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# Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

## Monterey Ranger District



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## Executive Summary

The Big Sur coastal area along California Highway 1 is an iconic, world-class destination, valued for its outstanding scenic qualities and land-ocean interface. The Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest manages approximately 90 miles of coastline and provides many recreational opportunities and resource values including wilderness and a wild and scenic river on national forest system lands further inland. This unique area draws local, regional, national, and international visitors year-round.

With outstanding natural resources and high visitation come challenges of managing visitor use to minimize impacts to resources and infrastructure while maintaining recreation opportunities and access. Recognizing the need to focus on the unique visitor use management challenges of this area, the Los Padres National Forest followed the Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework to develop management strategies and actions to move towards more sustainable recreation management and positive visitor experiences.

The Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework has four broad elements:

1. Build the Foundation ("Why")
2. Define Visitor Use Management Direction ("What")
3. Identify Management Strategies ("How")
4. Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, Adjust

The Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy was developed by working through each of the steps of the framework to understand the project area needs and issues, define desired conditions, and to identify short, medium, and long-term management strategies and actions to help achieve the desired conditions. Public input was considered and incorporated throughout the development of this strategy. The strategy includes indicators and thresholds that will be monitored over time to determine success of the management actions or identify adjustments that may be needed. This is an adaptive and dynamic process that will be implemented and adjusted over time.

The body of this strategy includes detailed information supporting the development of potential management strategies and actions to be implemented by the Forest as time, funding and staff allow. The appendices provide additional information and a prioritized summary of management actions, some that may be ready for immediate implementation, and others that would require additional planning, coordination, and compliance work. Many of the management strategies and actions may benefit from further coordination with local community partners, adjacent land managers, and volunteers.

As land managers consider future projects and actions within the project area, they should review the desired conditions and determine whether the proposed action would move the area toward meeting or maintaining those conditions. Project background and updates are available on the [Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map](#); this site will continue to be updated as projects progress.

## Introduction

Visitor use management is important to the Los Padres National Forest, Monterey Ranger District, as we strive to strike a balance between providing outstanding recreational opportunities along the coastal areas accessed by California State Highway 1, and protecting the scenic, natural, and cultural resource values that make this area unique.

Steadily increasing visitor use and associated resource and social impacts have prompted the need for a focused visitor use management approach. The goal of the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy is to guide the Forest in providing sustainable recreation opportunities and access by identifying desired conditions, adaptive management strategies, and management tools.

Sustainable recreation is defined in the Forest Service 2012 Planning Rule as:

*The set of recreation settings and opportunities on the National Forest System that is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generations (36 CFR 219.19)*

This strategy has been developed using the [Visitor Use Management Framework](#), developed by the [Interagency Visitor Use Management Council](#) (IVUMC). The purpose of the framework is to provide cohesive guidance for managing visitor use on federally managed lands and waters. The heart of the framework is the desired condition — what do people want the area to look like, and the experiences to be like in the future? From there, the visitor use management framework supports working together to develop strategies and actions to reach that desired condition.



## Element 1: Build the Foundation

### Project Purpose and Need

The coastal area of the Monterey Ranger District has some of the most rugged and scenic country found in California. California State Highway 1 (also known as the Cabrillo Highway) provides access to the Big Sur area along the central coast between Carmel and San Simeon and is a favorite touring destination for regional and international visitors. California State Highway 1 is part of the California Scenic Highway System, and an “All American Road<sup>1</sup>.” The proximity to San Jose, the San Francisco Bay Area, and other major population centers, and recognition of the area as a national and international tourism destination, combine to make this an extremely popular yearlong recreation area.

The focus area for this strategy includes the coast from Brazil Ranch (north of Andrew Molera State Park) in the north to San Carpoforo beach in the south and inland to approximately the Nacimiento Summit, including portions of the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness Areas (figure 1). This is within Monterey County and a small portion of San Luis Obispo County in the southern portion of the area. The project area includes several day use sites with beach access, two developed campgrounds, portions of two wilderness areas and a wild and scenic river, trails and trailheads, and forest system roads. Popular recreational activities include hiking, backpacking, surfing, cycling, camping in developed and dispersed sites, beachcombing, rockhounding, soaring sports, and scenic driving on backcountry roads.

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All American Roads based on their intrinsic qualities that include archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. To receive designation, a byway must be nationally significant, have one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere, and must be considered a “destination unto itself.”



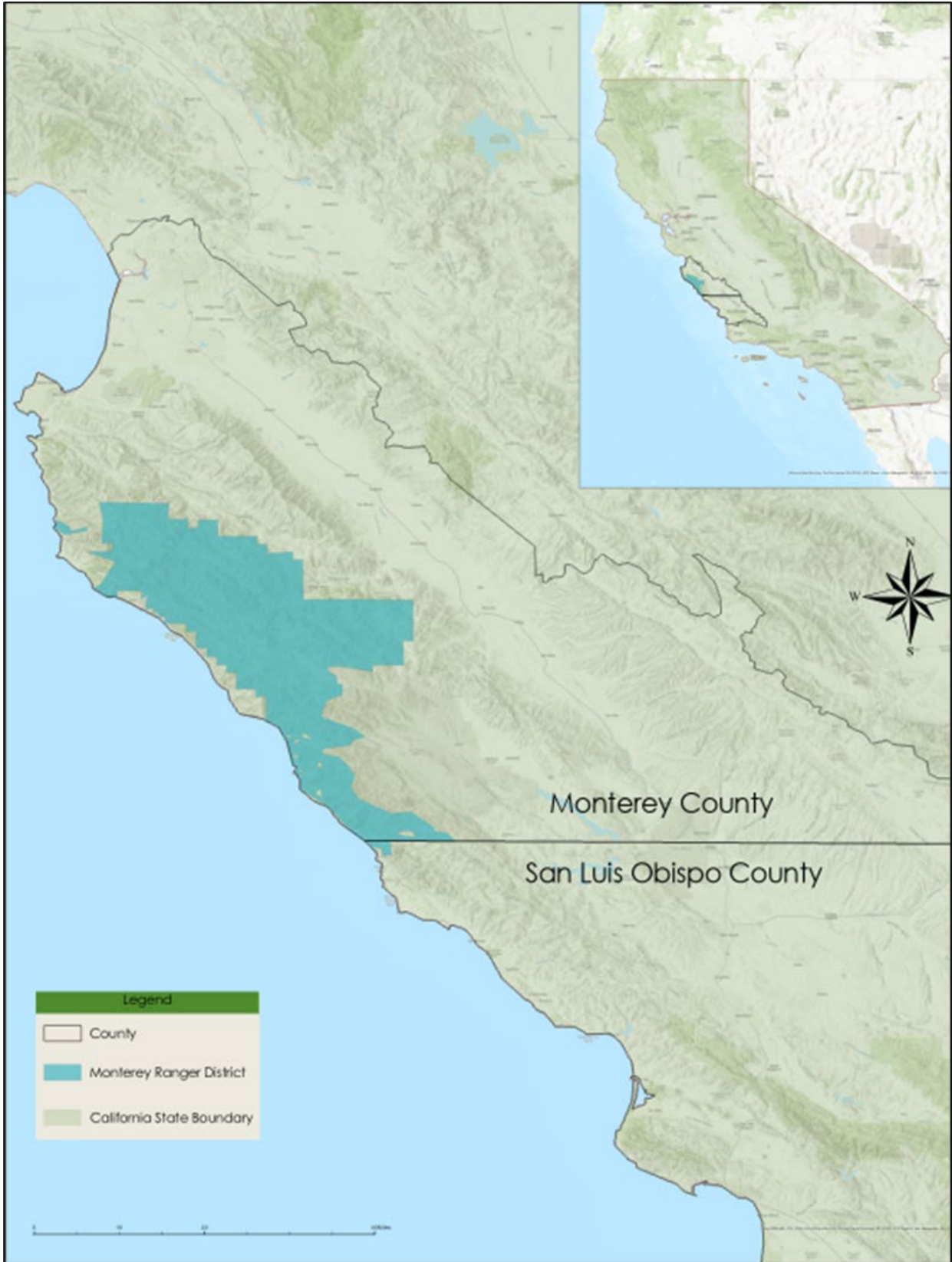


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

The Big Sur Place is described in the 2005 Los Padres National Forest Plan as:

*an international destination defined by spectacular land-ocean interface scenery. Big Sur abuts against the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and is valued as a touring corridor that provides access to the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses, the Big Sur Wild and Scenic River, and postcard natural images (Land Management Plan Part 2 Los Padres National Forest Strategy, p. 41).*

The area is experiencing unprecedented visitor use, resulting in traffic congestion, and expanding dispersed camping that is becoming concentrated on previously undisturbed areas. This is resulting in increased fire risk, human waste and litter issues, deteriorated road conditions, off-road vehicle use and associated resource impacts, and conflicts with local landowners.



