

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION
De NOVO APPLICATION
BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

DAY USE PARKING FEE COLLECTION DEVICE PROPOSAL

March 2016



State of California
California State Parks

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of California State Parks (“State Parks”) is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Along the Sonoma Coast, State Parks operates four park units totaling 19,408 acres with an annual visitation of over 3.8 million people. These parks stretch 31.5 miles along the coast and offer multiple locations for visitors to enjoy unspoiled Sonoma Coast vistas, wild beaches, forests, beach and river access and miles of trails. These locations also offer a variety of services from paved parking lots with restrooms, picnic sites, garbage collection to gravel pull-outs with no services.

Fees are charged for day use parking at over 132 parks units around the state and an additional 23 charge a per person entrance fee. In the four park units along the Sonoma Coast, day use parking fees are charged at Bodega Dunes, Wrights Beach, Reef, Fort Ross, Gerstle Cove, Woodside, and Fisk Mill day use parking areas. These fees are necessary to support the ongoing operations and maintenance of these facilities, including ensuring the health and safety of the public and the preservation of natural and cultural resources.

Due to passage of AB1478 in 2012, mandating a new revenue generation program, State Parks began a process to institute day use parking fees at 14 additional locations along the Sonoma Coast (“Original Fee Proposal”). The initial application to the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department and subsequent appeal to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors were denied in January and June of 2013, respectively. An appeal to the California Coastal Commission (CCC) in 2015 resulted in a finding of substantial issue and a De Novo hearing was scheduled for the following year. The following De Novo Coastal Development Permit is submitted in accordance with that finding.

Following the 2015 hearing, State Parks met with representatives of groups that opposed the proposal at the 2015 hearing. Following a series of meetings, a Revised Fee Proposal was presented that included a number of changes to the Original Fee Proposal. The number proposed for day use parking fee has been reduced from 14 to 8. The manner of fee collection was updated from the traditional “iron ranger” to a modern, technology-based fee collection device. A fee schedule with a variety of fee options based on the amount of time a parking facility is used has been developed. And, finally, a recommendation to condition the installation of parking signage and restrictions has been added to prevent excessive use of undeveloped (and therefore free) parking areas. State Parks proposes a substantially reduced proposal that has removed locations where traffic and neighborhood concerns were identified. Many beaches remain free of charge including the popular four-mile stretch from South Salmon Creek to Duncans Cove.

Like the Original Fee Proposal, the Revised Fee Proposal is consistent with the California Coastal Act and the Sonoma County Local Coastal Program. It also complies with several pieces of legislation enacted in 2012 mandating State Parks to generate revenue as an essential component of a long-term sustainable park funding strategy. The attached De Novo Application includes a summary of the revised Fee Project as well as additional data and information requested by CCC.



1. INTRODUCTION

This Coastal Development Permit (CDP) application has been prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to provide the California Coastal Commission (CCC) information regarding the Day Use Parking Fee Collection Devices Proposal at Sonoma Coast State Park (Sonoma Coast SP) and Salt Point State Park (Salt Point SP), located in Sonoma County, California. With strong passionate local visitation and visitation based on the regional and national significance, there is juxtaposition of visitor needs to manage. The proposed project would provide State Parks the ability to more effectively manage vehicular parking during peak use periods on up to 8 existing day use parking areas in Sonoma Coast State Park and Salt Point State Park, as necessary to better accommodate use and prevent deterioration of natural resources.

1.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Fee Proposal is to increase revenues through the collection of day use parking fees to help offset the cost of maintenance and resource protection activities. Approval of the Fee Proposal would allow State Parks to continue to meet the Department's mission of protecting resources and providing high quality recreation.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

The Fee Proposal includes eight different locations in two parks spread along Pacific Coast Highway 1 in Sonoma County. Sonoma Coast SP is a long, linear coastal park that extends north 19 miles from Bodega Head. The proposal includes seven parking areas in Sonoma Coast SP, including South Goat Rock, North Goat Rock, Arched View, Blind Beach, Shell Beach, Bodega East, and Bodega West and one parking area in Salt Point SP at Stump Beach parking area is included in the proposal.

1.3 VISITATION TO SONOMA COAST STATE PARK

Annually, Sonoma Coast and Salt Point SPs receive approximately 3,000,000 and 275,000 visitors, respectively. Many visitors are tourists taking a leisurely trip along the world-famous Highway 1, making brief stops at the many day use areas to take in the rugged scenery and ocean views. These visitors may spend comparatively little time at any one location and utilize fewer park resources than other visitors. There are no Caltrans rest stops along Highway 1 in Sonoma County, and consequently, State Parks' day use areas and restroom facilities have become de facto rest stops.

Many visitors are local to Sonoma, Marin and Mendocino counties and make frequent visits to the park to take advantage of the recreational activities. Others come from the Central and Sacramento valleys during the summer months when valley temperatures often rise above 100 degrees. This group consists of both campers and day users.

Park records show that visitation typically peaks in June and July, coinciding with school vacations and the highest temperatures in the valley. The average day in July brings more



than 600 vehicles into the Bodega Head and Goat Rock areas and over 1,000 on a Saturday or holiday. These visitor spikes heavily tax park resources and facilities.

Sonoma Coast SP Visitation				
Fiscal Year	Paid Day Use	Free Day Use	Camping	Total
2000/2001	51,962	1,869,751	91,861	2,013,574
2001/2002	34,688	2,239,255	90,478	2,364,421
2002/2003	39,169	2,772,723	97,950	2,909,842
2003/2004	41,572	2,476,741	94,445	2,612,758
2004/2005	34,302	2,940,163	84,676	3,059,141
2005/2006	31,757	3,228,878	77,886	3,338,521
2006/2007	28,906	3,153,553	83,378	3,265,837
2007/2008	34,070	2,133,186	90,345	2,257,601
2008/2009	33,738	2,369,167	90,514	2,493,419
2009/2010	26,105	2,972,087	70,325	3,068,517
2010/2011	20,094	3,043,706	67,365	3,131,165
2011/2012	25,055	3,080,690	73,496	3,179,241
2012/2013	23,044	3,266,409	71,547	3,361,000
2013-2014	25,291	3,416,089	80,885	3,522,265

Salt Point SP Visitation				
Fiscal Year	Paid Day Use	Free Day Use	Camping	Total
2000/2001	22,419	235,575	39,592	297,586
2001/2002	14,210	241,100	50,372	305,682
2002/2003	13,509	224,417	53,260	291,186
2003/2004	16,722	240,940	58,144	315,806
2004/2005	14,080	225,043	42,860	281,983
2005/2006	13,552	200,403	35,112	249,067
2006/2007	21,186	220,840	40,502	282,528
2007/2008	24,608	234,259	47,004	305,871
2008/2009	20,276	231,533	48,150	299,959
2009/2010	14,374	190,511	36,438	241,323
2010/2011	15,723	171,087	42,884	229,694
2011/2012	15,593	60,489	26,268	102,350
2012/2013	15,780	53,115	27,334	96,229
2013-2014	18,680	55,375	30,327	104,382

1.4 VISITOR DATA

Vehicle trips at North Salmon, School House Beach, Bodega Head, Goat Rock, and Willow Creek have been tracked since May 2015 using TRAFx data counters. Additional traffic counters were installed in October at Portuguese Beach North/South and Shell Beach. The counters record vehicles entering and exiting the area. The number must be divided in half to determine the total number of vehicles. This method does not identify how many vehicles enter verses exit in an hour; it provides only the raw data that 70 vehicles had triggered the counter during that hour (Support, 2016).



