BLM

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2023-0001-EA

Central Coast Field Office, California

Project Title:

Northern Parking Area and Trailhead

Environmental Assessment (EA) number:

DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2023-0001-EA

Location of Proposed Action:

Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit of the California Coastal National Monument in Santa Cruz County, California.

Mount Diablo Baseline Meridian, Township 10 South, Range 3 West, Section 11

Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Bureau of Land Management

Central Coast Field Office

940 2nd Ave., Marina, CA 93933

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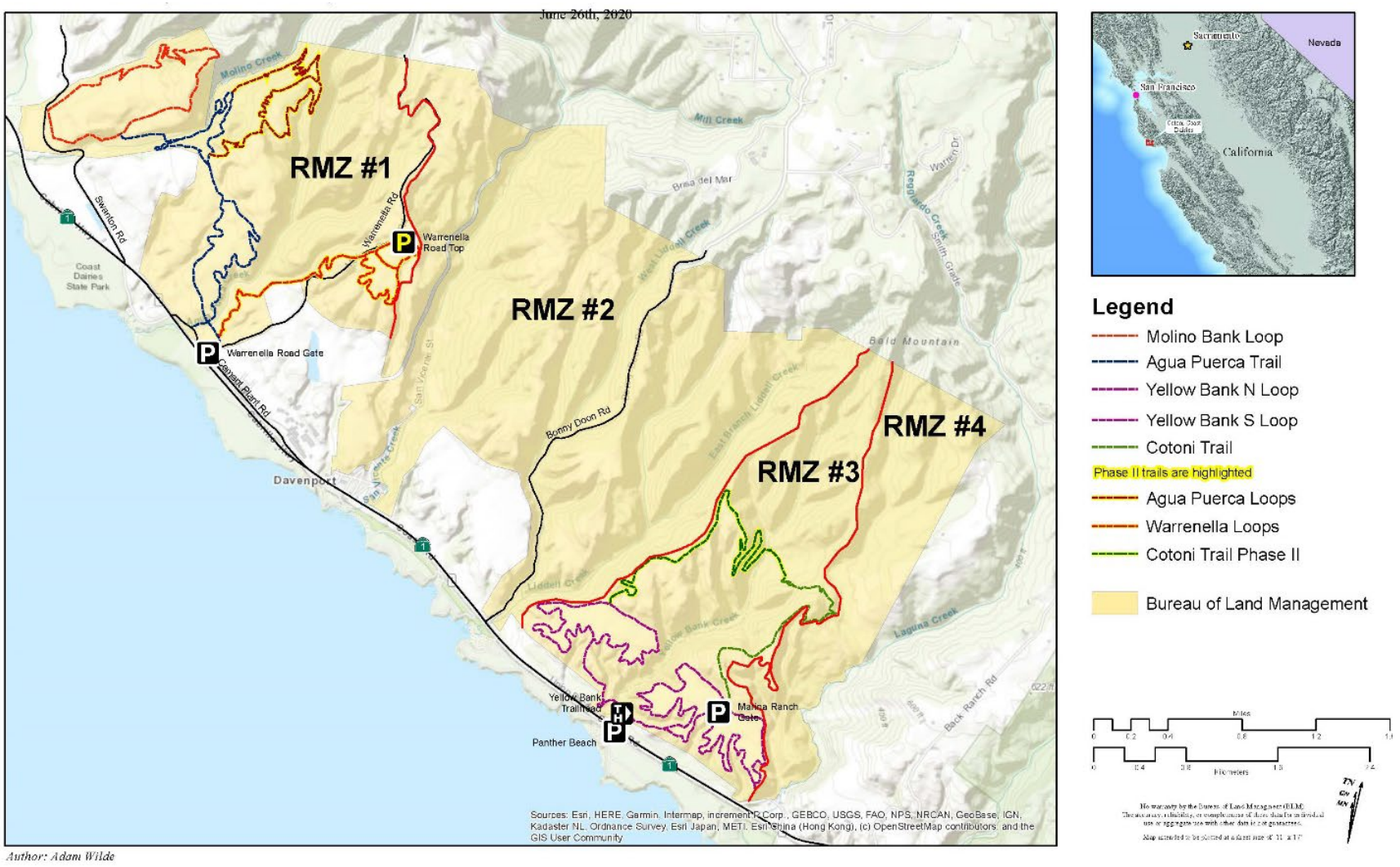
1. Introduction

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) purchased the Coast Dairies property in 1998 with contributions provided by the California Coastal Conservancy, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, the Save-the-Redwoods League, and other non-government entities. The land was acquired to facilitate the transfer of the upland parcels to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for open space and public recreational access purposes. Three agricultural parcels adjacent to the acquired public lands were retained by a subsidiary of TPL, known as the Coast Dairies Land Company (CDLC), for agricultural use in perpetuity through an agricultural conservation easement in favor of Santa Cruz County. The Coastal Development Permit (CDP 3-11-035) that authorized subdivision of the property was issued on April 10, 2014. Prior to the approval of the CDP, the TPL and BLM established deed restrictions to ensure the upland parcels would be protected, used, and managed only for open space, grazing, and public recreational access uses and development in a manner consistent with the protection and preservation of coastal resources.

In April 2014, TPL transferred upland portions of Coast Dairies, totaling 5,843 acres, into public ownership. On January 12, 2017, these Coast Dairies lands were added to the California Coastal National Monument by Presidential Proclamation No. 9563 and re-named Cotoni-Coast Dairies. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Central Coast Field Office (CCFO) released the Cotoni-Coast Dairies (C-CD) Decision Record (DR) and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) on June 23, 2021. The C-CD RMPA established goals, objectives, and management actions to conserve, restore, and protect resources, objects, and values for this on-shore unit of the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM). The proclamation that added the C-CD unit to the CCNM states that public access shall become available upon completion of a management plan. To comply with the proclamation, the DR included two implementation actions that authorized construction of public parking areas to be maintained consistent with Monument policy.

Figure 1 (below) shows the location of the parking areas and trails that were identified in the C-CD RMPA (BLM 2021) and approved in the DR.



Author: Adam Wilde

Figure 1. Parking areas and trails in the Decision Record for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Resource Management Plan Amendment, Appendix A.

Implementation action MA-REC-23 authorized construction of the C-CD [northern] parking area at the intersection of Cement Plant Road and Warrenella Road, and implementation action MA-REC-24 authorized construction of the C-CD [southern] parking area at the location called Marina Ranch Gate[1].

On July 23, 2021, Friends of the North Coast, Davenport North Coast Association, and Rural Bonny Doon Association (Appellants) appealed the two implementation actions for a northern and southern parking area – MA-REC-23 and MA-REC-24 -- included in the BLM's Decision Record approving the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Resource Management Plan Amendment for the California Coastal National Monument to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, which was docketed as *Friends of the North Coast et al. v. BLM*, IBLA 2021-313). Appellants did not petition for a stay of the BLM's decision and in July 2022, BLM initiated construction of the Warrenella Road Gate parking area, with some design changes resulting from engineering adjustments.[2] BLM removed four eucalyptus trees and began bulldozing of the parking area. Upon initiation of construction, Appellants petitioned for a stay of the BLM's Decision Record (DR) as to the two parking area implementation actions.

Appellants' allegations of BLM error in their appeal and petition for stay included that BLM violated NEPA because it failed to take a "hard look" at the design changes for the Warrenella Road Gate parking area, and because BLM's analysis assumed concurrent construction of both the northern and southern parking areas to disperse visitor use and reduce potential for concentration

[1] A few weeks before the DR was issued, TPL advised BLM that it would not grant BLM the easement necessary for the Marina Ranch Gate parking area and instead proposed a different southern parking area alternative on TPL lands that it indicated could be conveyed to BLM for that purpose.

[2] For example, the driveway entrance was moved south on Cement Plant Road to avoid the steeper hillside that would otherwise need to be excavated and to reduce the number of eucalyptus trees that would be removed for development of the parking area. Also, by reducing the number of parking stalls, the smaller site design preserved more of the natural landforms and drainage patterns related to stormwater runoff. A raised earthen berm parallel to Warrenella Road was also incorporated into the northern parking area to reduce potential scenic impacts from Newtown and State Route 1 (SR 1).

of impacts at a singular parking area, the southern parking area was not feasible, and BLM failed to analyze the impacts of constructing only the northern parking area without a second southern parking area. On August 31, 2022, the IBLA issued an Order that set aside and remanded Implementation Action MA-REC-23[3] because BLM failed to consider whether TPL's refusal to grant an easement for the southern parking area constituted new information or a changed circumstance requiring supplemental NEPA analysis. The Order stated:

> TPL's refusal to grant the necessary easement for the Marina Ranch Gate Parking Area meant that parking area would not be built. This was new information or changed circumstances requiring BLM to take a "hard look" at whether an additional NEPA analysis was required before issuing its DR, given that BLM never considered the environmental effects of building the Warrenella Road Gate Parking Area without also building the Marina Ranch Gate Parking Area. Because BLM never took this "hard look," it failed to comply with NEPA and the regulations implementing NEPA in approving IA MA-REC-23.[4]

This EA analyzes construction of only a northern parking area following the IBLA's remand of MA-REC-23 for further analysis.

1.1. Purpose and Need Statement:

The Monument Proclamation and CCNM RMP, as amended, require the BLM to ensure public access for recreation and visitor use of the Cotoni-Coast Dairies (C-CD). As such, the purpose for the proposed action is to establish public parking to support public access in Recreation Management Zone 1 (RMZ 1), while ensuring proper care for resources, objects, and values of the C-CD unit of the California Coastal National Monument.

1.2. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

Public notification for the Northern Parking Area and Trailhead EA was posted on the BLM's National NEPA Register on October 28, 2022. The BLM also issued a News Release on October 28, 2022. The News Release initiated the 30-day comment period (October 28, 2022 to November 28, 2022), described how the public could submit scoping comments, and identified dates for two

[3] The August 31, 2022 Order also dismissed Appellants' challenge to MA-REC-24 as seeking an advisory opinion and dismissed the petition for stay as moot.
[4] August 31, 2022 Order at page 12.

virtual public meetings. The BLM also sent emails to interested parties announcing the 30-day scoping period and two public meetings.

The BLM virtual public meetings were held on November 16 and November 17, 2022, from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. The BLM's Central Coast Field Manager and numerous interdisciplinary resource specialists attended the meetings to hear from constituents directly. Facilitation was provided by the BLM's Public Affairs Officer for the Central California District Office. Approximately half the people who registered attended the on-line meetings, with at least 18 participants signed in for the November 16 meeting and 19 participants for the November 17 meeting. The BLM explained these virtual meetings were informational and only written comments would be accepted for the public record.

The BLM's planning process emphasizes close coordination with partner agencies and organizations. The BLM also provided notification to the following agencies concurrent with the start of the public scoping period: California Coastal Commission, the County of Santa Cruz Public Works, Regional Transportation Commission of Santa Cruz County, California State Parks, Caltrans, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Written scoping comments were accepted on-line through the BLM's ePlanning project website, by email, facsimile, or delivered to the Central Coast Field Office. The BLM received approximately 70 submissions during the official scoping period. Approximately half of the submissions were versions of form letters submitted by interested parties. The remainder of the scoping comments were unique comment letters, including from the following organizations: Conservation Lands Foundation, Davenport North Coast Association, Friends of the North Coast, Rural Bonny Doon Association, Big Creek Lumber Co., Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship, Sempervirens Fund, and Peninsula Open Space Trust. Many issues raised by interested parties before and during scoping fell outside the scope of the EA.

1.2.1 Issues to be Addressed in this EA

Issues identified by interested parties were evaluated to address potential impacts of parking alternatives on recreation resources, traffic and transportation, cultural and historic properties, livestock grazing and agriculture, and special status species.

New information identified before and during scoping includes identification of the monarch butterfly as a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act and identification of the Central California mountain lion as a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act. The EA also incorporates changes in the C-CD visitor use estimates following the coronavirus pandemic and infeasibility of the Marina Ranch Gate parking area (MA-REC-24). The C-CD visitor use estimates for Recreation Management Zone 1 were revised upward to reflect anticipated visitor use if only the C-CD northern parking area is constructed without a C-CD southern parking area. The revised C-CD visitor use estimates were used to complete an updated focused traffic study that evaluated transportation impacts from the range of alternatives for the C-CD northern parking area considered in this EA. Other new information includes updates on the status of the North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5), which will provide public access to the C-CD unit of the CCNM via a pedestrian highway overpass at the Panther Gap/Yellow Bank Creek that is scheduled for completion in 2027.

1.3. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is subject to the Decision Record for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA), approved June 23, 2021. This plan has been reviewed, and the proposed action conforms with the RMPA because it is specifically provided for in the following decisions:

Table 1. C-CD RMPA Goals for Recreation Resources

Goals for Recreation Resources
1. Provide a range of recreational use opportunities while protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources from human impacts.
2. Provide the public with interpretive information and educational initiatives regarding the values and significance of the CCNM.
3. Provide a variety of experiences and settings for a diversity of users and to meet potential changes in demand while minimizing conflicts with adjacent property owners and among user groups.
4. Coordinate planning and management activities with the numerous jurisdictions on and adjacent to the CCNM and use the CCNM to help enhance cooperative and collaborative initiatives and partnerships with a variety of communities, agencies, organizations, academic institutions, the public, and other stakeholders.
5. Promote sharing of ideas, resources, and expertise to increase the public's appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural resources on BLM public lands; and

Goals for Recreation Resources
6. Disseminate information that will foster responsible behavior in order to achieve the highest possible environmental quality on BLM public lands.

Table 2. C-CD RMPA Objectives for Recreation Resources

Objectives for Recreation Resources
a) Visitors will be encouraged to participate in recreational pursuits on the CCNM that are respectful of the biological, cultural, physical, and scenic values of the monument.
b) Construct and maintain appropriate facilities to support recreational uses.
c) Design maps and brochures and educational opportunities to improve visitors' appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural resources on BLM public lands.
d) Create experiences and settings appropriate for the desired outcome within developed and undeveloped recreation areas.
e) Manage recreational facilities to protect natural resources and to meet user needs.

Table 3. C-CD RMPA Management Actions and Allowable Uses for Recreation and Transportation

Management Actions and Allowable Uses	
Implementation Action: MA-REC-23	Establish a Day Use Site (parking) at Warrenella Road Gate. No overnight (sunset to sunrise) parking will be allowed. Provide for at least one public restroom and trash collection at this site.
Implementation Action: AU-TTM-2	Designate 17.8 miles of existing roads as limited to authorized motorized use only (**Appendix A, Figure 4**). Designate short ingress/egress routes to proposed access points as open to motorized and non-motorized public uses (**Appendix B**).
MA-TTM-4	Work with Santa Cruz County (Public Works) to make improvements necessary to meet public safety standards and support increased vehicle traffic [and parking] on Cement Plant Rd.

Presidential Proclamation 9563 added the Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit to the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM). This proclamation called for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit to be available for public access upon the BLM's completion of a management plan. As a unit of the broader CCNM, the BLM will continue to manage C-CD under relevant goals and objectives that were identified in the Resource Management Plan for the California Coastal National Monument that was completed in 2005, before the addition of onshore units. The overarching goals are identified as follows:

1. Protect the geological formations and the habitat that they provide for biological resources of the CCNM.
2. Protect the scenic and cultural values associated with the CCNM.
3. Provide and promote research opportunities to understand the resources and values of the CCNM.
4. Provide the public with interpretive information and educational initiatives regarding the values and significance of the CCNM and the fragile ecosystems of the California coastline.
5. Coordinate planning and management activities with the numerous jurisdictions on and adjacent to the CCNM and use the CCNM to help enhance cooperative and collaborative initiatives and partnerships with a variety of communities, agencies, organizations, academic institutions, the public, and other stakeholders.

