Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach feasibility study

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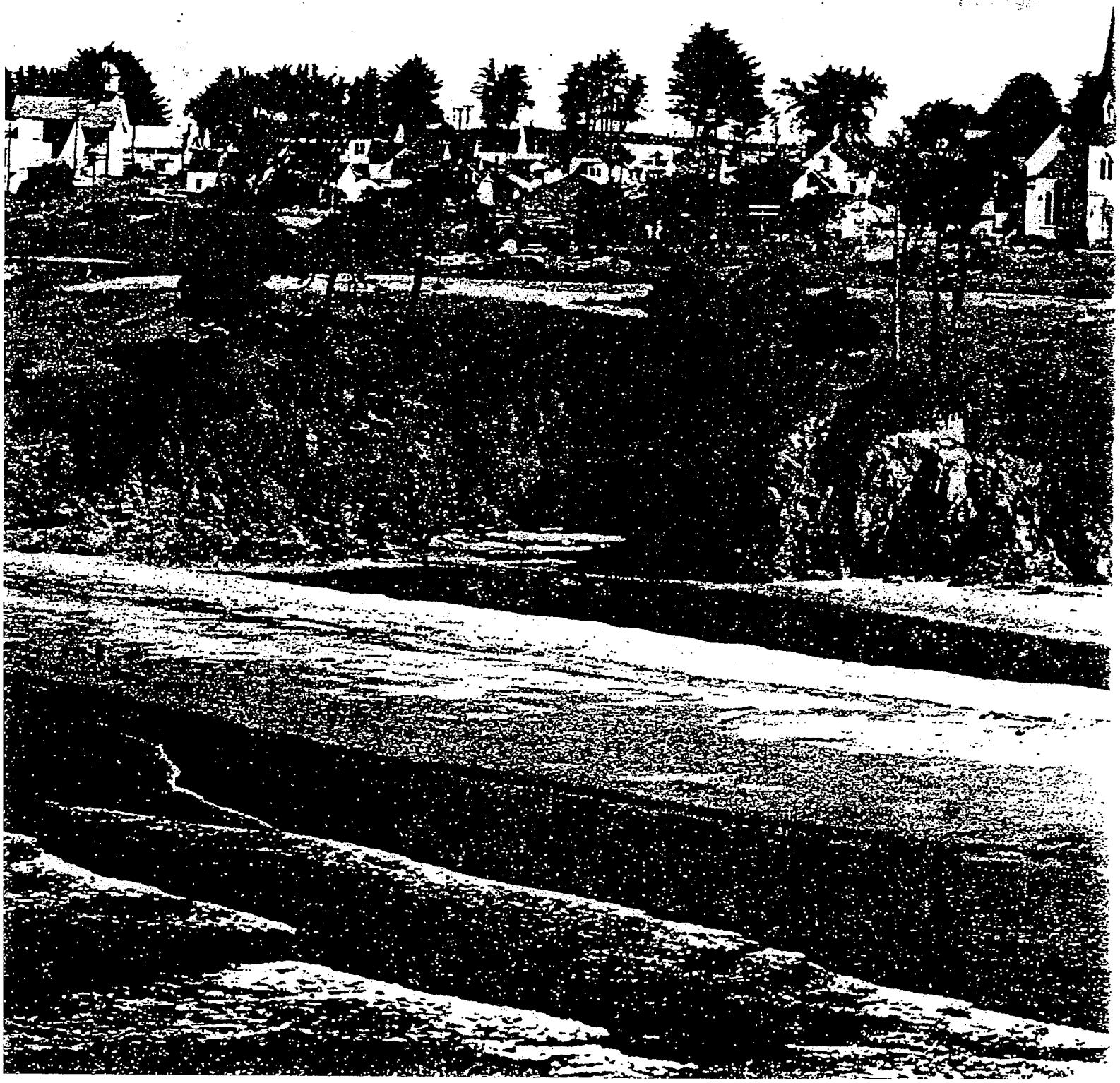
STATE OF CALIFORNIA • DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach feasibility study

RONALD REAGAN
Governor of
California

NORMAN B. LIVERMORE, JR.
Secretary for
Resources

WILLIAM PENN MOTT, JR.
Director
Department of Parks
and Recreation

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION
P. O. Box 2390 Sacramento 95811

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—RESOURCES AGENCY

RONALD REAGAN, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
P.O. BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO 95811

March 2, 1970

Honorable Bob Monagan, Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, California

Dear Speaker Monagan:

The enclosed report titled "Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach Area" is submitted to you in accordance with instructions contained in Assembly Resolution No. 72, Chapter 220, Statutes of 1969.

This study determines that it is feasible to incorporate the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach Area in the State Park System. The project consists of approximately 205 acres.

The State Park Commission recommended acquisition of this project. The priority of this project cannot be determined until a priority list for all California coastal projects is completed in 1970.

Sincerely,

William Penn Mott, Jr.
Director

APPROVED:

Secretary for Resources
State of California

MAR 20 1970

Date

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—RESOURCES AGENCY

RONALD REAGAN, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO 95811

March 2, 1970

Honorable Ed Reinecke
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, California

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APPROVED:

Secretary for Resources
State of California

MAR 2 0 1970

Date

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 72

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 220

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 72—Relative to the preservation of the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach area as a state park.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 26, 1969.]

WHEREAS, The Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach area in Mendocino County is an area of great natural beauty and ecological significance and forms an essential part of the natural setting of the historic coastal village of Mendocino; and

WHEREAS, The scenic beauty, the unique ecological attributes, and the historical and cultural value of this area should be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations of Californians; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Department of Parks and Recreation is directed to study the feasibility of preserving the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach area in Mendocino County as a state park and to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than the fifth legislative day of the 1970 Regular Session; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a copy of this resolution to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 72 (Chapter 220, Statutes of 1969), the Department of Parks and Recreation has studied the feasibility of preserving the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach in Mendocino County as a unit of the State Park System.

FINDINGS

1. *The historic values of the site are directly related to the beginning of the California redwood lumber industry.*

2. *The site contains natural and scenic resource values representative of the rugged Mendocino coastline, between Albion and Point Cleone.*

3. *The site has potential for affording both passive and active recreation opportunities.*

4. *The site would assure continued recreational use of Big River Beach and Flat.*

5. *The site would help satisfy a growing recreation deficiency within the 2-4 hour travel time zone of the San Francisco and Sacramento metropolitan complexes.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

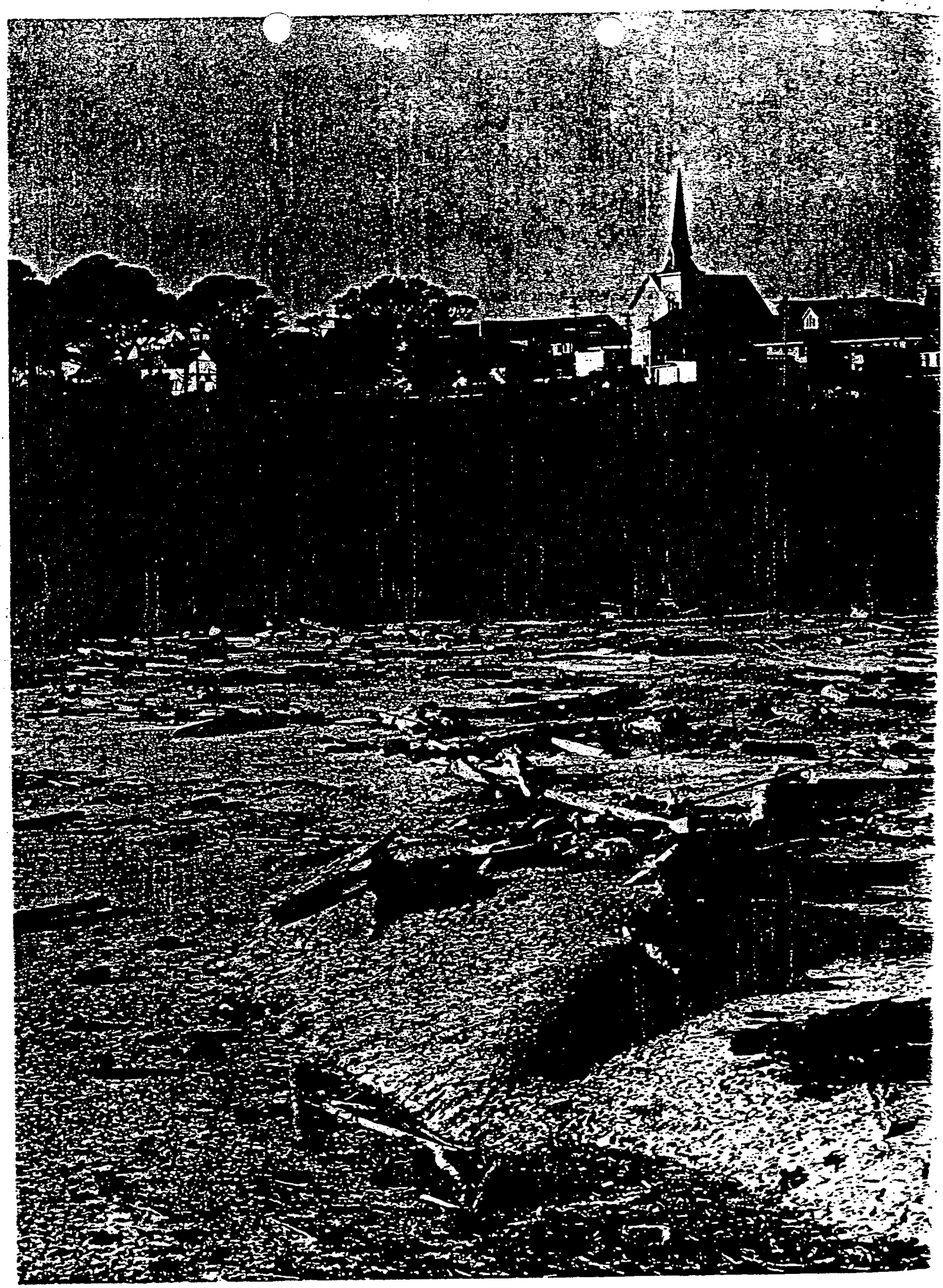
1. *That the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach be included in the State Park System.*