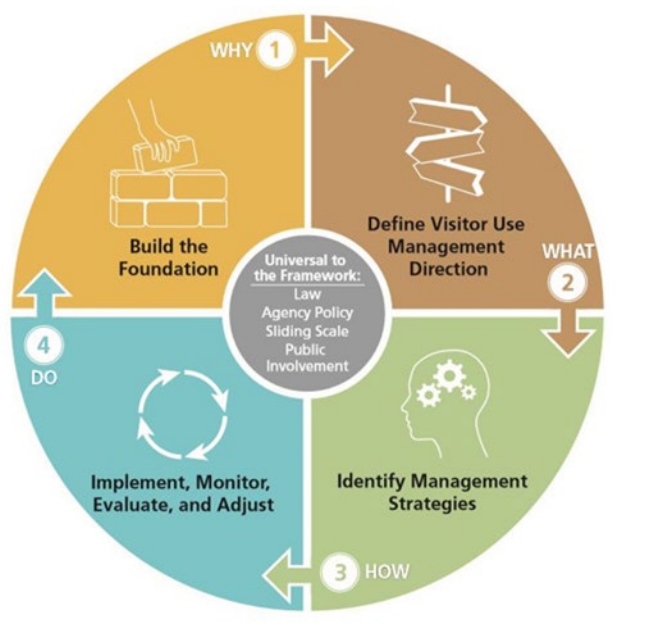
**Figure 2. Visitor Use and Impacts**

Regionally, the Big Sur coastal area falls substantially into Monterey County. Mapping of census tracts with environmental justice toolkits shows that this area lacks public transit links, and many of the nearby cities suffer negative health outcomes related to air pollution, contaminated groundwater, and proximity to traffic. There are large concentrations of various at-risk demographic groups in hot spots in the greater region – children 5 years old and younger; adults 64 years and older; people with disabilities; low-income families; people of color; and people with limited English and low educational attainment.

Many of these demographic hotspots overlap, indicating that many residents may fall into two or more of these at-risk populations. In this context, access to the Big Sur coast can provide at-risk regional populations with opportunities for fresh air, healthy recreation, and psychological respite.

The travel and tourism industry continues to grow nationally and globally. Pressure on internationally recognized tourism destinations such as the Big Sur coast are posing challenges to the area's long-term sustainability. Negative impacts of over tourism include alienated local residents, degraded tourist experiences, overloaded infrastructure, damage to nature, and threats to culture and heritage (WTTC & McKinsey & Co, 2017 in Atzori 2020).

To begin addressing these challenges, and to continue providing sustainable recreation opportunities and access, the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management planning process follows the [Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework](#). Four main elements of the framework, shown in figure 3, were used to develop adaptive and dynamic strategies to guide recreation management and resource protection into the future.



**Figure 3. Visitor Use Management Framework Elements**

The preliminary issues identified, relative to National Forest System lands within the project area, to be addressed through this effort include:

- Dispersed camping impacts (human waste, litter, soil and vegetation impacts, increased fire risks).
- Demands for recreation opportunities and access are exceeding supply.
- Conflicts with private landowners and residents (dispersed camping impacts on private lands, damage to roads and off-road vehicle use, traffic congestion, and conflicts between recreational and residential traffic).
- Record visitor-use numbers, with use potentially doubling each year (contributing to strain on infrastructure, resource degradation, and visitor conflicts). Visitation influenced by social media.
- Increased visitation has pushed users to recreate in areas planned for lower use, and in ways not intended for the site.



- Balancing the needs of residents, protection of natural resources and the character of the iconic national and international destination.
- Multiple jurisdictions including Forest Service, California State Parks, California Department of Transportation, and Fort Hunter Liggett Military Reservation.
- Limited staffing capacity of the Forest Service (recreation staff, law enforcement, maintenance, etc.) and its partners.
- Potential for management actions in one area to shift use and issues to other areas.

## Legislation, Agency Policies, and Other Management Direction

This strategy addresses National Forest System lands within the Coastal Zone VUM area that are managed by the Monterey District of the Los Padres National Forest. Management of these lands is primarily guided by the Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan. There are three Congressionally designated areas including the Ventana and Silver Peak Wilderness areas and the Big Sur Wild and Scenic River. The highway corridor is part of the California Scenic Highway System, and the Monterey County Coast Land Use Plan emphasizes scenic values, natural resources, and public recreational access. National Forest System lands are interspersed with lands of other jurisdictions such as state parks, and commercial and private lands. Recreational use crosses these jurisdictions, and coordinated efforts will be needed to effectively address visitor use challenges.

Following is forest plan direction relevant to the Coastal Zone VUM strategy.

### **Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan**

#### **Part 1 – Land Management Plan, Southern California Forests Vision**

Recreation - Recreation opportunities, outreach, activities, and services contribute to urban community well-being and visitors' physical and mental well-being. Recreation opportunities are provided that represent a variety of skill levels, needs, and desires in partnership with permit holders, private entities, nonprofit and volunteer groups, diverse community groups, state, federal and tribal partners. Scenic routes are a prominent feature that link the key places within the national forests and offer ecosystem-based excursion opportunities through the national forests' varied landscapes. Quality hunting and fishing habitat and access opportunities are available to the public. Facilities and infrastructure are high quality, well-maintained, safe, accessible, and consistent with visitors' expectations. Abandoned facilities and facilities no longer needed are removed and sites are restored to natural conditions.

Conservation Education - Conservation education is broad and includes interpretation, environmental education, and visitor information. People connect to the land and to each other through expanded public information, interpretive services, and environmental education programs/activities, with well-supported nonprofit partners and local community groups in a lead role and the Forest Service providing guidance and leadership. Proactive efforts reach both traditional and nontraditional users and lead to a greater citizen understanding, appreciation, advocacy, and participation in forest stewardship and ecosystem conservation. Recreation and natural resource management, as well as conservation education is improved through increased

knowledge of social science and heritage resources. As the Forest Service learns more about the diverse communities and stakeholders it serves, better services are supplied to national forest visitors through the use of current knowledge of who is using the national forests and how.

Road and Trail System - The transportation system of roads and trails is safe, affordable, and environmentally sound; responds to public needs; and is efficient to manage. The system provides public access for recreation, special uses, and fire protection activities, and supports forest-management objectives. The system is well maintained commensurate with levels of use and available funding. The system is connected to state, county or local public roads and trails. Scenic routes are a prominent feature within this interconnected system. Roads and trails determined to be unnecessary through Roads Analysis and the analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), are removed and the landscape is restored. Rights-of-way to access National Forest System lands satisfy public needs and facilitate planned resource activities. Over the planning period, the number of inventoried unclassified roads and trails are reduced, and the development and proliferation of new unclassified facilities is minimized.

An environmentally sustainable, integrated system of remote, urban, and rural non-motorized trails is established and maintained. The system can accommodate a range of experience in high quality settings and is managed to minimize conflicts while providing opportunities for partnerships, learning, stewardship, and mental and physical renewal for a diverse, urban visitor population. The availability of day-use 'loop trails' is improved.

Wilderness - Desired conditions for wilderness include:

- Ecological Processes – Ecological processes occur untrammelled. Human influences do not impede the free play of natural forces in the ecosystem. Management activities prescribed for enhancement and recovery of threatened and endangered species and for the re-introduction of extirpated species are supported.
- Vegetation Management/Fire – Vegetation management maintains or mimics natural processes for the purpose of achieving wilderness fire management objectives. Reduce to an acceptable level, the risks and consequences of wildland fire within wilderness or escaping from wilderness.
- Solitude – Outstanding opportunities for solitude and inspiration are characteristic and stable, or increasing.
- Challenge – Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities that offer physical and mental challenges are stable or increasing.
- Air Resources – Remediate and prevent human caused impairments to air quality values (AQRV) including visibility, ozone injury, and acid and nitrogen deposition. Suppression of wildland fires and ignition of prescribed fires in wilderness will consider impacts to human health and air quality (AQRVs).
- Environmental Education – People are connected to the values of wilderness resulting in support and stewardship for these values.
- Science baseline information – Wilderness is used as a benchmark for ecological studies.

## Part 2 – Los Padres National Forest Strategy, Place Based Program Emphasis

### *Big Sur Place*

**Theme:** An international destination defined by spectacular land-ocean interface scenery. It is one of the 'Key Places' representing the most picturesque national forest locations, containing its own landscape character. The natural landscape, including the fog-shrouded, windswept, rugged coastline and diverse coastal vegetation is exemplified by an independent, eclectic use of natural materials that create the image of Big Sur Place and the spirit of the people. Big Sur abuts against the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and is valued as a touring corridor that provides access to the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses, the Big Sur Wild and Scenic River, and postcard natural images (USDA Forest Service 2005, p 41).