In those areas where visitation has been consistently tracked, a predictable spike in visitation occurs during the summer, coinciding with the warmest temperatures of the year. The Bodega Head and Goat Rock areas will see between 15,000 to 20,000 total visitors during the warm summer months. On an average day, visitors began to arrive at 8:00 a.m. and visitation peaks between 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. when approximately 60 vehicles per hour move through the busiest day use areas of the park. Saturdays and Sundays are the busiest days of the week, with an average vehicle count of approximately 650 per day at Goat Rock (DataNet, 2015). A warm summer holiday, such as July 4th or Labor Day, will bring over 2,000 vehicles into the Bodega Head area where there are fewer than 200 parking spaces. Thus, over 5,000 people in 1,800 vehicles search for a parking space in one of the four Goat Rock day use parking areas.

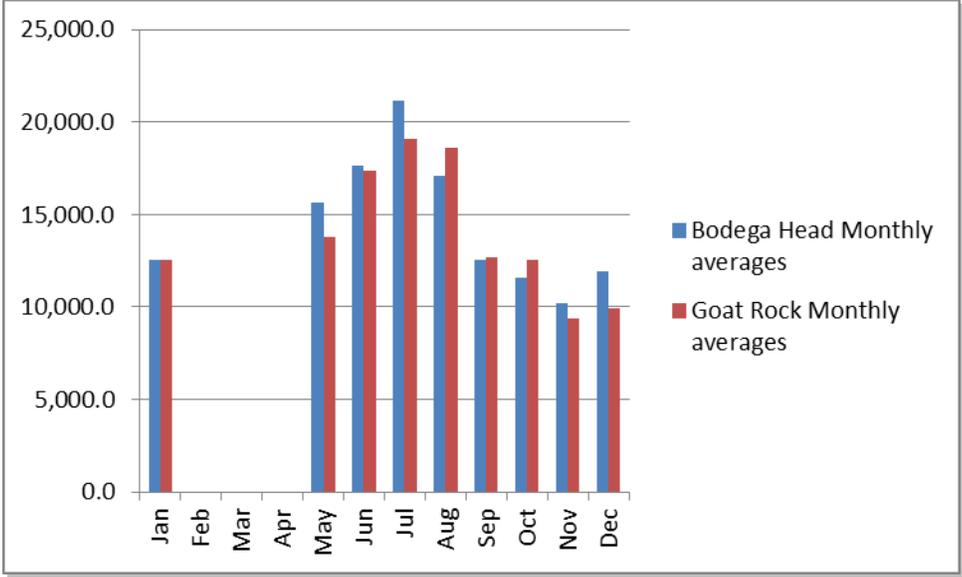


Figure 1: Monthly Vehicle Trip Averages



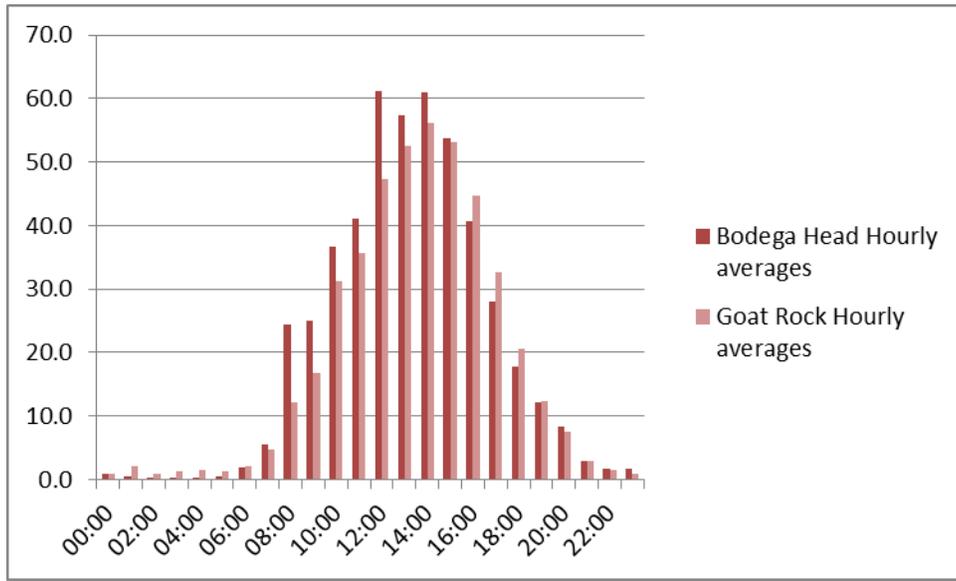


Figure 2: Hourly Vehicle Trip Averages

1.5 ECONOMIC IMPACT

Household incomes for visitors are relatively high with 57% earning over \$75,000 annually and only 15% earning less than \$40,000. Based on visitor zip codes, a majority of visitors are from the Sacramento and Northern San Joaquin valleys. Sacramento is the most common visitor origin while Sonoma County ranks fifth (NOAA, 2015).

The dramatic views from Sonoma Coast SP have become the face of tourism in Sonoma County. A quick look at many Sonoma County tourism brochures features waves crashing on its rocky beaches. This visitation is major economic driver in Sonoma County. On average, just under \$26 per person was spent by visitors on their trip to the coast. Together, these expenditures in the local economy totalled \$86.25 million in an estimated total output of \$145.8 million (2015\$), income of \$53.8 million and creates approximately 1,100 jobs (Vernon Leeworth, 2015).



2. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Sonoma Coast SP is comprised of over 10,000 acres of parkland stretching for 19 miles along the Sonoma County coastline from Bodega Head in the south to north of Jenner. It also extends inland, encompassing the Willow Creek watershed and portions of the lower Russian River watershed. Developed coastal accesses include, but are not limited to (from south to north) Bodega Head, Bodega Dunes, Salmon Creek Beach, Portuguese and Schoolhouse Beach, Duncan's Landing, Wright's Beach, Shell Beach, Goat Rock and Goat Rock Beach, Jenner Visitor Center, Carrington, Red Hill, Willow Creek Watershed, Willow Creek Environmental Camp, and Pomo Canyon Environmental Camp.

Salt Point SP encompasses over 6,000 acres of parkland located on the northern Sonoma County coastline from Gerstle Cove in the south end of the park to Horseshoe Cove in the north. Developed coastal accesses include, but are not limited to (from south to north) Gerstle Cove, Stump Beach, and Fisk Mill Cove (see attached Figures 4 and 5).





Day Use Parking Fee Collection Proposal
 Sonoma Coast SP and Salt Point SP
 California State Parks





Day Use Parking Fee Collection Proposal
 Sonoma Coast SP and Salt Point SP
 California State Parks



2.1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

There are currently an estimated 2400 day use parking stalls within Sonoma Coast SP, Fort Ross State Historic Park and Salt Point SP. These include paved, gravel and shoulder parking where visitors routinely park under existing baseline conditions. Approximately 600 spaces (25%) in 13 day use parking areas are currently subject to a flat \$8 daily fee. A day use pass is currently valid for parking at any recognized day use area managed and operated by State Parks during the date of purchase and operational hours, which may vary by park unit. The breakdown of existing parking including fee and non-fee for Sonoma Coast and Salt Point SPs, can be seen in Appendix A.

State Parks' Annual Statistical Report notes Sonoma Coast SP as the fourth-most visited park in the system. Because it is spread along 19 miles of the coastline and has many possible entry points, beach activity occurs 24 hours a day. Thus, demands on Sonoma Coast SP's facilities are considerable. The result of the high visitation levels, resource impacts and the limited maintenance budget is readily apparent in the condition of some of the facilities. Moreover, ranger, maintenance, and operations staffing levels are not appropriately aligned with the level of visitation, maintenance and resource protection needs. These deficiencies in staffing and maintenance are due in large part to the limited amount of revenue generated at the park.