2. *That the local government (city or county) assume the responsibility to establish Mendocino as a "historic district", to insure the environmental quality of the community's entire coastal setting.*

3. *That the state's control and historic interpretation of the headland, Big River Beach and Main Street be totally dependent upon establishing the community as a "historic district".*

4. *That the development of the headland be limited to insure that the natural environment and fragile ecological communities will not be destroyed.*

5. *That this project be considered an element in the total coastal planning effort of the State of California including the long range coastal plan of the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Interagency Council on Ocean Resources (ICOR).*



STUDY AREA AND NATURAL COASTAL CHARACTERISTICS

LOCATION AND ACCESS

The Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach are located at the town of Mendocino along Highway 1, two road miles south of Russian Gulch State Park and three miles north of Van Damme State Park in Mendocino County. The closest urban service center is Fort Bragg, approximately ten miles north of Mendocino Headland. Immediately north of Fort Bragg is MacKerricher State Park.

Primary access from the San Francisco Bay area includes inland Freeway 101, State Route 128 and Coast Highway 1. Inland urban areas utilize additional state routes.

The study area is located within the 2-4 hour travel time zones of the San Francisco metropolitan complex and the Sacramento metropolitan area. The current lack of high speed access along the coast and over coastal mountains makes the study area limited for day-use excursions from these metropolitan areas.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The cool temperate climate of the study area is typical of the central and northern California coast. Temperature variations are minimal, resulting in two basic seasons--summer 50° to 64° F., and winter 40° to 56° F.[1] Rainfall averaging 38 inches annually, occurs during the winter season.[2] Fog conditions along the Mendocino Coast as recorded over the past 40 years, averages 55 hours per month from October-June, and 170 hours per month from July-September.[3] Prevailing ocean breezes vary from 5 knots to 25 knots.[4] Ocean water temperatures range from 48°-55° F.

1) U.S. Department of Commerce, *Climates of the States*, Climatography of the United States, No. 60-4.
2) Ibid.
3) U.S. Coast Guard, 12th District, San Francisco.
4) U.S. Weather Bureau.

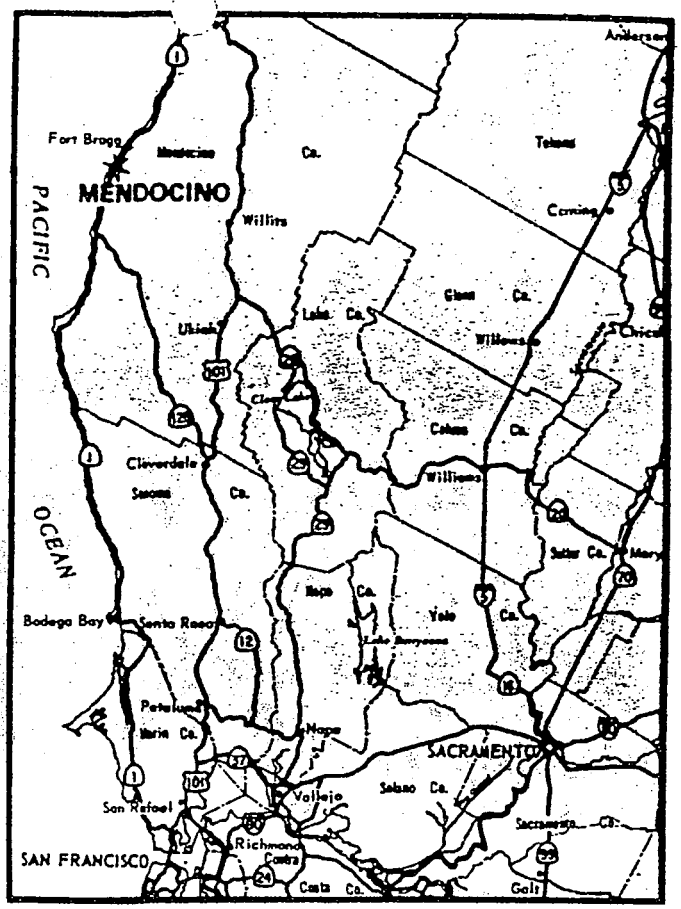


Figure 1. Location Map

The study area contains a marine terrace typical of the central Mendocino coastline between Albion and Point Cleone. This twenty mile segment of the California coast represents the largest formation of this rugged geologic type in California.

The terrace is composed of Cretaceous marine sediments - sandstone, shale conglomerates, and Pleistocene marine deposits of harder rock formations.[5] Wave, wind and rain action, sculptured the terrace, producing steep bluffs (50' to 70' high), rocky offshore islands of narrow finger coves, caves, blow holes, tide pools and sandy beaches. These features are backed by gently undulating coastal terrain.

Mendocino Bay shelters Big River Beach and the mouth of Big River. The beach rests at the foot of the steep headland bluffs, and provides access to interesting geologic formations. Big River estuary winds inland for approximately six miles.

5) Geologic Map of California, Ukiah Sheet, State Division of Mines and Geology, 1938.

Community of Mendocino and Headland

Big River Beach and Headland

Big River Flat

Influenced by changing tides, the canals, and marshgrass flats provide an outstanding natural estuarine area.

Vegetation is dominated by Bishop pine and large expanses of gently rolling grasslands. The irregular vegetative patterns complement the rugged coastline by combining to form interesting vistas. East from Highway 1, mixed communities of shore and Bishop pine, lowland white fir, Sitka spruce, and coast redwoods, cover the upland and banks of Big River. This area offers a fine example of plant growth of the transition life zone.

Ocean and shore birds are more abundant than upland wildlife throughout the study area. Marine wildlife includes fish, molluscs, crabs, seals and sea lions.

HISTORY

The community of Mendocino was the first of a number of towns that developed along the northern coast in the last half of the nineteenth century.

In 1851 Harry Meiggs of San Francisco, a lumberman, entered Mendocino Bay and established the northcoast's first sawmill on the Mendocino Headland. This installation grew into a major settlement, which today thrives as a living community and artists' colony.

An old Masonic Temple, a historic Presbyterian church, a Chinese joss house, and a number of stores and dwellings, characteristically Victorian in style, exist. Some of these buildings date back to 1852-55 with the majority covering a period between the years 1860 and 1900.

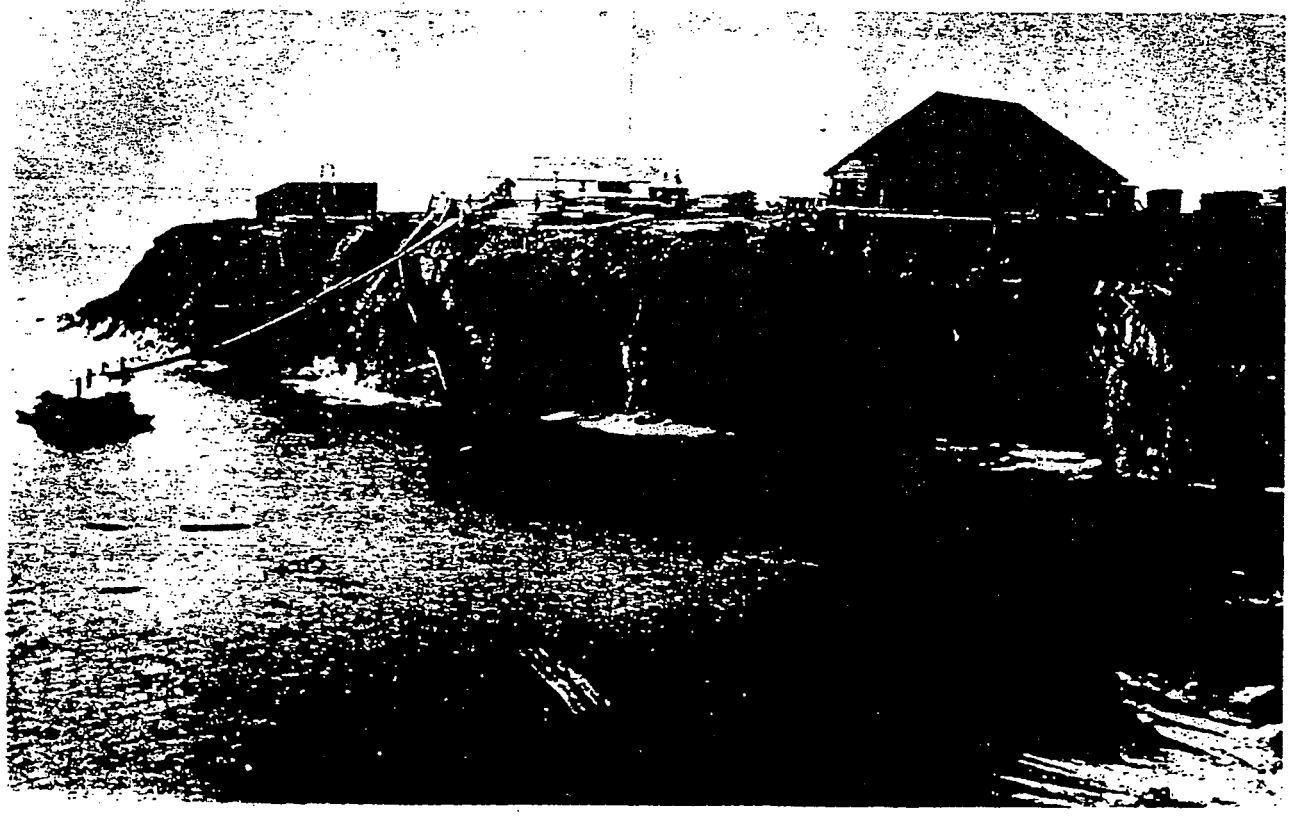
In early times Mendocino had six saloons, three hotels, a few scattered dwellings and a mill complete with cook and bunk houses. Later, it increased in size to eight hotels, nineteen saloons, five general merchandise stores, two groceries, a confectionery, photograph studio, shoe shop, bakery, two blacksmith shops livery stable, hardware store, soft drink saloon, two drug stores, three churches, a newspaper shop, brewery, several lodge buildings, and two schools.