**Desired Condition:** The Big Sur Place is maintained for its internationally valued scenic beauty and biodiversity. It is a naturally evolving and natural appearing landscape that functions as an international destination defined by spectacular land-ocean interface scenery. Visitor use is accommodated without compromising resource values. The valued attributes to be preserved over time are stands of redwoods within a mosaic of other vegetation, riparian vegetation appearing as prominent ribbons, grasslands that appear as openings across flat plateaus along the coast, and a rustic or rural built environment that reflects the eclectic character of the land and people (USDA Forest Service 2005, p. 43).

**Program Emphasis:** Management will be particularly sensitive to the fragility of the unstable landscape and the co-mingling of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Continue emphasis on visitor education relative to the unique assemblage of recreation opportunities and resources. Increase efforts to control the introduction or spread of invasive noxious plants and predatory exotic wildlife species to aide in the recovery of threatened and endangered species. Vegetative management emphasis includes fuels management around populated areas and within adjoining wildernesses. Forest health issues such as the spread of Sudden Oak Death, which holds the potential to cause devastation of coastal-forested habitats, are addressed. The North Coast Ridge Road will remain closed to public vehicular and mountain bike use, but open to foot and horse equestrian traffic.

Analyze the potential for visitor information opportunities on the south coast. Provide continuing opportunities for day-use and camping, including the maintenance, upgrading or construction of visitor facilities along California State Highway 1. Communication and administrative site support facilities will be developed to improve management of the Place. Adaptive reuse of existing structures will remain the preferred way of addressing future facility needs. Manage recreation use and related facilities to maintain scenic integrity. Protect and enhance scenic qualities through cooperative efforts with CalTrans, California State Parks, and others.

Project management decisions will be consistent with the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Act and the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan to the maximum extent practicable.

The Brazil Ranch will be a place for conference and educational opportunities focused on environmental conservation, stewardship, and sustainability. Managed public access and recreation opportunities will be provided. Traditional land uses and resource conservation activities can be showcased and studied. Other small-scale special uses may be authorized (USDA Forest Service 2005, p 43-44).

*Ventana Place (includes the Ventana Wilderness)*

**Theme:** A spectacular wilderness that offers a wide range of habitats from cool, damp coast redwood groves to hot, dry mountain peaks, and opportunities for solitude (USDA Forest Service 2005, p. 83).

**Desired Condition:** The valued landscape attributes to be preserved over time are the mosaic of vegetation including the redwoods, oak woodlands, open pine forests, grasslands and chaparral mix that draw people for the big trees, and water environment with scenic vistas. Visitor use is accommodated without compromising resource values (USDA Forest Service 2005, p. 84).

**Program Emphasis:** Maintain the wild, scenic, and rugged backcountry. Protect areas of cultural and biological significance, improve trail maintenance, increase environmental education, and resolve conflicts between users and resources. Increase Forest Service presence in Ventana Place through increased wilderness and volunteer patrols. Emphasize vegetation treatments (such as fuels reduction, including within adjoining wilderness areas) and fire prevention to reduce the occurrence of large wildland fires. Continue emphasis on partnerships to promote resource protection efforts, especially for threatened or endangered species. Maintain existing lookouts through partnerships. Address forest health issues, including the spread of Sudden Oak Death, which holds the potential to cause devastation of coastal-forested habitats (USDA Forest Service 2005, p. 84).

*Program Strategies and Tactics*

Recreation and scenery direction is provided in Appendix B – Program Strategies and Tactics. This section describes the detailed program strategies that the national forest may choose to make progress toward achieving the desired conditions and goals discussed in Part I. See page 128.

**Recreation Opportunity Spectrum in the Los Padres Forest Plan**

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a system used by the Forest Service to manage recreation settings. Recreation settings are the social, managerial, and physical attributes of a place that, when combined, provide a distinct set of recreation opportunities. ROS is used to define recreation settings and categorize them into six distinct classes: primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, rural, and urban (36 CFR 219.19; FSH 1909.12 zero code). ROS informs visitor use management by helping land managers identify appropriate activities, facilities, and services to achieve desired conditions in specific locations. Additional information about ROS settings can be found on the [Forest Service ROS Poster](#).

Table 1 below lists key locations within the project area and the ROS class that applies to each of them.

**Table 1. Coastal zone ROS classes in key locations**

Location	ROS Class(es)
Brazil Ranch	Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized
Pfeiffer Beach	Roaded Natural
Pine Ridge Trailhead	Roaded Natural
Pine Ridge Trail	Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Primitive
Big Sur Wild and Scenic River	Primitive
North Coast Ridge Road	Semi-Primitive Motorized



*Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy*

Ventana Wilderness	Primitive
Kirk Creek/Mill Creek	Roaded Natural
Nacimiento Fergusson Road	Roaded Natural
South Coast Ridge Road, Alms Ridge, Prewitt Ridge, Plaskett	Semi-Primitive Motorized
Sand Dollar/Plasket Campground	Roaded Natural
Silver Peak Wilderness	Primitive
Los Burros Road	Semi-Primitive Motorized
Salmon Creek Station/Trailhead	Roaded Natural
San Carpoforo Beach	Roaded Natural

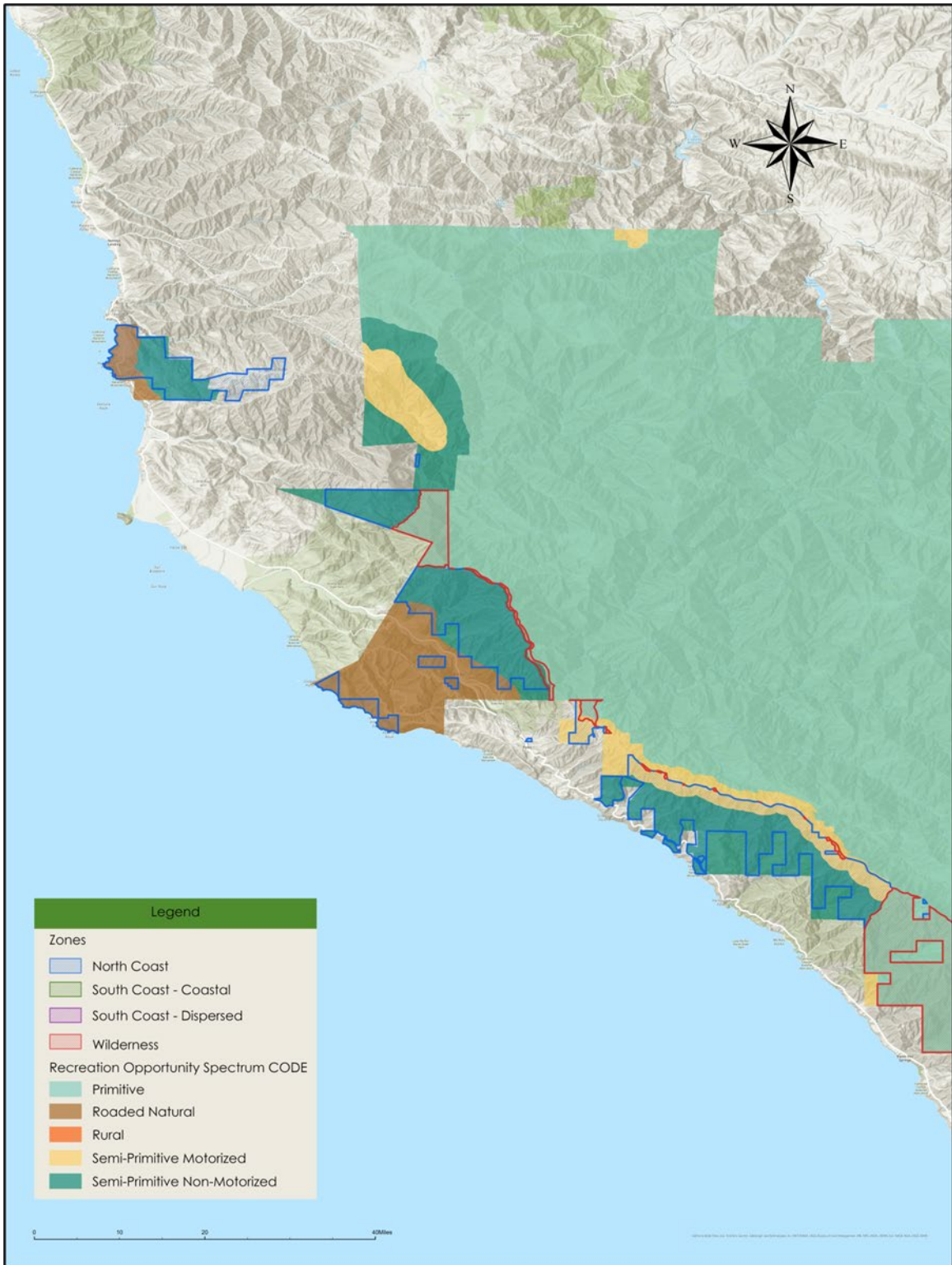


Figure 4. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Map (North)



Figure 5. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Map (South)



Following are descriptions of the setting for each of the six ROS classes.

