that the improvements of Sharp Park Road can be the long-term solution to providing Pacifica with a convenient and adequate east-west access. The nearby City of San Bruno agreed with the CalTrans' report and favored rescinding the route and was against any improvement of Sharp Park Road which they felt would further increase traffic on a city street already over-taxed.

The Coast Highway is a four lane freeway from its intersection with I280 in Daly City south of Sharp Park. South of Sharp Park, the highway becomes a four-lane undivided highway with signal light intersections. As mentioned, Sharp Park Road is the existing connection with the bay side for the central and southern (Sweeney Ridge) portions of Pacifica. Roads which

provide for local circulation south of Sharp Park are Fassler Avenue, Terra Nova, Linda Mar and Oddstad Boulevards.

There is presently no paved road access to the western side of Sweeney Ridge itself. Unimproved fire roads exist along the entire crest of the ridge itself, as well as along the crest of the two western lateral ridges. The dirt road on the southern lateral ridge ends at Fassler Avenue. The dirt road along the northern lateral ridge does not connect with any paved roads. However, from Ridgeway Drive, running along the southern boundary of Sharp Park, access can be gained to Sweeney Ridge. These dirt roads are on private lands which are fenced. However, hikers and picnickers currently use these roads to get up to Sweeney Ridge. On the east and south, paved road access leads up to the ridge via roads on San Francisco's watershed lands. Access to Sweeney Ridge is more difficult via these routes since watershed lands are fenced, patrolled and access is possible only by obtaining a permit from the San Francisco Water Department. The City of Pacifica has an access easement granted to them by San Francisco to the 18 acre publicly owned San Francisco Bay Discovery Site located on top of Sweeney Ridge.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The 1970 population of the City of Pacifica was a little over

36,000 and currently it is estimated to be about 38,000. As with most communities, Pacifica's growth rate has slowed considerably during the Seventies, with an average annual rate of less than one percent. The projected growth rate for the next decade is between 0.5 percent and one percent per year. During the previous decade, Pacifica grew by more than 70 percent, compared with about 25 percent for the rest of San Mateo County. Pacifica developed in single-family subdivisions, first on the valley floors then on the adjacent hillsides. However, substantial portions of the hill area within the city limits remain undeveloped. Nearly all of this undeveloped area is in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge. Pacifica remains essentially a bedroom community with the majority of its residents working in San Francisco.

The City of Pacifica has been involved in the process of updating its General Plan for some time. A draft plan was issued for review purposes last September. Essentially, this plan reflects the somewhat lowered expectations of the city in terms of future growth and the ability to generate revenues. The draft General Plan identifies proposed land uses for the city, including Sweeney Ridge.

The portion of Sweeney Ridge which falls within the

jurisdiction of the City of Pacifica (the ridge itself, the adjacent steep western slopes and the lateral east-west ridges) is shown and designated in the draft General Plan as a "Special Study Area." The plan describes such an area as one where special physical or economic problems exist and for which more than one use would be acceptable, depending upon the conclusions of additional study. The General Plan Map showing the above designation for Sweeney Ridge also shows the area to contain a series of "prominent ridgelines." This is a separate category and the draft General Plan describes "prominent ridgelines" as:

> A designation assigned to the most scenic of the City's ridges in order to protect their visual importance. The intent is to limit development on these ridges as much as possible. Zoning would encourage owners to focus development on suitable portions of their property off the ridges. Where there is no suitable property off the ridge itself, then carefully designed and regulated development could be permitted on the ridge. Such ridgeline development would be encouraged to use creative grading and structural design to make the resulting residential units as inconspicuous as possible to

those viewing them from a distance. Roadways would be permitted on prominent ridgelines provided they are graded into the contours of the hillside.

The draft General Plan concludes with the statement that the Special Study Area (Sweeney Ridge) should be planned and developed as a unit with whatever use determined to be the most feasible and desirable. Alternative uses which are to be considered include public acquisition for parks, very low residential development, and agricultural.

Pacifica's current General Plan shows Sweeney Ridge to be within an area identified for the protection of hillsides, implemented through a Hillside Preservation District Ordinance. This ordinance is based on a determination of the average slope for a particular parcel of land. Any terrain within that parcel exceeding that overall average would be excluded from development. The ordinance is also intended to discourage development along ridgelines. The underlying zoning for Sweeney Ridge is A/B5, an agricultural zone, which limits development to one unit per acre. In case of conflict, Pacifica's municipal code states that the ordinance shall prevail. Sweeney Ridge is located outside of the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission.

Proposition 13 has had a negative fiscal effect on Pacifica due to the city's dependence on revenue generated from the property tax. For example, prior to Proposition 13 Pacifica was receiving a little over $450 in revenue from a home whose fair market value was $100,000 ($25,000 assessed valuation at a 1.805 percent tax rate). Subsequent to Proposition 13, the same house generated $8.40 in revenue for the city under the State of California's one-year (FY 78/79) formula for the allocation of property tax revenue (last year Pacifica's share of the one percent County property tax pool was approximately .84 percent). Total revenue for Pacifica from the property tax prior to Proposition 13 was approximately $2,300,000 (FY 77/78). Post-Proposition 13, the amount was approximately $1,275,000 (FY 78/79) or about half of what it had been in the previous year. Both these amounts do not include any reimbursement by the State. Although there is uncertainty regarding the amount of revenues which Pacifica will be receiving this year from the property tax, it is expected that the amount will be more than last year.

City officials are presently considering various alternative means of raising revenue. Possibilities being considered include more commercial development (shopping centers, restaurants, tourist attractions, etc), the levying of a

municipal services tax, providing municipal fire insurance for homeowners and asking the state legislature to change the manner in which sales tax revenue is distributed, from an origin of sale basis to a per-capita basis.

The recent decision by CalTrans to rescind I380 will not have a positive effect on Pacifica's ability to attract residential development. The purpose of the project was to provide Pacifica with a major transportation corridor to the San Mateo County Peninsula communities to the east. On March 23, the California Transportation Commission, following a public hearing, voted not to complete the construction of I380. The improvement of Sharp Park Road is currently being considered as the alternative to provide Pacifica with a major east-west access road.

The West Aspen Company, a land holding subsidiary of the Texas International Company, presently owns 1,096 acres of Sweeney Ridge. This tract of land takes in nearly all of that part of Sweeney Ridge in private ownership - the crest, the western slopes and the two lateral ridges. West Aspen has developed plans calling for a Planned Unit Development

on portions of their holdings on Sweeney Ridge. The current development plan consists of 1,500 residential units and supporting retail and community service facilities.

The development would be located largely along the relatively flat (less than 25 percent slope) crest of Sweeney Ridge. The residential development would consist of 240 units of single family detached housing covering 40 acres, 765 units of townhouses covering 85 acres and 495 units of condominiums covering 19 acres. A neighborhood type retail and service facilities portion would cover four acres, roads and rights-of-way would cover 40 acres and 12 acres would be developed as recreation amenities. Altogether, the development would extend over just a little more than 200 acres. Principal access is proposed from Highway 1 and the developer will be providing for that access. Total population for the project is estimated to be 3,850.

Current estimated market value for the individual units of the proposed development are single family detached, $132,000, townhouses, $107,000 and condominiums, $77,000. The total estimated market value (1979) of the proposed development has been estimated by HKS Associates, consultants to West Aspen, to be about $155,000,000. Therefore, the

property tax that the development would generate under Proposition 13 is $1,550,000 per year. It is uncertain at this time what Pacifica's share would be since the current allocation formula is to be changed by the State legislature. The changes, however, apparently are to be designed to favor those jurisdictions who, like Pacifica, provide essential community services. Prior to Proposition 13, Pacifica received about 18 percent of all property tax collected in the city. Assuming they would be receiving a comparable share under the new allocation formula, Pacifica would receive close to $280,000 annually in property tax from the proposed development. This figure represents more than 20 percent of Pacifica's post-Proposition 13 property tax revenue and about 12 percent of its pre-Proposition 13 revenue. (See ADDENDUM at the end of this report.)

According to information developed by HKS Associates, during the estimated six year construction period, when one-time costs to Pacifica for capital improvements and operating expenses are compared with one-time fees and revenue accruing to Pacifica, the results show a considerable overall revenue surplus totalling nearly one million dollars. Moreover, the consultant has concluded that the proposed project, upon <u>full</u> development, would generate sufficient annual revenue to pay for the annual operating costs of

providing for municipal services--such as fire, police, community services and recreation--and possibly show a slight surplus. The City of Pacifica has not developed any cost verses revenue estimates for the West Aspen project.

A draft environmental impact report has been prepared on the proposed development by HKS Associates. Upon completion of the environmental impact report formal review process, the City of Pacifica will make a decision with respect to West Aspen's application to rezone and obtain variances on the property so as to allow the development to to proceed. This action should take place by late summer 1979.

The Hillside Preservation District Ordinance contained in Pacifica's current General Plan is designed to regulate development along ridgelines and exclude development on certain steep slopes. As mentioned, the ordinance uses average slope to determine allowable development. Based on the formula, the average slope on West Aspen property is too steep to allow development to take place.

As mentioned, the updated General Plan, currently being reviewed, shows the Pacifica portion of Sweeney Ridge as a "Special Study Area" and identifies three alternative

appropriate uses: public park, very low density residential development or agriculture. It is uncertain whether or not the type and scope of development currently proposed by West Aspen conforms to the updated draft General Plan. Pacifica expects to take action on the draft General Plan sometime this summer.

CITIZEN CONCERNS

During the past decade many residents of Pacifica have expressed concern over large-scale residential development in the surrounding hills. There has even been some concern expressed regarding proposals calling for additional commercial development along the city's shoreline. There is considerable interest by local residents for keeping the hills around Pacifica in open space. Most groups and individuals see this best being accomplished through the purchase and management of these hills by some park and recreation agency, preferably the National Park Service.

Recently (about one year ago), this interest coalesced with the formation of an ad hoc group called PUSH (Pacificans United to Save Our Hills). Their purpose was to document the presence of what they felt to be broad base support for keeping Pacifica's hills in open space and managed as a unit

of the National Park system. The proposal by the property owners, the West Aspen Company, to develop Sweeney Ridge and the perceived inability of Pacifica's general plan to prevent the development acted as catalysts prompting members of this group, last July, to circulate petitions in which the signatories, mostly registered voters of Pacifica, requested the City Council to recognize their desire to: "1) Preserve the natural state of the area*; and 2) request that Congressman Leo Ryan pursue the possibility of maintaining the area as open space through the National Park System." According to the chairman of PUSH approximately 5,000 signatures were collected over about four weekends. Following this petition, the Pacifica City Council, in August, voted to request that the local Congressman sponsor legislation authorizing the National Park Service to undertake a feasibility study of Sweeney Ridge. Subsequently, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors gave their endorsement to the feasibility study for Sweeney Ridge.