The overall approach to C-CD management includes integrating conservation, restoration, and livestock grazing along with research, education, and recreation. Providing access for research, education, and recreation is also a component of the deed restrictions and presidential proclamation for the C-CD unit of the CCNM. Existing gates and fences may be replaced and/or relocated to support goals and objectives for livestock grazing, public safety, and improved public access to C-CD. Locations for additional vehicle barriers may also be identified and installed so that vehicles do not park beyond the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of the intersection with Warrenella Road. These vehicle barriers could be large boulders, post and cable fence, welded pipe barrier, K-rail, or other barriers. To maintain consistency with the C-CD RMPA goals and objectives, day use area project plans may include the following amenities, some of which have already been approved and/or installed in separate actions: 1) security gates at the entrance/exit of the parking area and trailhead; 2) external perimeter fence and internal vehicle barriers/bollards; 3) vehicle parking stalls; 4) containers for recycling and waste disposal; 5) kiosks and interpretive display(s); 6) vault toilets; 7) pedestrian pathway(s) to site amenities (e.g. toilets); and 8) directional and entrance/exit sign(s).

1.4. Relationships to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

Omnibus Public Land Management Act

On January 12, 2017, President Barack Obama used his authority under the Antiquities Act (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431) to designate Cotoni-Coast Dairies as a unit of the California Coastal National Monument. In doing so, these lands became a component of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). As required under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA), the BLM manages components of the NLCS to "conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes." OPLMA also states that the Secretary, through the BLM, will manage the components of the NLCS "in accordance with any applicable law (including regulations) relating to any component of the system … and in a manner that protects the values for which the components of the system were designated."

The resource objects and values contributing to the Monument designation include traditional use areas of the indigenous people and archaeological resources, as well as a wide array of habitats and the diversity of wildlife that they support, including forests, shrublands, grasslands, riparian/wetlands, and aquatic systems.

Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires federal agencies to complete formal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for any action that "may affect" federally listed species or critical habitat. The ESA also requires federal agencies to use their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species. The BLM completed formal consultation with the FWS for the Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit (C-CD) of the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion (08EVEN00-2020-F-0631) lists the conservation measures the BLM agreed to implement as part of the proposed action to further the conservation of listed species in the project areas. The BLM also consulted (informally) with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the RMPA. This resulted in a concurrence letter from NMFS

on the BLM's determination that the RMPA is Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA) species listed as threatened or endangered or critical habitats designated under the ESA.

National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires agencies to make a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties that may be affected by an agency's undertakings and take those effects into account in making decisions. The BLM process for implementing this NHPA requirement is set forth in the State Protocol Agreement among the California State Director of the Bureau of Land Management and the California State Preservation Officer and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (2019). Pursuant to State Protocol Agreement, Class III surveys would be completed within the area of potential effects (APE) of the proposed parking area prior to construction.

Coastal Zone Management Act

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) (16 USC. 1451 et seq.) grants the state the ability to review federal agency activities that affect the coastal zone and, in some circumstances, to stop or modify federally permitted activities that are not consistent with the state's coastal program. The California Coastal Commission (Commission) is the state agency responsible for reviewing proposed federal and federally authorized services to assess their consistency with the approval state coastal management program. The Commission developed the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP) pursuant to the requirements of the CZMA. The key policy component of the CCMP is the California Coastal Act of 1976, as amended (Division 20, Cal. Pub. Resources Code (PRC)). The CZMA applies to actions initiated, permitted, or funded by federal agencies within the coastal zone. While the coastal zone by definition does not include federal land, the CZMA nonetheless applies to most federal activities or federally permitted activities that are located adjacent to or near the coastal zone, because such activities often affect the coastal zone and the resources therein—both onshore and offshore.

The California Coastal Commission has been encouraging BLM to provide public access since 2015. Additionally, as evidenced in the public scoping comments, numerous groups favor public access to the unit. Through its federal consistency role, the Commission is tasked with determining whether these federal activities are consistent with the Coastal Act.

Since the donation of C-CD, the BLM has coordinated closely with the California Coastal Commission on activities on the property. The BLM's consistency determination was submitted to the California Coastal Commission in September 2020. The Staff Report, released on November 25, 2020, recommended conditional approval of Phase 1, based on continuing interagency coordination and additional federal consistency review prior to implementing Phase 2. On December 11, 2020, by a unanimous vote the California Coastal Commission conditionally concurred with consistency determination CD-0005-20 for the Resource Management Plan for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property.

Concerning potential alternative day-use/parking sites, the California Coastal Commission's conditional consistency determination concluded that the BLM's proposed parking sites identified in the RMPA have been appropriately located in a manner that complies with Coastal Act requirements. See CD-0005-20 for the Resource Management Plan for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property [F13c-12-2020-staff report] at page 20.

With regard to the parking area alternatives considered in this EA, the BLM determined no supplemental consistency determination is needed because the proposed parking areas will not have substantially different effect on coastal resources than what was previously considered in the Commission's consistency determination finding on December 11, 2020. Although they include minor changes to the design of the parking area previously labelled Warrenella Road Gate, the BLM's northern parking area alternatives identified in this EA are within the scope and scale of what was previously evaluated and approved in CD-0005-20. For example, the size and location of the proposed parking area falls within the same overall construction footprint of Warrenella Road Gate [Implementation Action MA-REC-23], so the BLM is not requesting the Commission to render a new finding regarding consistency.

2. Range of Alternatives

The description below explains the general site development parameters that are considered under the range of alternatives. The general site development scenario and figures provided aid in the analysis and comparison of potential impacts in the environmental assessment.

Under Action alternatives 1 and 2, the proposed parking area would be located near the intersection of the BLM-administered Warrenella Road and the County of Santa Cruz-administered Cement Plant Road (37.0219°, -122.2079°) as detailed on the associated maps and figures.

All visitors to each of the parking lots described in these two action alternatives are anticipated to approach from the northern intersection of Cement Plant Road and State Route 1 (SR 1), travelling south on Cement Plant Road. All egress from the parking area is to be directed north on Cement Plant Road to the intersection with SR 1.

Project design features and conservation measures incorporated into the range of alternatives are described in Attachment 1. These design features and conservation measures are proven to be effective ways to reduce the potential impacts of the proposed parking area construction and use on coastal resources described in section 3 of this EA.

Additional project design features may be incorporated to further mitigate resource impacts. The BLM will monitor the application of BMPs after completion of the project to evaluate effectiveness. Effectiveness monitoring occurs after a designated period of wet weather has passed. Effectiveness monitoring will evaluate whether selected BMPs reduced erosion, reduced non-point source pollution, or protected beneficial uses, resources, objects, and values.

2.1. Alternative 1: Double Loop Site Design [Preferred Alternative]

Alternative 1 (**Figure 2**) is similar to Implementation Action MA-REC-23, described in the Cotoni-Coast Dairies RMPA/EA (BLM 2020).

- Under Alternative 1, the BLM would construct a parking area containing 65 stalls of which three would be dedicated to accessible parking.
- Access into and out of the lot would be provided through a single point on Cement Plant Road, roughly 190 feet north of the intersection of Warrenella and Cement Plant Roads.
- Four eucalyptus trees, or more, would need to be removed for the driveway entrance.
- Roads and walkways would not exceed 8% running slope to comply with access standards.
- Excavated soil would be used for fill material at lower elevations and banking the adjacent slopes to maintain finished slope stability.
- Surfaces constructed to support vehicle use and parking would be graveled (armored) to prevent soil loss and erosion.
- Stormwater runoff from the parking area would follow the natural drainage pattern towards Cement Plant Road or the grassland pasture below.
- The finished slope underlying the trailhead would be armored with large rock material (i.e. rip-rap) to prevent erosion during heavy precipitation events.
- Measures to preserve aesthetics include landscaping with native vegetation and raised earthen berms for visual screening along Warrenella Road.
- Additional project design features and conservation measures are described in Attachment 1.

2.2. Alternative 2: Single Loop Site Design

Alternative 2 (**Figure 3**) is similar to the BLM parking area design identified on the encroachment permit issued by the Santa Cruz County Public Works on March 15, 2022. In July 2022, the BLM contracted for removal of four eucalyptus trees for a driveway connecting to Cement Plant Road, approximately 60 feet north of the intersection of Cement Plant Road and Warrenella Road. Following tree removal, the BLM began construction by grading the footprint of the single loop parking area and purchasing materials needed for the facility. On August 31, 2022, all construction activity was suspended following issuance of the IBLA's decision that set aside and remanded MA-REC-23 back to BLM for supplemental environmental review.

- Under Alternative 2, the BLM would complete construction of a parking area containing 40 spaces, two of which will be dedicated for accessible parking.
- Vehicles entering the parking area would use a dedicated (one-way) entrance on Warrenella Road, approximately 95 feet east of the intersection with Cement Plant Road.

- To develop the entrance driveway, the existing gate on Warrenella Road would be removed, replaced, and/or re-located approximately 175 feet east of the intersection with Cement Plant Road.
- Vehicles leaving the parking area would use a dedicated (one-way) exit onto Cement Plant Road approximately 60 feet north of the intersection with Warrenella Road. A right-turn only traffic sign would be posted at the exit driveway to direct vehicles north on Cement Plant Road.
- A roundabout would be included to navigate the dedicated entrance and exit, particularly when visitors make another pass to find an open parking space.
- Surfaces constructed to support vehicle use and parking would be graveled (armored) to prevent soil loss and erosion.
- Stormwater runoff from the parking area would follow the natural drainage pattern towards Cement Plant Road or the grassland pasture below.
- Drainage areas would be armored to prevent erosion during heavy precipitation events.
- Additional project design features and conservation measures are described in Attachment 1.

2.3. No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the proposed parking area would not be constructed. Instead, there would only be the trailhead (and associated visitor services such as vault toilets and trash collection) to provide public access for day-use, trail-based recreation opportunities in RMZ 1 that are identified in the approved RMPA.

- Under this scenario the BLM anticipates visitors arriving in vehicles to utilize dispersed, informal parking areas along Cement Plant Road to access C-CD for allowable recreation opportunities on designated open trails in RMZ 1.
- Parking demand would likely result in drivers parking on the shoulders of Cement Plant Road north and south of Warrenella Road.
- Street parking may occur on SR 1 near the gravel road connecting to Cement Plant Road.

Figure 2. Alternative 1. Double Loop Site Design [Preferred Alternative].

Figure 3. Single Loop Site Design (Alternative 2).

2.4. Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

2.4.1. Community Site Design Concepts

Public involvement in the C-CD planning activity has generated numerous recommendations for alternative parking areas submitted by Friends of the North Coast and the Davenport North Coast Association. These recommendations emphasize parking near the historic barn structures and development of a driveway approximately 500 feet north of the intersection of Warrenella Road and Cement Plant Road, as described below.

Figure 4 shows a **Corral Loop Site Design** that includes space for up to 54 vehicle parking spaces, including two 12-foot accessible spaces located near the trailhead. Development of a parking facility at this location would have substantial adverse impacts on the existing livestock operations, the integrity of the historic barn setting, cultural resources, and the floodplain associated with Agua Puerca Creek. For example, the grazing operator has identified the following issues and concerns: loss of pastures used for weening calves and branding operations; vandalism to grazing infrastructure; gates left open; cattle let out of corrals; stress on livestock from proximity to people, vehicles, and pets (i.e. dogs); and interference with operator ability to haul cattle in and out from loading chute(s) during collection and gathering. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because it would provide for visitor access in a manner that impedes livestock grazing operations, which it is inconsistent with the land-use plan and the C-CD deed title.

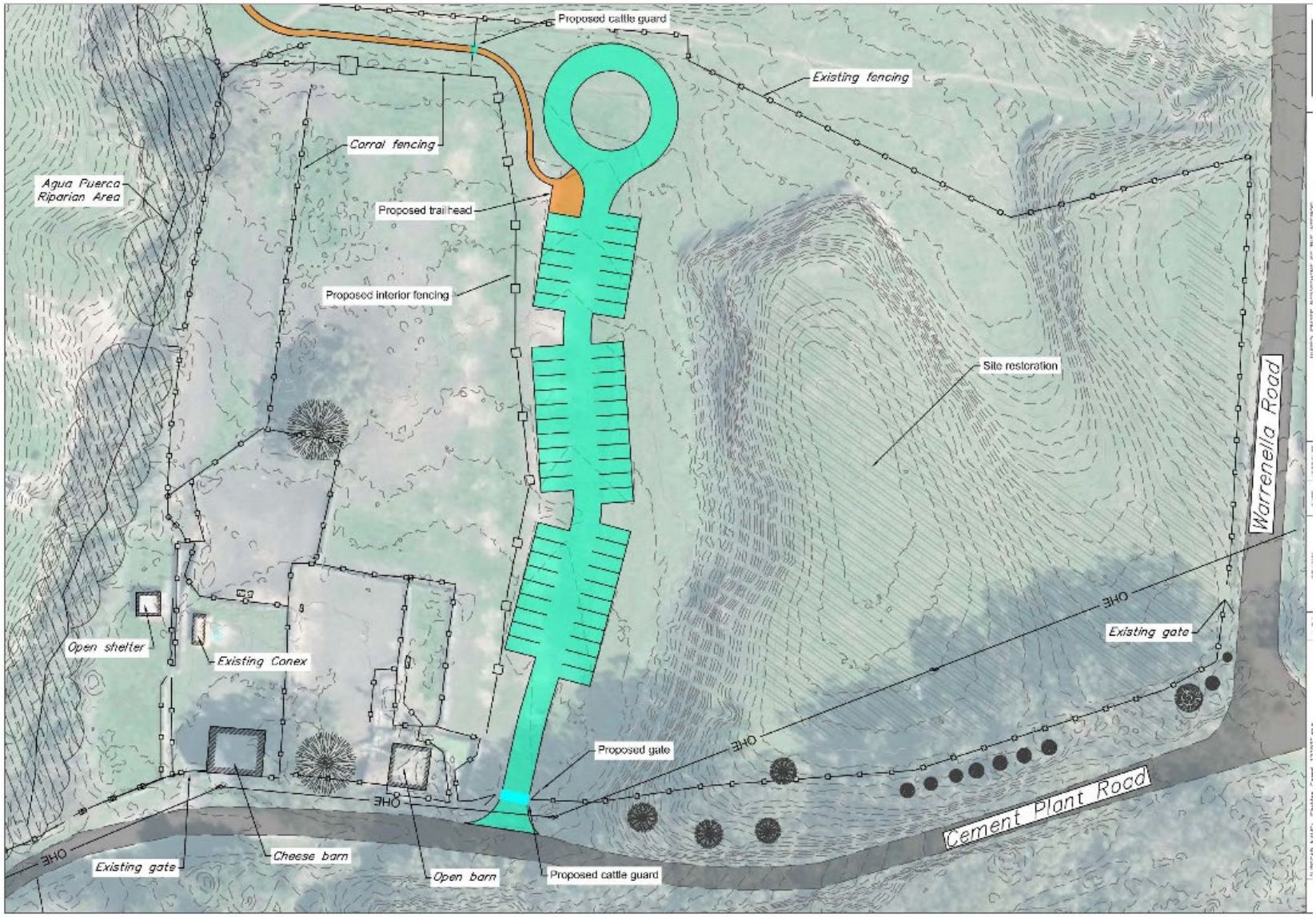


Figure 4. Corral Loop Site Design.

2.4.2. Upper and Lower Parking Site Design

The BLM developed an Upper and Lower Parking Site Design for a northern parking area (**Figure 5**) based on another design concept recommended by FONC and DNCA during the BLM's RMPA planning effort and public scoping period for this EA, where the upper parking site would be a permanent, rather than temporary parking area. Under this alternative, the BLM considered construction of upper and lower parking areas with a total of 76 parking spaces, four of which will be dedicated for accessible parking. The lower-level site design includes a driveway (exit only) on Cement Plant Road 500 feet north of the intersection with Warrenella Road. Vehicle access to the lower-level parking area would require construction of a one-way road from the roundabout within the upper-level parking area.

Figure 5. Upper and Lower Parking Site Design.

As noted in Section 2.4.1.A. above, development of the lower-level parking would have substantial adverse impacts to existing livestock operations, the integrity of the historic barn setting, and

cultural resources. The riparian habitat associated with Agua Puerca Creek would also be adversely affected because the seasonal drainage area is subject to inundation during heavy precipitation events. The BLM created a two-dimensional (2D) precipitation induced flooding model of the side drainage which parallels Warrenella Road up to the vicinity of the PG&E substation. Using the nearest statistical records, the 2D model for a 9.5-inch storm over a 24-hour period produced the inundation map shown in **Figure 6** (below). The lighter blue areas are water depths less than 1 ft.