Figure 4: Full Parking Lot and Whale Watchers on Bodega Head

2.2. FEES AT OTHER COASTAL STATE PARKS LOCATIONS

Fort Ross State Historic Park is located immediately adjacent to Salt Point SP. Fort Ross SHP has 4 developed parking/day use areas and 3 other highway shoulder areas. Of the developed areas (Upper Reef, Lower Reef (AKA Reef CG), Main Lot, Windermere Point), 3 of those are currently day use fee areas at an \$8 daily rate. Approximately 90% of the parking stalls at Fort Ross SHP require payment of a day use fee.

In Mendocino County State Parks located within the coastal zone, California State Parks operates 36 separate day use areas. Of those, only 4 charge a day use fee of \$8.00 per car. In Fiscal Year 13-14, this amounted to \$71,999 of paid day use revenue.



Marin County is perhaps a much better demographic and population comparison to Sonoma County. Most coastal State Park units in Marin County are located in the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, but are coastal units nonetheless. Many of these do charge day use fees, which vary from \$5 to \$8.

There are no coastal State Park units in Humboldt or Del Norte Counties that require day use fees.

2.3. DISTRICT BUDGETARY IMBALANCE

The General Fund declined from a high of 90% of State Parks' operating budget in FY 1979-80 to 29% in the FY 2012-13 budget, making State Parks more dependent than ever on revenues earned through user fees and concessions. Said another way, this change in funding has made State Parks more of an enterprise organization and less of a traditionally funded State department (Matthew Buttice, 2013).

Currently, operations at Sonoma Coast SP are heavily subsidized by other parks in the system because of the limited amount of revenue that is captured within the park, as well as the harsh coastal conditions that result in the rapid deterioration and increased costs necessary to maintain its facilities.

Year	Paid Visitation	Direct Expenditures	Indirect Expenditures	Total Expenditures	total gain/(loss)	% of total Exp. covered
Sonoma Coast State Park						
2013/2014	\$768,878	\$2,716,979	\$1,303,677	\$4,020,656	\$(3,251,778)	19%
Salt Point State Park						
	\$379,899	\$1,255,889	\$590,168	\$1,846,057	\$(1,466,158)	21%

State Parks in Sonoma County comprise nearly 39,000 acres, see 5.7 million visitors per year, and have a net visitor cost average of approximately \$2.31. Compare that to the Sonoma County Regional Park District which encompasses 11,000 acres, 5.1 million visitors and a net cost per visitor of only \$.70.

2.4. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5010, State Parks is authorized "to collect fees, rents, and other returns for the use of any state park system area, the amounts to be determined by [State Parks]." Based on this authority, State Parks has established and modified fees throughout the state park system for over 100 years. More recently, the California Legislature passed several laws in 2012 that require State Parks to develop a revenue generation program and work to improve its financial situation. Senate Bill 1018, the trailer bill for the FY 2012-13 budget year, provided for core funding and requirements for development of a revenue generation program. Assembly Bill 1478 (Blumenfeld) created the State Parks Enterprise Fund and clarified goals of the revenue generation program, including the creation of a revenue incentive program for park districts. Assembly Bill 1589 (Huffman)



created the State Parks Protection Fund and requires that the Department create a prioritized action plan to increase revenues and collection of user fees at state parks.

2.5. REVENUE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

In general, fees collected at state park units are deposited in the State Parks and Recreation Fund (SPRF), which is available to State Parks upon appropriation by the Legislature. While State Parks cannot commit future Legislatures to specific appropriations, increased revenue generation would provide more opportunity for State Parks to request funding for projects specific to the Sonoma Coast. Additionally, through the passage of AB 1478, Public Resources Code §5010.7(a) requires State Parks to set revenue targets annually and Public Resources Code §5010.7(d) states that any park that exceeds its revenue target shall receive a 50% return. This funding may be used to enhance visitor services and amenities and maintain or increase revenue generating opportunities, where currently these opportunities are limited.

The current revenue target for the Sonoma Mendocino Coast District, of which Sonoma Coast SP and Salt Point SP are a part, is approximately \$3.1 million. Generally, revenue targets are set annually based on the average of the prior three years of revenue collection plus an adjustment for inflation. Therefore, it is expected that by implementing a fee collection program, Sonoma Mendocino Coast District will exceed its revenue target and realize an increase in revenue returned directly to the district. Please see Appendix B for the revenue projections for the fee collection devices.

The increase in revenue received as a result of this program will make direct service enhancements such as improvements to bathrooms, parking lot improvements, and facilities upgrades at these Parks possible, where currently these opportunities are limited.

2.6. COASTAL PERMITTING EFFORTS

Since as far back as 1992, State Parks has contemplated installing day use parking fee collection in Sonoma County coastal park units as a means to generate revenue to fund expansion of park programs and to offset the costs of performing routine park maintenance.

These efforts were the subject of litigation, for which State Parks ultimately prevailed at the California Court of Appeals in 1994, though the fee collection devices were never installed. Those efforts were abandoned when the State Budget authorized additional spending for State Parks.

The most recent attempt to install day use parking fees began on February 22, 2012, when State Parks filed a Notice of Exemption to install self-pay stations at 15 locations along the Sonoma County Coast (See Appendix C). State Parks subsequently filed an application with Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) on May 31, 2012, for a Coastal Development Permit.

However, the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) preemptively adopted Resolution 12-0409 on August 21, 2012, opposing new parking fees until State Parks “has adequately accounted



for all funding streams and determined no other viable funding alternatives exist to ensure free and open access to parks.”

The Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) subsequently denied State Park’s application on January 17, 2013 and on June 18, 2013, the BOS denied State Park’s appeal of the BZA’s decision. State Parks appealed the BOS decision to the CCC and on April 15, 2015 the CCC found that substantial issues existed and granted State Parks a de novo hearing.

2.7. PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

At the April 2015 hearing, the CCC requested that State Parks engage with stakeholders in an outreach program to solicit input and search for a consensus on a fee proposal. Beginning in July 2015, State Parks convened (and CCC directed) the Sonoma Coast Fee Issue Working Group consisting of State Parks, County of Sonoma (Supervisor Carrillo, Permit Resource Management Department, and Sonoma County Regional Parks), Sonoma County Surfrider Foundation, Sonoma County Conservation Action, Coastwalk, Bodega Bay Fire Department, and Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods. The group met seven times to discuss State Park’s need for the project, site characteristics, proposed fees and passes and other opportunities to address concerns that have been raised by stakeholders.

Meeting Date	Attendees
Jul 15 th	State Parks, Surfrider, Sonoma County Conservation Action, Coastwalk
Oct 12 th	State Parks, Surfrider, Sonoma County Conservation Action, Coastwalk, PRMD, SCRCP, BOS Representative, Stewards, CCC
Nov 23 rd	State Parks, Surfrider, Sonoma County Conservation Action, Coastwalk, Stewards, CCC, BBFD SCRCP, BOS Office, Stewards
Dec 14 th	State Parks, Surfrider, Coastwalk, CCC, BBFD SCRCP, Stewards
Jan 6 th	State Parks, Surfrider, Coastwalk, BOS Office, Stewards
Jan 20 th	State Parks, Surfrider, Coastwalk, BOS Office, Stewards
Feb 3 rd	State Parks, Surfrider, Coastwalk, Stewards, CCC, BOS Office
Feb 17 th	Public meeting

The Working Group’s goal was to balance the input from the local community, the requirements of the Coastal Act, and the inherent challenges of managing and protecting natural and cultural resources of the state park system. The group presented a Revised Fee Proposal including administrative actions that could address many concerns that were articulated during the County and coastal permitting process. These actions are solely administrative in nature, are statutorily exempt from CEQA. In general, the group did not support fee collection.