### Primitive



**Figure 6. Primitive ROS – Ventana Wilderness View**

*Theme:* Predominately unmodified, naturally evolving, vast, and remote. Non-motorized trails; typically trail class 1; travel on foot and horse; no motorized travel; no mechanized travel within designated Wilderness. Very high probability of solitude; closeness to nature; self-reliance, high challenge, and risk; little evidence of people. Typically, 6 or less encounters with other parties on trails, and less than 3 parties visible from camping sites. Typically, no improvements, no facilities.

### Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized



**Figure 7. Semi-primitive non-motorized ROS – Pine Ridge Trail**

*Theme:* Predominately natural appearing, rustic improvements to protect resources. Non-motorized routes; trail classes 1-2 typical. Foot/horse/mountain bike use—no motorized travel. High probability of solitude, closeness to nature, self-reliance. High to moderate challenge and risk. Usually, 6-15 encounters with other parties on trails, six or less parties visible from camping

sites. Minor investments to protect natural and cultural resources. Sanitation-no facilities, leave no trace.

### Semi-Primitive Motorized



**Figure 8. Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS - South Coast Ridge Road**

*Theme:* Predominately natural appearing, motorized use visible and audible. Moderate to high probability of solitude. High to moderate degree of risk/challenge. Typically, 6-15 encounters with other parties on trails. Six or less parties visible from camping sites. Infrastructure is to protect natural and cultural resources, sanitation, limited facilities, outhouses may be in areas of concentrated use.

### Roaded Natural



**Figure 9. Roaded natural ROS - Plaskett Campground**

*Theme:* Natural appearing with nodes and corridors of development such as campgrounds, trailheads, boat launches, and rustic, small-scale resorts. Moderate evidence of human sights and sounds; moderate concentration of users at developed recreation sites; little challenge or risk is expected in these outdoor settings due to nearby amenities and management controls Opportunities to socialize. Typically vault toilets.

## Other Special Designations and Associated Management Direction

### Wilderness

A portion of the Ventana Wilderness, and the entire Silver Peak Wilderness area, lie within the project area. The Ventana Wilderness was designated in 1969 and the Silver Peak Wilderness in 1992. Both wildernesses offer rugged terrain, several trails, and outstanding views.

Wilderness areas are designated by Congress. According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, a Wilderness is “an area of federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation,” where natural ecological processes are supposed to dominate and “where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Wilderness areas are also intended to provide opportunities for visitors to find solitude and participate in primitive recreation activities.

### Wilderness Standards

LPNF S1- The maximum visitor group size is 25 people. Exceptions may be approved by the authorized officer.

### Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Big Sur River was classified as “wild” through the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-301) and flows through the Ventana Wilderness. A “wild” classification refers to those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.

Wild and scenic rivers are designated by Congress and managed by federal agencies. The goal of the National Wild and Scenic River system is to recognize and protect the natural values of rivers and streams that have not been impounded or substantially channelized: in effect, to maintain them in a “wild and scenic” condition. The objective of the original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 is to “preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.”

### *Big Sur River Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP)*

The Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for the Big Sur River are Scenic, Recreation, and Ecological (Final EIS, Los Padres National Forest LRMP).

Following are the desired conditions outlined in the CRMP (USDA Forest Service 2003).

- Existing infestations of French broom will not increase in size as a result of human disturbance and new spot infestations of French broom, or other non-native invasive weeds will be a priority for control measures.
- Maintain the water quality of the Big Sur River and its tributaries for maintenance and enhancement of fisheries and aquatic environments and for scenic and recreational enjoyment. Encourage “Leave No Trace” and wilderness ethics. This will be accomplished through trailhead signing at Big Sur, brochures, and visitor contacts, and assuming some level of compliance would reduce the disturbance and siltation from moving in-stream rocks, reduce garbage and thereby increase water quality.

- Minimize conflicts between dogs and recreationists and wildlife by requiring that all dogs be leashed at all times while in the river corridor.
- Preserve and restore riparian woodland vegetation along the stream banks and on the floodplain of the Big Sur River. Campfires will be prohibited during the months of May 1st through September 30th, so that restoration of riparian areas can occur. Educate the public on negative effects to vegetation and riparian areas caused by the cutting of live vegetation. This can be accomplished by direct public contacts by wilderness rangers and written literature.
- Preserve other ORVs while providing for recreational enjoyment. At the three natural sulfur hot springs near Sykes Camp, discourage containment structures and encourage ‘Leave No Trace’ and wilderness ethics.
- Manage the area to preserve wilderness values and the ORVs. Future surveys conducted using campsite condition field data forms will determine if wilderness values and the ORV’s are being met.
- Threatened and endangered species are protected. Campers, hikers and equestrians are directed to campsites and well-maintained trails. Stream crossings are kept to a minimum in an effort to disturb as little of the habitat as possible.
- The natural ecology of the Big Sur River remains intact. The diversity of plants and animals remains or is enhanced. Wilderness values are considered for all activities including wildfire suppression.
- The Big Sur Wild and Scenic River is maintained in a free-flowing condition, and connectivity of the river and tributaries is enhanced when compatible with other ORVs.
- Scenic values of the entire watershed and maintenance of a natural appearance are considered when managing, planning, or implementing any projects in or around the Big Sur River.

## **Other Relevant Plans**

The following are not Forest policy and guidance but should be considered when developing site specific desired conditions and management strategies.

### **Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan**

The project area falls substantially in Monterey County, CA. Forest lands are not subject to county planning regulations, but the project area is discussed as part of Monterey’s county-wide planning documents and addressed in their analysis of outdoor space.

The Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan ([LUP.complete.doc \(monterey.ca.us\)](#)) was developed to implement the California Coastal Act of 1976 ([California Coastal Commission](#)). The plan provides direction for Monterey County in making land use decisions in the Big Sur area, with emphasis on scenic values, natural resources and public recreational access. This plan also provides guidance to the California Coastal Commission in its review of Federal projects pursuant to the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

The 1986 Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan is currently being updated (2024). The updates are intended to address the change in conditions and new concerns that have arisen since the plan was certified, however it is recognized as a “gold standard” for this type of plan and has been



successful over the years, major revisions are not anticipated. More information on the plan updates can be found on the [Monterey County Housing and Community Development website](#).

## 2.1 PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

The Big Sur Coast Citizens Advisory Committee in providing guidance to the County established the basic philosophy and goals upon which this plan is based. In its report to the County entitled, *Philosophy and Goals for Planning*, the Committee stated:

The scenic beauty of the Big Sur Coast, and the opportunity to escape urban patterns, are prime attractions for residents and visitors alike. Man-made improvements detract from the near-wilderness attributes of the area if not individually, then collectively.

Quality should have precedence over quantity of any permitted uses, whether residential, recreational, or commercial. Any new development should remain within the small-scale, traditional, and rural values of the area, rather than to introduce new or conflicting uses.

Land use planning and management policies should be directed towards maintenance and restoration of Big Sur's remaining rural and wilderness character. Without compromising its character or depleting its resources, the area should be accessible to as many as can be accommodated.

The special cultural characteristics of the Big Sur Coast should also be recognized as a primary resource. Man's presence along this coast continues to reflect a pioneering attitude of independence and resourcefulness; the environment has been a special nurturing ground for individual and creative fulfillment. The community itself and its traditional way of life are resources that can help to protect the environment and enhance the visitor experience.

From these philosophic concerns the following basic goal was defined by the Citizens Advisory Committee:

"To preserve for posterity the incomparable beauty of the Big Sur country, its special cultural and natural resources, its landforms and seascapes and inspirational vistas. To this end, all development must harmonize with and be subordinate to the wild and natural character of the land."

## Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan, 2018-2022

Mission Statement: The State Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. We act with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

### **Major Issues in the Central Coast**

Coastal Access: Development of the Coastal Trail and public access to beaches and other protected lands remains an important goal in the Central Coast region. Demand for access continues to grow as the population of the region attracts more residents as well as visitors from other areas. There is an increasing need for visitor-serving amenities such as restrooms, staging areas, interpretive facilities, and lower-cost overnight accommodations. The Coastal Trail and regional trails that link communities to the coast benefit the region both by providing options for

non-motorized transportation, while also expanding recreation opportunities and strengthening the tourist economy.

**Agricultural and Working Lands:** The Central Coast region is one of the state's most productive agricultural areas. In addition to their economic importance, agricultural lands, and in particular rangelands, provide a number of other values such as groundwater recharge, wildlife linkages, flood water retention, open space and scenic views. Yet agricultural lands continue to be lost as the result of development or incompatible adjacent land uses. The Conservancy maintains an active agricultural preservation program and will continue to protect working lands in the Central Coast. Acquisition of conservation easements and other conservation measures are critical to ensure continued protection of agricultural lands.