*The "area" includes, in addition to Sweeney Ridge and the San Francisco Bay National Historic Site, "the east-west ridges between Vallemar and Fairway Park and Vallemar, Rockway and Linda Mar, from south of Sharp Park Road to the rear of Linda Mar." The inclusion of Pacifica's ocean beaches to this area also is advocated by PUSH.

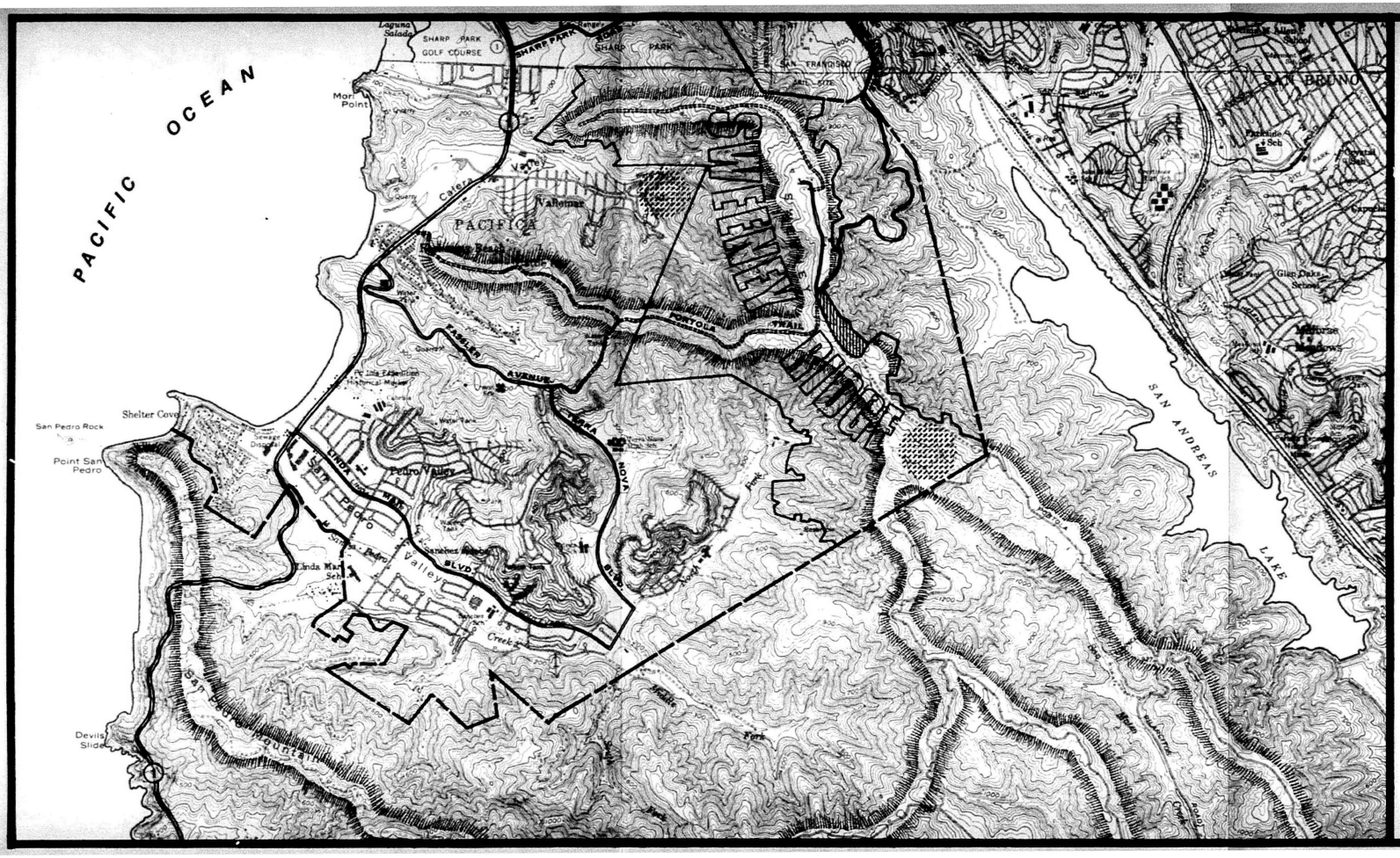
Another citizen group, the North Coastal Reserve Committee, located down the coast in Montara lent their support to the open space provisions of the PUSH petition for Sweeney Ridge and the surrounding area. The primary goal of this group, however, is the preservation of open space for an area encompassing about 30,000 acres along the coastal watershed of San Mateo County north of State Route 92. This area would include Sweeney Ridge. This goal would be accomplished through the establishment of a "reserve" or "area of national concern" patterned after the Act which authorized the Pine Barrens Area of New Jersey. Consequently, the North Coastal Reserve Committee members, a small cadre group, do not see acquisition and management of large areas by the National Park Service as one of their goals. Their goals comprise the following: "To preserve the scenic values of the Coast, to enhance Coastal agriculture, to protect the rural character of existing communities, to develop and adequately maintain appropriate recreational and educational opportunities on the Coast, to make a positive contribution to the economy of the Coast, and to encourage public participation in the pursuit of these goals."

Other groups, including the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club (Peninsula Regional Group), the United Citizens for

for Pacifica, Keep Pacifica Scenic, and the Portola Expedition Foundation have all given their support for making Sweeney Ridge and the surrounding area a unit of the national park system. The latter organization's primary goal is to make the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site more accessible.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Sweeney Ridge is part of a series of parallel ridges running generally in a north-south direction that together form the coastal watershed of San Mateo County. The physiographic feature shown on maps as Sweeney Ridge runs in a north-south direction for approximately two miles. However, a continuous ridge line, of which Sweeney Ridge forms a portion, begins at Mori Point and runs east-west for two miles before turning south and becoming "Sweeney Ridge." This ridge line continues southward for several miles splitting into a series of parallel ridges. The two mile "Sweeney Ridge" portion forms a small part of the western boundary of the City and County of San Francisco's watershed lands. Just to the south of Sweeney Ridge, a lateral ridge branches off to the southwest toward the coast linking up with Whitney Ridge, the northern slopes of Montara and San Pedro mountains, eventually hitting the coast at Point San Pedro. Thus, an arc of ridges, of which Sweeney Ridge is a part, cups the southern part of the City of Pacifica from Mori Point south to Point San Pedro and includes within it the Calera and San Pedro valleys.



0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 FEET

SCALE

NORTH

SWENEY RIDGE

LEGEND

- PACIFICA CITY LIMITS
- MAJOR RIDGELINES
- SPECIAL STUDY AREA (City of Pacifica)
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY DISCOVERY SITE
- SUITABLE HABITAT, S.F. GARTER SNAKE

LOCATION MAP

ON MICROFILM

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The terrain of Sweeney Ridge itself is basically characterized by slopes, steeper at their base turning more moderate at upper elevations and becoming nearly level at the top. The western slopes are in places in excess of 50 percent, with incised canyons. The eastern slopes are less steep and drain into San Andreas Lake, a large reservoir on San Francisco's watershed lands. The relatively flat ridge crest varies in width from 200 to 1,000 feet. Elevation of the ridge reaches a maximum of 1,220 feet. However, the general aspect along the ridge line is nearly level since the elevations of the entire ridge crest are above 1,100 feet.

Geology, Seismicity and Soils

The San Francisco Peninsula is a geologically complex region. The types of rock and soil materials that underlie the area vary widely. The rocks of the Franciscan formation (65 to 100+ million years old) are the most widespread bedrock type. They consist of generally hard but extensively fractured and deformed sandstone, shale, chert, limestone, greenstone and associated serpentine. The geologic structure of the San Francisco Peninsula is dominated by the active San Andreas fault zone which enters San Mateo County just north of Pacifica and extends in a southeasterly direction through the entire county. This fault, a thousand mile weakness in

the earth's crust has been, along with the associated Hayward and Calaveras faults, the source of several earthquakes of significant magnitude during historic times. Additional earthquakes will occur in the region.

The geology and the soils in and around Sweeney Ridge are both dominated by rocks of the Franciscan formation. Sweeney Ridge itself is composed of undifferentiated rock/soil types of the Franciscan, mostly of a type called Graywacke Sandstone. The lower slopes are composed of the greenstone type of this formation. There are small areas of alluvium deposits surrounded by colluvium in the upper end of the stream valley above Vallemar. The fertility of the soils is generally low and they have a limited water-holding capacity. Consequently, their potential for agricultural uses is very low.

Climate

The climate of the San Francisco Peninsula including the coastal area, though classified Mediterranean (dry summer), is strongly influenced by the cool ocean current offshore and exhibits many of the characteristics of the cool, damp and foggy Marine-type climate located to the north.

The prevailing westerlies and the cold offshore ocean current

are the dominant factors shaping this climatic type. The annual temperature range is small (45 degrees F, average winter low and 65 degrees F, average summer high) and the weather is mild year-round. Severe winter storms with gale winds and heavy rains occur only occasionally. The daily temperature range is slightly more varied. September and into October, when the ocean winds diminish, are the warmest and sunniest months.

Rainfall occurs during the months of November through April and averages 25 to 30 inches/year. The precipitation is nearly always in the form of rain since temperatures rarely fall below the freezing level. Light snowfall sometimes occurs on the higher peaks inland. Fog plays the critical role in modifying the weather in this region, especially during the period from May through September. During this time of the year a fog bank appears with great regularity, often not dispersing until late afternoon only to reappear again by evening. This fog occasionally produces a drizzle or mist. Winter months are generally free of fog. The prevailing winds are usually from the west-northwest and stronger at the higher elevations. Winds are usually lighter in the morning, gusting up to 25 m.p.h. by the afternoon. Most storms come into the area on winds from the southwest.