In the early 1860's the original sawmill was destroyed by fire. The new site for reconstructing the sawmill was Big River Flat, east of Highway 1.

On October 20, 1870, Mendocino suffered another serious fire in which twenty-five buildings were destroyed. They were replaced by dwellings and stores embellished with Victorian scroll work and trim.

Sawmill on Big River Flat – 1860

Original Sawmill on Headland – 1852



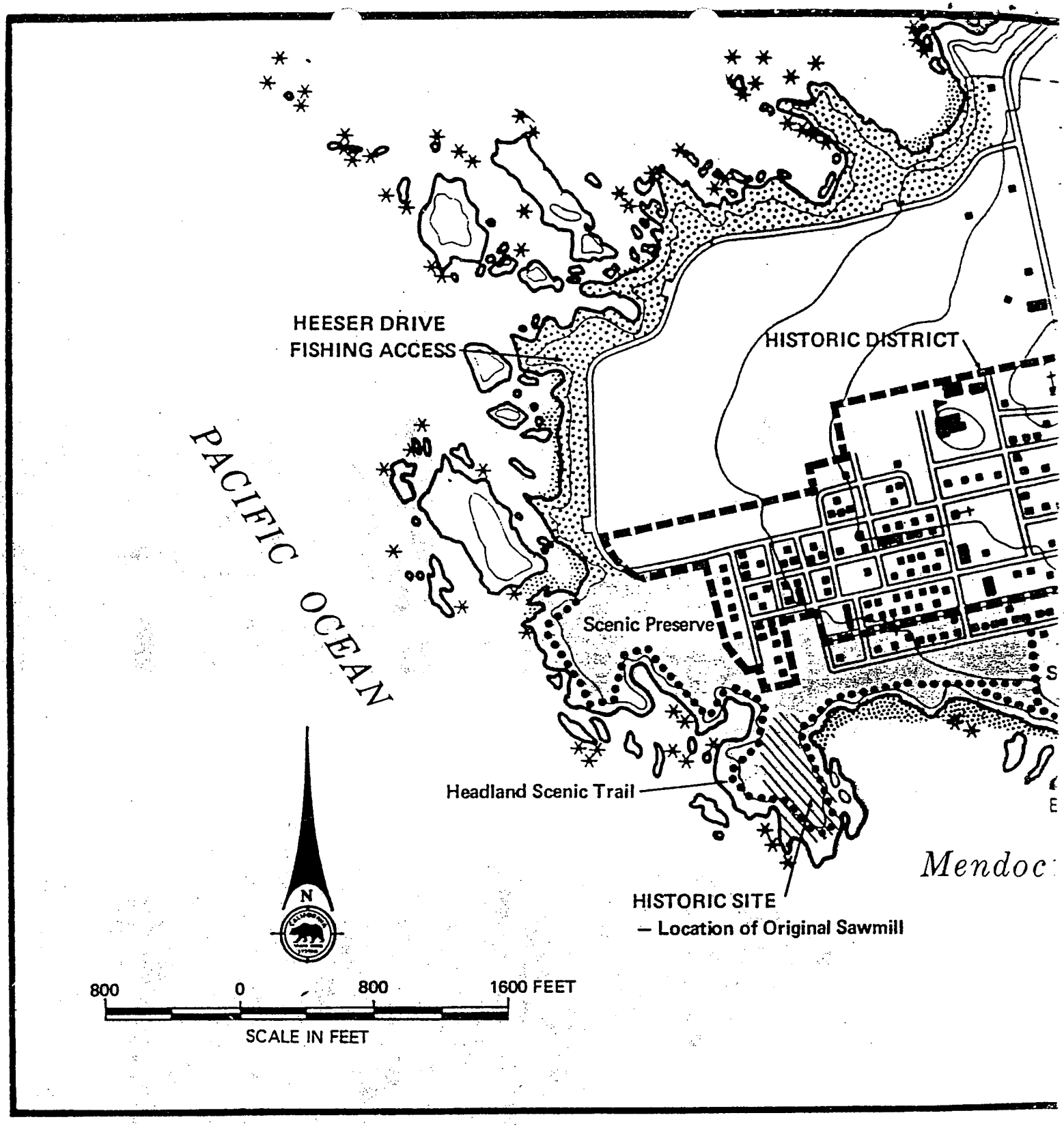
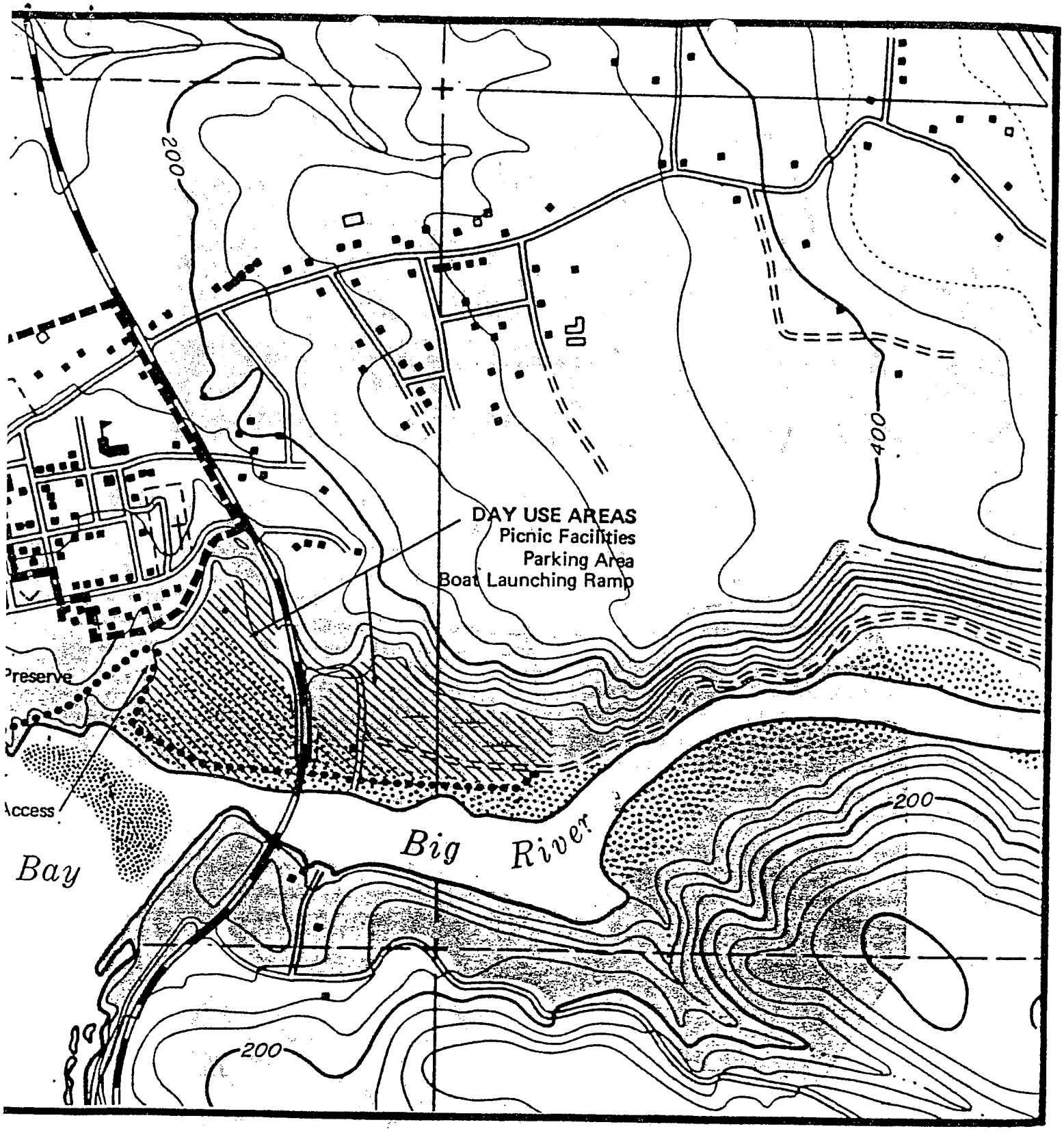


Figure 2.