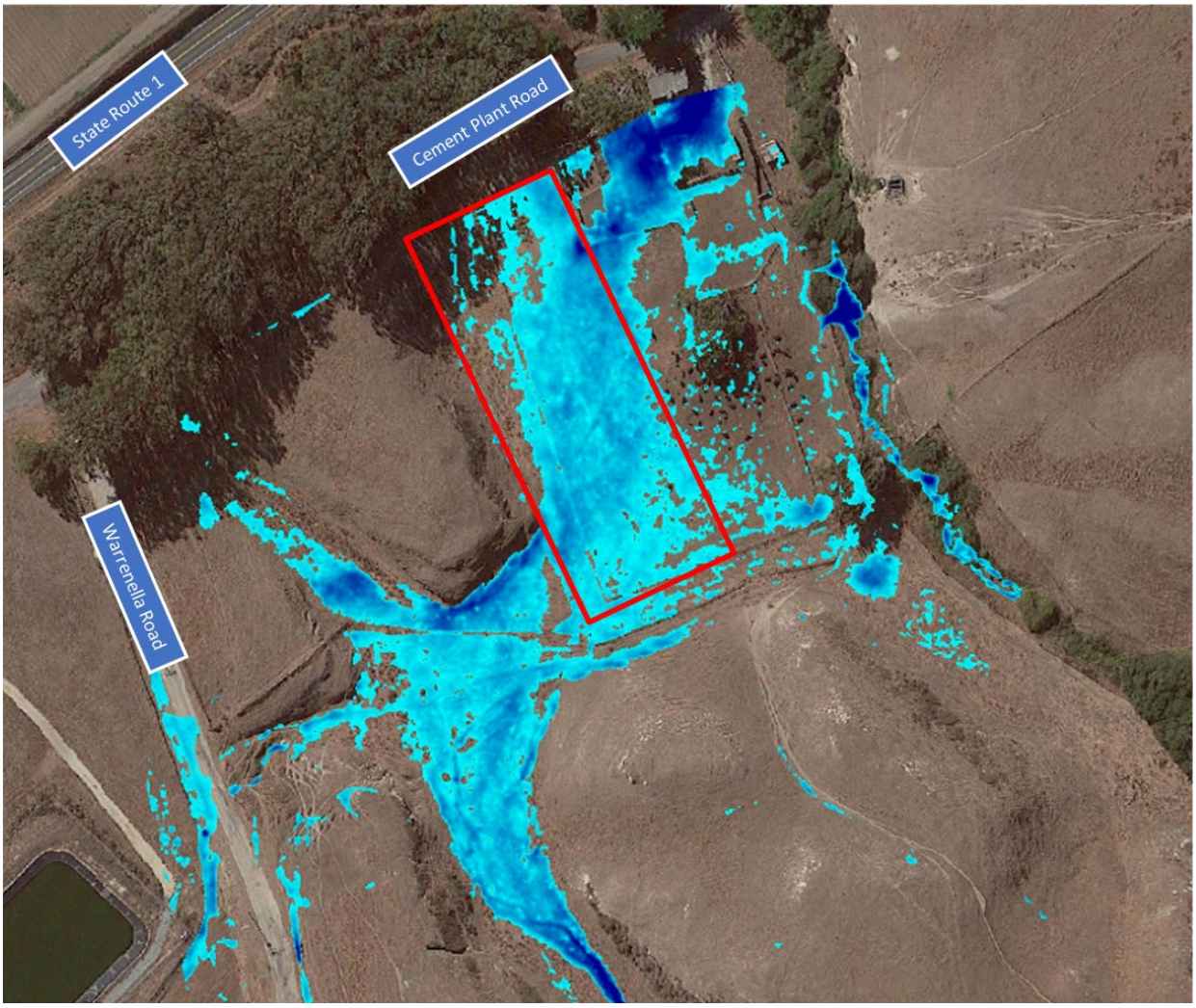


Figure 6. Two-dimensional model for a 9.5-inch storm over a 24-hour period. The lighter blue areas are water depths less than 1 ft. The corral parking area recommended by DNCA is shown inside the red box.

The BLM documented conditions following approximately 2.5 inches of rainfall over 24-hours from January 21 to January 22, 2024. The pasture proposed for the parking area was inundated

and a large volume of surface water was observed flowing through the corrals onto Cement Plant Road and toward Agua Puerca Creek. See **Figure 7** and **Figure 8** (below).

Figure 7. Grassland pasture and livestock corrals with precipitation induced flooding (BLM 2024).

Figure 8. Water flowing onto Cement Plant Road and toward Agua Puerca Creek (BLM 2024).

In 2023, the BLM contracted W-Trans to update the traffic study prepared for the C-CD RMPA/EA (Appendix K) to evaluate new information and changes in circumstance since completion of the previous study in 2020.

The Updated Focused Traffic Study for Cotoni-Coast Dairies Project prepared by W-Trans, dated December 20, 2023, determined the location of the driveway for the lower parking area[5] would have insufficient line of sight distance for traffic coming from the left (northbound on Cement Plant Road). For proper sightlines to be established at this location, traffic engineers from W-Trans determined it would be necessary to clear woody vegetation on the east side of Cement Plant Road south of the proposed driveway and excavate and grade a portion of the road bank slope, and/or move the driveway further north away from the horizontal curve. However, the presence of the historic barn structures precludes moving the driveway to the north and several large eucalyptus trees occupy the portion of the hillside on the road bank. Excavating and grading the slope would be costly and would require the removal of more eucalyptus trees than other parking design concepts being analyzed in the range of alternatives.

Development of the lower-level parking would have substantial adverse impacts to existing livestock operations, the integrity of the historic barn setting, cultural resources, and the riparian habitat (floodplain) associated with Agua Puerca Creek. In light of these considerations, the BLM eliminated this alternative from further analysis.

2.4.3. Yellow Bank South Gate Parking on Agricultural Parcel 3:

Commenters have proposed that the northern parking area proposal be analyzed in conjunction with a Yellow Bank South Gate Alternative for a southern parking area (Exhibit E) that has been proposed by Trust for Public Land, Santa Cruz Puma Project, Friends of the North Coast, Rural Bonny Doon Association, Big Creek Lumber Company, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, and Sempervirens Fund, in a Joint Proposal Letter dated June 29, 2021 addressed to BLM. As the proposed Yellow Bank South Gate parking area is private land, the BLM lacks the legal authority to propose management actions for adjacent private lands. The BLM will continue to cooperate with partners to establish public access to RMZ 3. However, after several rounds of meetings with

[5] The Upper and Lower Parking Area is identified as "Alternative 3" in the W-Trans Updated Focused Traffic Study for Cotoni-Coast Dairies Project, dated December 20, 2023.

stakeholders in 2022 and 2023, the TPL has not taken steps to demonstrate feasibility or obtain permits for development of public parking on Agricultural Parcel 3, so the Yellow Bank South Gate Parking Area is not a reasonable alternative for analysis at this time and this alternative has been eliminated from further consideration.

2.4.4. State Route 1 and/or County Road Enhancements:

Commenters have proposed that BLM's parking area construction include road improvements State Route 1 (SR 1) and County roads associated with C-CD visitor use. Examples of proposed improvements include implementing left turn lanes at the intersection of SR 1 and Cement Plant Road and its concurrent intersection with Davenport Landing Road. However, the BLM's management authority is limited to federal public lands, so any improvements on these roads fall under the jurisdiction of State and local government agencies. While the BLM will continue to work cooperatively with Caltrans and Santa Cruz County Public Works to identify transportation management improvements on State Route 1 and Cement Plant Road, this proposal was eliminated from further analysis as falling outside BLM's legal authorities.

2.5. Summary Comparison of Alternatives

Table 4, below, provides a brief comparison of the effects for each alternative described in Chapter 3 of this EA.

Table 4. Summary Comparison of Effects

Environmental Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	No Action
RECREATION	Major (direct) benefits on recreation from increased parking and services. Minor (direct) adverse impacts from visitor use conflicts would be reduced by public education and the C-CD supplementary rules.	Moderate (direct) benefits on recreation from increased parking and services. Minor (direct) adverse impacts from visitor use conflicts would be reduced by public education and the C-CD supplementary rules.	Major (direct) adverse effects on recreation and public access to C-CD. Adverse impacts from visitor use conflicts would be reduced by public education and the C-CD supplementary rules.
TRANSPORTATION/ TRAFFIC	Moderate (direct) impacts on traffic during weekend peak hours. Measures to reduce impacts include working with Caltrans, the Regional Transportation Commission, and the County on projects to improve public safety and coastal access.	Moderate (direct) impacts on traffic from parking in excess of capacity during weekend peak hours. Measures to reduce impacts include working with Caltrans, the Regional Transportation Commission, and the County on projects to improve public safety and coastal access.	Major (direct) adverse effects on transportation and traffic.

AGRICULTURE/LIVESTOCK GRAZING	**Minor (indirect) impacts to existing grazing operation and infrastructure from proximity of parking area, trails, and visitors would be addressed with signage and livestock barriers to prevent conflicts.**	**Minor (direct) impacts to grazing and agricultural lands from overflow parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north and south of Warrenella Road. Parking restrictions or improvement could reduce conflicts.**	**Major (indirect) adverse effects on grazing and agricultural lands from parking off Cement Plant Road north and south of Warrenella Road.**
CULTURAL RESOURCES	Minor (indirect) adverse effects on cultural resources. Measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include resource inventories, public education, and enforcement of the C-CD supplementary rules.		Moderate (indirect) adverse effects on cultural resources from parking off Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road.
WATER RESOURCES	Moderate (direct) adverse effects on hydrology and water quality. Project design features and best management practices would help avoid and/or reduce erosion.	Minor (direct) adverse effects on hydrology and water quality. Project design features and best management practices would help avoid and/or reduce erosion.	Minor (indirect) adverse effects on hydrology and water quality from parking on Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road.
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Minor (direct) adverse impacts on wildlife habitat from construction and use of the parking area. Measures to offset potential impacts	Minor (indirect) adverse impacts on wildlife habitat from construction and use of the parking area. Measures to reduce potential	Minor (indirect) adverse effects on biological resources from parking on Cement Plant Road north of

	are included in project design features and BLM habitat restoration projects outlined in the C-CD plan.	impacts include public education, monitoring, and the C-CD supplementary rules.	Warrenella Road.
GEOLOGY AND SOILS	Minor (direct), short-term effects on soil. Project design features and best management practices would help avoid and/or reduce erosion.	Minor (direct) short-term effects on soil. Project design features and best management practices would help avoid and/or reduce erosion.	Minor (indirect) long-term effect on soil from parking off Cement Plant Road north and south of Warrenella Road.
VISUAL RESOURCES	Minor (direct) adverse effects on aesthetics (viewshed). Measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include landscaping and visual screening with native plants, or raised earthen berms, along adjacent roadways.	Minor (direct) adverse effects on aesthetics (viewshed). Measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include landscaping and visual screening with native plants, or raised earthen berms, along adjacent roadways.	Minor (indirect) adverse effects on aesthetics (viewshed).
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	Potential for hazards and/or hazardous materials from construction and/ use of the parking area are the similar under all action alternatives. Project design features and best management practices would help avoid and/or reduce potential for contamination.		Minor (indirect) adverse effects from parking on Cement Plant Road north and south of Warrenella Road.
LANDS AND REALTY	Impacts on land and realty are similar under all alternatives. Coordination with County, State, Federal governments, and non-government organizations would be on-going to address regional development.		

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	Major beneficial impacts on social and economic conditions would result from development of parking area because it would improve access to recreation opportunities on public lands.	Moderate (indirect) adverse effects on social and economic conditions because relying on informal, dispersed parking on Cement Plant Road and SR 1 reduces equitable access to recreation opportunities on the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

3. Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

This chapter briefly describes the resource elements that may be affected by the proposed action. For each resource, the possible effects from other resource management programs are described and analyzed. Within each section of the resource analysis, effects common to all alternatives are discussed first. Then effects from individual alternatives are described comparatively, to clarify differences between the alternative approaches. The cumulative impacts are identified, as applicable.

The following elements of the human environment were considered but determined to be either not present or unaffected by the range of alternatives: Air Quality, Energy or Minerals, Paleontological Resources, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Terms referring to the intensity, context (geographic extent), and duration of impacts used in this chapter are the same RMPA/EA published on September 25, 2020, and incorporated here by reference.

Refer to Figures 9 and 10 below for the BLM parking area drawings used to calculate the limit of disturbance (LOD) for Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 used for analysis contained in this EA.

Figure 9. Limit of disturbance (LOD) for Alternative 1

Figure 10. Limit of disturbance (LOD) for Alternative 2

National Conservation Lands

Prior to the transfer of Coast Dairies to the BLM, the BLM agreed that the property shall be protected, used, and managed only for open space, grazing, and public recreational access uses and development in a manner consistent with the protection and preservation of coastal resources.

On January 12, 2017, Presidential Proclamation 9563 added the Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit to the California Coastal National Monument. The resources, objects and values identified in Presidential Proclamation 9563 include traditional use areas of the indigenous people and archaeological resources, as well as a wide array of habitats and the diversity of wildlife that they support, including forests, shrublands, grasslands, riparian/wetlands, and aquatic ecosystems. The Monument's objects and values that may be affected by the proposed parking and trailhead are described in the appropriate natural and cultural resource sections below along with a summary of the project design features that would avoid or reduce potential effects.

Final Supplementary Rule for Cotoni-Coast Dairies unit of the California Coastal National Monument

To sustain a healthy and safe environment for visitors to C-CD, the BLM is finalizing a supplementary rule published in the Federal Register on November 29, 2023 (87 FR 73276), under the authority of 43 CFR 8365.1-6, which allows BLM State Directors to establish such rules for the protection of persons, property, and public lands and resources.

To ensure protection of C-CD resources, particularly biological and cultural resources, the final rule prohibits use and occupancy from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. The final supplementary rule also prohibits members of the public from leaving the C-CD unit of the CCNM while their vehicle is parked in BLM-managed parking areas. Enforcement of the final supplementary rule will enhance the BLM's authority to manage recreation, address public safety, and provide additional resource protection on BLM-administered public lands within the Cotoni-Coast Dairies (C-CD) unit of the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM).

3.1 Recreation Resources

Current Conditions: C-CD recreation resources are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.13 on pages 40 – 41. Recreation opportunities for hiking, biking, and equestrian trail use are largely separated into RMZ 1 and RMZ 3. The BLM's plan decisions approved approximately 27 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding in two separate recreation management zones (RMZ's) totaling 2,656 acres. Hikers are allowed on all trails. Mountain biking trail opportunities are largely confined to RMZ 1, while horseback riding opportunities are entirely confined to RMZ 3 in the Decision Record of the C-CD RMPA/EA (BLM 2021).

The RMZ trail systems approved in the RMPA/EA have separate trailheads (i.e. public access points) to reduce potential for conflicts between recreationists. The RMPA/EA identified the watersheds that separate RMZ 1 and RMZ 3 to be managed for sensitive biological and cultural resource values, and there are no currently designated trails that would connect visitors across the landscape from RMZ 1 to RMZ 3. As a result, the total trails available for recreation in RMZ 1 is approximately 15 miles, and the total trails available for recreation in RMZ 3 is approximately 12 miles. The RMZ 3 trail network will include a regional connection to the North Coast Rail Trail via pedestrian overpass to be constructed over SR 1, between Yellow Bank trailhead and Panther Beach in 2027. Refer to RMPA/EA Appendix A, Figure 6D.

Based on the suite of allowable uses in RMZ 1 and RMZ 3, recreational opportunities are comparable to those provided at Wilder Ranch State Park, Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, and San Vicente Redwoods. The total size (2,656 acres) and miles of trails available for recreation in RMZ 1 (approx. 15 miles) and RMZ 3 (approx. 12 miles) are also relatively small in comparison to the aforementioned parks and open spaces.