Vegetation

The conservation and open space elements of the San Mateo County General Plan describes the vegetative resources of San Mateo County as being unusually diverse. The county contains nine of the eleven major vegetative types of California. These types have been classified and broken down into plant communities as follows:

Vegetative Type	Plant Community
Strand	Coastal Strand
Salt Marsh	Coastal Salt Marsh
Freshwater Marsh	Freshwater Marsh
Scrub	Northern Coastal Scrub
	Coastal Sage Scrub
Coniferous Forest	Redwood Forest
Mixed Evergreen Forest	Mixed Evergreen Forest
Woodland-Savanna	Foothill Woodland
Chaparral	Chaparral
Grassland	Coastal Prairie

The dominant vegetative type in the region around Sweeney Ridge is classified as scrub. The scrub is intermixed with grassland and to a lesser extent chaparral and mixed evergreen. Nearly all of Sweeney Ridge is in grassland and coastal scrub. The

grasslands are found along the relatively flat ridge top and the coastal scrub below on the slopes of the ridge. The scrub has a low aspect - all of it in the three to five foot range.

The grasses on the ridge are annuals, mostly weedy species which have replaced the original grasses of the area. Common species are brome grasses, Mediterranean rye grass, wild oats and buckwheat. These grasses sprout during the rainy season and remain green usually through May. During the dry summer they turn golden-brown. The presence of thistle among the grasses indicates that the area has been heavily grazed. During the spring, California poppies are found among the grasses, usually along the fire roads. Lupine can be found on the slopes of the ridge. A few scattered clusters of blue gum eucalyptus trees are found along the ridge top.

Wildlife

Small rodents, herbivores and their predators dominate the wildlife found on the ridge. Rodent species, whose burrows can be seen on Sweeney Ridge, include gopher, mice, moles and shrews. Larger mammals such as rabbits, skunks and black-tailed deer are also found on the ridge. Occasionally, larger predators such as gray fox, bobcats and coyote are in evidence.

Bird species found on and above the ridge include quail, meadowlark, blackbirds, sparrows, and mourning doves, raptors such as red-tailed hawks, white-tailed kites, and American kestrels (sparrow hawks) can be observed riding the air currents above the ridge. The turkey vulture is frequently sighted circling above the ridge. The ridge itself provides habitat for gopher and king snakes and also rattlesnakes.

Generally, the grasses on the ridge provide the food source habitat for many of the rodents and rabbits. The adjoining scrub area provides the cover for these same species. During the fall and winter when the grasses are dormant and the food source becomes scarce, many of these animals move to the scrub.

On the basis of suitable habitat, there is a possibility that the rare and endangered San Francisco garter snake may be found in the areas adjoining Sweeney Ridge - the lower and moist area located south of the ridge just to the north of San Francisco's watershed lands and the streamside area just above the Valemar development near the tip of the northern lateral ridge. The former area, a small bowl-shaped valley at the head of San Mateo Creek, provides habitat for amphibians including the red-legged frog. This particular frog makes up

a high percentage of the San Francisco garter snake's diet. The latter area is also relatively low and wet and was the area of an actual siting several decades ago.

The habitat of the San Francisco garter snake, officially classified as endangered, is confined to the San Francisco Peninsula, specifically the western portion from the San Francisco County line south along the coastal hills down to at least Crystal Springs Reservoir and south along the coast to Point Ano Nuevo. The colorful snake has an extremely limited range, which lies entirely within a 250 square mile area of San Mateo County.

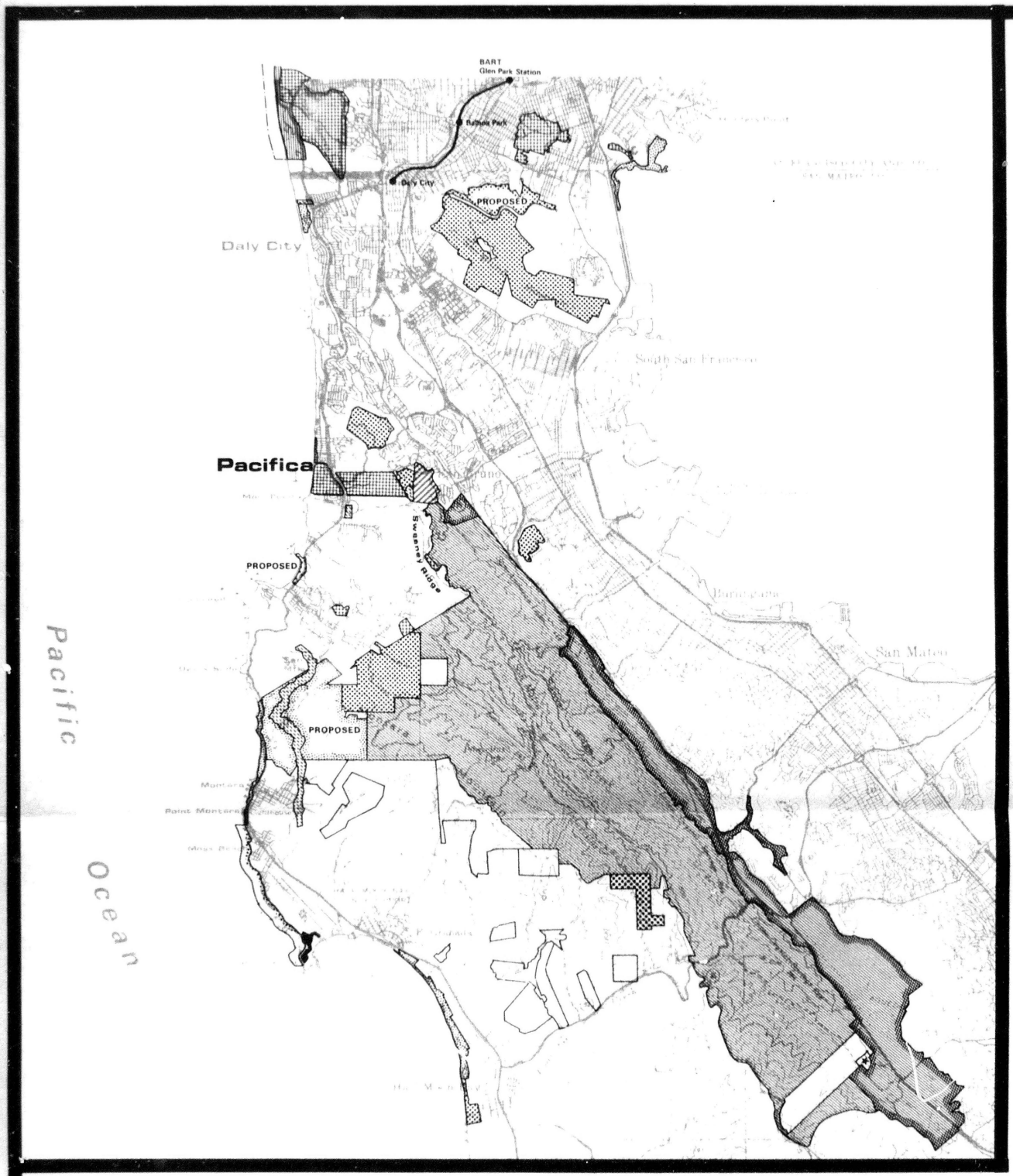
REGIONAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The area which the National Park Service has examined in this study contains a surprisingly large amount of public land devoted to park and open space uses. These lands encompass a large variety of landscape types and remain largely in a natural condition. Management of these lands is by all levels of government, although the greater part is managed by local government. In addition to the public lands, there are significant parcels of land in private ownership in open space uses, some of which are protected under the California Land Conservation Act.

Federal Resources

At the present time, no Federal parklands exist within the general area examined in this study. The southern boundary of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) administered by the National Park Service, is about seven miles north of Sweeney Ridge just inside of the San Francisco County line. The national recreation area boundary extends up the coast for about ten miles taking in all the western and substantial portions of the northern shoreline of San Francisco. Intensive recreation use takes place on the beaches and uplands and in the urbanized portions along the northern waterfront. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. A large portion of the authorized boundary for the refuge is in southwestern San Mateo County along the bay shoreline. The refuge's primary purpose is the protection of tidal, upland and open water habitat. However, passive recreation facilities such as trails, viewing platforms and interpretive programs will be provided.

South of Sweeney Ridge just below the coastal community of Montara, the U.S. Coast Guard operates the Point Montara Light Station. The historic lighthouse on the site has been proposed for nomination to the national register of historic places.



SWEENEY RIDGE

LEGEND

- SAN FRANCISCO (Jail Site)
- COUNTY PARKS
- STATE PARKS
- LOCAL PARKS
- GOLDEN GATE NRA
- FEDERAL LANDS
- NATIONAL TRUST
- STATE of CALIFORNIA
- AGRICULTURAL PRESERVES
- COASTSIDE WATER DISTRICT
- SAN FRANCISCO WATER DEPARTMENT
  - SCENIC EASEMENT
  - SCENIC AND RECREATION EASEMENT

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
SCALE

ON MICROFILM

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Recently, the Coast Guard has reported the approximately 15 acre parcel to be excess to their needs. The General Services Administration (GSA) who serves as the Federal government's disposal agency, will determine if other Federal agencies have a need for the property. If the property is determined to be surplus to all other Federal needs, it can then be made available to the State or local government for certain uses, including parks and recreation. The California Department of Parks and Recreation has already expressed an interest in the property.

State Resources

The California Department of Parks and Recreation operates several miles of state beach along the San Mateo County coast, including a more than two mile stretch south of the Devil's Slide area down to Point Montara, and an additional three miles along the Half Moon Bay coast further south. These sandy beaches receive a heavy amount of use, especially during the summer months during weekends and holidays. Most of these beaches have no facilities and parking is usually limited to the shoulders of the coast highway.

The planned acquisition of the McNee Ranch inland and adjacent

to the above beaches, by the California Department of Parks and Recreation has been stalled. The approved acquisition was for more than 1,400 acres of coastal mountain terrain, including 200 acres of agricultural lands, abutting the western end of San Mateo County's San Pedro Valley Park. Reasons for the delay are centered on the recent sale of portions of the ranch by the owner. Earlier appraisals made by the State on the ranch were based on a single ownership; consequently, they are no longer valid now that the property has been split and there is now a basis for placing a new and conceivably higher value on the land. New appraisals are currently being conducted by the State.

As part of the San Mateo County trails program, the California Department of Parks and Recreation has been legislatively authorized a total of $300,000 for the purchase and development of a hiking and riding trail, portions of which would run along Sweeney Ridge. The proposed trail route would begin at the county's Sweeney Ridge Skyline Preserve, run south along Sweeney Ridge itself, through the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site on lands owned by the West Aspen Company, onto San Francisco watershed lands, then turning west and cutting across San Pedro Valley County Park and the proposed state park (McNee Ranch), coming out along the coast at Montara State

Beach. A lateral trail referred to as the Portola Trail, running from the Bay Discovery Site west to the end of Fassler Avenue, was also a part of the proposed trail route. The entire trail is to be turned over to the county parks and recreation department for management.