**Coastal Habitat:** The Central Coast supports a broad range of habitat types from wetlands to coastal chaparral and grasslands, to redwood forests. The dunes along San Luis Bay and Monterey Bay provide a glimpse of what much of the California coast looked like historically. As elsewhere on the coast, streams and rivers and their surrounding watersheds are threatened with various types of development, as well as degraded conditions resulting from past destructive land uses or flood management actions. The Conservancy remains highly focused on preventing or repairing damage to these sensitive resources, adopting a holistic perspective that considers the needs of species, as well as overall hydrologic, geomorphic, economic and community functions. With sea level rise and other impacts of climate change, coastal habitats will experience significant stress and change. Wetlands, beaches, and dunes will be threatened with rising sea levels and limited opportunities for landward migration. The Conservancy will prioritize habitat preservation and restoration projects in the Central Coast which enhance the resiliency of the coastal environment and/or local communities.

### **2010 Monterey County General Plan, adopted October 26, 2010**

As one of the largest counties in the State of California, Monterey County covers more than 3,300 square miles and is comprised of diverse natural habitats and residential communities. The diverse landscapes range from rich farmland located within the Salinas Valley to the tall peaks of the Santa Lucia Mountains whose fast steep incline helps make up the dramatic Big Sur coastline along the Pacific Ocean. The rich agricultural land, mild climate, and spectacular coastline have made Monterey County famous throughout the world.

Although not exclusively focused on Big Sur, the Monterey County General Plan includes the Big Sur Land Use Plan (LUP) area as well as general goals and objectives applicable to Big Sur. Pursuant to the California Coastal Act (Public Resources Code Section 30000 et seq.), a portion of Monterey County is designated as a "coastal zone" and is divided into four areas governed by Land Use Plans (LUP) and Coastal Implementation Plans (CIP), which together comprise the Local Coastal Program (LCP) for Monterey County. Monterey County retains land use jurisdiction in these areas, with the Coastal Commission having appeal authority over certain issues and areas.

### **Big Sur Chamber of Commerce**

The Big Sur Chamber of Commerce provides information about lodging, camping, and beach access. The Big Sur Visitor's Guide includes information about local attractions and recreation opportunities. The guide also includes visitor information and safety tips for the handling Big Sur with care. The guide is available online at <https://www.bigsurcalifornia.org/>.

## Big Sur Sustainable Tourism Destination Stewardship Plan

A plan commissioned by the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) and Community Association of Big Sur (CABS) to maximize tourism's positive benefits and minimize any negative impacts.

### Destination Stewardship Plan Vision Statement

To protect and preserve the rugged, scenic, natural beauty of Big Sur and its cultural heritage, benefit the local economy, and foster a welcoming and sustainable community for generations to come.

This plan provides analysis and recommendations to support Big Sur to become a model for destination stewardship based upon the three key pillars of sustainable tourism:

- Environmentally friendly practices
- Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage
- Support for the economic and social wellbeing of local people.

Given that visitation will continue to grow over time, the question is, “how can tourism be managed in a way that protects Big Sur’s most precious attribute – its natural environment – while improving the local quality of life?”

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the five most common problems associated with visitation stress on a destination are growing alienation of local residents, degraded tourist experiences, insufficient infrastructure to handle visitation levels, damage to nature, and negative impacts on local ways of life and culture – all of which have been observed to varying degrees in Big Sur.

### California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Coast Highway Management Plan (CHMP, 2004)

“To provide a framework for restoring, maintaining and preserving the natural and scenic character of the corridor while continuing to operate the highway in a safe and efficient manner.” 1996 All American Road designation “generally reserved for routes considered destinations in themselves.”

### Big Sur Highway 1 Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Plan (February 2020)

Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Plan Vision: “Preserve the rugged and scenic nature of the Big Sur experience for all people through balanced, adaptive management strategies that encourage the use of transit and active transportation to enhance the travel experience and support sustainable corridor access.”

#### Plan Values:

- Organized yet independent travel experience.
- Iconic visual access is of primary importance.
- Respect for environment and community.

- Responsive and action-oriented with adaptive and innovative strategies
- Balanced
- Inclusive

## Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The California Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) focuses on access to safe parks, increasing community-based planning and health partnerships through grants.

<https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/scorp/2021>

## Other Jurisdictions

### California State Lands

California State Parks within the plan area from north to south include:

- Point Sur State Historic Park/ Marine Reserve: Point Sur lighthouse is available via guided tours The rest of the park is accessible using a trail from Andrew Molera State Park though there are no overnight facilities. These two areas protect 20 square miles of seafloor.
- Andrew Molera State Park: Largely undeveloped coast; 15 miles of trails; 24 campsites accessed through a ¼ mile hike. Reservations must be made online.
- Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park: More developed park with a lodge and visitor center; 189 campsites and short to moderate length trails through the redwoods and near the Big Sur River. It is possible to hike onto National Forest System lands from the trails here.
- Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park: two hike-in campsites, several trails (many closed due to damage from the Dolan fire) Park encompasses coastline to ridges.
- Limekiln State Park (currently closed) 30 site campground.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary/Coastal National Monument

### National Marine Sanctuaries Act of 1972.

Designated in 1992, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is a federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. Stretching from Marin to Cambria, the sanctuary encompasses a shoreline length of 276 miles and 6,094 square statute miles (4,601 square nautical miles) of ocean, extending an average distance of 30 miles from shore.

MBNMS was established for the purpose of resource protection, research, education. Public uses include commercial fishing and recreational activities like diving, kayaking, boating, and surfing. Activities that could harm the sanctuary's health—such as oil drilling, ocean dumping or seabed mining—are not allowed. (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, 2023)

### Fort Hunter Liggett Military Reservation

Limited [hunting and fishing](#) is allowed on the Reservation; however, this is a controlled access installation and individuals are subject to restrictions, including a criminal background check. [https://fthunter.isportsman.net/FreqQ\\_A.aspx](https://fthunter.isportsman.net/FreqQ_A.aspx)

## Partnerships and Initiatives

### Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council (BSMAAC)

The Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council was established following approval of the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan in 1986 to provide coordination between multiple agencies and stakeholders. The council meets quarterly for discussion and coordination of relevant local issues and projects. The council includes one representative from each of the following: the North Coast of Big Sur, the South Coast of Big Sur, the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce, the Community Association of Big Sur, the Monterey County Planning Department, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, the California Coastal Commission, Caltrans, State Parks, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the United States Forest Service, and both the 30th District State Assembly Member and the 17th District State Senator.

### Los Padres Forest Association (LPFA)

Founded in 1979, the Los Padres Forest Association is an official non-profit 501(c)(3) partner of the Los Padres National Forest. Our mission is to care for the Los Padres Forest, ensuring it thrives and remains safe and open for the people to use and enjoy. The LPFA operates the visitor center at Big Sur Station <https://lpforest.org/big-sur-station/>

### California Coastal Trail 2001, State Senate Bill 908

A resolution, ACR20, passed by the State legislature in 2000, declared that the California Coastal Trail (CCT) is an official state trail. It also required that each jurisdiction along the California coast determine an alignment for the California Coastal Trail. The intent is to provide a 1,200-mile trail along the entire California coast. The trail is not yet complete.

## Existing Information and Current Conditions

To focus on the various unique features and opportunities, the project area has been divided into four zones: North Coast, South Coast – Coastal; South Coast - Dispersed, and Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River.

The use of the term “zone” for the project area (Coastal Zone) is to differentiate the area that is the focus of this VUM planning effort from the rest of the Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. The focus of this strategy will be on visitor use that originates along Highway 1, and the associated opportunities and challenges.

The entire project area is seeing effects of increased visitor use and demand, coupled with lack of staff capacity to monitor use, educate visitors, and enforce regulations. Common problems include congestion, inexperienced or uninformed visitors without the proper skills or equipment, inappropriate behavior such as trash and human waste disposed of improperly, and demand exceeding supply.





Figure 10. Coastal Visitor Use Management Zones map

## North Coast

The North Coast zone includes the coast along Highway 1 from Brazil Ranch to Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park and extends inland to the Nacimiento Summit. The North Coast Ridge Road

traverses the inland coastal ridgelines and ends at the Ventana Wilderness boundary with multiple trailheads providing access from the coast into the Ventana Wilderness.

### **Pfeiffer Beach**



**Figure 11. Pfeiffer Beach**

Pfeiffer Beach is an iconic destination that sees high visitor use made even more popular with extensive social media attention. A narrow single lane road (Sycamore Canyon Road) connects the parking area of this concessionaire-operated site to Highway 1. The road is bounded by private property on each side. The volume of visitors often exceeds the capacity of the beach, parking, and visitor facilities. Congestion on this road presents a safety hazard for residents accessing their properties and for potential first responders. The Parks Management Company manages this area but occasionally cannot keep up with the impacts of visitation. The area of high visitor traffic to the beach is located on an important cultural site.