During Phase 1, BLM anticipates that visitation will be more frequent at the RMZ 1 access point north of Davenport than visitation associated with access to RMZ 3 via the pedestrian overpass that will connect Yellow Bank trailhead to the North Coast Rail Trail (NCRT) at Panther Beach. Approximately 75% of these visitors are likely to be local residents of Santa Cruz County or other nearby areas. Many of these visitors would be visiting C-CD in lieu of or in combination with another recreation destination on the North Coast (e.g. Wilder Ranch State Park, Coast Dairies State Park). **Figure 11** (below) is an aerial view of the BLM construction project that began in

July 2022, including the driveway entrance from Cement Plant Road, the graded footprint of the single loop, and the raised earthen berm parallel to Warrenella Road.

Figure 11. Aerial image of the Warrenella Road Gate [MA-REC-23] construction site. The BLM parking area is shown inside the orange box.

In July 2022, the BLM gave notice to interested parties that hired contractors would be removing (four) eucalyptus trees adjacent to Cement Plant Road followed by other construction activity at the project site. Following tree removal, the BLM began construction by grading the footprint of the single loop parking area and purchasing materials needed for the facility. These materials totaled more than $200,000 and included aggregate base rock, a vault toilet, picnic tables, and more.

On August 31, 2022, the IBLA issued a ruling on *Friends of the North Coast et al. v. BLM*, IBLA 2021-313. The IBLA ruled that the BLM implementation action for the southern parking area

[MA-REC-24] is moot [i.e. not feasible]. The IBLA ruling set aside and remanded MA-REC-23 back to BLM for supplemental environmental review to consider the effects of building the C-CD northern parking area without also building the C-CD southern parking area.

Appendix G: Update for DOI-BLM-CA-C090-0015-RMP-EA (BLM 2023) describes the C-CD visitor estimates based on comparison with other outdoor recreation destinations in the region. The BLM updated the C-CD visitor estimates to incorporate new information and changes in circumstances following the IBLA ruling and coronavirus pandemic. The C-CD visitor use estimates for Recreation Management Zone 1 were revised upward to consider the effects of building the C-CD northern parking area without also building the C-CD southern parking area. The C-CD visitor use estimates for RMZ 3 were revised downward because the public access to the southern portion of the C-CD unit of the CCNM relies heavily on completion of the North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5) pedestrian highway overpass at the Panther Gap/Yellow Bank Creek. The BLM will continue to work cooperatively with TPL, Caltrans, the California Coastal Commission, and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission to pursue development of additional parking facilities for public access to RMZ 3 on the C-CD public lands, adjacent private lands, or (possibly) within the Caltrans easement on the upland (east) side of SR 1. Federal Land Access Program grant funding awarded to the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission will be used to develop the Yellow Bank trailhead connection via a pedestrian bridge at Panther Beach in 2027. Accessibility to RMZ1 and RMZ3 is similar to Wilder Ranch State Park because these areas are a short drive from the major metropolitan center of Santa Cruz and easy to access from SR 1.

The BLM estimates an average of 30 visitors per mile of trail in RMZ 1 and 20 visitors/mile in RMZ3 based on comparable properties in the region. Public use of parks and open spaces increased dramatically during the coronavirus pandemic but has since generally returned to pre-pandemic levels (NPS 2022). At the same time, research suggests the pandemic-related lockdown increased people's appreciation and awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities for exercise and/or mental health benefits (Volenec 2021). Similar observations and studies demonstrate how mobile devices and technology have played a large role in increasing public awareness of local "hot spots" and the prominent pattern of emotional and spiritual experiences expressed through "selfies" posted on social media platforms (Park 2022). Comments submitted during scoping for this EA suggest

the BLM underestimated the number of annual visitors in the RMPA. Considering these studies, social media trends, and scoping comments the BLM has increased the updated C-CD visitor estimate by 25%, making the annual visitor use approximately 190,000 during Phase 1 of the C-CD RMPA. Additional parking and trails associated with Phase 2 of the RMPA require further review and approval, but at full buildout the BLM estimates up to 325,000 visitors annually to the C-CD unit of the CCNM. While visitor use (and thus parking demand) is not expected to exceed these estimates, additional parking capacity would reduce the potential for offsite parking during peak visitation weekends. Security gates are an effective way to prevent vehicle access to parking areas to mitigate concerns about overnight use.

Recreational opportunities would be comparable to those provided at Wilder Ranch State Park, Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, and San Vicente Redwoods. However, recreational opportunities in the C-CD may be considered less of a draw than those provided at Wilder Ranch, particularly because beach access drives a significant number of visitors to Wilder Ranch.

Recreation visitation to the project area would be affected by changes in recreation opportunities and demand outside of the C-CD on the North Coast. Other related actions are outlined and described in the draft North Coast Facilities Management Plan (NCFMP), developed by Santa Cruz County with support from the California Coastal Conservancy to improve coordination between agencies needed to address recreation demands and services. The draft NCFMP describes the existing conditions and recreation facilities from Big Basin to Wilder Ranch and includes illustrations for the overall distribution of visitor services and amenities on the North Coast of Santa Cruz. Existing conditions in areas near RMZ 1 are associated with Davenport (Zone 4) in the NCFMP.

Other non-BLM recreation facilities in the vicinity of the Cement Plant Road include Davenport Landing Beach managed by County Parks. This popular destination is accessed from Davenport Landing Road, a loop road on the coastal side of SR 1 with one end at Cement Plant Road's northern terminus. Unpaved shoulder parking, an ADA-accessible parking space, a few perpendicular unpaved parking spaces, trash receptacles, an ADA-accessible ramp, and a restroom are at the access point to the beach.

The south end of Cement Plant Road rejoins SR 1 on the inland side of the highway just before Davenport census-designated place (CDP), which is the northern terminus of the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, managed by Regional Transportation Commission. Large informal parking areas on the coastal side of the highway are used by crowds of visitors to access Davenport Beach. As described in the NCFMP, one portable restroom and trash receptacles are available at the informal parking area.

Existing conditions in areas near RMZ 3 are associated with Yellow Bank-Panther Beach (Zone 6) in the NCFMP. All land and beaches on the coastal side of SR 1 except the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line (which is managed by Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) is managed by State Parks. On the inland side of the highway, the agricultural lands south of Yellow Bank Creek are administered by the Trust for Public Land (TPL). Currently, there is a large informal parking area on the coastal side of SR 1 that is used by crowds of visitors for public access across the railroad tracks to the State beaches. There is a trash receptacle near the informal railroad crossing, but no restroom facilities are available.

The distribution of existing amenities over the 15-mile stretch of the North Coast from Big Basin to Wilder Ranch is illustrated in Figure 1-12 of the NCFMP. As shown, restrooms and paved parking areas are concentrated to the north and south of C-CD. Of the 22 parking areas identified in the NCFMP, only six are paved and formalized. Most of the other 17 unpaved areas are located along SR 1 within the Caltrans right-of-way, which precludes formalization of designed parking. These informal parking areas are used regularly by visitors despite increased risks to public safety from fast-moving traffic on the highway, lack of services, and frequent property loss or damage from vehicle break-ins.

Projects designed to support other recreation areas including the San Vicente Redwoods Access Plan and the North Coast Rail Trail, in combination with the construction of BLM-managed parking area at C-CD, will result in additional visitors to the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. Together, these projects would increase investment in the region, resulting in improved public facilities within the region (e.g. public restrooms, trash collection). Additionally, these projects may result in a small net benefit to some local communities, because of improved land protection and economic benefits from recreation. Future public access development activities subject to local and/or State agency approval would require further project-and site-specific analysis, during which

time applicable Project Design Features (PDFs), Best Management Practices (BMPs), and other conditions of approval (COAs) would be identified. Assuming the development trends in the region continue, impacts on recreation resources from construction and use of the parking areas would be beneficial because effects on regional trail connectivity would result in outstanding new opportunities for public use and enjoyment in the region over the next 15-20 years. Refer to the cumulative effects analysis in Section 3.12 for a summary of priority projects identified in the NCFMP.

Effects of Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative):

The BLM's preferred alternative (Alternative 1) would have major (direct) benefits on recreation because of increased parking and visitor services. Minor (direct) adverse impacts from visitor use conflicts would be reduced by public education and the C-CD supplementary rules.

To account for growth in public interest and visitors to the North Coast of Santa Cruz, the BLM increased C-CD visitor estimates by 25%, bringing total annual visitor use estimates to approximately 190,000 during Phase 1 of the C-CD RMPA. Approximately 75% of these visitors are likely to be residents of Santa Cruz County and other nearby areas. Many of these visitors would be visiting C-CD in lieu of, or in combination with, another recreation destination on the North Coast (e.g. Wilder Ranch State Park, Coast Dairies State Park).

New vehicle trips projected to travel to C-CD were estimated based on the anticipated number of trail users and the proportion of trail users expected to arrive and leave by motor vehicle. BLM assumes 75% of visitor use would be on the weekend split evenly between Saturday and Sunday. As a result, daily use of the C-CD during average summer weekends was projected to be 1,370 visitors during Phase 1. The vast majority (85%) are projected to visit RMZ 1, which amounts to approximately 1,028 visitors to the northern parking area during Phase 1, and another 342 visitors (15%) accessing RMZ 3 on weekends via the overpass crossing SR 1 near Panther Gap and Yellow Bank Creek.

Visitors seek public land destinations like C-CD to get outdoors, exercise, and enjoy nature. Conflicts between user groups on multi-use trails are inevitable with a growing population and increased pressure for places to recreate. With proper design, a variety of trail experiences, education, stewardship from the trail community and adequate signage these conflicts can be

greatly reduced. Conflicts near trailheads are inherently higher due to increased congestion near parking areas.

The grading of the parking area and trailhead would not exceed 8% running slope to comply with U.S. Access Board guidance. Ensuring these universal accessibility standards would have long-term moderate beneficial impacts on recreation resources because visitors with disabilities would have an improved recreational experience at C-CD, given improved access to recreational trails and other facilities.

The use of exhibits and interpretive facilities is an important and positive mechanism for directing visitors to areas most able to withstand recreational activities. Interpretive panels also provide visitors with invaluable information about natural resources, cultural resources, and historical use of the land. Guided tours and other educational activities would be used as teaching tools to promote awareness and appreciation for the resources, objects, and values (ROVs) of C-CD.

Additionally, web-based and printed media would be an effective tool for assisting recreationists in planning visits to the public lands. Establishing expected behaviors and actions before a visitor arrives is the best way to minimize impacts between users/individual recreationists and natural and cultural resources. For example, the requirement to remain on trails (no off-trail recreation allowed); keep dogs on a leash reduces negative impacts between visitors with dogs and other recreationists; hikers moving downhill need to yield to hikers going uphill; and hikers passing or trail running need to verbalize their intentions and pass where safe to do so (RMPA/EA Chapter 4, page 60).

Expanding the opportunities and places for recreation on the North Coast of Santa Cruz would likely reduce the number of recreationists in any given area, allow for a wider variety of recreation experiences, and improve the experience for those users. Therefore, the Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) offers good potential for new recreational opportunities that would ultimately help relieve the pressures in crowded areas for the near to long-term, which the BLM considers a major beneficial impact.

Effects of Alternative 2:

Alternative 2 would have moderate (direct) benefits on recreation from increased parking and services. When compared with the preferred alternative, Alternative 2 has more potential for moderate (direct) adverse impacts from visitor use conflicts on peak weekends when demand exceeds parking area capacity. Based on monitoring during Phase 1 of the RMPA, the BLM would be able to determine the average demand for parking during peak hours and evaluate management options.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would have more moderate (indirect) adverse impacts on recreation resources than both action alternatives because limiting public parking to informal dispersed locations on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road and SR 1 would increase the potential for conflicts between recreation visitors during peak weekends. Based on monitoring during Phase 1 of the RMPA, the BLM would determine the average demand for parking during peak hours and evaluate management options.

3.2 Transportation and Travel Management

Current Conditions:

Before the Trust for Public Land donated the 5,843 acres of former Coast Dairies Lands Company property to Federal ownership managed by BLM, TPL subdivided the property into lands transferred to California State Parks (beach parcels), BLM (upland parcels), and the adjacent upland agricultural parcels retained by TPL. The resulting BLM land boundary for the C-CD, which crosses few public roads, presents challenges for identifying potential public access points.

The challenges associated with identifying access point areas led the BLM to develop a feasibility study, which consisted of draft design concepts for ten potential access points (**Figure 12**). The concepts offer a technical/engineering study that will help inform the BLM's land use planning effort. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County funded the study and convened a group of stakeholders to contribute to its development. The draft concepts were presented for public feedback and participation in two well attended workshops held in the city of Santa Cruz and community of Bonny Doon in December 2018 (BLM Scoping Report, 2019).

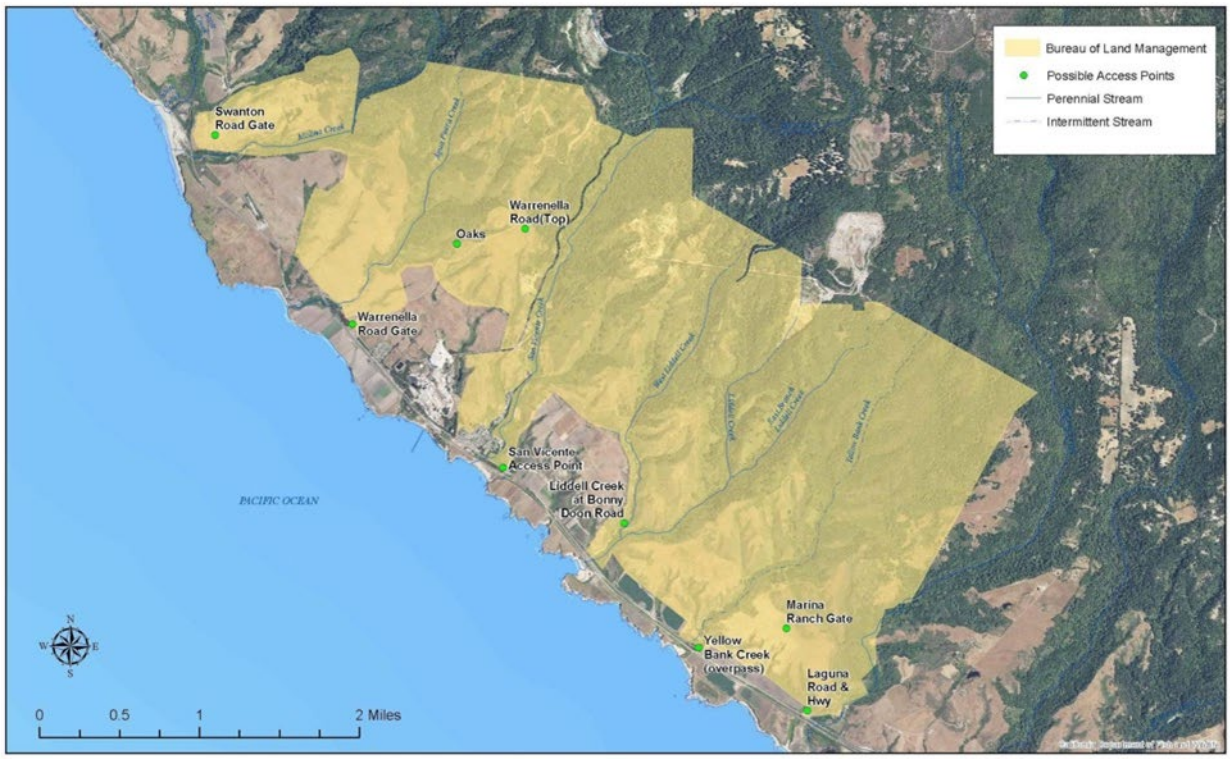


Figure 12. An overview of the potential access points evaluated by the BLM during C-CD planning efforts in 2018.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) published the Transportation Concept Report (TCR) for SR 1 in April 2006. The 2006 TCR and associated Fact Sheet for SR 1 in Santa Cruz County (Caltrans, September 2007) identify the 17-mile stretch from the City of Santa Cruz to the San Mateo County line as Segment 19. Annual Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for Segment 19 in 2000 was 8,000, and the forecast for 2025 is 12,000 annual ADT. It is expected that there will be increased congestion for Segment 19 by 2025. The TCR says Segment 19 will remain a two-lane conventional highway and that new access points should be minimized. The TCR identifies Wilder Ranch State Park, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Davenport, and Big Basin Redwoods State Park as the major traffic generators on Segment 19.