This entire project is currently being rescoped by the California Department of Parks and Recreation as a result of cost estimates which indicated that purchase of the trail corridor along the West Aspen portion of Sweeney Ridge would far exceed the authorized amount available to the State for the entire project.

In addition to the above project, the Department of Parks and Recreation's advance planning section has recently completed a preliminary survey of Sweeney Ridge to identify any resource values there that need to be protected. This survey serves as the basis for the Department's comparing these values with those already identified in other areas statewide which have been similarly surveyed and assigned a priority for acquisition (the Department maintains a listing of hundreds of such areas). The Department has committed its annual capital outlay for acquisition for the next five years. Any additions to the priority list for acquisition then would

be deferred until the areas which the Department is committed to purchase have in fact been acquired.

Currently, the California Department of Transportation owns two parcels of land adjacent to Sweeney Ridge. With the rescinding of I380 from San Bruno to the coast highway, the state is required to dispose of these parcels. One parcel is located just to the south of the Sweeney Ridge Skyline Preserve. This parcel formerly was Federal property deeded to the state for highway purposes. Now that I380 has been rescinded, the property will revert back to the Federal government's General Services Administration (GSA). The county, through the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, could apply to GSA for the property to be transferred to them for park purposes at no cost through the Federal Surplus Property Program.

The second parcel is located on the landward side of the coast highway south of Sharp Park and is presently being leased from CalTrans by the operators of a nursery. The operator's lease has four years to run. This property was purchased by CalTrans for highway purposes with gasoline tax monies. Consequently the state is required by law to sell the property at its current market value. The property

will be first offered to public entities and if not picked up will be placed on the open market. An exception to the above requirement is state property located within the California Coastal Commission's permit zone. Here a constitutional amendment required that disposition of property by the state must be at the value at which the property originally was purchased.

CalTrans has acquired four miles of highway right-of-way just to the south of Pacifica. The corridor extends south through the proposed state park down past and just above the coastal community of Montara. The State purchased the right-of-way as an alternate route for the coast highway to by-pass the infamous Devil's Slide, an area of very steep, unstable slopes which crumble onto the highway causing it to close periodically. Controversy over the re-routing has stalled the project and construction was never begun.

Local Resources

The San Mateo County Department of Parks and Recreation administers significant recreation and open space resources in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge. The largest of these resources is the San Pedro Valley County Park located along Pacifica's southern boundary right next to the community of

Park Pacifica. This 1,000 acre park contains within it 415 acres of watershed owned by the North Coast County Water District being leased to the county for park purposes. Most of the park is steep coastal mountain terrain cut by V-shaped canyons and covered by mixed shrubs. The county parks department manages the area for low density use and proposes only minimal facility development. The following outdoor recreation uses will be emphasized: picnicking, field sports, nature study, hiking and riding. Most of the recreation use, except for hiking and riding, will take place in the valley area of the park located near the entrance.

Approximately six miles north of Sweeney Ridge just south of the San Francisco County line lies San Bruno Mountain. The mountain is a significant (more than 3,500 acres) topographical feature, its steep, grass-covered slopes clearly visible, appearing as an "island" of undeveloped open space with urbanization on three sides and the bay on the fourth side. San Mateo county has recently purchased more than 1,700 acres of San Bruno Mountain for park purposes. As mentioned, if the State's proposed purchase of the adjacent saddle area comes to fruition, this area would be added to the existing county park. The county plans to manage the park for passive outdoor recreation uses mainly hiking and riding.

The area of San Bruno Mountain known as the "saddle" is planned for acquisition by the State pending approval by their Public Works Board. Once acquisition is complete, the State plans to turn the area over to the county. This area is located in the northwestern portion of San Bruno Mountain abutting the existing county park and is approximately 400 acres in size. Agreement with respect to price of the acquisition has not yet been reached.

Other significant recreation and open space resources administered by the county include two former Federal properties. One is most of the former U.S. Coast Guard Radio Station, San Bruno, now known as Sweeney Ridge Skyline Preserve. The preserve is wedged between the San Francisco jail site on the east and Sharp Park on the west and is immediately north of Sweeney Ridge. Through the Federal government's Surplus Property Program, administered by GSA through the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, a 58 acre parcel was deeded at no cost to the county in 1973 for use as a public park for passive outdoor recreation uses (hiking, horseback riding, scenic viewing, etc.). The second area is the former Milagra Ridge Military Reservation, Pacifica. This 196 acre parcel was conveyed to the county in 1977 under the provisions of the same program. The county

is presently managing the area as a public park for hiking, riding, picnicking, nature study, archery, and as a youth hostel complex and historic site.

The county also owns the 18 acre San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a registered national historic landmark. The site is managed by the City of Pacifica under the terms of a 99 year lease. The site is discussed in more detail under the section entitled, HISTORIC RESOURCES.

The Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, a more than three mile stretch of tidal reefs from the Point Montara Light Station south to Pillar Point, is operated by the county for the preservation and protection of its marine life habitat. The county provides a picnic area, parking facilities and access.

In November 1972, a voter approved charter amendment in San Mateo County established a special fund to finance a ten year park and open space acquisition and development program. The program was funded by a special override on the property tax of ten cents per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. This revenue was to be matched by monies from the

county's general fund. These monies were to be used to purchase parklands identified in the park and recreation element of the General Plan. Last year, with the passage of Proposition 13, the Board of Supervisors voted to suspend the charter which, according to the county park officials, has left the park department with insufficient funds to continue their planned acquisition program. Proposition 13 has also affected the development programs of the county's park department, as well as operation and maintenance. Difficulties have been experienced by the county in operating their existing park inventory.

The City of Pacifica has two major parks in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge, Oddstad and Frontierland. The former is primarily a neighborhood type facility, while the latter, more recently acquired, is intended to be developed as a major urban recreation area. About 10 acres of Frontierland's 65 acres will be developed. The remainder will be left as undeveloped open space. Frontierland is located next to the County's San Pedro Valley Park; Oddstad is located in the center of Pacifica's Linda Mar residential area.

About 13 acres of sandy beach north of Shelter Cove has been earmarked for acquisition by the state. This beach is one of

the very few spots along this portion of the coast with conditions suitable for swimming. Its sheltered location serves to protect the area from the heavy, pounding surf, cross-currents and rip-tides often found along other sandy beaches in the area. The California Department of Parks and Recreation has secured $500,000 of matching Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies to complete the purchase. The State's portion of the acquisition costs will be available pending authorization by the Public Works Board. The City of Pacifica will administer the area.

Interestingly enough, the City and County of San Francisco owns, by far, the largest acreage of public open space in San Mateo County. The City's watershed lands make up the bulk of their holdings in San Mateo County, totaling about 23,000 acres in a rough configuration approximately 12 miles long and three miles wide. The northwest corner of the watershed lies along the eastern slope of Sweeney Ridge.

The watershed is an unspoiled natural area which, due to its size and location, provides a scenic backdrop for the adjacent urban area. Topography is dominated by steep, coastal mountain terrain and two large, elongated reservoirs which occupy the San Andreas Rift Zone along the eastern

portion of the watershed. The watershed provides habitat for a wide diversity of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Fish are found in the streams and lakes of the watershed.

The land is owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and managed by the Water Department. Its primary purpose is to store and produce potable water for San Francisco and neighboring communities. The city restricts public use of the area and the entire area is fenced and patrolled. Individuals and groups are allowed access to the watershed lands only by obtaining a permit. Permits allow for hiking, riding and picnicking.

Hiking permits are issued only to organized groups, but riding permits are issued to both groups and individuals. Picnicking is permitted only at specific sites. The Crystal Springs Golf Course leases 180 acres of watershed land from the city for its 18-hole course. Additionally, the entire watershed has been designated a State Fish and Game Refuge; consequently fishing and hunting are prohibited.

In 1968, the city commissioned a study to determine the recreation potential of the watershed. The resulting report, adopted by the Public Utilities Commission, called for

providing active recreation facilities, a scenic corridor, an ecological reserve and historic sites. Controversy developed around this plan and its recommendations were never implemented.

In January 1969, in partial consideration for the Federal government bearing the additional costs involved in the State's relocating a section of the proposed Interstate 280 Freeway*, certain grants were made by the City and County of San Francisco to the United States of America. By these grants easements were created on the watershed lands. These easements conveyed to the Secretary of the Interior certain rights and responsibilities with regard to the recreation and scenic easement established on 4,000 acres of the watershed and a scenic easement established on all of the remainder.

*A 4.2 - mile section of the adopted route for the then proposed Interstate 280 traversed San Francisco's watershed lands in close proximity to Upper Crystal Springs Reservoir. San Francisco requested that the above section be relocated to a greater distance from the reservoir along a ridge route in order to provide a greater degree of protection against possible contamination and pollution of the reservoir. In consideration for the cost of the relocation being incurred by the Federal government, the City and County of San Francisco conveyed and granted to the Secretary of the Interior, in perpetuity, an estate and interest in their watershed properties.

The agreements were signed by the State of California, the City and County of San Francisco, the County of San Mateo and the United States of America and state that the land has "substantial public value as open space and that the preservation of the land in its present open state constitutes an important physical, social, aesthetic and economic asset" to all the signatories.

The Regional Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, now the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, was delegated the authority and responsibility conveyed to the Interior Department as grantee of the easements. This responsibility covers the preparation of a general land use plan for the entire watershed and planning for outdoor recreation development on the lands covered by the recreation easement, both to be carried out in cooperation with San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The easements give to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation authority to disapprove any developments, except those which are water and/or outdoor recreation related, on the watershed. Further, the Bureau can seek an injunction to restrain the City and County of San Francisco from certain prohibited acts.

As a result of the controversy which developed over the 1968 plan and the responsibilities delegated to the Bureau

of Outdoor Recreation under the terms of the easements, a new study was commissioned in 1975. This study has been completed by the consultant and contains a recommended plan for the development of certain outdoor recreation facilities on portions of the watershed. To date, the study has not been formally presented to the Public Utilities Commission and nothing has been done to implement its plan.

As the northern end of their watershed lands, San Francisco owns and operates its jail facility on about 150 acres. Most of the area is in open space devoted to agricultural uses. West of the jail site, Sharp Park parallels the northern flank of one of the lateral extensions of Sweeney Ridge. The park is operated by the San Francisco Department of Parks and Recreation and encompasses more than 460 acres, which includes a 220 acre 18-hole golf course. The park also contains rifle, pistol and archery ranges. The remainder of the park is undeveloped, though portions have been planted with conifers. The coastal portion contains Laguna Salada, a significant freshwater marsh habitat. This portion of the park provides suitable habitat for the San Francisco garter snake, classified officially as endangered.