Administrative Actions

- \$8/day for new fee areas. Good for day use in all state parks on date of purchase;
- Provide hourly rates (up to \$3/hour) where possible;
- Develop Sonoma Coast SP Pass for access to Sonoma County coastal park units (Fort Ross, Salt Point, Sonoma Coast);



- Disseminate information on existing Low Income Pass to Sonoma County residents;
- Work with stakeholders and CCC to explore alternatives for low income, undocumented residents for fee areas;
- Provide for free visitation for “surf checks” of up to 30 minutes;
- Minimize future service reductions in areas where no fees are collected;
- Use retained revenue pursuant to Public Resources code §5010.7(d) for improved services along the Sonoma Coast (facility improvements, housekeeping, interpretive programs, trail maintenance, natural and cultural resource management, etc.);
- Implement Sonoma Coast Advisory Group to build and maintain community trust (broad representation to potentially include, conservation, recreation, economic, allied agency, and political interests).

As a result of its dialogue with the Working Group, State Parks identified the following key considerations that influenced the scope of the Revised Fee Proposal.

Natural and Cultural Resource Protection:

New fee locations must consider and minimize direct and indirect impacts to natural and cultural resources. Areas where any new facilities are proposed for development generally has been previously disturbed and are absent of natural and cultural resources of significance. For instance, fee collection devices would be located in already developed parking lots.

Public Safety:

State Parks recognizes that there are a few locations where patrons may elect to park informally and walk-in rather than pay a day use fee. These locations include parking areas adjacent to neighborhoods and/or with ample shoulder parking. Traffic safety may be compromised by short lines of site, narrow roads, or unsafe pedestrian crossings of Highway 1. Locations with public safety concerns include Russian Gulch, North Salmon Creek, Schoolhouse, and Portuguese Beach.

The Bodega Bay fishing community depends on the ability to check surf conditions from Bodega Head. To maintain this critical access, no gate will be installed at the proposed Bodega Head entrance station or West Lot. Access will be unimpeded by hours of operation and no fees will be charged for a “surf check”.

Services and Activities:

Sites with developed facilities and ample recreational activities provide more value to park visitors and there is a reasonable expectation for user fees. High service and activity value sites include Goat Rock, Shell Beach, Bodega Head, and Stump Beach. Sites with lower service and activity values include; Portuguese Beach, Schoolhouse Beach, North Salmon, Bean Avenue, and Russian Gulch.

Revenue:

Sites with high services and activities, promontories and park like settings tend to attract the greatest number of visitors. These types of sites include Goat Rock, Bodega Head, and Shell Beach.

Entrance Station v. Fee Collection Devices:

In many regards, entrance stations are preferable to several independently fee collected parking areas in certain situations. Staffed entrance stations provide an important source of information for the visiting public. The need to monitor separate parking lots is reduced when all vehicles pass through an entrance station. In areas where there is a relatively high number of parking areas and ample shoulder parking, the presence of entrance stations reduces illegal parking and associated social trails, litter, and waste that results. These sites include Bodega Head and Goat Rock.

Traffic and Parking Impacts:



State Parks recognizes that there are a few potential locations where patrons may elect to park informally and walk-in rather than pay a day use fee, creating new parking areas and associated social trails through sensitive habitats. Sites located adjacent to neighborhoods and/or environmentally sensitive areas include North Salmon, Bean Avenue, Schoolhouse Beach, Shell Beach, and Portuguese Beach.

Spatial Arrangement:

Limited free coastal access should be distributed in a manner that provides access to key roadways used by park visitors. Locations with low to moderate services and activities should be removed from any fee implementation proposal. These sites include Russian Gulch and Salmon Creek.

Using the criteria and considerations above, the project scope was revised and several areas included in the Original Fee Proposal were removed from the project scope. Parking areas no longer part of the proposal include; Bean Avenue/South Salmon, Portuguese, North Salmon, Schoolhouse Beach, and Russian Gulch, for a total of 222 parking spaces.

The concept of manned entry stations at several of locations received tacit support from the Working Group. Although entry stations would have far higher construction, operation, and long-term maintenance costs, they provide the first and frequently only point of contact between the public and State Parks staff and are therefore a valuable source of information to park visitors. State Parks revised the plan to provide entry stations at Bodega Head, Goat Rock and Willow Creek and was in the process of preparing an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration evaluating potential impacts when it held an Open House to present the much altered proposal.

The Revised Fee Proposal was presented to the public at an open house in Sebastopol on February 17, 2016. The workshop was intended as a means to present the revised concept to demonstrate the efforts State Parks had taken in response to the opposition raised at the numerous early hearings that occurred as a prelude to the County's early denial at the local level. The meeting quickly became contentious and State Parks was never able to fully articulate its vision. What the attendees made clear however, was their determination to resist implementation of any new fees. As the entry stations were received with little support from the public they were subsequently removed from the proposal considering both cost and potential delays.

2.8. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND STATE PARKS RESPONSES

State Parks met with the Rock Ice & Mountain Club who did not support the fee proposal generally. Their primary concern however, was preserving reasonable access and adequate parking to the Sunset Rocks considered by some to be the birthplace of rock climbing in Sonoma County. The proposed kiosk location would have eliminated roadside parking areas that are considered essential access point for the climbing community. This is not an issue now as the kiosks are no longer being considered under this proposal.

Comments received from the public at and following the February 17th Open House, along with State Parks responses to those comments can be seen in Appendix D.



3. THE PROJECT

3.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Locations

The Original Day Use Parking Fee Proposal included self-pay stations at 14 locations in Sonoma Coast SP and Salt Point SP, converting approximately 814 free spaces to paid spaces. Based on the input of the CCC, the Working Group, and the general public, State Parks reduced the number of parking areas from 14 to 8, including; Stump Beach, Goat Rock North, Goat Rock South, Arched View, Blind Beach, Shell Beach, Bodega East and Bodega West. The characteristics of each site proposed fee collection area are as follows:

Goat Rock Area (North Goat, South Goat, Blind View and Arched View)

- Single ingress and egress, State Park owned and maintained road, 2 miles to beach. Four paved, maintained parking areas including North Goat, South Goat, Arched View and Blind Beach (North Goat lot striped for 68 vehicles, four lots total 80,200 sq. ft.), numerous shoulder parking locations, 3 comfort stations, picnic tables, drinking water (North Goat), beach access and trail connectivity (Kortum, Pomo, Red Hill and Willow Creek).
- Hiking, landscape and wildlife viewing, fishing, surfing, river and beach access.
- Adjacent uses; parkland, Goat Rock residences, near Jenner.
- Sensitive resources include coastal dunes, coastal bluffs, coastal prairie, wetlands, Species of Special Concern, nesting raptors, seal colony, estuary, archaeological and historical features.
- Average monthly vehicle trips 13,997.7, maximum 19,118. Average daily vehicle trips 445.8, maximum 2,025.
- Visitation trends toward long stay.

Bodega Head Area (East Bodega and West Bodega)

- Single ingress and egress, 1 mile to beach with several parking lots en route. Two gravel parking lots include East and West Bodega Head Day Use. Campbell Cove is a paved lot. The three parking lots total (68,500 sq. ft.), 3 comfort stations, picnic tables, trails (including ADA accessible), docent programs.
- Hiking, landscape and wildlife viewing, fishing, beach access.
- Adjacent uses, parkland, UC Bodega Reserve/Marine Lab.
- Average monthly vehicle trips 14,485.7, maximum 21,173. Average daily vehicle trips 474.9, maximum 1,812.
- Visitation trends toward shorter stay; strongly affected by weather conditions.
- Sensitive resources include coastal prairie, coastal bluffs, nesting raptors, and owls, wetlands, Species of Special Concern, archaeological and historic features.