THE MENDOCINO HEADLAND, BIG RIVER BEACH PROPOSED PARK PLAN



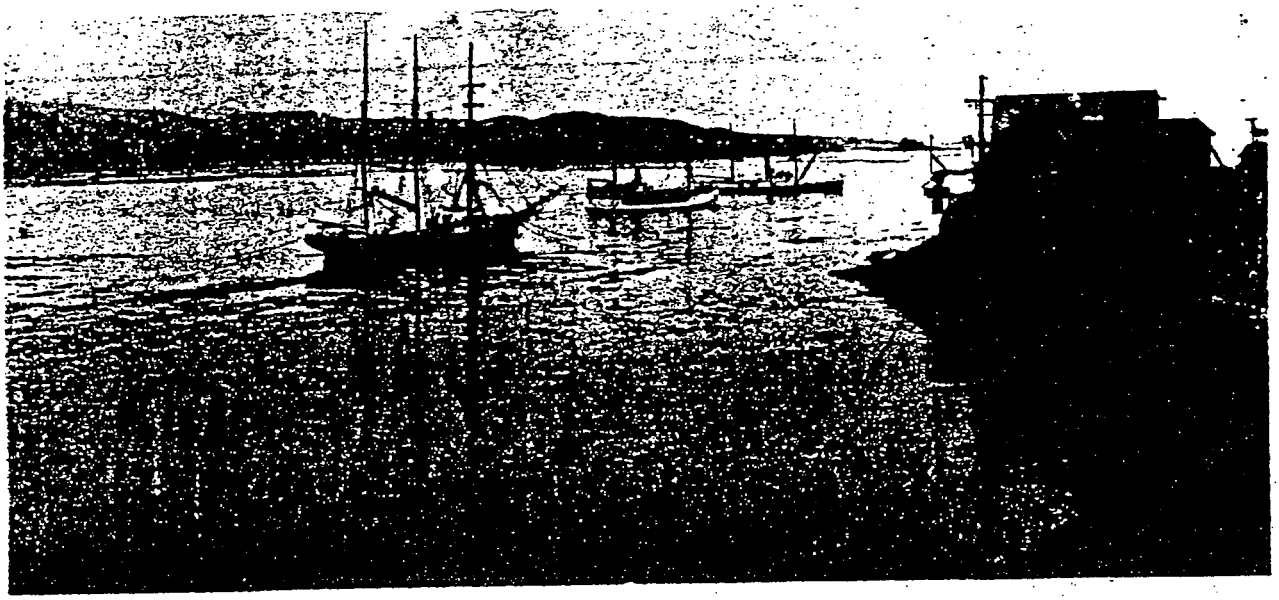
Existing State Owned Land

Historic District Boundary

Headland Scenic Trail

Proposed Park Area

Special Use Areas



Ships Waiting to be Loaded – 1850's

Numerous ports, or "dog holes" eventually were established for the lumber schooners. In foul weather, access to these ports required exceptional navigational skill and seamanship. It was not uncommon to see six or eight vessels anchored in Mendocino Bay waiting to be loaded.

The early schooners were sailing vessels, but these soon gave way to steamships. A number of vessels were ultimately stranded or destroyed upon reefs which guard the entrance to some of the "dog holes". The story of these little ships which plied the redwood coast provides a colorful and intriguing part of our California history.

Today the town remains much as it was in earlier times. It has retained the rare individuality of architecture and environ, which makes one's visit a satisfying experience.

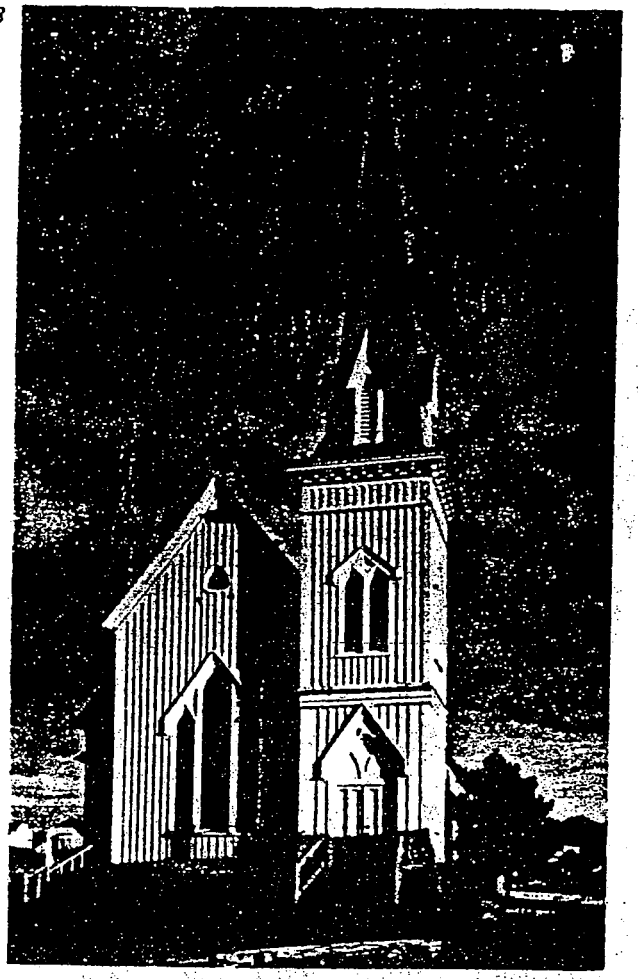
Mendocino represents an outstanding example of early California architecture, Victorian in style, executed in wood. The structures show evidence of their having been built by skilled craftsmen. The fact that they have withstood bitter changes in weather and the ravages of the time attest to their having been constructed of the finest redwood materials.

The most significant single structures that remain are the Presbyterian church built in 1867-68, the Masonic Hall built in 1866, and McCallen house built about 1885.

The Mendocino Hotel, located on Main Street, was built in 1872 as a home and boarding house. It is one of a number of interesting buildings which front on Main Street, and was once part of a hotel

Main Street, July 4, 1884

Presbyterian Church – built in 1867-68



row which catered to travelers and residents. It has been redecorated in keeping with the period and has a fine view of the ocean and coastline. With the exception of five or six buildings, the entire two blocks fronting on Main Street provides a panorama of Victorian times. They, like the rest of the buildings in the town, are a product of their times. The major significance is that a large number remain in their original environmental surroundings. Few areas in the state match qualities that can be said to be as historically or architecturally important as Mendocino.

The story of this lumber country is one of vast lumber resources, of the open coves where ships were loaded from chutes, of shipwrecks, of the lumber opportunists like Honest Harry Meiggs, and C. R. Johnson, and old Skippers like Hog Aleck, Flatfoot Hanson, Caspar Charlie, and Midnight Olsen.

Today -- except for a shipping museum in San Francisco, the Wapama and Thayer in San

Main Street as it is Today

McCallen House – built in 1885

Francisco Maritime State Historical Monument, and in a few small company operated museums along the northcoast - the beginning of the redwood industry which characterized the northern California coastline is not being interpreted. Nor, for that matter, are coastal towns that grew as a result of lumber operations being preserved to convey a picture of their earlier times.

Mendocino is a rare exception. Change has fallen lightly on the community, even though a population of some 1,500 or more keeps the town alive.

Maxwell House – built in 1880

OWNERSHIP AND PRESENT USE

The entire Mendocino Headland, Big River Beach and Flat are in private ownership.

The Boise Cascade Union Lumber Company represents the largest single land owner in the study area. Their holdings include Big River Beach, all of the headland south of the community of Mendocino, and inland acreage along the north shore of Big River. The company's interests are in lumbering and second home development. It is the latter use which threatens the historic and Victorian atmosphere of Mendocino. To develop the headland with housing or commercial use would severely alter and possibly destroy the overall environmental quality of the community.

Mendocino over the past eleven years has changed from a near ghost town to a thriving artist colony and tourist attraction. The population has increased from 500± to 1,500±. Mendocino's popularity is evident by the increasing number of tourists and vacationers, who enjoy the old town atmosphere. As the community's popularity has grown, so has its financial gains increased. Commercial outlets have more than doubled, from 29 in 1966 to 64 in 1969. This economic growth is expected to increase along with urban pressures for promoting additional commercial development. Such commercial exploitation, if left uncontrolled, could destroy the charm of the community.

Stringent guidelines to govern the future growth of Mendocino should be established if the historic old town atmosphere and unique environmental quality are to prevail.