### **Multi-Agency Facility**



**Figure 12. Multi-Agency Facility, Big Sur Station**



Big Sur Station, a multi-agency facility, is an information hub for Big Sur Coast's high volume of visitors. There is such a high demand for services that there may be a need for alternative facilities, particularly at the south end of the project area. Often there are lines of people waiting for services, and the staff can become overwhelmed by the amount of people needing assistance.

### **Brazil Ranch**



**Figure 13. Brazil Ranch**

The Brazil Ranch was established by Tony and Margaret Brazil in the late 19th century and was operated by the Brazil family for nearly a century. In 1977, the ranch was purchased by Allen Funt the creator of the television show “Candid Camera.” Mr. Funt used the ranch to raise quarter horses and cattle and made several facilities improvements with the help of John Moon and his family. Local leaders banded together in 2001 to forestall development of the site, and in early 2002 the Trust for Public Land and other partners purchased the land. In the fall of 2002 Congress gave the U.S. Forest Service the responsibility to manage and develop the land for public use. The site is currently an operational fire station with housing for fire crews working on the district. The Big Sur Environmental Center leads hikes for the public starting at Brazil Ranch. These facilities and areas need significant repair but have unrealized potential for additional public access and education.

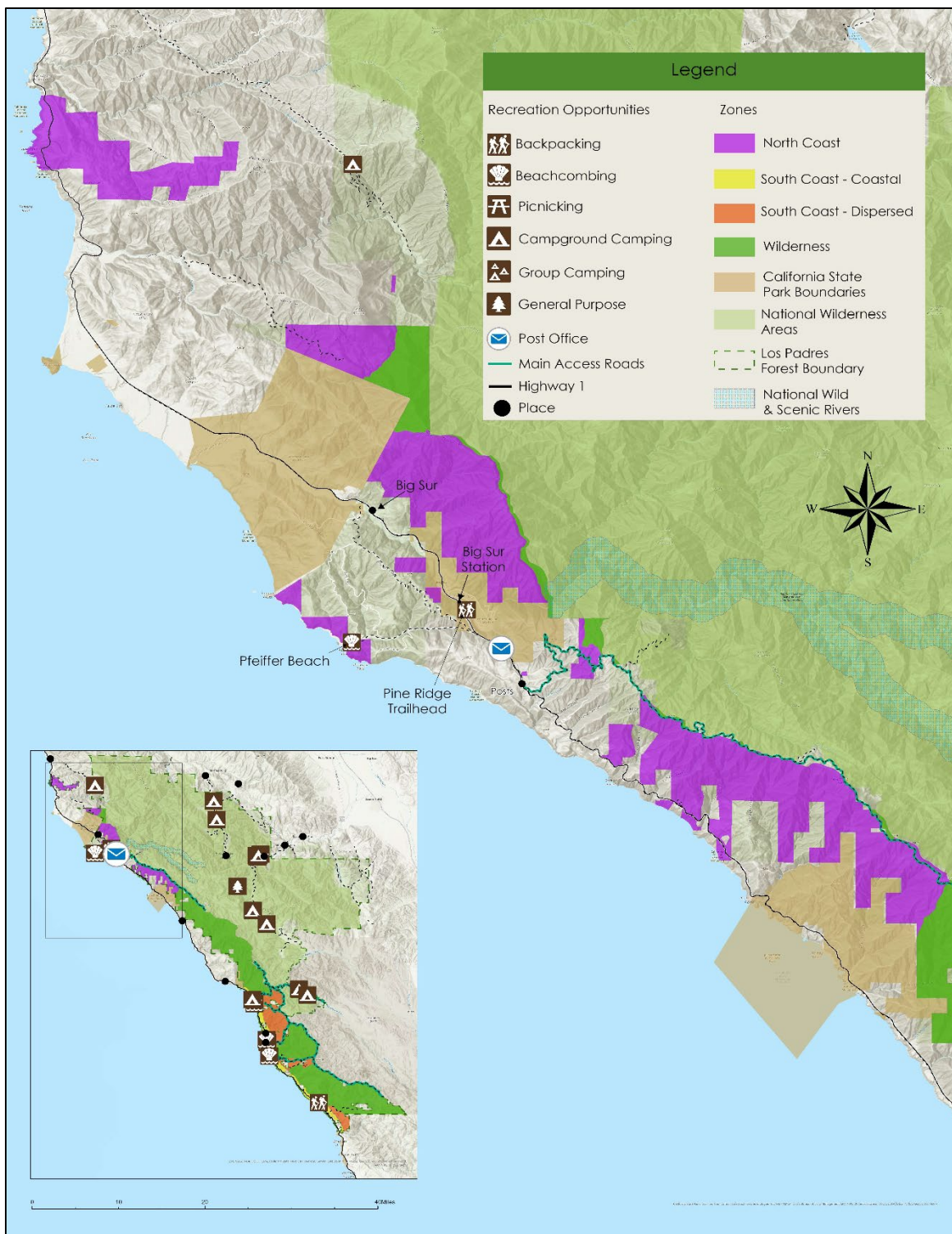


Figure 14. North Coast Visitor Use Management zone map

### South Coast – Coastal

The South Coast – Coastal Zone includes the immediate coastal areas along Highway 1 from Limekiln State Park to San Carpoforo beach and the San Luis Obispo County line. This area features several concessionaire-operated campgrounds and day-use sites with access to the beach

and outstanding scenic views. Trailheads provide access from the coast into the Silver Peak Wilderness.

### **Sand Dollar Beach and Campgrounds**



**Figure 15. Sand Dollar Beach**

Plaskett Creek Campground with campsites nestled among large Monterey Pines is concessionaire-operated campground on the east side of Highway 1. The campground is popular with families, surfers and cyclists touring Big Sur because of its scenic location and pedestrian access to Sand Dollar beach. Challenges include high demand, with very little availability on short notice, and safety for pedestrians (especially children) crossing Highway 1 on foot to access the beach.

### **San Carpoforo Beach**



**Figure 16. San Carpoforo Beach**

Dispersed camping has caused impacts to many threatened and endangered species including snowy plover nesting and to salmon habitat through visitor presence, trash, and human waste. Demand for parking here has led to safety issues with vehicles parking along the highway.



### Ranger Station/Potential Southern Portal/Trailhead



**Figure 17. Salmon Creek Station**

This is a potential location for an information hub for the south coast. The historic Salmon Creek Ranger Station (constructed in 1932) is adjacent to a trailhead and small parking lot to access the Silver Peak Wilderness. The building is in a significant state of disrepair. Lack of signage, and adjacent private property concerns can make accessing the nearby trails challenging. If renovated, this site could host an information hub for the South Coast. There is little information currently for visitors accessing Big Sur from the south. There are also few facilities (toilets, trash cans, camping).

### South Coast – Dispersed

The South Coast – Dispersed Zone includes lands east of Highway 1 accessed along the South Coast Ridge Road, including Alms Ridge, Prewitt Ridge, the Los Burros Road and its associated spur roads in the South Coast Area.

Forest roads connect Highway 1 to wooded valleys and high ridges in the general forest area. These areas offer dispersed camp sites with highly scenic and sought-after views up and down the Big Sur coast and out to sea. These roads also provide critical access for private inholdings and their residents. The roads are impassible in bad weather conditions or in cars not designed for offroad driving. Increased use has increased impacts including road damage, cutting of locks on gates, disputes with nearby landowners, camping in prohibited areas, litter, damage to vegetation and increased fire risk. Campers may be driving these roads looking for sites due to lack of availability in their preferred locations on the coast. They also may be uninformed on conditions, types of vehicles needed for roads, and in leave no trace techniques.



**Figure 18. View from South Coast Ridge Road**



Figure 19. South Coast Ridge Road

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy



Figure 20. South Coast Visitor Use Management Zone map

## Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River

Portions of the Ventana Wilderness overlap the project area in the North Coast zone and portions of the Silver Peak Wilderness overlap the South Coast-Dispersed zone. The VUM strategy focuses on visitor use into the wilderness areas that originates from the coast. Both wildernesses offer rugged terrain, opportunities for solitude and self-reliance, amazing scenery, and a unique experience involving coastal mountains/long distance hiking not offered elsewhere.

The Pine Ridge Trailhead is a key access point for the Ventana Wilderness. It provides opportunities for long loop hikes or day trips. The trail is challenging; visitors should be prepared for river crossings and considerable changes in grade and elevation. The high volume of visitors means parking is limited and there is competition for the available campsites. The hot springs at Sykes, ten miles from the trailhead, draws visitors who are often unprepared for the hike or unaware of proper leave no trace techniques.



