



County of Santa Cruz

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES

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BARRY C. SAMUEL, DIRECTOR

Vote 5/0

September 1, 1999

Santa Cruz County
Parks and Recreation Commission
c/o County Parks Department
979 17th Avenue,
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

*Tim:
strongly encourage an improved financial system of monitoring specifically for off road vehicles. That device need be handled by the parks dept as that they have the responsibility for deciding the best way to handle the monitor restoration or use of a private firm*

SUBJECT: Scott Creek Beach Access Enhancement and Habitat Restoration Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, Environmental Assessment

Dear Commissioners:

September 28, 1999, completes the public comment period for the Scott Creek Beach Access Enhancement and Habitat Restoration Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, and Environmental Assessment (SEIR/EA). In the Commissions August agenda package, you received a copy of this document, and on September 13, 1999, your Commission will be holding a public hearing regarding the same.

The purpose of this hearing is to allow community members an opportunity to learn more about the Project and the draft SEIR/EA from the project planners. If members of the community still have unresolved concerns after the meeting, there will be a minimum of 15 days remaining in the 60 (+) day comment period for individuals to submit written comments. If concerns are expressed during this meeting that your Commission would like to forward to the County Environmental Coordinator, those comments will be recorded at that time

Staff has reviewed the draft SEIR/EA and have found that outside of minor technical and grammatical mistakes the document has only 5 areas of substance that the Department is concerned. These concerns are as follows:

- 6. On page 15, 2nd paragraph, under C. Revegetation, the draft SEIR/EA indicates that "Dune restoration would be maintained by a professional maintenance service for three years after planting". The Department recommends that this statement includes the County Parks maintenance. The Department would like to have the option of providing it's own restoration maintenance with the acknowledgment that additional maintenance staff will be necessary to maintain this and other north coast recreational access points once constructed.

② 7. On page 59, Mitigation Measure LU-3, suggests that one "No parking" sign along Highway One shall be removed for each new freestanding sign installed by the project so the total number of signs in the vicinity remain the same" The Department supports the intent of this Mitigation Measure, that a minimum number of signs be used, but recommends that law enforcement officials be consulted to determine the appropriate number and type of regulatory parking signs needed, as well as the spacing requirements between signs.

③ 8. On page 72, Mitigation Measure TRAF-2, recommends that the County develop a gravel turn-around north and south of the project and post signs indicating the presence of pull outs for U-turns. The Department does not support the use of any signs regarding U-turns. Nor does the Department support the notion that the County would encourage visitors to make U-turns any where along this stretch of Highway One by developing additional pull outs. Because traffic conditions change from one moment to the next in the vicinity of this Beach, the Department does not believe the County should assist the drivers of vehicle as to when, where, or if it is safe to make a U-turn.

However, in light of Mitigation Measures LU-3 and TRAF-2, the Department does support a post-construction evaluation of traffic movement and parking conditions for the possible inclusion of additional traffic regulatory signs if determined necessary.

④ 9. On page 63, Mitigation Measure BIO-2A, recommends setting a side 2 acres of coastal strand and dune habitat as a snowy plover refuge. For the last several years the Department, working with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and volunteers, have seasonally set aside approximately 6 acres of this type of habitat as a plover refuge during the plover breeding season, April - September. During the winter months, October - March, the size of this beach is significantly reduced and much of this habitat area is inundated by waves. The Department supports the protection of a seasonal snowy plover refuge, that encompasses the dune and as large an area as reasonably possible west and south of the dune. However it is important that the SEIR/EA acknowledge that the size of the plover refuge is determined by seasonal conditions and in the winter that the size is significantly reduced.

⑤ 10. On page 63, Mitigation Measure BIO-2B, references the US Fish and Wild Life Service's (USFWS) Biological Conference and Opinion located in Appendix D of the Technical Appendices. Mitigation Measure BIO-2B combines the Terms and Requirements of the USFWS Biological Conference and Opinion with their Conservation Recommendations. As a result, the Conditions and Requirements have been over simplified and the Conservation Recommendations have become a project Condition. The Department supports the USFWS Biological Conference and Opinion as stated in Appendix D, with the exception that the monitoring of Laguna Beach not be a requirement of the County because it is a privately owned piece of property.

After thorough review and evaluation, it is therefore Recommended that your Commission forward the above concerns to the County Environmental Coordinator during the Scott Creek Beach Access Enhancement and Habitat Restoration Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, and Environmental Assessment public comment period.

Sincerely,

Barry C. Samuel
Director