On May 4, 2023, the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) unanimously approved a resolution to approve the use of Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grant funding for delivery of North Coast Rail Trail (Segment 5) Phases 1 and 2 (trail and parking areas) and Phase 3 (Cotoni Coast Dairies Highway 1 Overpass) to provide for better connection to the C-CD. Following completion of the C-CD RMPA, the BLM entered into agreements with the RTC and

Federal Highway Administration Central Federal Lands (CFL) to assist with implementation of Segment 5 of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST), otherwise referred to as the North Coast Rail Trail Project.

As described in the RTC's meeting agenda, dated May 04, 2023 (pp. 28-2 to 28-4): *The North Coast Rail Trail (NCRT) project is a 7.5-mile multimodal bicycle and pedestrian trail that will extend along the rail corridor from Wilder Ranch State Park in the south to Davenport in the north in unincorporated Santa Cruz County. RTC received a $6,295,000 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant in 2015 to develop and construct a 5.4-mile portion from Wilder Ranch to Yellowbank/Panther Beach, what is now referred to as Segment 5, Phase 1. The federal funding was secured, in-part, due to matching funds provided by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the California Coastal Conservancy. In 2021, RTC staff, in coordination with the Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), applied for additional FLAP funding to construct the remaining 2.1 miles of North Coast Rail Trail from Yellowbank/Panther Beach to Davenport [Phase 2] and for preconstruction and construction funds to connect the Coastal Rail Trail to the Cotoni Coast Dairies National Monument by way of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over Highway 1 at Yellowbank Creek, referred to as the Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument Highway 1 Overpass (Phase 3). These projects qualify for this grant program since they provide access to the BLM's Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument, BLM's California Coastal National Monument, and NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.*

In December 2022, RTC received notice that the North Coast Rail Trail Phase 2 & 3 projects were awarded $15.5 million in FLAP grant funding. The grant award provides FLAP funding to construct the 2.1 mile of North Coast Rail Trail Project from Yellowbank/Panther Beach to Davenport, including construction of formal parking areas at Yellowbank/Panther Beach and Davenport (Phase 2). The grant award also includes FLAP funding for construction of a connection from the Coastal Rail Trail on the coastal side of Highway 1 to Cotoni Coast Dairies National Monument on the inland side of Highway 1 (Phase 3). In addition, due to updated cost estimates for Phase 1, CFL increased FLAP funding for Phase 1 from $6.3 million to $22.3 million, an increase of $15.9 million, for a total of $31.4 million in new federal FLAP funding for construction of North Coast Rail Trail (Phases 1-3). This brings the total FLAP funding approved

to date to nearly $38 million. The total cost estimate for the combined North Coast Rail Trail Phase 1-3 is $50.7 million.

Phase 3 provides for the construction of a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge crossing over Highway 1 at the north end of the North Coast Rail Trail Yellowbank/Panther Beach Parking area approximately 1.75 miles south of the town of Davenport and 5 miles north of Wilder Ranch State Park. The project cost is estimated at $5.815 million in FY26/27 dollars, the year it is programmed and scheduled for construction. Costs include preliminary engineering and environmental compliance, utility relocation and construction.

Appendix G: Update for DOI-BLM-CA-C090-0015-RMP-EA (BLM 2023) describes visitor vehicle trip estimates [and parking needs] for C-CD based on comparison with other outdoor recreation destinations in the region. The BLM prepared the updated visitor estimates to incorporate new information and changes in circumstances not previously considered in the RMPA/EA. Estimates were then used by traffic engineers at W-Trans to update the C-CD traffic study contained in Appendix K of the RMPA.

Based on the new information, W-Trans consultants were asked to evaluate traffic operation issues associated with the range of alternatives considered in this EA for public access and recreation opportunities. The focus of this investigation was to determine the extent of improvements needed on SR 1 and/or Cement Plant Road for ingress and egress to parking areas being considered, as well as to discuss potential traffic congestion due to the project. They examined trip generation of the proposed project alternatives, and provided an assessment of traffic facility needs because of the additional traffic expected to be generated by the project (refer to Updated Focused Traffic Study for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Project, prepared by W-Trans December 20, 2023).

The conclusions and recommendations from the Updated Focused Traffic Study for the Cotoni-Dairies Project (addressing measures for both the public lands over which BLM has legal jurisdiction and State/County roads over which BLM has no legal jurisdiction) are as follows:

a) It is estimated that the project would generate a peak of 658 trips on a weekend day, 94 trips during the weekend peak hour, and 37 trips during the weekday p.m. peak hour. Based on these estimates, there would be an anticipated demand for 55 parking spaces.

b) If fewer than 55 designated parking spaces are provided for visitor use, this would result in unaccommodated parking demand and parking would continue to occur on the shoulders of Cement Plant Road.
c) There is dense woody vegetation and downed woody debris along Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road. These impediments should be removed to accommodate shoulder parking, or parking should be prohibited in this area. Parking should be prohibited on SR 1 near the gravel road connecting to Cement Plant Road.
d) There is adequate line of sight distance for drivers departing the proposed project parking area under Alternatives 1 or 2, but the driveway location on Cement Plant Road 500 feet north of Warrenella Road under Alternative 3 (i.e., the Upper and Lower Parking Site Design described in Section 2.4.2) has deficient sightlines. If Alternative 3 is pursued, visibility should be increased by removing woody vegetation (i.e. eucalyptus trees) and grading a portion of the hill south of the driveway and/or moving the driveway north, away from the restricting condition.
e) A northbound right-turn taper and southbound left-turn lane at SR 1/Cement Plant Road would be warranted under Existing plus Project weekend peak hour volumes, and a right-turn lane would not be warranted under any scenario assessed. Because the future volumes likely overstate the growth that would actually be experienced, BLM staff should monitor traffic at this location and work with Caltrans and County staff if additional turning facilities are warranted in the future.
f) Peak Hour signal warrants were assessed for each scenario, and under each scenario a signal would not be warranted.

Effects of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2

Both of the public parking areas being considered under the range of alternatives would increase traffic on nearby roads. Once operational, the parking area would generate a substantial amount of weekly and/or daily vehicle trips. An important aspect when considering traffic volume increases over existing conditions is the life cycle of the RMPA. As the availability of recreation opportunities increases, new activities (and any adverse impacts) may occur in addition to existing activities (and any adverse impacts).

These alternatives would have moderate (direct) impacts on traffic during weekend peak hours. Measures to reduce adverse impacts include traffic control signs and working with other agencies to make changes to SR 1 and Cement Plant Road.

Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative, parking activity on the shoulders of Cement Plant Road and SR 1 would be anticipated. Consultants from W-Trans that prepared the Updated Focused Traffic Study suggest that with low traffic speed at low traffic volumes in the vicinity of the C-CD northern trailhead, continued public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road would not be anticipated to present an unusual safety concern.

However, shoulder parking problems are likely to have adverse impacts on traffic along the segment of Cement Plant Road just north of Warrenella Road, and where there's a gravel road connecting Cement Plant Road and SR 1 approximately 500 feet south of Warrenella Road. As a result, W-Trans recommended the BLM work with the County of Santa Cruz to prohibit parking on Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road and instead direct drivers to park south of Warrenella Road, since Cement Plant Road is wider, flatter, and has unobstructed shoulders south of Warrenella Road.

3.3 Livestock Grazing and Agriculture

Current Conditions: C-CD livestock grazing activities on public lands are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.16 on pages 44 – 45. **Table 5** lists the acres for each pasture and the total number of head, which includes cows, bulls, and non-nursing steers and heifers.

Table 5. Livestock grazing allotments on C-CD.

Operator	PastureAcres	Pasture Name(s)	# of Head
Pastorino	150	Borego	
	500	Big Ranch (Lower Newtown)	
	100	Upper Newtown	
Total	**750**		**90**

Cattle at the Borego, Big Ranch (Lower Newtown), and Upper Newtown pastures use the livestock corrals near the proposed parking area north of Warrenella Road. During the development of the C-CD RMPA, the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau strongly advised BLM to site, design, and manage recreation facilities to avoid adverse effects on livestock grazing operations. The same concerns continue to be expressed by the livestock grazing operators that have existing lease agreements with the BLM for the Borego, Big Ranch (Lower Newtown), and Upper Newtown pastures because the corrals are vital to their operation. The corrals are used several times a year for branding, weaning, vaccinating, pregchecking, and pulling bulls. The cattle are normally gathered into the lot the day or two before they are worked or shipped. When cows are brought to the property, they may have small calves at their sides, and they are turned out in the large lot behind the corrals so the cows and calves can mother up before they are turned out on the rest of the property. They are also kept overnight in the lot when they are shipped off the property and when there is scheduled cattle work.

Agriculture on private lands adjacent to C-CD predominantly occurs on the ocean side of SR 1. The Coast Dairies Land Company (CDLC) leases three agricultural parcels that were subdivided from the property before the remaining upland parcels were donated into public ownership. The lower segment of Warrenella Road extending uphill 0.4 miles from the intersection of Cement Plant Road is the property line with Agricultural Parcel Two (2), owned by TPL and administered by the CDLC.

The CDLC leased the portion of Agricultural Parcel 2 adjacent to Warrenella Road and Cement Plant Road for a waste treatment facility.

Effects of Alternative 1(Preferred Alternative):

Under Alternative 1, the anticipated demand for 55 parking spaces would be accommodated without interfering with livestock operations or the use of the corrals to the north, so potential impacts on livestock grazing operation from construction and use of the proposed parking are expected to be less than significant.

The BLM's preferred alternative would have minor (indirect) impacts to existing grazing operation and infrastructure and the proximity of parking area, trails, and visitors to such operations would

be addressed with signage and livestock barriers to prevent conflicts. A few times per year, the parking area may need to be temporarily closed when the livestock operators have scheduled cattle work that impacts public access to trails in RMZ 1. If visitor will not be able to access the parking area, the BLM would provide advance notice to visitors on-line and signage on local roads.

Effects of Alternative 2:

Under Alternative 2, the anticipated demand for 55 parking spaces would not be accommodated so public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road and/or SR 1 south of Warrenella Road may occur on peak weekend hours. As a result, Alternative 2 has more potential for minor (direct) impacts to agricultural lands from overflow parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road south of Warrenella Road than Alternative 1.

Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road could also occur under Alternative 2, so potential impacts from parking near the corrals would have to be addressed with signage to reduce conflicts.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, no parking area would be constructed. Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road is expected to have more adverse effects on livestock operations because there's more potential for vehicles parking in front of gates restricting the livestock operators from accessing the property. Additional moderate adverse effects on agricultural lands are likely occur due to public parking on the road shoulder adjacent to SR 1 and Cement Plant Road south of Warrenella Road. Potential impacts from parking near the corrals would have to be addressed with signage to reduce conflicts.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Current Conditions: C-CD cultural resources are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.6 on pages 23 – 25.

A Memorandum of Understanding renewed in 2021 between Amah Mutsun Land Trust and BLM describes how the two organizations will work together to protect and steward cultural resources at the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property. Under the MOU, representatives of the AMTL and BLM meet quarterly or as needed to discuss land use planning and resource management opportunities.

The Mocettini Cheese Barn historic site is within the area of potential affect for the range of alternatives being considered for public parking in this EA. The historic Mocettini Cheese Barn was originally built in the late 1800s in Davenport, California in association with the coastal dairy industry that brought an influx of dairy to the region as part of the development of early California. The Mocettini Cheese Barn site is an example of an important part of the local history and consists of the Mocettini Cheese Barn, an open feeding barn, an accessory shelter structure, wood fencing, corrals, and cattle chutes and other features. On February 14, 2023, the BLM received a Final Historic Structures Report (HSR) from S&B Christ Consulting, LLC along with a Final Feasibility Study that were developed to support interim stabilization efforts and serves as part of the overall restoration plan of the Mocettini Cheese Barn site. Additional documents supporting the HSR include recorded conditions prior to stabilization and restoration, and the seismic and structural stabilization program for the Mocettini Cheese Barn. The other historic structures on site [including the open feeding barn, accessory shelter structure, wood fencing, corrals, and cattle chutes] were not included in the HSR due to limited funds.

Effects of Alternative 1:

The range of alternatives for parking in this EA have similar potential for effects on cultural resources and historic properties because the limit of disturbance is for both parking areas are similar. The increased risk of vandalism and/or unauthorized entry to historic structures due to development of parking could be reduced by establishing barriers, signage, and education to create public awareness and appreciation for these sensitive Monument objects.

The preferred alternative (Alternative 1) would have minor (indirect) adverse effects on cultural resources compared to other alternatives because the estimated weekday and weekend parking demand would be accommodated without visitors parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road. Other measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include completion of cultural resource inventories and enforcement of the C-CD supplementary rules to keep visitors out of sensitive resource areas on the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

Effects of Alternative 2:

Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road on peak weekends would have potential adverse effects on the historic barn site since the barn structure is located on the shoulder of the road and is partially not fenced due to the proximity of the road. The increased

risk of vandalism and/or unauthorized entry to historic structures due to development of parking could be reduced by establishing barriers, signage, and education to create public awareness and appreciation for these sensitive Monument objects. Other measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include completion of cultural resource inventories and enforcement of the C-CD supplementary rules to keep visitors out of sensitive resource areas on the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, no parking area would be constructed. Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road would have more potential adverse effects on the historic barn site than the action alternatives. The increased risk of vandalism and/or unauthorized entry to historic structures due to lack of parking could be reduced through signage and enforcement of the C-CD supplementary rules to keep visitors out of sensitive resource areas on the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

3.5 Water Resources

Current Conditions: C-CD water resources are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA Section 3.3 and illustrated in Appendix A, Figure 2. Agua Puerca Creek is located approximately 800 feet north of the intersection of Cement Plant Road and Warrenella Road. Agua Puerca Creek is a perennial waterway with visibly low flows for the majority of each year. The creek is separated from the parking area by 350 – 400 feet of annual grassland buffer. The perennial creek flows through culverts under Cement Plant Road and SR 1 before entering the ocean at Davenport Landing. The headwaters of Agua Puerca Creek are located within C-CD.

The BLM's civil engineer examined site elevation and topography prior to initiating construction in 2022. During periods of heavy precipitation and saturated soils conditions, approximately one-third of the surface area drainage is expected to migrate towards Cement Plant Road. The remaining two-thirds of the surface area drainage would migrate towards the grassland pasture below. The pasture is a 400-foot-wide swath of annual grassland between the parking area and Agua Puerca Creek that is expected to capture sediment, slow surface flow, and largely infiltrate (filter) the runoff into the soil.

Effects of Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative):

The BLM's preferred alternative would have minor (direct) effects on hydrology and water quality due to soil excavation and potential for erosion associated with construction of the proposed parking area. Alternative 1 includes a driveway connecting to Cement Plant Road where the slope is steeper than Alternative 2. Roads built on steep slopes are more likely to have erosion and stability problems (Weaver et al. 2015). During construction activities, vegetation and ground cover are removed, often exposing both the surface and subsurface soil to erosion. Runoff from staging areas can create rills or gullies, and carry sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants to nearby surface waters. Due to the larger design, the double-loop parking area would require adding fill material to reduce the slope of the path to the lower pasture where the visitors can access the public trail system. These features are not expected to substantially alter the existing drainage patterns in the project area because the surfacing materials are going to be permeable to allow for precipitation to percolate directly into the ground. The BLM would implement additional temporary and long-term erosion-control measures to reduce erosion and maintain overall slope stability. These erosion-control measures may include vegetative and structural techniques to ensure the area's long-term stability.

The Bureau of Land Management California State Office created a Best Management Practices (BMP) guide to provide agency staff with direction for implementing non-point source pollution provisions of the Clean Water Act 1977, as amended. The guidance released on September 29, 2022 lists BMPs to achieve the goals of clean water, including general provisions to protect water from contamination, leaks or spills, and soil loss or erosion associated with road construction and maintenance.