Shell Beach

- Single ingress and egress. Paved, striped parking area for 42 standard-size vehicles and 2 ADA sites (35,800 sq. ft.), in addition, shoulder parking at entrance, a comfort station and coastal access. Serves as a trailhead for the popular Pomo, Red Hill and Kortum Trails.
- Hiking, wildlife and landscape viewing, fishing, beach access.
- Adjacent uses; parkland, three nearby residences.
- Sensitive resources include coastal prairie, coastal bluffs, tide pools, Species of Special Concern, and archaeological sites.



- Free parking for approximately 66 vehicles exists along Pacific View Road, a Sonoma County owned road (29,400 sq. ft., mostly undeveloped subdivision) immediately north of this parking lot. Existing free parking will compete with proposed fee lot.
- Estimated high vehicle count, medium level of service. Currently insufficient user data for projections, but traffic monitors in place.
- Visitation trends toward long stay.
- Fee collection device in parking area and any needed site improvements.

Stump Beach

- Gravel parking area (unstriped, 11,300 sq. ft.), restroom, picnic tables, designated trail access to the beach area below, bluff trail north and south and Stump Beach Trail to interior with connectivity to Kruse Rhododendron and Salt Point State Park trail systems.
- Hiking, landscape and wildlife viewing, fishing, mountain biking, equestrian, beach access.
- Adjacent uses; parkland.
- Sensitive resources include coastal prairie, riparian habitat, coastal bluffs, tide pools, Species of Special Concern, and archaeological sites.
- Estimated medium/low vehicle count, medium level of services. Currently insufficient user data for projections, but traffic monitors in place.
- Visitation trends toward longer stay.
- Fee collection device in parking area and any needed site improvements.

Pay Stations

The Original Fee Proposal developed in 2007 called for the use of self-pay stations referred to as “iron rangers”, which consist of an old style and inefficient square iron tube set in concrete three feet into the ground and extending from 32 to 38 inches above the ground. Today State Parks uses a more technologically advance form of self-pay machines referred to as Automated Payment Machines (APM). APMs are solar powered capable of having Wi-Fi connectivity to allow for the purchase of a day use pass with a debit or credit card or cash, but can also accept all forms of payment without connectivity. APM provides data on parking usage that will provide State Parks with better user information on which to base management decisions or otherwise direct resources.

Two types of machines will be installed: “pay-in-line” and “pay-on-foot”. Machines will be installed at each of the identified parking lots. Site plans showing proposed specific locations are included in the Appendix D. Visitors will be expected to park and then walk to the machine, print out the ticket, and post it on their dash. Both types of machines will be compliant with ADA and capable of accepting payment by credit or debit card or cash. Neither machine will accept coins or give change. The APM can be programmed to sell a variety of parking passes and can be easily updated with new fee schedules or other parameters. The system will be able to generate reports of statistical information on demand. Other features of the APM are described below.

A typical APM installation would include the following design features. It should be noted that not all installation sites are the same and variation will occur from site to site.



Automated Pay Machines

Physical Design Features:

- Solid concrete footing to securely anchor each station to the ground;
- Construction of a concrete pad in front of the APM in compliance with current ADA Accessible Guidelines. This would include obstacle free transitions to existing paved surfaces;
- Installation of informational and regulatory signs as required. Signage typically measures no more than 28" in width and no more than 84" above finished grade.
- Construct accessible pad in front of APPM which entails removing approximately 72ft² of existing asphalt, grade to level and resurface with 4" of asphalt over 4" of compacted aggregate base;
- Construction of the appropriate number of accessible parking spaces commensurate with parking lot capacity.
- Construction of ADA compliant concrete paths to connect accessible parking with fee stations. .

3.2. FUTURE VISITOR ENHANCEMENTS UNDER SEPARATE PERMIT OR MAINTENANCE

A proposed list of projects associated with proposed fee collection locations has been developed and can be found in the Appendix F. Both short term and long term projects have been identified. Some are simply deferred maintenance and others may require additional analysis.

3.3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The improvements covered in this review could be completed as part of a single contract or staged in phases. All improvements would be limited to the existing footprint of the parking lot. Any area necessary for storage or staging of materials will be limited to existing developed areas.

Installation of the fee collection devices could begin as early as the spring of 2017 and could continue for several months. Work would occur only during daylight hours and would be scheduled to incur the least amount of impact to visitors. However, weekend work could be implemented to accelerate construction or address emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

Road maintenance equipment, such as graders, loaders and dump trucks, could be used during various aspects of construction and installation. Most equipment would be transported to the site and remain there until work is completed. Vehicles for the transportation of materials, equipment, and crew will also enter the parking lot locations intermittently. Staging areas for equipment will be confined to the existing parking areas and other previously-disturbed areas.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the project design to ensure that the natural resources in and around the project are adequately protected during and after



construction. The BMPs discussed in this document and used in the implementation of this project were obtained from the *California Stormwater Quality Association (CSQA), Stormwater Best Management Practices Construction Handbook*. BMPs will be used to keep sediment on-site throughout the project. During construction, BMPs will be checked, maintained, and modified daily and as needed. BMPs will also be used after construction to stabilize the site and minimize erosion.

State Parks has consistently referenced CSQA BMPs and has identified them as an acceptable standard for use in all state parks.

3.4 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Under CEQA, the Department of Parks and Recreation has the distinction of being considered a *lead agency*, a public agency that has the primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project and for implementing CEQA. A *responsible agency* is a public agency other than the lead agency that has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project and for complying with CEQA. A *trustee agency* is a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California. With this distinction comes the responsibility to ensure that actions that protect both cultural and natural resources are always taken on all projects. Therefore, State Parks maintains a list of Project Requirements that are included in project design to reduce impacts to resources.

State Parks has developed a list of Standard Project Requirements (SPR) that are used to avoid significant project-related impacts to the environment. SPR are assigned, as appropriate to all projects. For example, projects that include ground-disturbing activities, such as trenching, will always include SPRs to address the inadvertent discovery of archaeological artifacts. However, for a project that replaces a roof on an historic structure, ground disturbance would not be necessary, and therefore, SPRs for ground disturbance would not be assigned to the project.

State Parks also makes use of Specific Project Requirements to address project impacts for projects that have unique issues. Both Standard and Specific Project Requirements that apply to the Revised Fee Proposal are described below.

Standard and Specific Project Requirements for the Revised Fee Proposal	
Natural Resources	
Cultural Resources	
Specific Project Requirement: Cult 1	A State Parks archaeologist may monitor ground-disturbing activities in areas identified with a moderate to high degree of archaeological sensitivity. These locations will be coordinated with the project and construction managers. Other archaeological monitoring needs are at the discretion of the State Parks archaeologist.
Specific Project Requirement: Cult 2	A State Parks archaeologist will review all BMPs and SWSLPP developed for the project.
Specific Project Requirement: Cult 3	During construction, a State Parks archaeologist must review and approve all change orders/RFIs that include ground disturbing



	activities or changes in location.
Specific Project Requirement: Cult 4	Unless a State Parks archaeologist review and approves disposal areas within the park, spoils generated from the project will be disposed of outside of the park.
Specific Project Requirement: Cult 5	A State Parks archaeologist will approve all staging locations for materials and equipment.
Standard Project Requirement: Cult 1 Inadvertent Discovery	<p>a) In the event that previously unknown cultural resources (including but not limited to dark soil containing shellfish, bone, flake stone, groundstone, or deposits of historic trash) are encountered during project work by anyone, the state representative will put work on hold at that specific location and contractors will be redirected to other areas (tasks). A State Parks -qualified archaeologist will record and evaluate the find and work with the state representative to implement avoidance, preservation, or recovery measures as appropriate to any work resuming at that specific location.</p> <p>b) In the event that significant cultural resources are found in the project location, a qualified historian and/or archaeologist will monitor all subsurface work including trenching, grading, and excavations in that area from that point forward to ensure avoidance of significant cultural material.</p>
Standard Project Requirement Cult-2: Human Remains	In the event that human remains are discovered, work will cease immediately in the area of the find and the project manager will notify the appropriate State Parks personnel. Any human remains and/or funerary objects will be left in place or returned to the point of discovery and covered with soil. The DRP Sector Superintendent (or authorized representative) will notify the County Coroner, in accordance with §7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, and the Native American Heritage Commission (or Tribal Representative). If a Native American monitor is on-site at the time of the discovery, the monitor will be responsible for notifying the appropriate Native American Authorities.