Private Open Space

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private, non-profit organization chartered by Congress, owns a 40 acre parcel of land within San Francisco's watershed lands. These lands are largely in open space and managed for the Trust by the Fioli Center, who provide tours to the historic house and garden located there. The Trust originally obtained the land when it was deeded to them by the property owner. An additional 85 acres of adjacent open space is currently being leased to the Trust. The Filoli Center, a non-profit foundation, owns more than 525 acres next to the Trust's lands. Under a master plan prepared for this latter area, this property will remain primarily as open space.

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, usually referred to as the Williamson Act, was enacted to protect farmlands of the state which because of their proximity to urban areas were being lost to development. The Act enables local governments to establish agricultural preserves wherein land is restricted by regulation through the establishment of a ten year voluntary contract between the local government and the private landowner. The preserves are to be no less than 100 acres, but may be smaller if the size and use are consistent with the local

government's general plan. Unless a notice of non-renewal is given, the contract period is automatically extended for one year at the expiration of the first anniversary date. Within the preserves, the property tax assessment is based on the land's current use value (agriculture or a compatible use) rather than on its highest and best use (urban), thereby giving the owner a tax break. If not renewed, assessed valuation begins to rise in the third year so as to be at full value by the tenth.

San Mateo County has elected to use the Williamson Act, establishing preserves in the county. To the south of Sweeney Ridge, along the southwestern border of San Francisco's watershed lands, there are several large parcels of land presently under Williamson Act contract, together totalling well over 2,000 acres.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

On October 20, 1769, the exploratory expedition of Gasper de Portola reached what is now San Mateo County. The Spanish civil-military governor of Baja California and his party were proceeding north along the California coast with the objective of locating Monterey Bay. Having failed to recognize the bay, the party continued on up the coast. On

October 21, the expedition camped on the bank of Purissima Creek about five miles south of the present city of Half Moon Bay. They continued their northward march and two days later camped at Martini Creek just north of the present day community of Montara. Proceeding again north, the next day the party made camp in the San Pedro Valley in what is now Pacifica.

On November 4, Portola and his party left their San Pedro Valley encampment, this time proceeding inland in a northeasterly direction toward the crest of that portion of the coastal ridge. They reached the crest at a point on what is now called Sweeney Ridge. On the crest of the ridge Portola and his party viewed San Francisco Bay, thereby becoming the first men other than the aboriginal inhabitants to view this great inland body of water. For the next several days the party explored the bayshore and the surrounding lands.

The historical importance of the above described event which led to the founding of the Mission and Presidio of San Francisco and other historic events which followed is well recognized. As early as 1966 the California Assembly's Resolution, relative to the then upcoming 1969 bicentennial celebration, commemorated "the discovery of the Bay of San

Francisco." The following year, Federal legislation was introduced calling for the designation as a national historic site of an area not more than 30 acres in size. Similar bills were introduced both in the Senate and House during the next two years. In 1968, during field hearings before the Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, testimony was given providing support for the national historic site designation. At the same time, the Secretary of the Interior indicated that the discovery site was eligible for the Registry of the National Historic Landmarks. In May of 1972, the National Park Service officially dedicated the site as a Registered National Historic Landmark. In 1973, negotiations were completed by the City of Pacifica and San Mateo County resulting in the purchase of about 18 acres of Sweeney Ridge. The purchase was accomplished through a $58,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development which was matched by San Mateo County. The following year, Pacifica signed a 99 year lease with the county to manage the 18 acre site. An easement was granted to Pacifica for access to the discovery site from Sneath in San Bruno along the private road on San Francisco's watershed lands.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

In February 1979, a field reconnaissance was conducted for the Sweeney Ridge area for purposes of identifying and evaluating any cultural resources which may be found there.

The archeological field reconnaissance was carried out by a consultant for HKS Associates for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Report being prepared by that firm for the West Aspen Company. The level of the field reconnaissance consisted of inspecting that portion of the surface area which could be seen and did not include any major modification of vegetation or structural cover. The areas covered were the portions of Sweeney Ridge along the nearly level crest, the terraced areas adjacent to drainages and the upland areas of Calera Creek and the north fork of San Pedro Creek. This reconnaissance did not reveal the presence of archeological remains in the above described area. However, it was pointed out that this did not preclude the possibility of archeological remains existing below the surface.

Earlier archeological investigations in the general vicinity around Sweeney Ridge produced documented sites. These sites were situated adjacent to the ocean, on terraced plateaus and adjacent to San Francisco Bay and were all Costanoan in type (the general environs were populated by the Costanoan Indians in prehistoric times). However, these earlier investigations also did not reveal any sites on or adjacent to Sweeney Ridge itself.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESOURCE

Criteria for National Parklands

The National Park Service, through its process of identifying areas for study as additions to the national park system, is primarily looking for those areas which would help in ultimately producing a system which would include a broad spectrum of geographic locations possessing specific and certain natural and/or cultural values that need to be protected. Additionally, those areas which have outdoor recreation values may be added to the system. These recreation values play a particularly important role in the assessment of those areas which due to their location serve urban residents.

Areas being considered as additions to the national park system are measured against criteria delaing with signicance and suitability/feasibility. Additionally, management alternatives will be developed for these areas which will include whether or not the area is or will be adequately protected and available to the public by means other than inclusion into the national park system.

Significance essentially means that those areas being considered primarily for their natural and/or cultural

resources must contain outstanding national significance. This significance relates to natural and/or historical themes identified in Part I (History) and Part II (Natural History) of the National Park System Plan.

Part I divides the organization of American history into various representatives themes. The San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a designated national historic landmark, is listed in this document as an unit under the Spanish Exploration and Settlement subtheme. In terms of overall representation, this subtheme is presently well covered in the national park system. However, in terms of geographic location, this subtheme is currently under-represented in California.

The purpose of Part II is to identify and evaluate the significance of the natural (phisographic, biological or climatological) features of a particular area to determine if they are adequately represented in the national park system. To aid in this process the entire country has been divided into relatively homogeneous areas, called natural regions, which are based on observable physiographic and biological features. The natural region in which Sweeney Ridge is located, the South Pacific Border, is according to this document, inadequately represented in the

system. However, this judgment was made prior to the establishment of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, whose authorized boundary takes in approximately 150,000 acres, major portions of which are chaparral, coastal scrub and grassland.

Suitability/feasibility means that an area must be feasible in terms of administration and preservation. Specifically, it should be of a size necessary to protect the identified resource values it contains and provide for essential public and administrative needs.

Lastly, through the identification of management alternatives the National Park Service will consider whether the significant resources of the area now or will be in the future adequately protected and available for public use through other means of preservation outside of the national park system.

Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resource Values

Sweeney Ridge, a north-south crest situated above the present residential development of Pacifica, in combination with connecting ridges, provides a major part of the natural backdrop for that city. From the west, Sweeney Ridge is not entirely visible or clearly identifiable from most of

the other nearby ridges and does not come fully into view until one is well up on one of the two lateral ridges connected with Sweeney Ridge. From the east (I280 and State Route 35, Skyline Boulevard) Sweeney Ridge is more distinctive, rising above the Peninsula foothills.

The visible crest of Sweeney Ridge is nearly level and approximately the same height as the surrounding terrain. The natural resource values identified and discussed in the previous section, geology, soils, vegetation and wildlife, are similar to those found in the adjacent public watershed and parklands. Except for the possible presence of the San Francisco garter snake, a rare and endangered species, none of these natural values are of major significance. Water tanks and the remnant structures from the now abandoned missile radar reservation, are the only developments on Sweeney Ridge. Sweeney Ridge's significance then, either as a physiographic or biological feature, is rather limited.

Once the ridge crest is gained, however, the views from Sweeney Ridge are spectacular, particularly on a clear day. To the west, the rocky summits of the Farallon Islands can be seen and to the north the tip of the Point Reyes peninsula is visible, weather permitting. Sweeping inland from the point, the head of the Bolinas peninsula and the southern

flank of Mount Tamalpais can easily be picked out. To the south the dark shape of Montara Mountain rises up and dominates the skyline. Looking eastward from the crest of Sweeney Ridge, San Francisco Bay is spread out below. This view, containing the fully developed bay plain, presents a sharp contrast to the vistas in other directions which remain largely natural landscapes. Beyond the bay are the cities of the East Bay rimmed by the still largely undeveloped hills. In the distance, the top of Mount Diablo can be picked out.

Since property owners do not actively restrict access from the west, public use of Sweeney Ridge is presently taking place. This use is local in origin, usually from nearby Pacifica. Most of it is by hikers and picnickers, although horseback riding also takes place. There is evidence too of use by motorcycles and/or trail bikes. Although the views atop Sweeney Ridge are impressive, the presence of the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a designated national historic landmark, provides the major attraction. The national landmark designation attests to the site's historic value. Moreover, the purchase of about 18 acres of the crest of Sweeney Ridge by the county protects the integrity of the historic site which is presently marked by a stone plaque. An easement granted to Pacifica by San Francisco allows

access by road from San Bruno. Most of the public use, however, is from Pacifica via the two dirt roads which run along the crests of the two lateral ridges connected to Sweeney Ridge. The dirt road along the southern ridge is referred to as the "Portola Trail" and is thought to be the route by which the Spanish explorers reached the crest. Use of these dirt roads is primarily by hikers since access from Pacifica requires getting through or around fences.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that the scenic and historic values of Sweeney Ridge are significant. The historic value of a portion of the ridge crest, the Discovery Site, is of national significance. Based on the capacity of the resource, Sweeney Ridge could accommodate additional recreation use, but these uses appropriately should be of a passive nature - hiking, horseback riding, nature study, photography and picnicking. However, interpretive facilities related to the discovery site could be developed. Also the level crest could possibly accommodate some overnight camping sites. The portion of Sweeney Ridge suitable for recreation use and development is its nearly level crest and the level crests of the adjoining lateral ridges. These lands have a slope of less than 25 percent and encompass a little better than 250 acres. This area is the same area which the West Aspen Company, owners of most of

Sweeney Ridge, plan to develop. Most of the remainder of Sweeney Ridge and its adjoining ridges have slopes which exceed 40 percent and are covered by coastal scrub. Recreation use of these lands is severely limited by steepness and the type of vegetative cover. Hiking on trails constructed parallel to ridge lines would be the most appropriate and likely the only possible recreation use of these lands.