Project design features and best management practices to control soil loss and erosion during construction are expected to make impacts less than significant. The selection of erosion and sedimentation control measures would be adjusted based on assessments of site conditions and how storm events contribute to erosion. Through this type of adaptive management, the BLM would be able minimize erosion from the project site, so no water quality standards or waste discharge violations are expected during construction of the parking area.

Effects of Alternative 2:

When compared to the preferred alternative, Alternative 2 has lower potential for minor (direct) adverse effects on hydrology and water quality because there would be substantially less ground disturbance associated with a smaller project area. Similar to Alternative 1, project design features and best management practices to control soil loss and erosion during construction are expected to make impacts less than significant.

Effects of the No Action Alternative:

The BLM's management strategies for C-CD include restoration efforts in Agua Puerca Creek and the upper watershed. The no action alternative may have minor (indirect) adverse effects on Agua Puerca Creek from increase sedimentation or an increase of pollutant discharges related to parking on Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road.

3.6 Biological Resources

3.6.1 Upland Terrestrial Vegetation

Current Conditions: C-CD vegetation communities are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.2.1, including **Table 6** below with the total acres for each vegetation type at C-CD. The vegetation types that occur where the parking area is proposed are illustrated in Appendix A, Figure 7D of the RMPA/EA. The vegetation type within the proposed parking areas includes non-native weedy/ruderal patches (dominant) and non-native grassland. Blue gum eucalyptus *(Eucalyptus globulus*) occurs along Cement Plant Road. Eucalyptus is not native to California. It is a tall tree species native to Australia that is commonly planted in horticultural settings of California for windbreaks. Blue gum is detrimental to California native plant species due to its high stature and dense canopy which shades out most other plant species. Additionally, the deep leaf and bark litter accumulation under blue gum suppresses native plant growth.

Table 6. Acres of vegetation types at Cotoni-Coast Dairies.

VEGETATION TYPE**	**Acres**
Upland Terrestrial Vegetation	
Non-native weedy/ruderal patches	185
Non-native grassland	476
Native grassland	314
Coyote brush encroachment	157
Coastal scrub	1,766
Coast live oak woodland	250
Chaparral	57
Broadleaf forest	12
Conifer forest	2,123
*Quarries (Non-native shrubs)	135
Riparian Areas and Wetlands	
Riparian areas	337
Perennial wetlands	7
TOTAL	5,819
*Quarries are drastically disturbed areas with a relatively high abundance of non-native shrubs. ** Acres are approximated based on the best available GIS information.	

A plant survey was conducted for the Northern Parking Area and Trailhead project area on June 29, 2022. A plant species list and relative species abundance ranking is contained in **Table 7**. Georeferenced photos of species observations were collected in Calflora Observer Pro and are available on Calflora.org. Additional site photos showing the vegetative cover are available upon request. The plant species observed within the project area are primarily non-native annuals.

The species list and associated observations are available here:

https://www.calflora.org/entry/wgh.html#srch=t&GBL=f&fmt=photo&inma=t&y=37.0225&x=-122.2077&z=18

Table 7. Plant species list and relative species abundance ranking.

Common Name	Species	Native/Non-Native	Annual/Perennial	Habitat	Abundance
Slim oats	*Avena barbata*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Abundant
Ripgut brome	*Bromus diandrus*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Abundant
Italian thistle	*Carduus pycnocephalus*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Abundant
Summer mustard	*Hirschfeldia incana*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Abundant
Milk thistle	*Silybum marianum*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Abundant
Bull thistle	*Cirsium vulgare*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Common
Poison hemlock	*Conium maculatum*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland - swale	Common
Italian rye grass	*Festuca perennis*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland - swale	Common
Foxtail barley	*Hordeum murinum*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland - swale	Common
Jointed charlock	*Raphanus sativus*	Non-Native	Annual	Under Eucalyptus	Common
Narrow leaved clover	*Trifolium angustifolium*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Common
Ribwort	*Plantago lanceolata*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Infrequent
Annual beard grass	*Polygpogon monspeliensis*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland - swale	Infrequent
Poison oak	*Toxicodendron diversilobum*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Infrequent
Hop clover	*Trifolium campestre*	Non-Native	Annual	Grassland	Infrequent
Garden nasturtium	*Tropaeolum majus*	Non-Native	Annual	Under Eucalyptus	Infrequent
Common yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*	Native	Perennial	Grassland	Scarce
California mugwort	*Artemisia douglasiana*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
Oregon grape	*Berberis nervosa*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
California coffeeberry	*Frangula californica*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
Bull mallow	*Malva nicaeensis*	Non-Native	Annual	Under Eucalyptus	Scarce
Rock phacelia	*Phacelia californica*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
Western brackenfern	*Pteridium aquilinum*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
California blackberry	*Rubus ursinus*	Native	Perennial	Slopes - north	Scarce
Green dock	*Rumex conglomeratus*	Non-Native	Perennial	Grassland	Scarce

Effects of Alternative 1 [Preferred Alternative]:

The construction of the parking area under Alternative 1 would result in the loss of 1.62 acres (or 0.003%) of non-native weedy/ruderal patches (dominant) and non-native grassland. The day use parking area represents less than 0.02% of the (non-native) vegetation community that will be developed to support public access for recreation opportunities at C-CD.

Alternative 1 would require the removal of four more non-native eucalyptus trees where the driveway is located on Cement Plant Road. To reduce potential effects of tree removal, the BLM would work with partners to promote and emphasize the use of native plants and trees for landscaping associated with the proposed parking area and other restoration projects on the C-CD lands. Therefore, the impacts to upland terrestrial vegetation resources from the construction of the preferred alternative are considered less than significant.

Effects of Alternative 2

The effects on upland vegetation from constructing the parking area under Alternative 1 and 2 are similar because they represent a small fraction of non-native weedy/ruderal patches and non-native grassland that would be developed in the same general location.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Non-native weedy/ruderal patches and non-native grassland would remain dominant within the project area. No additional eucalyptus trees would be removed.

3.6.2 Riparian Areas and Wetlands

Current Conditions: C-CD riparian and wetland habitats are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.3 on pages 12 – 13. Agua Puerca Creek is 400 feet north of the parking areas and trailheads being considered.

Riparian areas and wetlands of C-CD have been highly altered as a result of historic land uses and resulting creek channel modification. For example, all of the coastal streams have significant channel modifications near their mouths at SR 1. Agua Puerca Creek has been effectively dammed by SR 1 and the flow has been directed through a narrow culverts and tunnels.

There is a 400-foot-wide swath of annual grassland that would provide a buffer between the parking area and Agua Puerca Creek. The grassland will act as a filter strip to capture sediment, slow surface flow, and largely infiltrate (filter) the runoff into the soil. Buffers serve as transitional habitat and provide distance and physical barriers from human degradation and disturbance. Studies examining the effectiveness of riparian buffers have determined that 30-60m (97.5-195 feet) wide riparian buffer strips will effectively protect water resources through physical and chemical filtration processes (Davies & Nelson 1994; Brosofske et al. 1997, Wenger & Fowler 2000).

Effects of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2:

The effects on wetland or riparian habitats from constructing the parking area are similar under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Soil disturbance would be short-term (<6 months). Surfaces constructed to support vehicle use and parking would be graveled (armored) to prevent soil loss

and erosion into drainages and waterways. Other disturbed soil areas within the project area would be protected from erosion with installation of erosion control and revegetation.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, no parking area would be constructed. Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road may have minor indirect adverse effects on riparian areas associated with Agua Puerca Creek.

3.6.3 Fish and Wildlife

Current Conditions: The C-CD diversity of fish and wildlife are summarized in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.4 on pages 14 – 18.

Mountain Lions (*Puma concolor*)

As noted in the EA, mountain lions are expected in every habitat at C-CD. On April 16, 2020, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) provided notice that the Central Coast evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) of mountain lions (*Puma concolor*) is a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) website (https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion) explains that research indicates there is a lack of genetic diversity in specific parts of California (i.e., southern California and central coast; Ernest et al. 2014, Gustafson et al. 2019) as a result of human population growth and barriers that restrict connectivity with other mountain lion populations. The Department was expected to complete a status review of mountain lions within the proposed ESU in 2021 but the evaluation is still underway. At the end of the review, CDFW will make its recommendation on listing to the Commission. Under CESA, species classified as a candidate species are afforded the same protection as listed species. As a result, mountain lions in this proposed ESU are CESA-protected during the review period.

Under the C-CD RMPA, the BLM identified RMZ 2 and RMZ 4 as core wildlife areas to avoid habitat fragmentation or other human-caused disturbances in the C-CD watersheds known to provide habitats for listed species. The C-CD is also connected to a broader network of conservation areas, like the San Vicente Redwoods property, that are will continue to provide important habitat and corridors for wildlife movement in this region.

Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*)

During development of the C-CD RMP amendment, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) announced that adding the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*) to the list of threatened and endangered species is warranted but precluded by work on higher-priority listing actions. With this decision, the monarch became a "Candidate" for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and its status will be reviewed each year until it is no longer a candidate (USFWS, December 15, 2020).

Unlike CESA, candidate species receive no statutory protection under the ESA. Rather, the Service encourages cooperative conservation efforts for these species to reduce the need for listing under the ESA. Therefore, the BLM would consider incorporating measures to reduce potential adverse impacts to monarch butterfly and their associated habitats during construction and maintenance activities for the proposed parking area.

Information provided by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation during scoping illustrates the location of trees where small clusters of monarch butterflies were observed in 2022. Based on this information and the public interest in monarch butterfly conservation efforts, the BLM is currently working with partners at the Xerces Society and Groundswell Ecology to support ongoing efforts to restore and protect habitat for monarchs.

The RMPA includes numerous goals and objectives that are explicitly designed to protect the diversity of habitats for wildlife (including listed species) and their habitats. The RMPA also emphasizes restoration of native habitats to benefit listed species. For example, the management action "MA-WLD-1" for fish and wildlife directs the BLM to maintain an inventory of wildlife and wildlife habitat. As described, the BLM would pursue focused annual surveys on selected species and sites based on BLM management needs and capacity, and partnership/stakeholder interest and abilities. The RMPA also includes goals to determine status of invasive wildlife species and their effects on native populations, and human use of C-CD and its effects on wildlife habitat and populations.

<u>Effects of Alternative 1 [Preferred Alternative]:</u>

Long-term, permanent impacts from the construction of the preferred parking area design concept is less than 2.5 acres total. The entire project area is non-native grassland and is in close proximity

to existing disturbances, which will minimize permanent, adverse impacts from habitat fragmentation for mountain lions and other wildlife known to occur at C-CD. Measures to offset impacts include habitat restoration in coordination with partners.

At least four large eucalyptus (blue gum) trees on the east side of Cement Plant Road would have to be removed to construct the driveway for the double loop site design resulting in moderate (direct) adverse impacts on monarch butterfly habitat. Indirect impacts to monarch butterfly that may occur include the potential for incidental trampling or crushing of individuals by maintenance vehicles or equipment, or temporary disturbance of habitat.

Blue gum is not the native overwintering habitat tree of monarch butterflies, nor is blue gum the preferred tree species for overwintering (Griffiths and Villablanca 2013, 2015). Blue gum is essentially an artificial habitat for the species. Of the California native tree species identified as overwintering habitat for monarch, coast redwood, Douglas fir, and coast live oak are the ecologically appropriate overwintering trees at C-CD. Enhancement of monarch butterfly habitat at C-CD should focus on replacing non-native blue gum eucalyptus with native coast redwood, Douglas fir, and/or coast live oak. Although both Monterey pine and Monterey cypress are native to the Monterey Peninsula, and Monterey pine is native at Año Nuevo, neither of these tree species are locally native to C-CD and should not be planted there. Removal of blue gum trees and their replacement with more beneficial native species is, in fact, a proactive conservation action for monarch butterfly and being able to achieve this goal through the mechanism of providing recreational opportunity is a rare conservation "win-win."

To reduce potential adverse impacts on the species, various (interim) programs and projects that work towards the recovery of monarch butterflies can be put in place through interagency coordination with the "conservation recommendations" of the Service and local agencies and/or non-governmental organizations. This allows the Service to work with BLM and other partners on "voluntary monarch conservation" to improve monarch habitat and address potential effects to populations of the butterfly on the North Coast of Santa Cruz County (USFWS reference: https://www.fws.gov/initiative/pollinators/monarchs) This process emphasizes coordination with State Parks and other partners to obtain the best available information on species status and recommendations for conservation; and provides the foundation for planning and implementing conservation efforts that are most likely to be effective in improving the status of the species.

Measures to reduce potential impacts include habitat restoration for monarch butterfly in coordination with partners. Ground-disturbing activities would be scheduled outside the peak winter flight period (approximately October 1 through March 15) and flagging or other markings would be used to avoid butterfly host plants outside of permanent impact areas.

The location being considered for construction of a public parking area under the preferred alternative in this EA is, administratively, at the extreme perimeter of the C-CD unit of the CCNM as well as, biologically, at the extreme perimeter of the unurbanized lands in the region. The proposed parking area is 1.6km from the urban center of the town of Davenport; 1.0km from a large cement facility that has been in commission for many decades, which features bright lights at night and intensive human activity; 0.6km from busy Davenport Landing Beach; 0.1km from well-traveled Highway 1, and adjacent to Cement Plant Road and Warrenella Road, well-traveled rural routes. As a result, there would be no effects on mountain lions from the preferred alternative because they already avoid the location proposed for development under existing conditions.

With implementation of habitat restoration and the other project design features (PDF) described in the Attachment 1, impacts to wildlife habitat would be less than significant.

Effects of Alternative 2:

Alternative 2 would result in minor (indirect) adverse impacts on wildlife habitat from construction and use of the parking area. No additional eucalyptus trees would need to be removed to construct the driveway for the single loop site design. Ground-disturbing activities would be scheduled outside the peak winter flight period (approximately October 1 through March 15) and flagging or other markings would be used to avoid butterfly host plants outside of permanent impact areas. There would be no effects on mountain lions from the Alternative 2 because they already avoid the location under existing conditions due to intense human activity on adjacent roadways.

Measures to reduce potential impacts include public education, monitoring, and the C-CD supplementary rules. With implementation of habitat restoration and the other project design features (PDF) described in the Attachment 1, impacts to wildlife habitat would be less than significant.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would result in minor (indirect) adverse effects on biological resources from visitor parking on Cement Plant Road north of Warrenella Road.

3.6.4 Special Status Species

Current Conditions:

Special Status plant species

San Francisco popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys diffusus*; CRPR 1B.1), Santa Cruz clover (*Trifolium buckwestiorum*; CRPR 1B.1), Marsh scorzonella (*Microseris paludosa*; CRPR 1B.2), Choris's popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys chorisianus* var. *chorisianus*; CRPR 1B.2), Santa Cruz microseris (*Stebbinsoseris decipiens*; CRPR 1B.2), and bent flowered fiddleneck (*Amsinckia lunaris*; CRPR 1B.2) are BLM Sensitive (CRPR 1B) plant species that have low to moderate potential to occur at C-CD due to occurrence of these species in the vicinity of C-CD and presence of some potential habitat for the species there (BLM 2021). Most BLM Sensitive and Federally listed plant species in California occupy very specific, narrow habitat types (niche). Federally listed plant species of the Santa Cruz Mountains region are strict endemics of the Zayante sand soil series (Santa Cruz Sandhills; USFWS 1998). Zayante sand soil is derived from the Santa Margarita sandstone formation. Neither the Santa Margarita sandstone formation, nor Zayante soil series occur within the project area. Small areas of Santa Margarita sandstone occur elsewhere on C-CD, but the Zayante soil series does not occur anywhere in the area.

No special status plant species were observed during the survey (see **Table 7**) conducted on June 29, 2022. No special status plant species are likely to occur within the project area due to dense cover of non-native plant species (high competition and invasion pressure), and the lack of specific habitat characteristics (specific soil type) to support them. No special status plant species populations are known to occur on the C-CD unit of the CCNM (Calflora 2023, CNDDB 2023).