Much of the surrounding area has been subdivided for second home development. The speculative impact of this type of development has resulted in an escalation of land values throughout the area. If for no other reason, therefore, acquisition of this project should proceed without delay.

PARK AND RECREATION POTENTIAL

RECREATION DEFICIENCIES

A deficiency exists in parks and open space within the 2-4 hour time travel zone of the San Francisco Bay area metropolitan complex and the Sacramento metropolitan area. By 1980, the outdoor recreation demand of the residents of the San Francisco Bay area metropolitan complex is expected to increase 1.34 times faster than that of the population of the complex. The population is projected to increase from 3,461,000 to 5,797,300 or 67.5% over the 20 year period, while the total potential demand for outdoor recreation will rise from 386.5 million to 736.2 million participation days, an increase of 90.4%.[6] The recreation demand from residents of the Sacramento metropolitan area, by 1980, is expected to increase 1.32 times faster than that of the population area. The population is projected to increase from 510,300 to 854,100 or 68% over a 20 year period, while the total potential demand for outdoor recreation will increase from 53.0 million to 101.0 million participation days, or a rise of 90%.[7] In both urban areas, the faster rate of growth for outdoor recreation can be attributed to increasing leisure time and changing socio-economic characteristics of the population.

A recent survey of two parks in the study area shows that nearly 49% of the overnight users and 32% of the day users originated from the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento metropolitan areas. Of this approximately 36% of the overnight park users and 25% of the day users were from the San Francisco Bay area. The Sacramento metropolitan area provided approximately 13% of the overnight users and 7% of the day users.

An analysis of expected facility deficiencies in the 2-4 hour time travel zone from the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento metropolitan areas show a 1980 need for 1,087 additional picnic units and 236 family camp units.

6) Park and Recreation Information System, 1969.
7) Ibid.

With increasing leisure and better mobility through improved highways, an escalation of overnight and day use trips can be expected in the near future.

A major recreational impact on the Mendocino Coast can be expected when Highway 128 is completely upgraded to higher standards. Completion of this project is expected during the early 1980's.

SUITABLE ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the study area, numerous recreation activities, both passive and active, could be offered. These would include: walking and driving for pleasure, sightseeing, picnicking, nature walks, skindiving, scuba diving, sailing, canoeing, fishing and interpretive programs. In addition to recreational use, the project would adjoin 29.2 acres of state owned land, thus guaranteeing public access to 4-1/2 miles of ocean frontage and 1-1/2 miles of river frontage.

Between the Heeser Drive Fishing Access and Big River lies the Mendocino Headland, Big River Beach, and the community of Mendocino. The headland and existing community are directly related to the early history of the redwood lumber industry. Development potentials include the interpretation of the original lumber mill, shiploading activities, and possible reconstruction of all or a portion of the mill, acquisition of existing structures along Main Street and use of other isolated historic structures in the town for interpretive and educational values. Beach access, rock fishing, hiking and sightseeing are additional potential uses.

At the east end of Mendocino Bay is Big River Beach and the mouth of Big River. Highway 1 bridges this coastal river outlet. Big River Beach is located on the west side of Highway 1 with access under the bridge to a smaller beach, parking area and boat launching ramp. Steep bluffs 60-80 feet high rise above the beach to form the foundation for the community of Mendocino. Scenic qualities prevail throughout the 360° panorama. Recreational beach activities include fishing, beachcombing, walking for pleasure, sightseeing, picnicking, skindiving, scuba diving, boating and possibly beach camping.

Big River winds for miles inland and exists in a nearly natural state. Only an old logging road along the north bank interrupts the natural quality of this area. Steep hillsides rising high above the river are covered with virgin pine, century old fir and second growth redwood. Deciduous understory growth, primarily alder, is common.

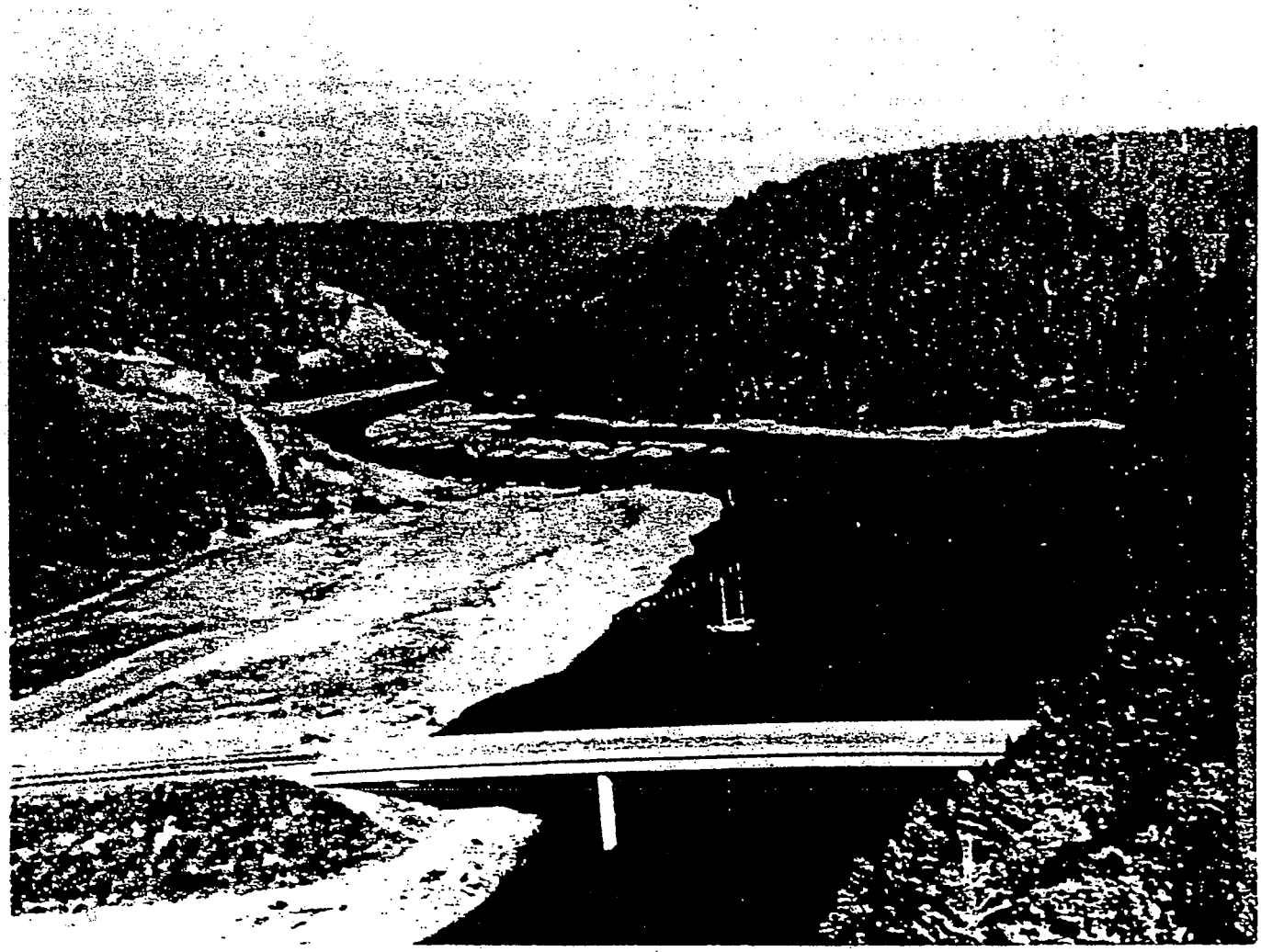
The river's extensive estuary is open to the ocean year around. In the fall and winter, the river is the migration route for excellent runs of silver salmon and steelhead trout. Summer anglers fish for flounders and several species of ocean perch. Extensive shell fish beds exist, consisting primarily of soft shell clams. Lack of public foot access to most of the estuary confines its use to boat fishing.

The Big River marshes and mudflats are a prime feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, ospreys, mammal life and other water associated birds dependent on coastal wetlands.

The importance of the Big River estuary is magnified when one considers that California has already lost over 60% of its estuarine habitats and that the existing estuaries are rapidly being altered for man's use, and this area should be considered as a subsequent area for study.

Additional recreational uses of the estuary area could include limited small boat transient docking facilities, day use facilities and trails.

Big River Flat and Estuary



RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

FEDERAL

The *Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey*[8] published by the National Park Service states that the community of Mendocino, its headland and Mendocino Bay offer scenic, historic, marine, scientific and recreational interests of state significance.

STATE

Department of Parks and Recreation

In Mendocino County there are five ocean-oriented state parks totalling 971 acres. Eight inland state parks totalling 2,942 acres are also located within the county. The latter are representative of redwood growth and associated ecologies.

The study area is between Russian Gulch State Park and Van Damme State Park, and adjoins Heeser Drive Fishing Access, owned by the State Wildlife Conservation Board and maintained by the County of Mendocino. MacKerricher State Park, located just north of Fort Bragg, is also discussed below because it satisfies ocean recreation demand along the Mendocino Coast.

Van Damme State Park: This unit consists of 1,824.94 acres and 1,700 feet of ocean frontage. Facilities include 82 family camp units and 5 picnic units. Attendance figures at Van Damme, over the past 10 years, have increased from 116,433 visitors in 1959 to 189,239 visitors in 1968. This represents a 60% increase in facility use.