Development Proposals

The West Aspen Company currently owns all of the crest and western slopes of Sweeney Ridge, as well as the two western lateral ridges, altogether encompassing about 1,000 acres. In April 1972, following two years of negotiations, West Aspen completed its purchase of the Sweeney Ridge property from the Consumer Ice Company (Dillingham Corporation) for what was reported by the press to be in excess of $2,000,000. Consumer Ice, beginning in 1969, had put together development plans for the nearly level crest of Sweeney Ridge, including the two western lateral ridge crests. These plans consisted of two basic development options, a town center and community support facilities covering 250 acres, not counting the access roads. The latter concept, covering the same area, called for 2,700 dwelling units and community support facilities, plus 70 acres to be developed as a high-rise

corporate headquarters. These plans both assumed access would be available by means of an interchange on the then approved I380, which provided linkage with I280 and U.S. 101 to the east. These plans were, of course, never implemented for a number of reasons, including litigation over the Federal Government's use of the northern part of Sweeney Ridge as a radar site and the stalling of the plan for completing I380 to the coast highway.

Other past proposals for large-scale residential development in Pacifica included the Challenge Development Company's Rockaway Highlands project. This project called for residential development on and around the slopes of the hill above Rockaway Beach just south of Vallemar. Due to the lack of level land a considerable amount of grading was required to prepare the site. The scale of the project, the amount of earth moving required and problems with access via Fassler Avenue all contributed to the development of opposition to the project by many residents of Pacifica. In late 1973, a voter referendum, by a four to one margin, effectively overrode the earlier City Council decision to allow the project. The parcel remains undeveloped.

In June 1978, West Aspen presented to the Pacifica City Council a scaled-down version of an earlier development proposal for

its Sweeney Ridge property amounting to 1,500 mixed residential units clustered along the top. This revision came about largely as a result of concerns expressed by the local residents of Pacifica regarding the proposal's effect on the city's natural backdrop. In response to this concern West Aspen revised its development proposal reducing the overall density and eliminating development from the two east-west lateral ridges. Their original plan for Sweeney Ridge had called for 220 patio homes, 1,330 townhouses, 2,000 garden condominiums, plus supporting retail office and community service facilities, altogether covering more than 200 acres of the crest. Including the necessary rights-of-way for roads, the acreage totaled about 245. As mentioned earlier in the report, West Aspen is now waiting for Pacifica's updated General Plan to be approved before going to the City Council with their revised development proposal. This action will probably take place late this summer.

Effects of Proposed Development on Resource Values

Development of the crests of Sweeney Ridge and adjoining ridges along the lines of the West Aspen proposal would have a significant impact on the vegetation and wildlife found there. Also a very small portion of the San Francisco garter snake total habitat would be lost. The grassland habitat would be largely replaced by residential development and

the accompanying landscaping. Some of the scenic view sites also would be replaced by either single family, townhouse or condominium units ranging up to four stories in height. Consequently, many of the views of the surrounding natural landscape, including distant views of the Farallons, Point Reyes and Mount Diablo would be restricted. The west side of the publically owned 18 acre San Francisco Bay Discovery Site would be paralleled by a two-land road proposed by West Aspen for access to their development. The east side of the historic site would be untouched by the development and thus the opportunity to relive the historic experience of "viewing the bay" would be unimpaired. However, the historic approach to the discovery site known as the "Portola Trail," presently little changed from the time of the Spanish explorers, would be impaired, thereby lessening the total experience associated with the national historic landmark. The west side of the 18 acre site would be impacted by single family and townhouse units which could range up to two and one-half stories in height. The opportunities to enjoy scenic views to the west from the 18 acre site would be impaired.

Land Values

The 1972 sale by the Challenge Development Company of the approximately 1,000 acres of Sweeney Ridge to the West Aspen

Company was reported by the press to be in excess of $2,000,000. However, other sources have indicated that the total transaction was in the neighborhood of $3,000,000. Current market value of the West Aspen Company's holdings on Sweeney Ridge has been estimated by the National Park Service to be in the $15 to $20 million range. This value is based on the number and type of units which could be developed along the 250 acre level crest of Sweeney Ridge, not on the total number of acres owned by West Aspen.

This value takes into account also that there are access problems associated with the development. Road access does not now exist and would have to be provided by the developer at a scale commensurate with the number of residents which the development mix provides for. The value is, of course, based on today's cost of raw land which can be developed and the present price escalation on lands which are capable of development. This rate is currently 18 to 24 percent per year. Based on the current market value, this would mean a three to four million dollar increase each year.

The value of those undeveloped lands adjoining the West Aspen holdings depends to a large degree on whether or not the proposed development on top of Sweeney Ridge is approved and whether actual construction including roads, takes place.

These adjoining parcels include the Challenge Development Company's property whose Rockaway Highlands project was turned down.

Comparative Values and Optimum Boundary

As described at the beginning of the chapter, the National Park Service in conducting its feasibility study of Sweeney Ridge has herein identified significant park and open space resources of a region which takes in the northern part of San Mateo County south to State Route 92, and west of the watershed land. The remaining 10,000 or so acres are in private ownership, usually in large parcels. Some of these parcels are under Williamson Act contract. This large natural landscape is located next to the urbanized portions of San Mateo County and just to the south of heavily urbanized San Francisco County.

There is then a considerable amount of public park and open space in the vicinity of Sweeney Ridge. Most of these areas are physiographically and biologically similar to Sweeney Ridge, thus containing similar natural and recreational values. In fact, the values found in many of the nearby existing local parks (San Pedro Valley County Park, Miligra Ridge, Sharp Park and the Sweeney Ridge Skyline Preserve) and a proposed state park (the McNee Ranch), duplicate and,

in some instances, even surpass those found on Sweeney Ridge Additionally, these lands contain a considerably larger portion of the San Francisco garter snake's habitat than does Sweeney Ridge. The values which set Sweeney Ridge apart from other nearby park and open space resources are largely historic and scenic; the latter being the magnitude of the views which can be experienced from the top of Sweeney Ridge. The historic resource is, of course, the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site.

The above resources are located on that portion of Sweeney Ridge currently being proposed for residential development by the owners, the West Aspen Company. Therefore, in order to ensure that these resources would not be impacted by residential development or roads, the lands on which they are located would have to be purchased in fee, preferably by a public park agency who would be able to manage the resources found there. The optimum boundary then, based on the identified resource values, would be the approximately 250 acres along the nearly level crest of Sweeney Ridge. Realistically, however, any public entity would have to purchase the entire West Aspen ownership, since the remaining 800 or so acres, due to the steepness of the slopes, are largely undevelopable and possess only limited value. Moreover, along its western boundary, the West Aspen ownership does not extend to any public roads. There are two likely spots where this linkage could

be accomplished. One is through the CalTrans property, now operated as a nursery, which connects the West Aspen property with the Coast Highway. The other is through property owned by the Challenge Development Company, which separates the West Aspen ownership from the end of Fassler Avenue. Consequently, in order for any park on Sweeney Ridge to be connected with paved roads, purchase of all or portions of these additional parcels would be necessary. As indicated earlier, the purchase of the West Aspen lands on Sweeney Ridge would cost an estimated $15 to 20 million based on the current market.

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

In the previous chapter the natural, cultural, and recreational values of the Sweeney Ridge area were identified and evaluated. A determination was made relative to these values for their significance, how they would be impacted by proposed residential development and finally how they compared with similar values in park and open space areas in the general vicinity. Also determined were the amount of land necessary to preserve and protect these values and the attendant costs to purchase the land.

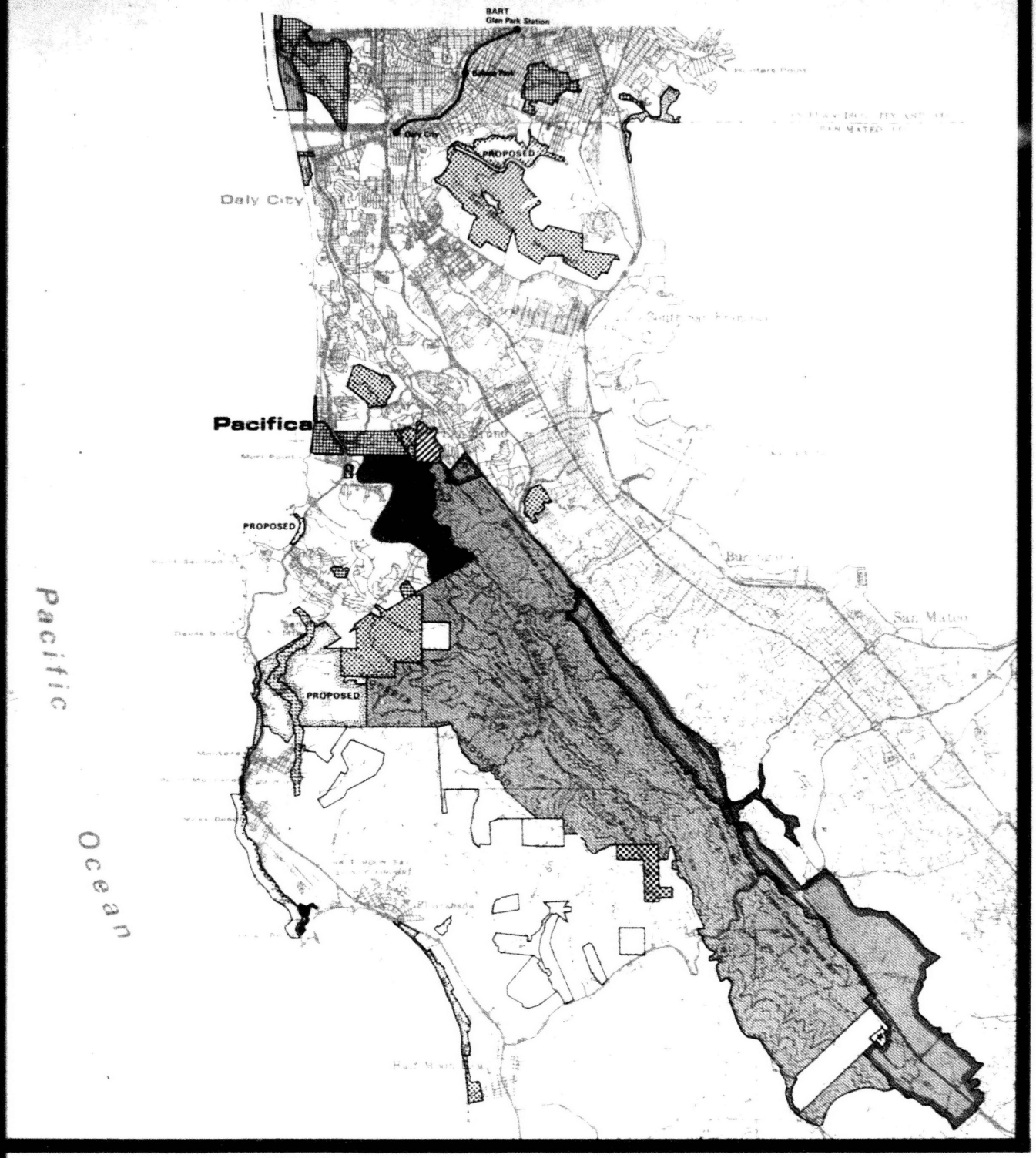
The significant values identified for Sweeney Ridge--either natural, cultural or recreational--during the above process were the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a small portion of the suitable habitat for the endangered San Francisco garter snake, the unobstructed scenic views from along the crest of Sweeney Ridge and 200 to 250 acres of land suitable for passive outdoor recreation uses. Additionally, the survey of regional recreation and open space resources revealed the seemingly outstanding resource values of a large natural landscape area extending from about Sweeney Ridge south to State Route 92.