**Figure 21. Ventana Wilderness**

Both wildernesses have trails that climb high above the coast with unique views of the rugged peaks and ocean. Thermal springs, waterfalls, and coastal redwood stands are some of the reasons people visit these areas. A high level of self-reliance and navigation skills are needed in some locations. The challenges associated with these wilderness areas are, as mentioned above, inadequate preparation by users, concentrated use, high levels of encounters, campsite impacts in some areas, and vehicle trespass into wilderness off of Forest roads for camping. In addition, trails near Highway 1 have limited parking, which creates congestion and safety issues with people parking on the highway and walking to the trailhead.

The Big Sur Wild and Scenic River designation begins in the wilderness and ends at the boundary between the wilderness and Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park. The river can be seen from the trail and must be crossed several times to get to Sykes Camp. There are occasions when the river is running high enough that crossing is challenging. Campsites located along the riverbanks are causing erosion into the water.

Current road closures have eliminated some access points to wilderness, causing concentration of use in other areas of the wilderness. Gaining access to some trails forces visitors to hike through neighborhoods, or to end up on a closed road miles from services.



## Public Involvement Summary

Public workshops were held to gather input on recreation trends and visitor use, identify core values, understand existing conditions and issues, frame a common agenda for management of the project area, and to gather input on potential management strategies and actions.

The first workshop was focused on the existing and desired conditions and was held at the Big Sur Lodge Conference Center on June 8, 2022, from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm and was attended by approximately 75 people. Opportunities for public input were also available through the [Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map](#) and by email to the project team.



Figure 22. Public Workshop at Big Sur Lodge

Prior to the first workshop, the Ventana Wilderness Alliance and Community Association of Big Sur sent out surveys to their individual organizations to gather input primarily around existing conditions, issues, and concerns. Information from the surveys was considered and incorporated during development of this strategy, along with input from the public workshop.



Figure 23. Public workshops at (left) Big Sur Lodge, and (right) Pacific Valley School

Following the first public workshop, we drafted the desired condition statements to reflect public input. The statements also tier from the existing desired conditions in the Los Padres Forest Plan and other relevant planning documents. The draft desired conditions were available for review in September through early October on the Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Story Map, at the Big Sur Library, and copies were provided at the August 26, 2022, Big Sur Multi-Agency Advisory Council meeting. This initial public input also included many thoughts and ideas that were incorporated into draft management strategies and actions.

The second set of workshops focused on potential management strategies and actions and gathering input on additional ideas to help achieve the desired conditions for the area. A virtual workshop was held online via Microsoft Teams on August 3, 2023, in-person workshops were held at the Big Sur Lodge Conference Center on August 8, 2023, and at Pacific Valley School on August 10, 2023. Each meeting was held from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Each of the three meetings were attended by approximately 40 to 50 people.

Input from the second set of public workshops helped to refine potential management strategies and actions. Overarching priorities that were brought forward during the meetings are for increased Forest Service presence on-the-ground, increased patrol to enforce existing regulations, improved information and education, and maintenance of existing facilities. Many participants also noted the need for additional restroom and trash facilities and parking.

Summaries of public input from each of the public workshops are included in appendix B.

## **Element 2: Define Visitor Use Management Direction**

### **Desired Conditions and Appropriate Visitor Activities, Facilities, and Services**

Following are the desired conditions for recreation and visitor use within the project area. The desired conditions are presented for partnerships and the larger Big Sur area, the overall project area, and the four project zones that include North Coast, South Coast – Coastal, South Coast – Dispersed, and Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River.

Desired conditions are statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that the Forest would strive to achieve and maintain in a particular area. They describe what the area should look like, feel like, sound like, and function like. Desired conditions do not say how an area would be managed; management actions are described later in this document. In some cases, an area may already be meeting these conditions, and others may be future-oriented.

Following the desired conditions statements are the types of visitor activities, facilities, and visitor services that are consistent with and complement desired conditions for each zone. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but, rather, to provide some examples to help convey a more complete picture of the types of programs, facilities, and management we believe will best support the desired conditions for the area.

### **Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur Area**

Visitors are informed and educated as they arrive or prior to their visit, enabling them to choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels. Visitors experience a sense of awe, respect, and appreciation for the outstanding scenery, natural and cultural resources, and sense of place.

Collaboration efforts and partnerships are robust between residents, business owners, non-profit partners and volunteers, state and county agencies, and environmental organizations. Visitor information is timely, readily available, and accurate.

### **Overall project area**

Visitors experience Forest Service lands in Big Sur in a way that is centered on learning about the rich prehistory, history, and cultural traditions of the area. Acknowledgement of cultural landscapes is presented to visitors which pays respect and honors the traditional custodians and ancestors of this place.

The area offers refuge from everyday life challenges for the mind and body and the rejuvenation, relaxation, and renewal fostered by immersion in a stunning landscape with little development on Forest Service lands. In contrast to the amenities offered in adjacent Big Sur lands, the Forest includes rustic facilities and a large, remote expanse where self-reliance and backcountry skills are needed. A feeling of serenity and an authentic connection to nature and place is possible, particularly in areas distant from Highway 1.

The threat of uncontrolled human-caused wildfire is reduced for visitors and residents to the greatest extent possible, while protecting the sacred, cultural, and natural resources on the landscape.

Recreation activities do not significantly detract from the natural character of the forest or significantly impact or contribute to the degradation of resources such as scenery, cultural resources, soils, and vegetation, including native plants utilized by tribes and wildlife; or contribute to user conflicts. Visitors are aware of the importance of protecting natural and cultural resources, sensitive and endangered species, and threats from invasive species and how they can reduce their impact. Recreational activities do not prevent the landscape from recovering after fire events.

The backcountry trail system brings hikers to scenic ocean vistas, redwood groves and rolling grasslands. Travel is often challenging and remote feeling when several miles from Highway 1 and more social at destination points and near trailheads. Access and parking may occasionally be difficult at times of higher demand.

To meet increasing demand, the highest and best use of existing public lands and facilities is identified to balance capacity across areas with untapped potential and areas currently above capacity.

The transportation system and its use have no or minimal impacts on resources including threatened and endangered species, sensitive species, native plants, cultural landscapes and resources, watersheds, and aquatic species.

A wide variety of visually appealing, resilient landscapes are enjoyed by visitors and residents. These inspiring landscapes feature the diverse ecosystems and outstanding scenic attributes of Big Sur.

Backcountry visitors will arrive in Big Sur and confidently know the availability and legitimacy of existing campsites that they are capable of accessing. Dust, traffic, resource damage and carbon footprint will be reduced in the backcountry by responsible use.

## North Coast

### Brazil Ranch

Existing Program Emphasis from Forest Plan:

The Brazil Ranch will be a place for conference and educational opportunities focused on environmental conservation, stewardship, and sustainability. Managed public access and recreation opportunities will be provided. Traditional land uses and resource conservation activities can be showcased and studied. Other small-scale special uses may be authorized.

### Multi Agency Facility and Pine Ridge Trailhead

This area serves as an information hub for the Coastal Zone; visitors are presented with timely, accurate information that will allow them to make informed choices about their recreational activities. Parking is typically available and trailhead information gives a clear picture of what visitors can expect on the trail.

### Pfeiffer Beach/Sycamore Canyon

Access to Pfeiffer Beach is through a slow-paced and enjoyable drive from Highway 1. Traffic flow allows adequate ingress and egress for residents to easily reach their homes. During non-peak visitation times, the beach allows room for several groups to stroll, take photographs, or enjoy stunning offshore views of surf and rock formations. It is possible to feel remote from the busy areas of Big Sur. Facilities are rustic and minimal yet provide for basic visitor comfort.

Peak-visitation weekends offer a more communal experience with more encounters; however, people still enjoy the beach and time spent in nature. Partners and the forest work together to manage the highly valued resource and minimize user conflicts.

### North Coast appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services

Activities: scenic driving, day-use beach access, picnicking, photography, hiking, backpacking

Facilities: Visitor information center, information or interpretive kiosks, parking areas, restrooms, trailheads, trails, signs

Services: Visitor information and education, law enforcement, commercial/concession operations, online information, guided activities may be appropriate with a permit

## South Coast Coastal

Visitors experience a modified natural environment with developed but rustic visitor facilities. Visitation levels are high and encounters with other visitors are routine. Visitors of all physical ability levels can enjoy this area and have opportunities to learn about area resources. Knowledge of outdoor skills or self-sufficiency would not be needed in most areas. Visitor comforts and basic needs are met.

Developed campgrounds and day use areas are safe, clean, and welcoming, with opportunities for families and friends to socialize.

Visitors are informed and educated as they arrive or prior to their visit, enabling them to choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels.



### **Sand Dollar Beach**

Visitors can enjoy a long, uninterrupted stretch of sand and sea, with iconic views of rugged cliffs and opportunities for challenging surfing and family friendly day use activities close to amenities.

### **San Carpoforo Beach**

Visitors can enjoy activities such as sightseeing and relaxing in an undeveloped beach environment, close to the highway yet with a wild and remote feel once people leave the road. Snowy plovers and salmon thrive in a largely undisturbed ecosystem, with clean water and healthy, native vegetation that is not impacted by visitor use. Dogs are controlled during visits and do not present hazards to wildlife.