During the peak summer months — June, July and August — for the past seven years Van Damme State Park has averaged 39 days filled to capacity. Deficiencies in available overnight facilities over the past six years shows a need for an additional 23 campsites.

Because of the park's lineal shape, over 90% of its land is oriented to the inland coastal ecologies and environments. The park has fine inland natural values, including a 3-mile canyon with a running stream and lush ferns and rhododendrons lining the banks. Taller native vegetation in the canyon include coast redwood, Douglas fir, Pacific hemlock, Bishop pine, shore pine and lowland white fir. Van Damme State Park has only slightly more than a quarter mile of coastline. The majority of this area is beach land rather than rocky headland. In proportion to the inland acreage of this park, the coastline has been severely slighted. The multitude of ocean ecologies, micro-climates and scenic environmental values are not available for public access, interpretation or enjoyment.

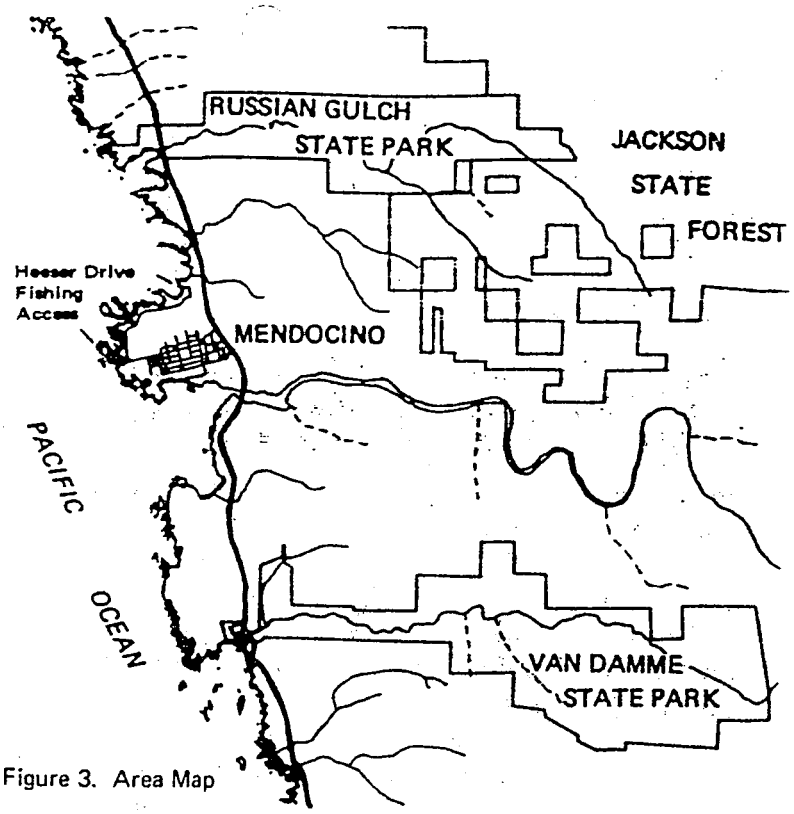


Figure 3. Area Map

Russian Gulch State Park: This unit includes 1,162.0 acres and 7,630 feet of ocean frontage. Facilities include 35 family camp units and 14 picnic units. Park attendance figures show an 11% rise over the past ten years. This low attendance growth results from the limited facilities available. Over the past 7 years, the average number of summer days when the facilities were filled to capacity is 70. An additional 42 family camp units are needed to meet a portion of the present demand at this park.

Like Van Damme State Park, this unit is lineal in shape, with the majority of the acreage located inland. The gulch, which is a long canyon penetrating the inland country, contains an impressive waterfall and lush green understory vegetation lining the canyon and stream banks. Taller native vegetation is similar to that found in Van Damme State Park.

8) *Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey*, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 1969

Both Russian Gulch and Van Damme State Parks have extremely fragile natural values. Natural protection of the intricate ecosystems is provided by the steep topography of the canyon walls. Additional development could result in an absolute saturation of the area by use, resulting in destruction of the natural values for which the units were established.

MacKerricher State Park: This park is not within the study area, but it shows the increasing demand for coastal recreation areas. Located just north of the City of Fort Bragg and approximately ten miles north of Russian Gulch State Park, this unit consists of 285.19 acres and 20,210 feet of ocean frontage. It has a total of 147 family camp units and 12 picnic units. Over the past 10 years, visitor attendance increased from 109,500 in 1959 to 281,509 in 1968. This represents an average increase of 170%. Over the past 7 years an average of 51 summer days filled to capacity has been recorded. This shows an immediate need for 84 additional camp sites.

MacKerricher State Park is 25% as large as Russian Gulch State Park and only 15% as large as Van Damme State Park. Visitor attendance between 1959 and 1968 at MacKerricher has increased 2.3 times and 19.7 times as much as the use at Van Damme State Park and Russian Gulch State Park respectively. While more facilities are available at MacKerricher State Park, figures show that ocean oriented recreation activities are rapidly increasing in popularity.

Department of Fish and Game —
Wildlife Conservation Board

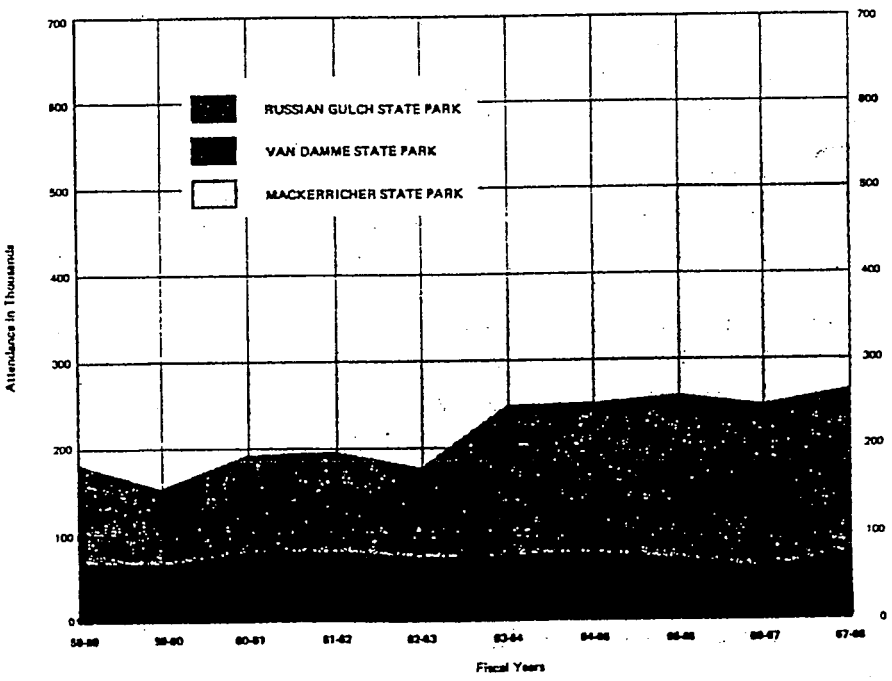
Heeser Drive Fishing Access: Along the northern Mendocino Headland is the Heeser Drive Fishing Access, consisting of 29.2 acres with approximately 11,600 feet or 2.2 miles of coastline. It is owned by the State Wildlife Conservation Board, and maintained by the County of Mendocino. This facility guarantees public fishing access to the coastline.

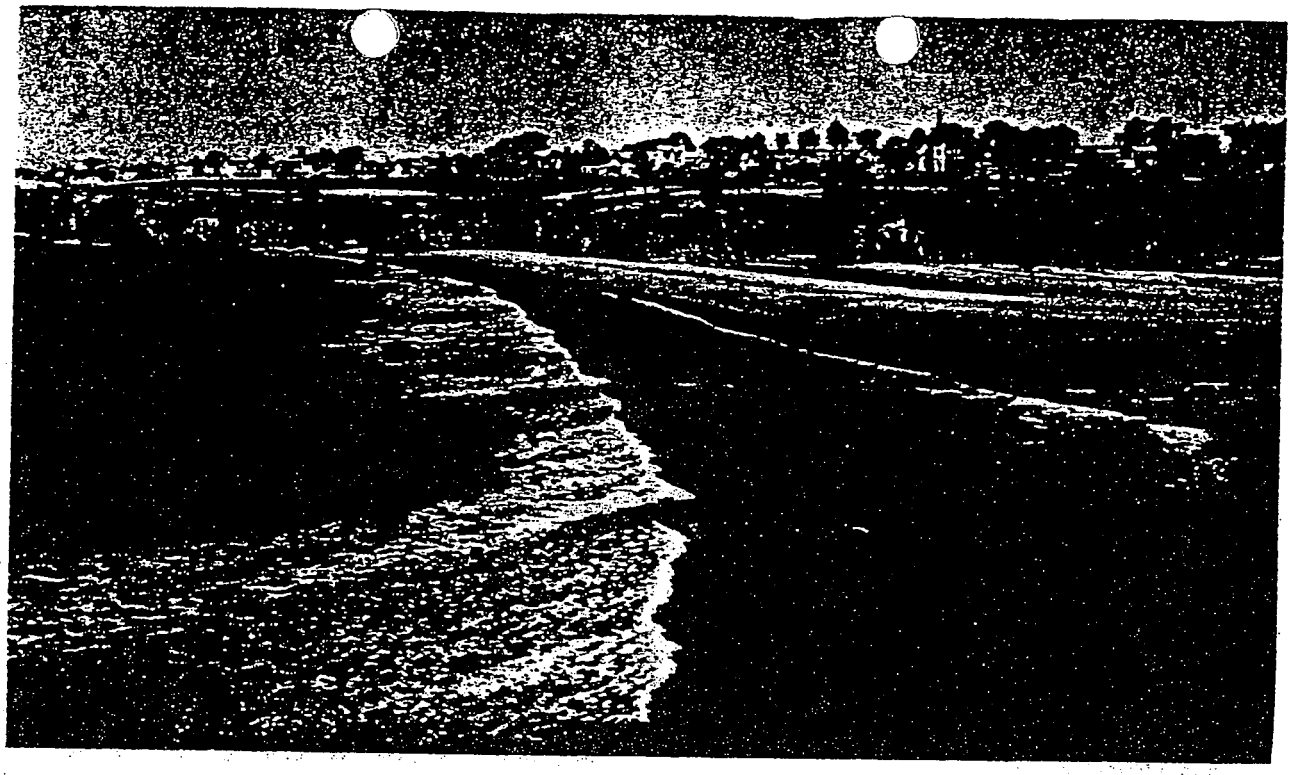
Department of Conservation — Division of Forestry