Implementation of any of the following three alternatives allows for protection and preservation of some or all of the significant resource values identified and in around Sweeney Ridge. All of the alternatives recognize the significance of San Francisco Bay Discovery Site and that the basic integrity of the site would not be lost through implementation of any of the alternatives. Specific impacts resulting from implementation of an alternatives are listed following the description of the alternative. Impacts are related to natural, cultural, and recreational values associated with the Sweeney Ridge area. The impacts of implementation on socio-economic values were also considered. The second alternative is a means of providing additional protection to significant resource values contained within a large natural area, including Sweeney Ridge, located on the fringes of the Peninsula cities of San Mateo County and to the south of San Francisco.

ALTERNATIVE A - (Acquisition and Management by a Public Park Agency). Acquisition and management of the crest and western slopes of Sweeney Ridge and the two connecting lateral ridges by a public park agency. This would mean the ridge crest could not be used for residential development and would remain essentially in open space. Implementation of this alternative would serve to ensure preservation and protection

of a large area buffer around the 18 acre San Francisco Bay Discovery Site and also preserve and protect associated areas such as the Portola Trail, as well as guarantee this entire area's availability for public outdoor recreation use. Interpretation of the historic site could be provided and the panoramic views currently associated with the crest of Sweeney Ridge would remain unimpaired.

Increased opportunities for public outdoor recreation use could be provided through improved trail access and through the development of picnic sites and primitive camping facilities along the level grassy crest. Additional suitable habitat for the San Francisco garter snake, an endangered species, would be preserved and protected through public ownership and management of the area. About 1,000 acres of open space above the City of Pacifica would be preserved through public purchase. This purchase would complete an arc of public park and open space lands around the City of Pacifica. As previously discussed, implementation of this alternative would require purchase of the entire West Aspen ownership on Sweeney Ridge, an area in excess of 1,000 acres.



NORTH

SWEENEY RIDGE

LEGEND

- SAN FRANCISCO (Jail Site)
- COUNTY PARKS
- STATE PARKS
- LOCAL PARKS
- GOLDEN GATE NRA
- FEDERAL LANDS
- NATIONAL TRUST
- STATE of CALIFORNIA
- AGRICULTURAL PRESERVES
- COASTSIDE WATER DISTRICT
- SAN FRANCISCO WATER DEPARTMENT
  - SCENIC EASEMENT
  - SCENIC AND RECREATION EASEMENT

ALTERNATIVE A

MANAGEMENT BY A PUBLIC PARK AGENCY

(APPROXIMATELY 1000 ACRES)

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

SCALE

SW-RI	80,003
JUNE 79	WRO-PP

ON MICROFILM

ALTERNATIVE A
(Management by a Public Park Agency)

Resource Values

Cultural: A more than 1,000 acre buffer would be established on the western side of the 18 acre publicly owned San Francisco Bay Discovery Site. The site itself and the buffer would be preserved and protected through management by a public park agency.

Natural: The public park agency would preserve and protect:

- About 1,000 acres of open space located above the City of Pacifica.
- Examples of coastal scrub and introduced grasses.
- Habitat for wildlife common to this area.
- A very small portion of the habitat of the endangered San Francisco garter snake (about 50 acres of suitable habitat of a total of 250 square miles of habitat).
- Unobstructed views in a natural setting of the significant natural features of the surrounding region.

Recreational: The public park agency would manage:

- About 200 acres of nearly level grassland suitable for passive outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, and limited overnight camping.
- About 800 acres of coastal scrub suitable only for very limited outdoor recreation use such as hiking.

The public park agency with management responsibilities would operate and maintain the area. Certain recreational and interpretive facilities would likely to be developed by the park agency.

ALTERNATIVE A - Continued

Socio-Economic Values

Urban Development:	About 200 acres of land currently proposed for 1,500 units of mixed residential development for approximately 3,500 people would be precluded.
Tax Revenue (Estimated):	Based on an estimated FMV of $155,000,00 for the above development, a maximum of $1,550,00 in property tax revenue would be lost to the county. Precluded also would be revenues accruing to the City of Pacifica which total an estimated one million dollars during the six-year construction phase and an estimated small annual surplus upon reaching full development of the project.
Access:	A four-lane access road, including an interchange, from the coast highway to the crestline of Sweeney Ridge would be precluded.

Costs to the Federal Government

Acquisition (Estimated):	$15,000,000 to $20,000,00 (1979 dollars)

Implementation of this alternative would include additional costs, associated with the development of recreational facilities, and annual operation and maintenance. These costs would not, in all cases, be borne by the Federal Government.

Based on the size of the area, the significance of the resource values contained therein and the judgement that these resources would draw less than national visitation, management of Sweeney Ridge is feasible at either the local or state level. Federal (National Park Service) management of Sweeney Ridge is possible but only on a conditional basis. At the local level the county would be the appropriate managing entity since the City of Pacifica has officially declared that it is not in a position to participate either fiscally or operationally in any park facility on Sweeney Ridge. Moreover, the city lacks experience in managing this type of recreation resource. The State of California (Department of Parks and Recreation) has exhibited some interest in Sweeney Ridge, having completed a preliminary survey of the area's resources. As a result of this survey, however, the Department has given Sweeney Ridge a low priority among those areas which they indicated an interest in programming for acquistion. The San Mateo Department of Parks and Recreation has expressed an interest in acquiring and managing Sweeney Ridge, but their current financial capability for either acquisition, development or operation and maintenance has been lowered substantially by the effects of Proposition 13.

The Federal Government's principle park management agency, the National Park Service, has the necessary experience and expertise to manage such an area, but the limited significance of resource values and the relatively small size of the area standing alone as a unit serve to make it infeasible for Park Service management. However, due to the proximity of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, located about seven miles to the north, it would be possible for the Sweeney Ridge area to be managed as a unit of the national recreation area.

Based on the above conditions and circumstances, the following management options have been identified as means of implementing this alternative.

Management Option (1)

Management of Sweeney Ridge and adjacent areas by the San Mateo County Department of Parks and Recreation. Due to the effects of Proposition 13, this option would be feasible only if the county were provided with financial assistance for acquisition and development as well as operation and maintenance. The Federal Government, through the Secretary of the Interior, would provide funds to the county for acquisition. The Secretary of the Interior

would provide the funding also for the development of appropriate recreational and interpretive facilities.

Overall administration and management of the area would rest with the county, however, the Secretary of the Interior would also provide financial assistance for a legislatively limited amount, for a specific time period, for the operation and maintenance. The close proximity of San Pedro Valley County Park make it possible, even likely, for the county to operate and maintain the two areas as a single park unit, thereby cutting down the attendant costs considerably. Moreover, the funding assistance provided for operation and maintenance would be designed as as to be scaled-down, eventually being taken over entirely by the county. Financial assistance for development and for operation and maintenance would be provided contingent upon the completion of a park management plan to be prepared by the county and approved by the National Park Service.

Appropriate recreational facilities commensurate with the carrying capacity of the resource would be developed. These would include limited parking and improvement of trail access, as well as interpretive facilities to give the public the opportunity to relive the historic experience of retracing the route of the Spanish explorer, Gasper DePortola, in

his "discovery" of San Francisco Bay. Costs associated with this development have been estimated at $75,000. The annual operation and maintenance budget has been estimated to be $50,000 to $75,000.

Management Option (2)

Management of Sweeney Ridge and adjacent areas by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Unless an immediate shift in the Department's priorities for parkland acquisition were to occur, the Sweeney Ridge area would not be even programmed for purchase by the State in the next five years. Consequently, this option is feasible only if the State were provided with Federal assistance for the acquisition of Sweeney Ridge. As a result of this assistance, the legislatively authorized State trail project could, once again, include Sweeney Ridge, thereby completing linkage by trail of parklands to the north with the proposed state park (McNee Ranch acquisition) to the south. Moreover, the State's management of any parklands on Sweeney Ridge would likely be in conjunction with the nearby McNee Ranch acquisition and thus would be less expensive to manage as a separate unit. Under this management option, the development of any recreation facilities, including interpretation of the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, would be left up to the Department of Parks and Recreation. Consequently, it would

not be possible to detail the type and extent of these facilities. It would not even be possible to know if and when these facilities would be developed.

Management Option (3)

As noted, due to its relatively small size and the limited significance of the natural and recreational resources identified there, it would not be feasible for the National Park Service to acquire the Sweeney Ridge area for the purpose of managing it as a separate unit of the National Park System. It is possible, however, for Sweeney Ridge to be managed by the National Park Service as a component of the nearby Golden Gate National Recreation Area located about seven miles to the north. As such, the National Park Service would operate and maintain the area to preserve and protect its natural and cultural resources and also to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Physical linkage between the Sweeney Ridge area and GGNRA could be provided through the establishment of a hiking and riding trail. As with Management Option (1), appropriate recreational facilities would be developed commensurate with the carrying capacity of the resource. These developments would include limited parking, improved trail access and interpretive amenities. Costs for development have been estimated at $75,000. The annual operation and maintenance budget has been estimated to be $50,000 to $75,000.