California Red-legged Frog *(Rana draytonii)*

C-CD is known to support populations of the Federally threatened California red-legged frog (CRLF) and the property is designated as critical habitat for the species. The US Fish and Wildlife

Service's Recovery Plan for California Red-legged Frog (USFWS 2002) designates the entirety of C-CD as "core areas", with Davenport noted as a "hydrologic sub-area." C-CD provides a full range of habitat for the species, including aquatic breeding habitat and upland foraging and estivation habitat. To date, the documented breeding habitat has been confined to artificial water bodies. CRLF that breed in C-CD ponds may utilize habitat beyond the boundaries of the property; conversely, frogs born off the property likely use upland habitat on C-CD. California red-legged frogs have been documented in association with the flowing creeks on the property and likely use them as summer habitat, but they overwinter and breed in still waterbodies such as agricultural ponds and ditches.

Central California Coast Steelhead DPS *(Oncorhynchus mykiss)*

The Central California Coast DPS (Distinct Population Segment) includes all naturally spawned populations of steelhead (and their progeny) in California streams from the Russian River to Aptos Creek, and the drainages of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays eastward to the Napa River, excluding the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Basin. The Service identified the DPS as threatened on August 18, 1997. Anglers are prohibited from fishing the coastal streams on C-CD by the CDFW.

The NMFS approved the Coastal Multispecies Final Recovery Plan for California Coastal Chinook Salmon, Northern California steelhead and Central California Coast steelhead in October 2016. The plan is based on the biological needs of the fish and provides the foundation for restoring the populations to healthy levels. Landlocked steelhead occur in the segment of Agua Puerca Creek north of the proposed parking area. The stream is designated critical habitat for the species, but anthropogenic fish barriers block salmonid passage. Downstream from the C-CD property boundary, the creek flows under SR 1 through a series of narrow culverts and tunnels that prevent fish migration. Approximately 1200 feet upstream from the Cement Plant Road there is another fish barrier on Agua Puerca Creek where water is now diverted through a gravel filled perforated pipe connected to a cistern that provides off-stream water source for livestock and a nearby residence.

Effects of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2:

The potential for minor direct adverse effects on special status species and their associated habitats from constructing the parking area are similar under Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Approximately two acres of dispersal habitat and upland estivation habitat for California red-legged frog would be lost due to the construction of the parking area. Surfaces constructed to support vehicle use and parking would be graveled (armored) to prevent soil loss and erosion into drainages and waterways. Other disturbed soil areas within the project area would be protected from erosion and outflow of potential contaminants from the parking area with installation of erosion control and revegetation. Required measures to reduce impacts to California red-legged frogs under the US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion are outlined in Attachment 1.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, no parking area would be constructed. The potential for adverse effects on listed species and their associated habitats from public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road and SR 1 would be negligible because disturbance would be adjacent to roads that are subject to regular use and maintenance operations.

3.7 Geology and Soil Resources

C-CD substrate (geology, soils) and climate are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA, Section 3.8 (Geology) and Section 3.10 (Soils). The geologic formation underlying the project area is Santa Cruz Mudstone. The soil series in the location where parking alternatives are being considered is Bonny Doon loam (SoilWeb 2023).

Effects of Alternative 1 [Preferred Alternative]

The BLM's preferred alternative would have minor (direct), short-term effects on soil. Surfaces constructed to parking would be graveled (armored), which will prevent soil erosion. Other disturbed soil areas within the project area would be protected from erosion with installation of erosion control with straw mulch, straw wattles, and/or silt fences and revegetation by direct seeding with native plant species. The climate is relatively cool and wet at C-CD and any disturbed soil should regain adequate cover within a year. Project design features and best management practices to control soil loss and erosion during construction are expected to make impacts less than significant.

Effects of Alternative 2

The effects on upland vegetation from constructing the parking area under Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1. Soil disturbance would be short-term (<6 months). Surfaces constructed to parking would be graveled (armored), which will prevent soil erosion. Other disturbed soil areas within the project area would be protected from erosion with installation of erosion control and revegetation. Project design features and best management practices to control soil loss and erosion during construction are expected to make impacts less than significant.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, no parking area would be constructed. There is more potential for adverse effects on erosion and soil loss from public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road under no action than the other alternatives.

3.8 Visual Resources

Current Conditions: The broad view of the Pacific Ocean and sweeping marine terraces are the key scenic features of C-CD. The BLM's goals and objectives include maintaining the existing pastoral visual character of C-CD and minimizing impacts to coastal vistas. The BLM's visual resource inventory is described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 3.12. The location for parking areas and trailheads is VRM Class III where the management objective is to retain the character of the landscape.

Key observation points associated with the northern parking area include a short segment of scenic highway State Route 1 and various locations along Cement Plant Road, including Newtown, Warrenella Road, and the historic barn site.

Figure 13 (below) is basic viewshed analysis prepared in 2020 using Google Earth Pro, where the BLM used 2 meters from the ground as the height of observer at the point of observation. The point of observation is located on Cement Plant Road at the boundary of New Town closest to the potential parking area. The analysis only looks at terrain, so any trees or other obstructions (i.e. utilities, infrastructure) in the view may further obstruct visibility from the point of observation.

Figure 13. Viewshed (shown in green) from the point of observation located on Cement Plant Road at the northwest boundary of New Town, California.

Effects of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2:

The BLM's preferred alternative would have minor (direct) adverse effects on aesthetics (viewshed). Measures to reduce potential adverse impacts include landscaping with native vegetation and visual screening using raised earthen berms on adjacent roadways.

The site proposed for development has a Class II rating based on the BLM's visual resource inventory prepared for the C-CD RMPA. Construction of the parking area would have short-term (minor) adverse impacts on scenic quality that would be reduced by implementation of PDF's listed in Attachment 1. These alternatives would alter foreground views from key observation points, but the parking area is located near existing infrastructure, so the long-term effects are considered less than significant.

Project design features would retain the contours and contrast of the surrounding landscape and provide visual screening and mitigate these impacts effectively within a few years.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would have no effects on viewshed because there would be no facilities developed for public parking.

3.9 Hazardous Materials

Construction activities associated with the development of the parking area would involve the use of heavy equipment, which would contain fuels and oils, and various other products. During implementation, operators would adhere to federal, state, and local regulations to reduce potential impacts from accidental hazardous materials releases (i.e. spills) during construction and future use of the parking area. Public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road also involves the risk of oil, lubricants, and other potentially hazardous substances leaking from vehicles.

Effects of Alternative 1 [Preferred Alternative]

Potential for hazards and/or hazardous materials from construction and use of the parking area under Alternative 1 would largely be confined to the limits of disturbance (on-site) because there are enough parking spaces to meet visitor use demand on peak weekends. The establishment of parking areas is not anticipated to result in substantially increased runoff compared to the no action alternative because surface material would be permeable and allow for percolation into soils.

The addition of BMPs for non-point source pollution described in the water resources section of this EA would reduce the potential impacts from hazardous materials to less than significant.

Effects of Alternative 2

The potential for (off-site) hazards and/or hazardous materials from public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road or SR 1 is greater under Alternative 2 because there would not be enough parking spaces to meet visitor use demand on peak weekends. The addition of BMPs for non-point source pollution described in the water resources section of this EA would reduce the potential impacts from hazardous materials to less than significant.

Effects of No Action Alternative

The no action alternative has the greatest potential for off-site hazards and/or hazardous materials from public parking on the shoulder of Cement Plant Road or SR 1 because there would be no public parking area on the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

3.10 Lands and Realty

Private lands adjacent to the C-CD where the project is located include property owned by Union Railroad on the west site of Cement Plant Road, and Agricultural Parcel 2 on the south side of Warrenella Road, held by the Trust for Public Land. Agricultural Parcel 2 is on the eastside of Cement Plant Road and the south side of Warrenella Road. It is between Warrenella Road and the residential neighborhood of Newtown, CA. A portion of Agricultural Parcel 2 is utilized for operation and maintenance of an industrial wastewater treatment facility associated with the Cemex Plant.

The project area is 963 feet (0.18 mile) from the property line of six (6) residential developments on the border of Newtown. There are a total of 31 homes in the neighborhood. The Cemex property is approximately 0.36 mile from the project area and immediately south of Newtown. The Cemex plant consists of settlement ponds, large industrial facilities, and numerous buildings associated with operations. The Cemex property is the subject of numerous studies that identified goals for reclamation, redevelopment, and potential future use of these industrial lands. Davenport is approximately 0.94 mile south of the project area.

Effects of Alternative 1 and 2:

Impacts on land use and planning are similar under all action alternatives. The proposed action would not physically divide an established community or conflict with applicable plans and policies. Consultation and coordination with tribes, County, State, Federal agencies, and non-government organizations would help reduce conflicts. The proposed project would have minor (direct) adverse impact from noise during construction and use of the parking area. Impacts on population and housing and utilities and service systems are similar under all action alternatives. Coordination with County, State, Federal governments, and non-government organizations would be on-going to address public services.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

There is more potential for adverse impacts on lands and realty under the no action alternatives because parking along Cement Plant Road would increase potential for conflicts on adjacent private lands or SR 1.

3.11 Socio-Economic Conditions and Environmental Justice

The social and economic conditions in communities associated with C-CD and the effects of the BLM's approved RMP Amendment are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA, Sections 3.17 (pp. 46-48) and 4.14 (pp. 73-76), respectively.

As BLM prepared the RMPA, the County of Santa Cruz began pursuing a comprehensive update to the General Plan/Local Coastal Program and modernization of the County Code. The project, known as Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update (Sustainability Update), also includes new County Design Guidelines and rezoning of certain properties. The goal of the Sustainability Update is to implement new policies and code regulations that support more sustainable communities in Santa Cruz County. The County prepared an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Sustainability Update that says unincorporated population was 133,153 according to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, which is approximately half of Santa Cruz County's total population. This is an increase of 3,414 persons over the last 10 years, comprising an average annual growth rate of 0.3%. This average annual growth rate was the same as for the county as a whole and lower than the state (0.6%) during this 10-year period. The 2020 U.S. census reported the total population of Newtown and Davenport was less than 400 people. With respect to environmental justice, the community of Davenport represents a low-income population, and many cities in Santa Cruz have a high percentage of minorities compared to the population in the larger Central Coast region.

Various components of the economy are typically associated with the use of public lands, including timber, mining and agriculture, and industries that include travel and tourism. However, the deed restrictions for C-CD preclude resource extraction, so timber and mining are not considered in the RMPA. On the other hand, travel and tourism and agriculture are prevalent in Santa Cruz County as reflected in the percent of employment in both these sectors, which are markedly higher than State and U.S.

Tourism and recreation are expected to continue to stimulate local employment. Communities surrounding C-CD can benefit directly from visitors who spend money in rentals, restaurants, gift shops, and elsewhere. Tourism can also help communities retain and attract capital and spur transitions to more diverse economies.

It is worth noting the C-CD is the only significant federal land ownership in Santa Cruz County. At 5,843 acres, the property accounts for 2.0% of the entire County. As a result, actions on the federal lands are not likely to affect the local economy. For example, the low volume of federal lands demonstrates the County does not depend on payments related to federal lands to supplement economic growth. On the other hand, since these lands are managed primarily for their non-commercial values (i.e., scenery, wildlife, recreation), they potentially play a different economic role than public lands more commonly associated with commodity sectors described above.

Effects of Alternative 1 and 2:

Alternatives 1 and 2 would have negligible direct effects on social and economic conditions for reasons described above. The preferred alternative is likely to have indirect minor beneficial impacts on social and economic conditions on the North Coast of Santa Cruz from increased recreation and tourism associated with enhanced public access to the C-CD unit of the CCNM.

The construction and use of the parking area is not expected to create a significant number of new jobs or induce population growth on the North Coast of Santa Cruz, where social values and structure are already influenced by the recreation and tourism industry. It is likely some contracted workers, and up to 25% of C-CD visitors, would come from outside the local area and potentially contribute revenue to local restaurants and other services. However, lodging for these workers and anticipated visitors is not expected to be developed near C-CD because there is ample supply in the nearby city of Santa Cruz and surrounding area. Therefore, the presence of workers and C-CD visitors is not expected to disrupt existing social conditions or values of the adjacent communities of the North Coast. While some groups or residents in the North Coast would potentially consider new recreation developments to diminish quality of life, the area is already a recreation destination for beach access, State Parks and auto tours, among other activities. Therefore, this adverse impact is considered to be minor and is outweighed by the beneficial social effects of greater access to public trails for recreation and enjoyment by members of the public who would visit the C-CD.

In addition to direct jobs associated with construction, use, and maintenance of the parking area, future economic activity would support other secondary jobs established in the local communities. These jobs result from indirect economic effects of tourism activity including purchases of goods

and services by visitors. The BLM does not anticipate any disproportionate impacts on the existing low-income or minority population(s) within the project area.

Effects of No Action Alternative:

There is more potential for adverse impacts on social and economic conditions under the no action alternatives because lack of investment in infrastructure could reduce potential contributions to the economy from construction and maintenance contracts. However, the BLM does not anticipate these effects would disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations that may be employed in these sectors.

3.12 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts are defined as the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes such actions. The cumulative effects analysis for this EA is tiered to the environmental review (DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA) prepared for the C-CD RMPA. Past, present, and future actions are described in DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2019-0015-RMP-EA in Section 4.15. Resources which have an identified cumulative impact from the range of alternatives for the C-CD northern parking area and trailhead are addressed below. The geographic scope for the cumulative effects analysis is focused within the boundaries of the County of Santa Cruz. The specific geographic scope for different resources varies due to the nature and extent of the impacted area; but the accumulation of the effects being assessed is expected to remain within the North Coast of Santa Cruz geographic area. The timeframe of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects was determined as follows:

 Past and Present Development. Existing development reflects the cumulative baseline or existing conditions described in the affected environment in Chapter 3.

 Visitor Use and Parking Estimate. An estimate of the level and type of future visitor use in the C-CD planning area (BLM 2023).

 Regional Transportation. Future traffic volumes were determined using the anticipated growth rate to 2040 from the AMBAG RTDM. Refer to the W-Trans Updated Focused Traffic Study for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Project (Spencer and Carstens, 2023).

 North Coast Facilities Management Plan. Includes other recreation and transportation (infrastructure) projects that have either: submitted permit applications, begun the environmental review process, been approved, or are under construction within the geographic scope.

The C-CD RMPA calls for a two-phased approach to the implementation of public recreation facilities in cooperation with local and State governments. Phase 1 consists of developing the proposed parking area in RMZ 1, the Panther Gap/Yellow Bank Creek Trailhead in RMZ 3, and 17 miles of recreational trails for hiking, biking, and/or equestrian use. If monitoring demonstrates that the Phase 1 recreational improvements are being effectively managed, then more trails and/or parking areas could be developed in Phase 2.

Implementation of Phase 2 is dependent on effective recreation management under Phase 1. Based on monitoring and visitor use data gathered during Phase 1, the BLM will be able to develop a reasonable forecast of increase visitor use that would result from additional recreational trail building and additional parking facilities during Phase 2. Emphasis will be placed on the adequacy of infrastructure to accommodate visitor use, the effectiveness with which the BLM and partners are able to maintain the trail system, and the BLM and partners' ability to address unauthorized trails and trail use, and unauthorized entry into core wildlife areas (RMZs 2 and 4), wetlands and riparian areas. Prior to implementing Phase 2, the BLM will request a federal consistency review from the California Coastal Commission to ensure compliance with the California Coastal Act. Additional future projects that may affect C-CD have been identified in the North Coast Facilities Management Plan (NCFMP), published by Santa Cruz County Parks and funded by the California Coastal Conservancy. The North Coast Facilities Management Plan (NCFMP) is the result of a highly collaborative effort, with coordination between many government and nonprofit agencies and local stakeholders, with input from the community and visitors. The NCMFP is designed to enhance coordination and collaboration between agencies to address increasing recreation demands, needed visitor facilities, and funding for maintenance and operations.