Jackson State Forest: The forest is located in Mendocino County one and one-half miles inland from the coast. The forest totals approximately 52,000 acres of redwood, pine and fir forest lands. Recreational use of the forest is restricted to small camping and day use areas. A study which locates potential recreation sites was completed in 1963 by the State Division of Forestry. The study lists many isolated recreation areas which could be developed without disrupting forest logging activities.

Figure 4. Attendance Chart

TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR MENDOCINO COAST PARKS





Community of Mendocino and Big River Beach

LOCAL AND REGIONAL

The Mendocino County General Plan shows future land use in the study area to consist of residential-recreation (R-R) that allows single and multiple dwellings, commercial facilities which serve recreation users and agricultural use.[9]

Developed or urban areas within the community of Mendocino are zoned as follows: (R-1) single family residence district - this allows for single residential, recreation and public facilities (schools, churches, etc.); (R-3) neighborhood apartment district - allowing all that is acceptable in R-1 plus multiple dwelling structures, and community commercial districts. A special residential district, (C-2-R) also exists. This allows for most commercial retail uses, (banks, food stores, drug stores, restaurants, etc.).[10]

Lands surrounding the study area are zoned for residential and recreational use.

The Master Plan of Beaches, Parks and Recreation[11] for Mendocino County recommends that the state acquire two acres south of Russian Gulch State Park between Highway 1 and the ocean as an expansion of this unit, that the Heeser property be acquired (completed project), and that the state acquire Big River Beach for park purposes.

The community of Mendocino is working towards incorporation. The movement was prompted by the need for a sanitary sewer system and an updated water system. With incorporation, stronger controls could be established to preserve the charm and environmental quality of this community.

PRIVATE

The largest landowner in the study area is Boise Cascade Union Lumber Company. As a major land developer, potential uses of the Mendocino Headland, Big River Beach and land along the north shore of Big River are numerous. To date no development plans have been made public for these lands.

9) A General Plan for Mendocino County, 1967.
10) Zoning Plan Map, Sectional District Map No. 7, Section 5:2007 of Ordinance No. 359.
11) *Master Plan of Beaches, Parks and Recreation*, Mendocino County, prepared by Mendocino County Planning Commission, James M. Campbell, Planning Consultant, 1954.

EVALUATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Preservation of the natural resource values of the headland, beach and the historic and charming environmental quality of the town of Mendocino is the responsibility of the state, county and community of Mendocino and the lumber industry.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY

The Department of Parks and Recreation's responsibility which extends to all areas of the state is determined by the adopted functions of the California State Park System:

1. To preserve significant evidences of the state's history;
2. To preserve the best examples of California's scenic natural landscape; and
3. To provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is conducting statewide evaluations to determine which historic and coastal areas of California should be incorporated within the State Park System. These studies will not be completed before 1970. However, preliminary conclusions can be reached, that justify the state taking action even before the above master reports have been finalized.

In comparison to other early logging communities along California's northern coast, the Mendocino Headland and community of Mendocino offer an excellent opportunity to preserve and interpret an important facet of the pioneer urban and industrial development in California. To adequately interpret a representative example of northern California lumbering history, the state should control the headland, Big River Beach and Flat, and all structures fronting on Main Street, west from the Presbyterian church. Additional significant structures within the "historic district" should also be controlled by the state.

The headland and community of Mendocino represent an environmental quality which is inseparable. Any changes which violate the old town Victorian atmosphere would seriously detract from any historic interpretation which the state might provide. It is a local responsibility of either the county, community or both to assure the state that no new development or remodeling of existing structures be allowed which is incompatible with the old town atmosphere. The state's responsibility in the area will become valid only after the local government establishes Mendocino as a "historic district" and enacts and enforces stringent architectural and zoning ordinances which will secure forever the historic image of the town.

The state has the responsibility to preserve the outstanding natural resources throughout the study area.

The wave cut terrace found only along the Mendocino Coast is one of California's most outstanding and popular geologic formations. Only a small example of this formation is available for public enjoyment. State control of the headland would preserve a fine example of this limited formation for public use.

The state has the responsibility to protect the scenic and ecological values of the Big River estuary. This responsibility is considered critical due to the rapid loss of wildlife habitat areas to urban development along the California coast.

In addition to preserving this segment of the Mendocino Coast, the state has the responsibility to provide adequate recreation facilities and accommodations for the people who are attracted by the area's scenic and historic values.

COUNTY AND LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The local responsibility of this project is concerned with the total historic preservation of the community of Mendocino. Over the past twelve years, Mendocino's development as an art colony has resulted in an increasing popularity with tourists and growing stabilization of the community's economic status through commercial outlets. Continued growth of these two factors coupled with an increasing residential population in nearby subdivision developments could threaten the area's overall environmental quality and historic charm. It is the responsibility of the local government to protect the values on which

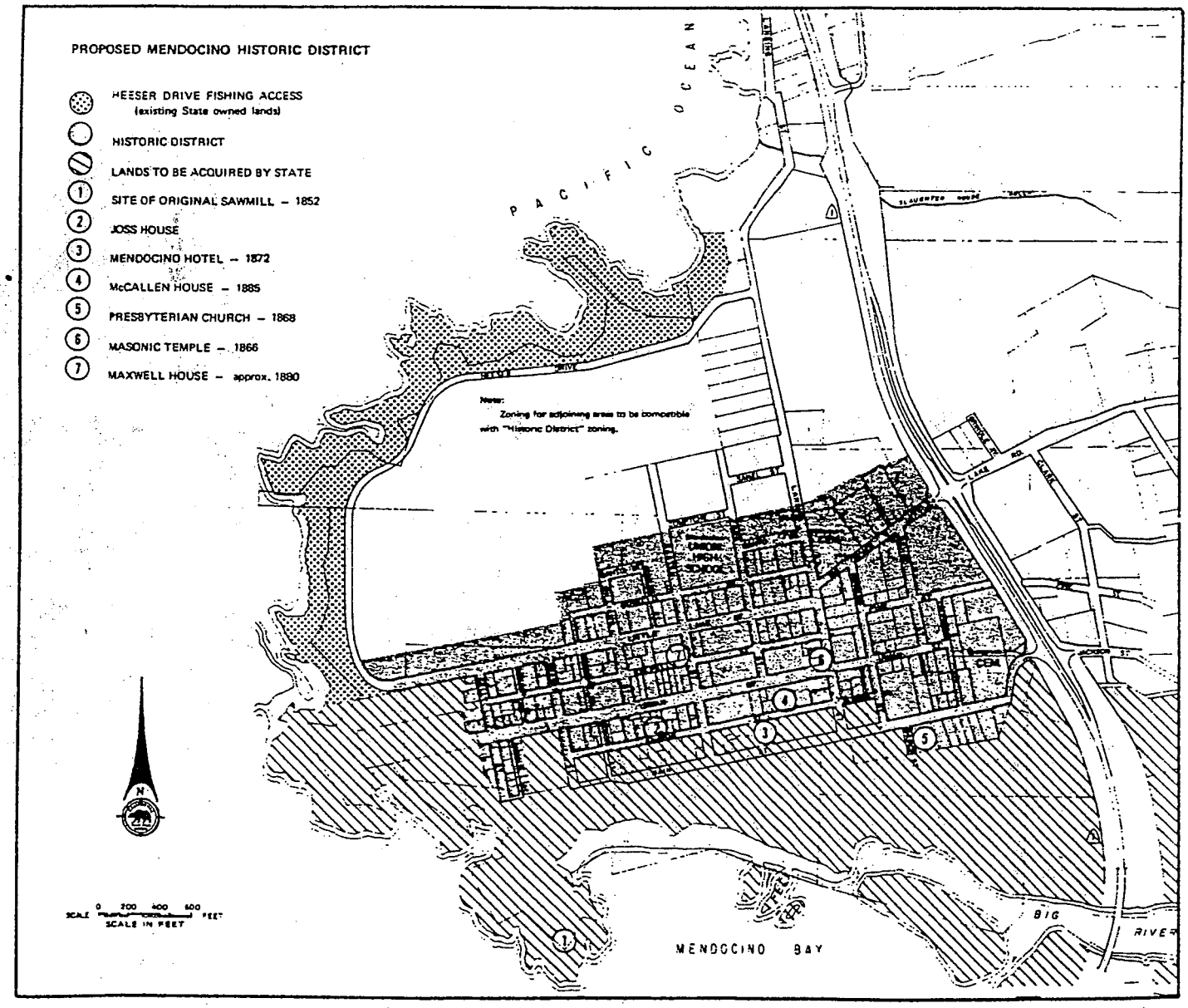
Mendocino's renaissance is assured. Acceptance of this responsibility must include the adoption of a resolution declaring the community of Mendocino and adjoining vacant grasslands as a "historic district". Within the "historic district", architectural controls and zoning restrictions must be adopted and strictly enforced. Such action must provide adequate control over architectural style, scale, color and details on all existing structures, alterations and proposed new development. All adjoining lands should be zoned to insure that future development will be compatible to the "historic district".