ALTERNATIVE B - (Establishment of an Area of National Concern) Designation as an area of national concern the area from Milagra Ridge in Pacifica south to State Route 92 and along the coastal watershed (I280) to the ocean. This entire area takes in approximately 35,000 to 40,000 acres. About 25,000 acres of this area are currently in public ownership as parks and watershed. Another 10,000 or so acres are in various open space uses, but privately owned. The remaining acreage is comprised of the developed portions of the cities of Pacifica and Half Moon Bay, as well as the coastal communities of Montara, Moss Beach and El Granada. The jurisdictions involved in this area include San Mateo County, Pacifica and Half Moon Bay and the California Coastal Commission.

To accomplish the ultimate goal of preserving and protecting the natural and cultural values in the above area and to provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities, a body would be legislatively established to undertake and complete a comprehensive land use and management plan for the area within a certain time period. Membership of the planning body would be composed of the various units of government having jurisdiction over the area. This plan would be based upon mutually agreed upon administrative policies developed by the body. The land use management plan would identify the



NORTH

SWEENEY RIDGE

LEGEND

- SAN FRANCISCO (Jail Site)
- COUNTY PARKS
- STATE PARKS
- LOCAL PARKS
- GOLDEN GATE NRA
- FEDERAL LANDS
- NATIONAL TRUST
- STATE of CALIFORNIA
- AGRICULTURAL PRESERVES
- COASTSIDE WATER DISTRICT
- SAN FRANCISCO WATER DEPARTMENT
- SCENIC EASEMENT
- SCENIC AND RECREATION EASEMENT

ALTERNATIVE B

AREA OF NATIONAL CONCERN DESIGNATION
(APPROXIMATELY 40,000 ACRES)

0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles
SCALE

ON MICROFILM

SW RI | 80.004
JUNE 79 | WRO-PP

type, intensity and location of appropriate land uses based on the various resource values and here also on economic considerations, which of those areas, if any, should be acquired for public purposes or developed for private purposes. Public agencies, private groups or individuals owning or administering lands within the area would retain management responsibility for their lands, but would have to obtain approval from the body for any land use modification not spelled out in the plan. The plan would identify also where and what type of additional public outdoor recreation facilities could be provided.

The primary responsibility for the area would rest with those units of government currently having jurisdiction. The plan would be enforced through the regulatory authority of the affected local governments. The Federal role, based on interest in seeing that the area's significant resources are protected, primarily consists of providing certain and specific kinds of assistance to these units of government. Additionally the Federal Government, through the Secretary of the Interior, would ensure that all Federal projects which could affect the area are consistent with the management plan. The Secretary also would be responsible for this overall consistency during plan preparation.

The Federal Government, through the Secretary of the Interior, would provide technical and financial assistance through the body to the affected governments. This assistance would be provided both during and after the development of the management plan. Except for those specific areas legislatively exempted, Federal financial assistance for land acquisition would not be available until after the management plan is approved. Acquisition of lands in fee, either fee simple or less than fee, would be limited to those lands which were judged by the plan to be critical to maintaining or fulfilling the area's intended purpose. The National Park Service could assist in identifying these critical areas. As mentioned, in special areas where development is imminent and viewed by the body as being inimical to the area's intended purpose, acquisition funds could be made available prior to completion of the management plan. The Secretary of the Interior would have the responsibility for reviewing and approving the land use and management plan and for providing any acquisition funds prior to plan completion. Compliance with the management plan would be backed by Federal sanctions, including removal of financial assistance and reversion of acquired land to Federal hands.

ALTERNATIVE B

(Area of National Concern)

Resource Values	Impacts
Cultural:	Through public purchase the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site, a national historic landmark, would receive the additional protection afforded by the more than 1,000 acres of undeveloped open space on its western side. Development and management of any interpretive facilities related to the Discovery Site would be the responsibility of the managing entity. Other cultural resources within the Area of National Concern could be preserved through public purchase or by other means. These resources, however, would be identified later during the development of the land use management plan.
Natural:	The open space and natural resources of the Sweeney Ridge area, including suitable habitat for the San Francisco garter snake, would be preserved through public ownership. The level of protection given to these resources would be the responsibility of the managing entity. Additional open space and natural resources in the reserve area would be preserved by public purchase or by other means through the identification of critical areas in the land use management plan.
Recreational:	The opportunity to enjoy unobstructed scenic views in a natural setting from Sweeney Ridge would be preserved. Hiking and/or riding opportunities up to the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site along the present unimproved roads would be preserved.

ALTERNATIVE B - Continued

The development of any recreation facilities and the operation and the maintenance of these facilities would be the responsibility of the managing entity.

Additional outdoor recreation opportunities could be provided in other areas within the designated Area of National Concern through public purchase or by other means. Again, the land use management plan would be the appropriate vehicle to identify these areas.

Socio-Economic Values

Urban Development: About 250 acres of land currently proposed for mixed residential development for approximately 3,500 people would be precluded.

Tax Revenue (Estimated): Based on an estimated FMV of $155,000,000 for the West Aspen development on Sweeney Ridge, $1,550,000 in property tax revenue would be lost to the county.

Precluded also would be the revenues accruing to the City of Pacifica which total an estimated one million during the six-year construction phase and an estimated small annual surplus upon reaching full development of the project.

Upon completion of the management plan, critical areas would be identified. These areas may have to be purchased in order to preserve and protect their resource values. Consequently, under this alternative, there would be additional lands which would be taken off the tax rolls. The amount of revenues which would be lost to the affected localities is unknown at this time.

ALTERNATIVE B - Continued

Socio-Economic

Access:	A four-lane access road, including an interchange, from the coast highway to the crestline of Sweeney Ridge would be precluded.

Costs to the Federal Government

Acquisition (Estimated):	$25,000,000 to $30,000,000 (1979 dollars)
Development (Estimated):	No cost
Operation and Maintenance (Estimated):	No cost

ALTERNATIVE C - (No Action)

Ownership and future use of Sweeney Ridge and the adjacent area to remain with the present owners. Accordingly, there would be no public purchase of lands. The 18 acre San Francisco Bay Discovery Site atop Sweeney Ridge would continue to be owned by the county and administered by Pacifica. The City of Pacifica, the local jurisdiction with responsibility for regulating land use on Sweeney Ridge, will review the development proposal for the crest area and, based on that review, either approve or deny the project. If that project were to be approved, residential development and a paved road would abut the western side of the 18 acre site. The open space buffer around the site would be diminished and some of the view points from the site would be impaired. However, most of the historical integrity of the site would remain intact. The "historic" view of San Francisco Bay to the east would be unaffected. Paved road access would be provided to the site thereby making it available to motor vehicles.

Under this alternative there would be no involvement by the National Park Service. As pointed out, any involvement by the State of California (Department of Parks and Recreation) in the acquisition and development of the Sweeney Ridge area for public park purposes appears to be remote at this

time based on the low priority given to the area by the State. It appears that local governments, either city or county, would also not be likely to acquire and manage the Sweeney Ridge area due to the shortage of local funds for acquisition, development or operation and maintenance. This condition has been brought about largely through the passage last year of Proposition 13.

If the West Aspen project were to proceed, the historic and scenic values of the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site would be impaired to some degree (the specific impacts on the site and on the other values identified in this study are detailed on the following page.) However, it has been judged herein that due to public ownership of 18 acres around the site, the presence of public open space lands to the east and the scattered, cluster nature of the proposed development, these values would not be totally lost and most of the site's integrity would remain intact.

ALTERNATIVE C
(No Action)

Resource Values	Impacts
Cultural:	Assuming residential development along the lines of the West Aspen project: -Residential development and a paved road would abut the western side of the 18 acre publically owned San Francisco Bay Discovery Site. -Views to the west from the site would be impaired by that development. -The upper portion of the "Portola Trail," located along the southern lateral ridge, would be paved over and replaced by a road and have residential development alongside it. -Paved road access to the San Francisco Bay Discovery Site would be provided thereby making the recreational opportunity of visiting the site and enjoying the view of San Francisco Bay available to those other than just hikers and riders.
Natural:	About 200 acres of residential development, paved roads and landscaping would replace the introduced grasses currently found along the ridge crests. About 200 acres of open space would be replaced by residential development. About 800 acres of coastal scrub would remain essentially intact. Residential development would take place on those portions of the Sweeney Ridge area judged to be suitable habitat for the San Francisco garter snake.

ALTERNATIVE C - Continued

Recreational:	About 12 acres of the ridge crest area would be developed as ponds and parks. However, these areas would not be open to the general public. Several scenic view points located along Sweeney Ridge and the adjacent lateral ridges would be retained.

Socio-Economic Values

Urban Development:	Approximately 1,500 single-family, townhouse and condominium units would be constructed, providing housing for about 3,500 people.
Tax Revenue Estimated	The above units, based on an estimated FMV of $155,000,000, would generate a maximum of $1,550,000 in property tax revenues for the county. Revenues accruing to the City of Pacifica total an estimated one million dollars during the six-year construction phase, and an estimated small annual surplus upon reading full development of the project.
Access:	A four-land access road and interchange would be built by the developer from the coast highway to and through the development.

Costs to the Federal Government

Acquisition:	No cost
Development:	No cost
Operation and Maintenance:	No cost

by OPR from ten California cities indicated that, since Proposition 13, new residential development is generating more costs than revenues. The current State allocation formula was used to arrive at this conclusion. Moreover, factors such as employment gains and environmental impacts were not included.

ADDENDUM July 23, 1979

Just prior to the printing of this report the City of Pacifica released its own cost/revenue figures for West Aspen's proposed residential development along Sweeney Ridge. According to these figures, annual expenditures for the proposal total more than three times the annual revenue. Pacifica used the current (interim) allocation formula to derive these figures. These estimates contradict figures generated by HKS Associates, consultants to the West Aspen Company, who concluded that the proposed development would generate a slight surplus of revenue upon completion. This conclusion was based on what was assumed to be a likely approximation of the new state allocation formula (see page 25). When Pacifica's figures for revenues and expenditures are applied to this new formula, expenditures come to about one and one half the revenues. In neither instance, according to Pacifica's estimates, is the proposed development paying for itself.

This information conforms to conclusions of a recent survey* by the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR). Information obtained

*New Housing: Paying Its Way, an analysis of the fiscal impact of new residential development in post-Proposition 13, California - ten case studies," Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento, May 1979

by OPR from ten California cities indicated that, since Proposition 13, new residential development is generating more costs than revenues. The current State allocation formula was used to arrive at this conclusion. Moreover, factors such as employment gains and environmental impacts were not included.