Hazards	
<p>Standard Project Requirement: Hazmat-1: Spill Prevention and Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prior to the start of construction, all equipment will be cleaned before entering the project site. During the project, equipment will be cleaned and repaired (other than emergency repairs) outside the project site boundaries. All contaminated spill residue, or other hazardous compounds will be contained and disposed of outside the boundaries of the site at a lawfully permitted or authorized destination. ▪ Prior to the start of construction, all equipment will be inspected for leaks and regularly inspected thereafter until removed from the project site. ▪ Prior to the start of construction, a Spill Prevention and Response Plan (SPRP) will be prepared to provide protection to on-site workers, the public, and the environment from accidental leaks or spills of vehicle fluids or other potential contaminants. This plan will include but not be limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A map that delineates construction staging areas, and where refueling, lubrication, and maintenance of equipment will occur. ▪ A list of items required in an on-site spill kit that will be maintained throughout the life of the project. ▪ Procedures for the proper storage, use, and disposal of any solvents or other chemicals used during the project. ▪ Identification of lawfully permitted or authorized disposal destinations.
<p>Project Specific Requirement Hazmat-2: Wildfire Avoidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For any work during red flag conditions, a Fire Safety Plan will be developed and approved by the local CalFire Battalion Chief. ▪ Spark arrestors or turbo-charging (which eliminates sparks in exhaust) and fire extinguishers will be required for all heavy equipment. ▪ Construction crews will be required to park vehicles away from flammable material, such as dry grass or brush. At the end of each workday, heavy equipment will be parked over asphalt, or concrete to reduce the chance of fire.



Hydrology	
Standard Project Requirement Hydro-1: Erosion and Sediment Control / Pollution Prevention	Prior to the start of construction involving ground-disturbing activities, the District will prepare and submit a Storm Water Soil Loss Pollution Prevention Plan (SWSLPPP) for State Parks approval that identifies temporary Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., tarping of any stockpiled materials or soil; use of silt fences, straw bale barriers, fiber rolls, etc.) and permanent (e.g., structural containment, preserving or planting of vegetation) for use in all construction areas to reduce or eliminate the discharge of soil, surface water runoff, and pollutants during all excavation, grading, trenching, repaving, or other ground-disturbing activities. The SWSLPPP will include BMPs for hazardous waste and contaminated soils management and a Spill Prevention and Control Plan (SPCP), as appropriate.
Noise	
Standard Project Requirement Noise-1: Noise Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project-related activities will generally be limited to the daylight hours, Monday through Friday. However, weekend work will be implemented to accelerate construction or address emergency or unforeseen circumstances. If weekend work is necessary, no work will occur on those days before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. ▪ Internal combustion engines used for any purpose in the project areas will be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. Equipment and trucks used for project-related activities will utilize State Parks -approved noise control techniques (e.g., engine enclosures, acoustically attenuating shields or shrouds, intake silencers, ducts, etc.) whenever feasible and necessary. ▪ Stationary noise sources and staging areas will be located as far from visitors as possible. If they must be located near visitors, stationary noise sources will be muffled to the extent feasible, and/or where practicable, enclosed within temporary sheds.

3.5. PROJECT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

There will be no change in operational hours as a result of the project. Operation and maintenance of the project is referenced in Appendix G.

3.6. ANNUAL PASSES AND OTHER FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

State Parks offers several low or no-cost passes to certain eligible individuals. For example, persons with a permanent disability are eligible to purchase a lifetime pass that entitles the user to a 50% discount on all park fees for a nominal processing fee of \$3.50.

The Distinguished Veteran Pass is free to honorably discharged war veterans and entitles the user to free day use, camping and boat use at all units of the state park system. The Golden



Bear Pass is available for a \$5 processing fee to any qualifying person receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) [CA State Welfare and Institutions Code § 12200]; any person receiving aid under the applicable aid codes in the CalWORKS Program; or any persons 62 years of age or older with an income limitation. The Golden Bear pass entitles the bearer and spouse or registered domestic partner free entry to most State Park-operated units.

State Parks also offers the Limited Golden Bear Pass for \$20 to any persons aged 62 or older. This pass entitles the holder and spouse or registered domestic partner free entry to most State Park-operated units during non-peak season. If a person does not qualify for one of these passes, State Parks also offers the Golden Poppy Pass at a cost of \$125 per year, which provides entry into most State Park-operated units with the exception of Hearst Castle and Southern California beaches. State Parks proposes to post information about the available pass options at the new automatic payment machine locations.

State Parks also manages a robust “Volunteer In Parks” program in which volunteers can earn local or Statewide day use passes in return for volunteer service. In the Sonoma Mendocino Coast District, State Park volunteers who provide 24 hours of service annually, receive a complimentary day use pass for 23 State Park units in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. State Park volunteers, who provide 200 or more hours of service annually, receive a complimentary day use pass for all California State Parks.

Pursuant to PRC 5010.2, State Parks waives day use fees for public and private school groups upon advance request. This would apply to the proposed day use parking fee areas of the project.

Pursuant to PRC 5009.1 (b) and (d), State Parks may enter into agreement with individuals, groups or organizations to accept services that benefit the mission of the Department and may in turn, waive or reduce fees for said services when the public benefit received from the services is deemed to exceed or compare to the value of the fees/park access.

The Department is currently working on a more comprehensive Statewide plan to address the effects of day use parking fees on access to ancestral tribal lands on State Park property.

Finally, State Parks is working on a local pass for which the parameters are currently being discussed.

3.7. PROJECT OVERSIGHT

The Sonoma Coast Advisory Group (SCAG) is a is integral planning and operations of the Sonoma Mendocino Coast District (SMCD) of California State Parks, serving as a citizen's advisory group to SMCD on state park-related issues.

The SCAG will be re-established by the SMCD in January, 2017. This panel of individuals, appointed by the SMCD Superintendent, with the advice of the California Coastal Commission, will ensure the public has a voice in the operations, planning and development of Sonoma County Coasts' state parks. Membership makeup and bylaws will be forthcoming. Meetings will be held between four and six times per year.



4. CONSISTENCY WITH APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

4.1. CONSISTENCY WITH CEQA

In 2012, State Parks determined that there would be no significant effect from the implementation of day use parking fee collection at 14 locations on the Sonoma Coast including those eight in the Revised Fee Proposal. The installation of fee collection devices are specifically exempted in State Park's CEQA implementation procedures pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11 of CEQA. Furthermore, under Section 15273 of the CEQA Guidelines, the imposition of fees is not considered a project under CEQA.

Section 15273: CEQA does not apply to the establishment, modification, structuring, restructuring, or approval of rates, tolls, fares or other charges by public agencies which the public agency finds are for the purpose of meeting operating expenses, purchasing/leasing supplies, equipment or materials, or meeting financial reserve needs and requirements.

Many of the comments received by Sonoma County during the BOS appeal hearing emanated specifically from economic or social justice concerns. A social or economic change related to a physical change may not be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.

Section 15382: There are limits to what is considered a significant effect on the environment. A "significant effect on the environment" means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An *economic or social change* by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment.

While State Parks recognizes the unpopularity with parking fees, Section 15064(f)(4) specifies that a "public controversy over the environmental effects of a project will not require preparation of an EIR if there is no substantial evidence before the agency that the project may have a significant effect on the environment."