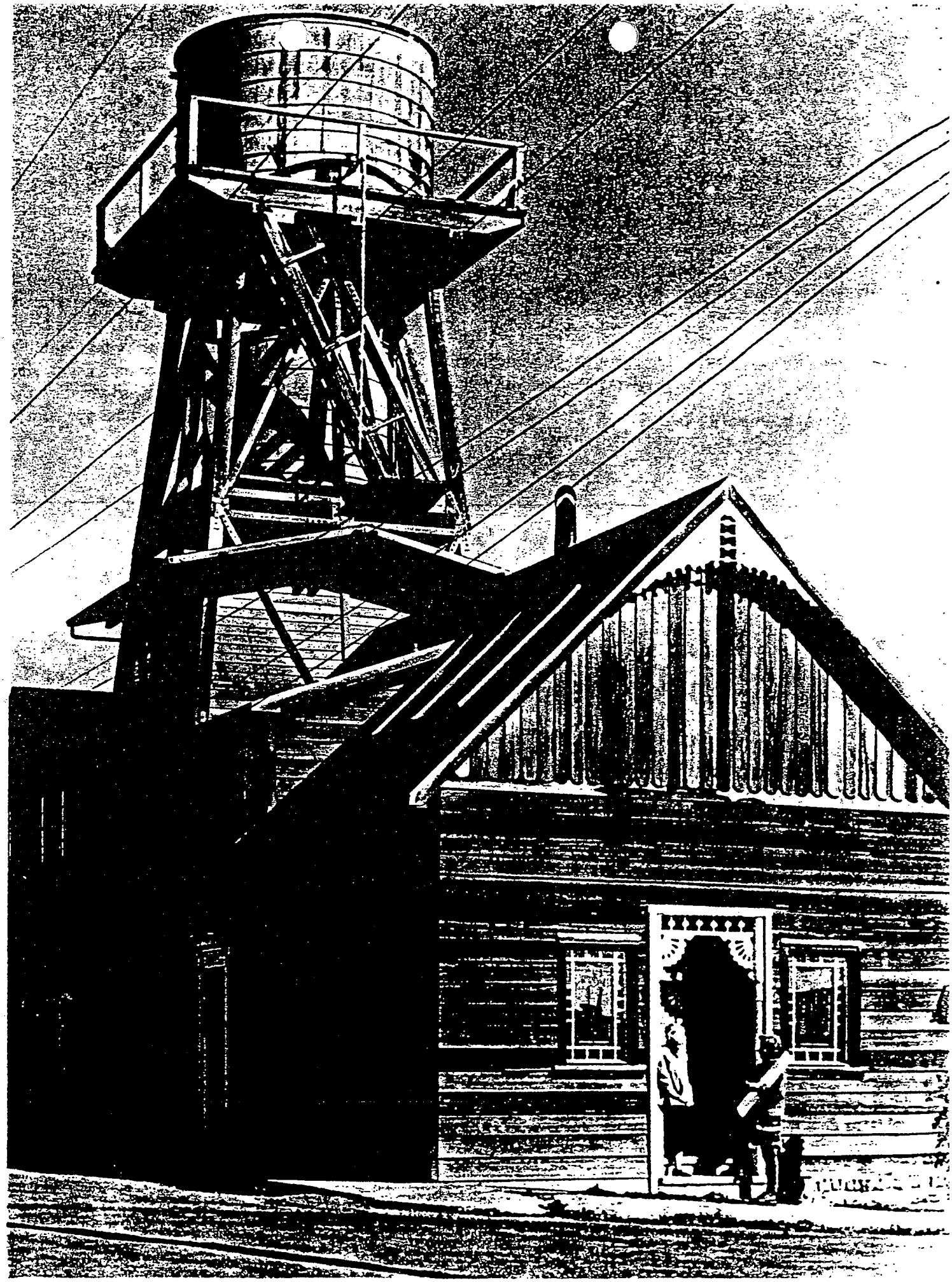
Such local action would guarantee that the existing character and integrity of Mendocino will be maintained as a compatible element of the headland and its historic significance.

LUMBER INDUSTRY

The vast northern California lumber industry, which represents a major contribution to California's economy, has a colorful and fascinating background. Adequate interpretation of the industry's beginning and rapid mechanical change has never been adequately portrayed. Only a few private lumbering museums are attempting to tell the redwood story. The state's interpretation of the lumber industry at Mendocino would offer the opportunity for lumber companies to support and contribute their wealth of information toward the development of a comprehensive lumbering interpretive center.

Figure 5. Map of Mendocino showing Proposed Historic District





THE PLAN

The plan for the Mendocino Headland and Big River Beach is divided into acquisition and development priorities, including estimated costs. Only broad estimates for uses and facilities are considered in relation to the carrying capacity of this fragile coastal area.

PURPOSE

State acquisition of the headland, beach, flat and historic buildings would allow for the historic interpretation of California's redwood lumber industry, through reconstruction of the original sawmill and shiploading facilities, acquisition of structures along Main Street and other significant structures throughout the town. (See figure 5.) All structures acquired by the state will be leased back to their existing use. State control of Main Street would insure preservation of the historic and architectural integrity of all structures involved.

The increasing popularity of Mendocino could produce undesired traffic congestion which would threaten the historic atmosphere of Main Street. This could result in the state eliminating vehicular access from Main Street and redesigning the area for pedestrian circulation.

This priority is totally dependent upon the local government's acceptance of the responsibility to preserve the remaining town as a "historic district" with stringent development and zoning controls.

PROPOSED ACQUISITION

- It is proposed that the state acquire approximately 205 acres, including 12,000 feet of ocean frontage and 8,000 feet of river frontage.

Estimated acquisition costs for the headland, Big River Beach and Flat totals approximately $1,042,000.

Within the "historic district," structures and land acquisition has been estimated at approximately $1,200,000.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The ultimate development of the headland, Big River Beach and Flat includes: Reconstruction of the original sawmill, 11,000 feet of trails, 125 picnic sites, parking, utilities, and a boat launching ramp.

This development totals $1,210,000, of which $500,000 is for historic redevelopment of the sawmill and ship loading facilities.

PROPOSED INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

The initial phase of the proposed development would include: Marking the original sawmill as an Historic Site; the construction of 11,000 feet of trails on the headland; development of day use facilities on Big River Beach and Flat including 50 picnic units, 125 car parking area, and a boat launching ramp.

The estimated cost for initial development is $350,000.

ESTIMATED OPERATIONAL COSTS

It is estimated that $70,000 per year will be required to operate and maintain the ultimate development. Approximately half of this amount is needed for maintaining historic structures. The remaining $35,000 is for interpretive, patrol, and clean-up duties.

Acreage: Approximately 205 acres.

Ocean Frontage: 12,000 feet.

River Frontage: 8,000 feet.

Estimated Acquisition Costs:

Buildings and lots	$1,200,000.00
Headlands, Beach and flat	$1,042,500.00
Potential Development and Estimated Costs:	
Historic Restoration and Reconstruction	$ 500,000.00
Day Use facilities	$ 675,000.00
Trails	$ 20,000.00
Boat launching ramp	$ 15,000.00
Total Acquisition and Development	$3,452,500.00

PRIORITY 2. "A" & "B" ALL LANDS NORTH OF JACK PETERS CREEK TO RUSSIAN GULCH, WEST OF HIGHWAY 1 AND HEADLANDS NORTH OF VAN DAMME STATE PARK.

Purpose: Acquisition to the visual coastal boundaries of Russian Gulch and Van Damme State Parks is necessary to protect the scenic and natural values for which these units were established.

2 "A"

Acreage: Approximately 40 acres

Ocean Frontage: 10,500 feet

Estimated Acquisition Costs:	$320,000.00
Potential Development and Estimated Costs:	
Natural trails and vista areas	$ 10,000.00
Overnight hostels (existing structures)	---
Total Acquisition and Development (Priority 2"A")	$330,000.00

2 "B"

Acreage: Approximately 50 acres

Ocean Frontage: 6,000 feet