The coordinated effort of stakeholders involved with the NCFMP produced a list of priority projects that are expected to enhance the visitor experience and preserve natural resources. The NCFMP mapped 40 projects and grouped them into zones to assist agency coordination. Details about each project are captured in a table and the dominant conditions and needs are discussed in the NCFMP.

Priority projects that are planned or underway near RMZ 1 are associated with Davenport (Zone 4) in the NCFMP. The BLM projects include trail construction and development of recreation facilities to serve the trailhead, such as the Northern Parking Area and Trailhead project and nearby Historic Feature Preservation and Restoration project, which may include interpretive and educational opportunities to further connect visitors to the C-CD and the history of the land.

Other non-BLM projects near Davenport include the North Coast Rail Trail (NCRT), where the RTC has secured funding to develop formal parking in the Davenport CDP, as well as restrooms, bike racks, benches, and concrete crossings to replace the informal parking areas that currently exist on the coastal side of the highway. The NCFMP identifies the potential to connect visitors from the NCRT to the C-CD via Cement Plant Road Multi-Use Path project, which would provide alternative transportation access to additional beaches and trails, as well as connecting Newtown to Davenport.

Priority projects that are planned or underway near RMZ 3 are associated with Yellow Bank-Panther Beach (Zone 6) in the NCFMP. The North Coast Rail Trail is divided into three phases that are all fully funded. Phase III includes construction of the Cotoni Coast Dairies highway overpass that connects the NCRT to Cotoni Coast Dairies National Monument on the inland side of SR 1. According to the RTC, phase III is scheduled to complete environmental review in 2024, design in 2025, and begin construction in 2027.

Upon completion, the NCRT (Segment 5) will provide continuous, paved Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible bicycle and pedestrian trail, as well as parking areas and pedestrian crossing infrastructure in Zones 4 and 6. Agencies anticipate an increase in highway ingress and egress at these locations, so additional turning lanes will be developed on SR 1 to reduce vehicle conflicts and safety hazards to pedestrians.

Recreation Resources

Cumulative impacts to the recreation resources and opportunities would result from other projects or activities that combine with the impacts of the BLM development of parking areas at C-CD. Implementation of PDFs presented in Attachment 1 would reduce impacts and minimize the incremental contribution to cumulative effects from the proposed actions.

Future public access development activities subject to BLM approval would require further project- and site-specific analysis, during which time applicable PDFs, BMPs, and other conditions of approval (COAs) would be identified. Assuming the development trends in the region continue, cumulative impacts on recreation resources from the BLM's proposed development of parking areas for C-CD visitors would be beneficial because effects on regional trail connectivity from the parking area and trailhead would result in outstanding new opportunities for public use and enjoyment in region over the next 15-20 years.

Transportation and Travel Management

Effects of increased traffic from C-CD visitors would be generally the same for the surrounding communities because they all rely on the regional transportation network to connect with the neighboring cities of Santa Cruz and San Francisco.

Construction of cumulative projects listed in the NCFMP would generate traffic on roadways and within communities proximate to and serving individual project locations. The greatest number of trips would be expected during construction of large-scale projects that typically require daily vehicle trips. Any adverse cumulative impact from increased daily vehicle trips may be most noticeable on rural roadways with low baseline traffic volumes.

For example, the intersection of SR 1/Cement Plant Road has one lane in each direction with no turn lanes, and with stop controls on the Cement Plant Road approaches. Since this intersection would provide the majority of access to the proposed project, it was evaluated in the Updated Focused Traffic Study for the addition of a southbound left-turn lane, northbound right turn lane, or taper on SR 1 onto Cement Plant Road, as well as for installation of a traffic control system at the intersection to replace the current two-way stop control.

As described in the Updated Focused Traffic Study, the northbound right-turn taper would be warranted with the addition of project traffic to existing volumes during the weekend peak hour, and a right-turn lane would be warranted under the conservative future volumes used to assess conditions during the weekend peak hour with the addition of project traffic. A right-turn lane or taper would not be warranted under any scenario without project traffic or any weekday p.m. peak hour scenario without or with the addition of project traffic. A southbound left-turn lane would not be warranted under any scenario assessed.

Future projects on BLM-administered lands would require further project- and site-specific environmental analysis, during which time applicable PDFs, BMPs, and other measures would be identified and imposed to reduce adverse effects to existing transportation routes or access points. Coordination with Caltrans, Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission, and the County of Santa Cruz would reduce adverse effects to existing coastal access points along the North Coast adjacent to C-CD. Assuming the development trends in the region continue, cumulative impacts on transportation from BLM's proposed development of parking areas for C-CD visitors would be negligible because effects associated with increased visitor use at C-CD would be difficult to measure when combined with recreation on other conservation lands over the next 15-20 years.

Cultural and Heritage Resources

Cumulative effects on archaeological sites, traditional cultural properties, and historic resources are caused by impacts that can occur over a long period of time, resulting in the gradual but permanent loss of archaeological data as well as the diverse cultural history represented by those properties. Historic structures are sensitive to degradation and collapse through a natural aging process and unauthorized visitation/vandalism. The range of alternatives for parking in this EA have similar potential for cumulative effects on cultural resources and historic properties because the limit of disturbance is for both parking areas are similar. The increased risk of vandalism and/or unauthorized entry to historic structures due to development of parking could be reduced by establishing barriers, signage, and education to create public awareness and appreciation for these sensitive Monument objects. Currently, there is not enough funding available to stabilize the Mocettini Cheese Barn Historic Site. Therefore, future review and approval will be needed to evaluate preservation and restoration opportunities in compliance with applicable law.

Social and Economic Conditions

Beneficial economic impacts would occur from the development of cumulative projects identified in the NCFMP. Workforce wages and spending during the construction and operation of cumulative projects would be an economic stimulator to regional and local governments. Other important public benefits include both short-term and long-term increases in local expenditures, payrolls, and sales tax revenues. These would positively affect the economy at regional and local levels. The development of cumulative regional conservation lands may adversely affect environmental amenities including environmental quality, stable rural community values, and cultural values. The development of regional trail connectivity could reduce a community's ability to attract some new types of businesses. However, other economic and demographic factors would play a role in the economic development potential of any particular location.

Assuming the development trends in the region continue, adverse cumulative impacts on social and economic conditions from the range of alternatives would be negligible because effects associated with increased visitor use at C-CD would be hard to measure when combined with recreation on other conservation lands over the next 15-20 years.

4. Coordination and Consultation (Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies):

During the preparation of this EA, the BLM coordinated closely with several local, State, and Federal agencies related to activities on the property, including Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Coastal Commission, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Similarly, the BLM met with leaders of conservation organizations and other groups representing community concerns including the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz Natural History Museum, Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship, Trust for Public Land, Sempervirens Fund, and the Peninsula Open Space Trust, as well as the Davenport North Coast Association, Friends of the North Coast, and Rural Bonny Doon Association. The BLM will continue to coordinate efforts with TPL and others to identify appropriate management and maintenance requirements and conditions designed to protect the landowner's rights, obligations and agricultural interests relating to visitor use at the intersection of Cement Plant Road and Warrenella Road.

The C-CD RMPA reflects the Department of Interior's goal of increasing public access to outdoor recreation opportunities and the BLM's effort to promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the National Conservation Lands. Recreational opportunities are compatible with the protection of the diversity of habitats and the traditional cultural resource values present within C-CD. The plan calls for limiting the number of parking areas and trails, while still providing sufficient trail miles to meet public demand.

As a result, the range of alternatives in this EA also reflects careful balance of many competing public interests in managing public lands for public benefit in accordance with the C-CD deed restrictions, Presidential Proclamation 9563, and other obligations under the Omnibus Lands Act and FLPMA. BLM's resource specialists and other technical experts provided input into the analysis of the environmental effects of the alternatives considered in this EA. Input from members of the public has also contributed to the analysis and consideration of the environmental issues associated with C-CD parking area development and use. Prior to issuing a final decision, the BLM will complete coordination and/or consultation with Tribes and local, State, and Federal agencies to ensure compliance with environmental policies, including those listed in **Table 8** below.

Table 8. Consultation and Coordination

Name	Purpose for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Amah Mutsun Land Trust	Memorandum of Understanding	
County of Santa Cruz	Public Works, Encroachment Permit	
California Coastal Commission	Conditional Consistency Determination	
Regional Water Quality Control Board	General Construction Permit/Waiver	
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Biological Opinion, Endangered Species Act	

5. *List of Preparers*

The BLM staff that contributed to this EA are identified in **Table 9**.

Table 9. List of Preparers

Name	Title
Zachary Ormsby	Field Manager
Bejamin Hoke	Assistant Field Manager
Sky Murphy	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Jed Parker	Civil Engineer
Michael Westphal	Ecologist
Michael Powers	Natural Resource Specialist (Wildlife)
Ryan O'Dell	Natural Resource Specialist (Botany/Soils/Paleontology). Biological Resources - Upland Terrestrial Vegetation; Biological Resources - Special Status Plant Species; Geology and Soils.
Rebecca Spitzer	Archaeologist
Adam Wilde	Outdoor Recreation Planner

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Attachment 1: Project Design Features and Conservation Measures

The following Project Design Features and Conservation Measures listed in the C-CD Biological Opinion are incorporated into the range of alternatives for the Cotoni-Coast Dairies Northern Parking Area and Trailhead Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2023-0001-EA).

Project Design Features:

- Where appropriate, revegetation would be completed as soon as possible after disturbance using live native plantings, or native seed casting, preferably prior to the onset of rain.
    - Temporary erosion control measures shall be used on disturbed soils until permanent vegetation is established.
    - Disturbed and uncompacted soils shall be covered with rice-straw, and/or biodegradable netting or matting. For slopes exceeding 20% staked biodegradable erosion logs or wattles are required for decelerating runoff.
    - Silt fences or filter bags shall be used if working in areas known to flood or experience heavy flow.
    - Plant materials for revegetation should be sourced locally from native plant seeds collected and propagated in containers, as feasible.
    - Temporary seeding using non-invasive, non-persistent grass species (e.g., barley grass, sterile wheat) or hydromulching may be utilized if approved by BLM.
    - To avoid scouring, erosion control materials shall be placed to allow water to sheet as opposed to channel.
    - Areas that may be accessed by cattle or other livestock shall be enclosed by fencing to exclude livestock until restoration goals have been met.
- If access through a wetland is necessary, low ground pressure, rubber-tired equipment is required. BLM will determine the necessity and timing of access to minimize disturbance (typically later summer).
- Replace native plants removed during project activities, as appropriate, with species similar to that of the removed vegetation or with species that are appropriate to the site conditions and are native to the project watershed, as approved by the BLM. Plants shall be sourced from Santa Cruz County. Alternative sources may include San Mateo County and Monterey County.

  - Plants sourced from nursery require BLM approval of the nursery, which shall include documentation of pathogen avoidance protocols and source of plant materials.
  - Use of native plant species with high wildlife and/or pollinator values will be prioritized by BLM during approval.
- Tree removal (or pruning) shall be performed during the non-breeding/non-nesting season on all nesting trees and to the greatest extent possible on non-nesting trees.
- Prior to tree pruning or removal, a qualified biologist shall survey the trees to be pruned or removed to detect nests by conducting a ground level visual inspection of the trees scheduled for pruning/removal.
- Tree pruning or removal may not proceed if an active nest is found and/or evidence of courtship or nesting behavior is observed, even if it is occurring during the non-breeding season. Tree pruning or removal shall not occur any closer than 300 feet from these trees (500 feet in the case of an active Raptor nest). In the event that any birds exhibiting breeding and nesting behavior continue to occupy the trees during the non-breeding/non-nesting season, pruning or removal shall not take place until a qualified biologist has re-assessed the site, determined that breeding and nesting has ceased and given approval to proceed within 300 feet of any occupied tree (500 feed for raptor species).
- The BLM shall be proactive in identifying any tree related health and safety issue as early as possible during the nonbreeding/non-nesting season in order to avoid habitat disturbances during the breeding/nesting season.
- Nesting or non-nesting trees posing an immediate or imminent public health or safety issue should be pruned/removed immediately regardless of the presence of nest(s).
- In order to reduce and minimize soil loss or storm water runoff from the project sites, re-contouring of project sites will be conducted perpendicular to the sites' contours such that water nor soil could run downhill but instead will be intercepted every ½ meter by a cross berm of soil and all soil on project sites will be immediately covered with native vegetation to further minimize any soil or water movement off site.
- Infestations of high priority invasive weed species would be removed, to the extent possible, from all project sites prior to commencement of project work. Control will continue at all known high priority invasive weed sites in the immediate vicinity of the

project, including new sites discovered during or following completion of the project. Tools and equipment will be cleaned to the extent possible prior to arrival and upon departure from project site in order to prevent the spread of weed seeds.

- Project areas would be monitored for weed invasion after construction. Monitoring shall employ an early detection, rapid response approach to any previously undetected aggressive weedy species observed.
- A tribal and/or archaeological monitor should be present during project-related ground-disturbing activities that have the potential to encounter previously unidentified cultural resources.
- If artifacts are unearthed during ground disturbing activities of any projects, all work shall halt in the area of the discovery and the BLM Archeologist shall be immediately notified. The Archeologist will evaluate the discovery and initiate mitigation measures (if necessary) to preserve the archeological resources.
- Employ soil erosion and sediment control measures during watershed restoration activities to reduce or eliminate erosion and sediment transport or incidental sediment discharge. Soil erosion control measures include seasonal limits on operations, construction of runoff dissipation features (e.g rolling dips), placement of straw rolls and hay bales, mulching, and seeding to re-establish vegetative cover.
- Where wetlands or streams cannot be avoided, appropriate approvals from the USACE and/or the RWQCB and the CDFW shall be secured prior to initiating work in these areas. The measures included in any such authorizations shall be incorporated into the design.

Cotoni-Coast Dairies Biological Opinion 08EVEN00-2020-F-0631

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion 08EVEN00-2020-F-0631 lists the following conservation measures the BLM agreed to implement as part of the proposed action to further the conservation of listed species in the project areas:

1. Ground disturbing activities will be limited to April 30 to October 31 to the greatest extent feasible.
2. A Service-approved biologist will provide training to all workers on the identification and habitat requirements of California red-legged frogs. When the Service-approved biologist is not present, a worker that has undergone this training will act as a biological monitor.
3. Concurrent with the activities taking place in upland habitat or aquatic habitats of the California red-legged frog, a Service-approved biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys and capture and relocate individuals that are at risk of injury or mortality.
4. Prior to work activities each morning, the Service-approved biologist or biological monitor will survey under vehicles and equipment, and within areas that could provide cover for the California red-legged frog.
5. If a California red-legged frog is observed by anyone at any time, all work that could impact the species must cease and the Service-approved biologist will be notified immediately. Work activities in these areas can commence when the animal moves from the area on its own accord or after the Service-approved biologist captures and relocates the individual(s).
6. Impacts to habitat of the California red-legged frog will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.
7. Best management practices (BMPs) that require protection of surface waters during construction activities will be implemented, including but not limited to the following:
    a) Contained areas will be designated for equipment storage, maintenance, and refueling. Contained areas will be located at least 50 feet from aquatic systems.
    b) Vehicles will be inspected daily for leaks and repaired immediately if necessary.
8. The Service-approved biologist and biological monitor will have the authority to halt work at any time to prevent harm to the California red-legged frog or when any of the conservation measures are not being properly implemented.

9. A Service-approved biologist will be the contact for any employee or contractor who inadvertently kills or injures a California red-legged frog or finds a dead, injured, or entrapped individual. The biologist will report the incident to the Service via electronic mail within one working day.
10. All food-related trash items will be disposed of in secure, closed containers and removed regularly to reduce the potential to attract predators. After construction, all trash and construction debris will be removed from work areas.
11. All steep-walled earthen holes and open trenches 6 inches deep or greater will be covered each night or provided with escape ramps to prevent entrapment of California red-legged frogs. Excavations will be inspected for animals each morning, prior to any work in or around them, and before they are backfilled.

NOTE: These measures are only necessary when working in habitats that are presumed occupied by the California red-legged frog. Presumed occupied habitat includes all aquatic and adjacent upland areas (within 50 meters) at any time of year, and all terrestrial and aquatic areas during the winter season (October 31 through April 30).