In summary, the Revised Fee Proposal is consistent with CEQA and State Park's CEQA implementation guidelines. Moreover, the NOE filed in 2012 remain valid.

4.2. CONSISTENCY WITH THE SONOMA COUNTY LOCAL COASTAL PLAN

State Parks believes both the Original and Revised Fee Proposals are consistent with the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan (LCP). The County acknowledged in their 2013 staff report that no provision of the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan or the Coastal Act preclude or prohibit collection of parking fees in state park day use parking areas. The basis on which the County made their findings was in reference to Figure V of the Plan, entitled "Access Plan Description and Recommendations". As an example, the LCP discussion for Goat Rock Ocean Access says simply, "Four accessways are available from Goat Rock Road" and the



recommendation says only, “No change”. The staff report concluded that this notation meant an amendment would be required to change these locations from free parking to fee parking.

4.3. CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT

The Revised Fee Proposal is consistent with the California Coastal Act, including maximizing public access and ensuring the ability of public agencies to manage coastal resources. The Coastal Act is mostly silent with respect to fees either in support or opposition. In fact, there are numerous references to managing access and protection from overuse.

The California Coastal Plan (Plan), prepared in 1975 contained several Major Findings and Recommendations with respect to parking and access. The Plan acknowledged that parking at the coast had to be regulated or otherwise much of the coastline would be paved by parking. It also noted that recreational areas would be managed to respect the natural capacity of park lands. Policy 124 of the original Plan notes that “areas to which the public has the right of access shall be managed, maintained and controlled by public agencies. The Coastal Act also contains the following regulations that influenced State Park’s project scope:

Coastal Act Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>Section 30210 Access; In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.</p>	<p>This Coastal Act Section emphasizes the mandate of Maximum Public Access to the coast but acknowledges that there must be limits. Under State Park’s revised plan, maximum public access is maintained consistent with the Coastal Act, but will grant State Parks the ability to better manage the park to protect natural resource areas from overuse.</p>
<p>Section 30212.5 Public facilities; distribution: Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.</p>	<p>Section 30212.5 recognizes overcrowding and overuse as significant issues requiring active management efforts; precisely what the proposed project was designed to provide. Non-fee parking areas will remain spaced throughout Sonoma Coast SP so as to better facilitate spacing of crowds during peak day use periods, reducing the risk of overcrowding and overuse in State Park’s more heavily-utilized areas.</p>
<p>Section 30213 Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities; encouragement and provision; Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.</p>	<p>Section 30213 of the Coastal Act perhaps speaks closest to the issue of fees within the Coastal zone. The term “lower cost” is used to promote facilities and access for those who are least able to afford to pay but it clearly does not suggest fees should never be required in any coastal location. To meet this provision, State Parks has revised the plan to maintain free day use parking areas around and within the vicinity of the proposed fee areas. Furthermore, State Parks offers the \$5 Golden Bear Pass to any qualifying person receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) [CA State Welfare and Institutions Code Section 12200]; any person receiving aid under the applicable aid codes in the CalWORKS Program; or any person 62 years of age or older</p>



	with income limitations.
<p>Section 30214 Implementation of public access policies; legislative intent (a) The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <p>(1) Topographic and geologic site characteristics.</p> <p>(2) The capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity.</p> <p>(3) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses.</p> <p>(a) The need to provide for the management of access areas so as to protect the privacy of adjacent property owners and to protect the aesthetic values of the area by providing for the collection of litter.</p> <p>(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the public access policies of this article be carried out in a reasonable manner that considers the equities and that balances the rights of the individual property owner with the public's constitutional right of access pursuant to Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. Nothing in this section or any amendment thereto shall be construed as a limitation on the rights guaranteed to the public under Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution.</p> <p>(c) In carrying out the public access policies of this article, the commission and any other responsible public agency shall consider and encourage the utilization of innovative access management techniques, including, but not limited to, agreements with private organizations which would minimize management costs and encourage the use of volunteer programs.</p>	<p>Section 30214's intent was to recognize that there must be some limits to free and unrestrained access. Access should be made in a reasonable manner and what may be reasonable at one location may not necessarily be reasonable in the next. Wholesale free-for-all beach access in a park unit that has 3 million visitors, suggest that thoughtful consideration be given to a site's characteristics in determining what Maximum Public Access means to that specific site.</p>
<p>Section 30401 Effect on existing state agencies; construction of chapter Except as otherwise specifically provided in this division, enactment of this division does not increase, decrease, duplicate or supersede the authority of any existing state agency.</p> <p>This chapter shall not be construed to limit in any way the regulatory controls over development pursuant to Chapters 7 (commencing with Section 30600) and 8 (commencing with Section 30700), except that the commission shall not set standards or adopt regulations that duplicate regulatory controls established by any existing state agency pursuant to specific statutory requirements or authorization.</p>	<p>Section 30401 indicates that because State Parks has been granted the statutory authority to assess fees pursuant to Public Resources Code 508, that authority cannot be superseded by the California Coastal Commission pursuant to Section 30401 of the California Coastal Act .</p>



<p>Section 30404 Recommendations; agency review; reports</p> <p>(a) The commission shall periodically, in the case of the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, the State Water Resources Control Board and the California regional water quality control boards, the State Air Resources Board and air pollution control districts and air quality management districts, the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Boating and Waterways, the Division of Mines and Geology and the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources in the Department of Conservation, and the State Lands Commission, and may, with respect to any other state agency, submit recommendations designed to encourage the state agency to carry out its functions in a manner consistent with this division. The recommendations may include proposed changes in administrative regulations, rules, and statutes.</p> <p>(b) Each of those state agencies shall review and consider the commission recommendations and shall, within six months from the date of their receipt, to the extent that the recommendations have not been implemented, report to the Governor and the Legislature its action and reasons therefor. The report shall also include the state agency's comments on any legislation that may have been proposed by the commission.</p>	<p>There have been no commission recommendations to State Parks with respect to imposition of parking fees. There was an agreement in 2013 between the then-Directors of the CCC and State Parks that discussed a collaborative approach with respect to implementing fees but State Parks has incorporated all the measures recommended therein in this proposed project.</p>

A denial of State Park's de Novo application would in fact be a repudiation of some of the most important tools authorized under the Coastal Act; that being State Park's ability to effectively manage these fragile areas from overuse.



4.4. CONSISTENCY WITH THE SONOMA COAST SP GENERAL PLAN

The Revised Fee Proposal is consistent with the Sonoma Coast SP General Plan and conforms to current and on-going management practices elsewhere in the park. The 2007 Sonoma Coast State Park General Plan, calls for the use of adaptive management techniques as a tool to achieve a balance between maximum access and resource protection. The General Plan notes that a “well-operated park unit provides for visitor safety and enjoyment, protects resource values, optimizes the utilization of the park unit’s funding and material resources, and increases the effectiveness of the staff’s efforts”. Goal ROAD-1 of the Plan includes providing parking areas that are safe and convenient and consistent with the protection of resources.

When overuse results in resource degradation, the plan calls for implementation of measures including; facility design; installation of barriers; surface treatments; area or facility closure; change in access locations, or redirection of visitors to other areas. Other methods include regulations including limiting the number of people, location or time of use (Department of Parks and Recreation, 2007). Often times parking, parking configuration and fees is a strategic tool for managing resource degradation and visitor experience related to overuse.

4.5. CONSISTENCY WITH THE 2013 AGREEMENT BETWEEN STATE PARKS AND CCC

In 2013, the then-director of State Parks, Major General Anthony Jackson, met with the then-executive director of CCC, Dr. Charles Lester, in search of an understanding on permitting issues related to self-pay stations along the coast. From that meeting, a list of approaches that State Parks should “consider” when proposing such fees was developed. To the extent that the approaches are applicable, they have been incorporated into the Revised Fee Proposal. (See Appendix H)



5. EXPECTED CHANGES

The following supplemental information was requested by CCC to address various issues that may not have been borne out of State Park's internal CEQA review. Although the following information covers similar issues addressed in Appendix G of CEQA, it is not intended to be nor should it be considered a "CEQA document".

5.1. ESHA

One side effect the Revised Fee Proposal will be the redistribution of some park visitors to other, less visited locations along the coast. Moreover, new signage associated with the project will help to limit illegal parking and the creation of illegal trails through sensitive habitat. One of the goals of the projects is to facilitate better management of the haphazard parking and prevent overuse of the most popular areas, where crowding inevitably leads to parking along the road shoulders and creation of volunteer trails through sensitive habitat. As noted above, peak use periods in Bodega Head and Goat Rock areas of the park realize visitation levels that far exceed the number of improved parking spaces. As a result, the existing baseline condition is visitors frequently using the shoulders for overflow parking.

The general plan for the park unit calls for the use of adaptive management techniques as a tool to achieve that balance. If overuse results in resource degradation, the plan calls for implementation of measures including: facility design; installation of barriers; surface treatments; area or facility closure; change in access locations, or redirection of visitors to other areas. Other methods include regulations including limiting the number of people, location or time of use (Department of Parks and Recreation, 2007).

Bodega Head has three paved areas providing enough space to park approximately 215 vehicles. A peak use day will see nearly 2000 vehicles pass through, and as many as 100 vehicles per hour, with the crowds far exceeding the capacity of the paved parking areas. Cars are frequently parked on the unpaved shoulders contributing to resource, degradation. There is an area of free parking along Westshore Road adjacent to Bodega Bay that will continue to remain free and may fill up before the fee areas but steep topography and the bay severely limits the ability to create additional areas of social parking.

Nevertheless, State Parks understands that some may seek out shoulder areas to avoid paying day use parking fees. As such, State Parks proposes that the CCC include a condition requiring all visitors parking at any point beyond the end of the County-maintained road, to pay either an hourly or daily fee to park. This will ensure that visitors aren't incentivized to seek out free parking at the expense of resource protection.

Shell Beach day use parking area serves as a trailhead to several popular trails including the Pomo Canyon and Redhill trails located on the east side of SR 1. On many days, vehicles are already parked along the shoulders of the entry road to the parking area to access that trail or because the lot is full. Installation of the fee collection device in this location will not induce people to park outside of the day use parking area in areas that have never seen parking, to avoid paying fees. The shoulders on SR 1 in the vicinity of the entry to Shell Beach contain



dense vegetation, roadside ditches or other topography that severely limits the ability for creation of shoulder parking.

Park users seeking to avoid paying fees are more likely to park on Furlong Court and Pacific View Drive, which are County subdivision roads that are located adjacent to this day use area. These roads are already heavily used by hikers when the parking lot is full and there are existing social trails that connect with other trails. What is more likely to occur is the subdivision road may fill up first by those seeking to avoid paying fees but they will continue to utilize the existing social trails to access the sanctioned trails. As such, there is no evidence to suggest that instituting a day use parking fee here will result in impacts to ESHAs.

The four day use parking areas at Goat Rock are located along Goat Rock Road, which is approximately 1.8 miles long from SR 1 to its terminus. The first parking area reached is Blind Beach located approximately .75 miles in from the highway while the second lot, Arched View, is located approximately 1.3 miles in. South Goat is located almost 2 miles from the entrance while North Goat is located 1.75 miles in. There are numerous turnouts and informal parking along the road and many have social trails accessing climbing areas or sanctioned trails. All of these shoulder parking areas will be full during peak use periods.

In the vicinity of the Goat Rock Road entrance at SR 1, there is one gravel turnout approximately .10 mile south but there are no other areas in the vicinity of the entrance where visitors may attempt to park so as to avoid fees because the steep terrain and dense vegetation limit opportunities to exploit for free parking. Additionally, the distance between the highway and the coast (or sanctioned trails) in this location make it less likely that visitors may attempt to park on the highway shoulder with implementation of a parking fee system. As with the other locations however, a proposed condition will require that everyone parked along Goat Rock Road will be subject to payment of the fees.

Stump Beach is located along a winding portion of SR 1 where shoulder access is limited by a steep embankment on one side of the highway and guard railing on the other side. In other locations, roadside ditches and vegetation preclude parking along the shoulder. There is a gravel area just across the highway from the Stump Beach entrance that could potentially fill up before the day use parking area but it is in a location where visitors would not be forced to create social trails to access the park.

5.2. PUBLIC SAFETY

Contacted CHP and Sherriff and waiting for responses.

5.3. ADA ACCESSIBILITY

Each project undertaken by State Parks must be designed and implemented to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project description in the original proposal did include a provision that included ADA accessible parking and routes between the accessible parking spaces and fee stations.



5.4. NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

In 2015, Assembly Bill 52 (AB52) was passed and added to the Environmental Quality Act. The addition defined “tribal cultural resources” as: sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe. This new category of cultural resources must be included or determined eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources, or a local register of historical resources. The resources must be determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria established by PRC 5024.1.

AB52 requires that all Native American tribes, entities and individuals that have notified a State Agency in writing, to be informed of proposed projects, and have an opportunity to consult with the lead agency regarding all cultural resources including tribal cultural resources.

California State Parks practices on-going Native American consultation with two specific Native American entities in the Sonoma area, the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. This on-going and project specific Native American consultation has failed to identify any previously recorded or identified tribal cultural resources within the project areas. However, consultation is on-going to identify all concerns that Native American entities may have regarding this proposed project.

As indicated from archival research and past and present field investigations, archaeological deposits appear not to be present in the project area of the proposed fee collection devises, upgrades and re-routes for parking or transportation will not cause an impact to previously identified archaeological resources.

Discussion - Inadvertent Finds: Given the inherent nature of archaeological deposits, often contained in subsurface deposits, there always a possibility of encountering such resources despite conducting the proper investigative work. To account for the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources during project work, DPR will implement Specific Project Requirements Cult 1-5 and Standard Project Requirement 1, which is normal protocol for all DPR projects.

Discussion – Discovery of Human Remains: The probability of unearthing human remains during project work is low; however, in the unlikely event, such finds are uncovered, DPR will implement the protocol developed in cooperation with the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to handle these discoveries. Standard Project Requirement Cult 2 is normal protocol for all DPR projects.

Native American consultation with the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of Stewart’s Point Rancheria and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, has failed to identify or indicate that any Tribal Cultural Resources are located within the proposed project area. Native American consultation is a continuous and on-going process.



5.5 ANTICIPATED CHANGES IN USAGE PATTERNS

The visitation in the proposed fee areas is expected to decrease by 25% in the first years of project implementation, based on comparable fee programs implemented in other State Park locations statewide. However, attendance generally rebounded after the second year. This visitation is expected to be displaced into other non-fee areas in the park. However, this immediate outcome, will assist in addressing resource and facility impacts caused by overuse. State Parks believes that increased revenues to the District will improve the ability to maintain these high-use areas and potentially accommodate more visitors in the future.



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APPENDIX A

**PARKING OVERVIEW IN SONOMA COAST STATE PARK AND
SALT POINT STATE PARK**

APPENDIX B
REVENUE PROJECTIONS

APPENDIX C

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

APPENDIX D

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

APPENDIX E
SITE PLANS

APPENDIX F
ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

APPENDIX G

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

APPENDIX H

**LETTER FROM DR. CHARLES LESTER TO DIRECTOR
GENERAL JACKSON**

APPENDIX I

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION INFORMATIONAL NEEDS
REQUEST AND KEY**