There may be times when demand exceeds the parking availability for this location.

### **South Coast – Coastal appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services**

Activities: scenic driving, day-use beach access, camping in designated areas or developed campgrounds, surfing, photography, hiking

Facilities: rustic facilities including developed campgrounds, visitor information center or contact station, trailheads, trails, restrooms, signs

Services: Visitor information and education, law enforcement, commercial/concession operations, online information, guided activities may be appropriate with a permit.

### **South Coast – Dispersed**

The area offers opportunities for uncrowded, dispersed primitive camping and sightseeing, with campsites clean and free of trash and human waste and with sweeping ocean views as a backdrop. There is a feeling of “getting away from it all” for those who are prepared and skilled in backcountry travel. Dispersed campsites accessed by the road system can be found on durable surfaces and in low density, so that campers can mostly escape the sights and sounds of others except for passing vehicles.

Visitors know where and how to camp and travel in these remote areas, including recognizing and respecting wilderness boundaries and private property. The environment is resilient to impacts from recreational use.

Visitors and residents share a mutual respect for the landscape and each other; and a recognition of the importance of shared stewardship of the resource. Private land and wilderness boundaries are clearly understood and respected. Prior to embarking on a drive inland from the coast, visitors have adequate information to understand what the recreational experience will be like, regulations for the area, and what skills and equipment are needed.

The road system offers opportunities for challenge and exploration, while remaining sustainable relative to the amount of traffic it receives. While some roads may be closed or restricted, there are other maintained roads available. Information on the types of vehicles appropriate for travel on them, as well as their maintenance level and the recreational opportunities they access is accurate and easily available. Facilities and enforcement of regulations are adequate and appropriate for visitor use and volume.

### **South Coast dispersed appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services**

Activities: dispersed and/or designated primitive camping, scenic driving on four-wheel-drive roads, hiking, hang gliding, photography

Facilities: dispersed and/or designated campsites with minimal facilities to protect the resources, backcountry roads, trails, signs

Services: Visitor information and education, law enforcement, volunteer ranger presence, limited concession operation if needed for campsite management, guided activities may be appropriate with a permit.

### **Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River**

Visitors leave with an increased appreciation for the people who lived there before us, for the ecological function of the wilderness, the wild and scenic river's outstandingly remarkable values and the other natural, cultural, and scenic resources in this area.

#### **Pine Ridge Trail to Sykes Camp and Connecting Trails:**

Visitors travel a narrow, footpath, providing a sense of remoteness and discovery, with occasional breathtaking views of the far-off Pacific Ocean.

Signs of human modification of the natural and cultural landscape are minimal to support a sense of discovery and immersion in a natural habitat with rolling hills, redwoods, dense vegetation, far-off ocean vistas, and picturesque peaks. Visitors are aware of how to have a safe, enjoyable experience. Amenities and services within these areas support basic visitor access and navigation of trails but are minimal. Experiences range from remote feeling to occasional encounters with others. However, visitors are able to reach their intended destinations with minimal crowding and conflicts.

Campsites are situated in durable locations that do not contribute to disturbances to cultural resources, erosion or sediment delivery to the wild and scenic river. As night falls, campers can experience dark, starry skies and can hear the sound of a free-flowing river.

The majority of both wilderness areas are characterized by unconfined recreation and a sense of freedom; if restrictions are in place, they are the minimum necessary to protect cultural and natural resources and enhance wilderness character and wild and scenic river values. The overall goal for both wildernesses is to preserve and protect wilderness character.

In other areas of the wildernesses outside of popular trails, access may be challenging and trails difficult. Solitude, remoteness, natural quiet, and a chance to use wilderness skills such as navigation and route-finding characterize these areas. Encounters with others may be low; the sounds of birds, wildlife, and wind dominate rather than human-made noise.

### **Wilderness-appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services**

Activities: hiking, primitive camping, photography, viewing natural and cultural resources

Facilities: trails, minimal signs

Services: wilderness ranger, visitor information and education, trail maintenance

## Indicators and Thresholds

Indicators translate the broad description of desired conditions into measurable attributes that can be tracked over time to evaluate change in conditions. Thresholds ensure that conditions remain acceptable for the selected indicator. Indicators are defined as specific resource or experiential attributes that can be measured to track changes in conditions so that progress toward achieving and maintaining desired conditions can be assessed. Thresholds are defined as minimally acceptable conditions associated with each indicator.

Monitoring is conducted to track the indicators over time and inform management actions. This is an iterative process of monitoring, implementing adaptive strategies, and then continuing to monitor to gauge effectiveness of management actions that allows managers to maximize benefits for visitors while achieving and maintaining desired conditions for resources and visitor experiences in a dynamic setting.

Below are suggested indicators and thresholds to be incorporated into site-specific monitoring plans as needed, all indicators may not need to be monitored every year.

### Entire Project Area

**Indicator:** Indigenous land acknowledgement recognized

**Threshold:** At least two efforts per year to acknowledge cultural landscapes\*

\*This can include educational presentations, information at trailheads and developed sites, website acknowledgements, or other method that is approved by Tribes.

This indicator tracks the desired condition for visitors to experience Forest Service lands in Big Sur in a way that is centered on learning about the rich prehistory, history and cultural traditions of the area. Acknowledgement of cultural landscapes is presented to visitors which pays respect and honors the traditional custodians and ancestors of this place. Educational and interpretive efforts will enable visitors to leave with an increased appreciation for the people who lived here before us.

**Indicator:** Partnership collaborations or agreements in place

**Threshold:** At least one active partnership in place per year\*

\*This can include volunteer agreements between organizations, informal collaborations with outcomes identified, or agreements between agencies to improve and enhance conditions.

This indicator relates to the desired condition that collaboration efforts and partnerships are robust between residents, business owners, non-profit partners and volunteers, state and county agencies, and environmental organizations. Partnerships will be critical to the success of many aspects of this strategy.

**Indicator:** Forms of education/information available to Big Sur visitors

**Threshold:** At least two forms of NEW focused education/information is provided for visitors per year\*

\*Focus would include identifying the main issues/areas for that year that need attention based on observations and field reports. Education can come from any partner, organization, or collaborative, as well as the federal agency.

This indicator tracks the desired condition that visitors are informed and educated as they arrive or prior to their visit, enabling them to choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels.

**Indicator:** Human caused, recreation related wildfires per year

**Threshold:** No more than 1 per five-year period\*

\*This could lead to a management action of no campfires allowed or only in certain places

This indicator would help track wildfire risk associated with recreational use. This relates to the desired condition that the threat of uncontrolled human-caused wildfire is reduced for visitors and residents to the greatest extent possible.

## North Coast

*Sycamore Canyon Road/Pfeiffer Beach specific indicators:*

**Indicator:** Drive time on Sycamore Canyon Road

**Threshold:** 80 percent of the time the total drive time to Pfeiffer Beach is 15-20 minutes

This indicator would address traffic congestion and conflict between visitor and residential traffic on Sycamore Canyon Road. The desired condition is that access to Pfeiffer Beach is through a slow-paced and enjoyable drive from Highway 1. Traffic flow allows adequate ingress and egress for residents to easily reach their homes.

**Indicator:** Number of People at one time on the beach

\*This indicator would be especially important if a shuttle system is in place due to an influx of a larger groups of potentially 10-20 per shuttle vs the average group size of 2.2 per car.

**Threshold:** Baseline is 65 parking spaces x 2.2 people average group size = 143 People at One Time (PAOT) within the recreation site when the parking lot is full.

\*Los Padres NVUM 2019 average group size is 2.2 people. The beach is approximately one mile long.

This indicator tracks the desired condition for visitor experience: During non-peak visitation times, the beach allows room for several groups to stroll, take photographs, or enjoy stunning offshore views of surf and rock formations. Peak-visitation weekends offer a more communal experience with more encounters; however, people still enjoy the beach and time spent in nature.

*Multi-Agency Facility/Big Sur Station specific indicators:*

**Indicator:** Resources available for information at the multi-agency facility

**Threshold:** 80 percent of the time, there are enough resources to assist visitors (wait time for in person help is 15 minutes or less).

This indicator addresses the desired condition that the multi-agency facility serves as an information hub for the Coastal Zone; visitors are presented with timely, accurate information that will allow them to make informed choices about their recreational activities.

**Indicator:** Day use parking available

**Threshold:** Day use parking is full or over capacity no more than two days per week during the high use season.

This indicator addresses the desired condition for the multi-agency facility/Pine Ridge Trailhead that parking is typically available.

## **South Coast Coastal**

**Indicator:** Illegal camping incidents, where forest order is in place

**Threshold:** No more than 1-2 per month year-round

\*Threshold could be increased during educational period when new forest orders are put into place.

This indicator tracks enforcement of forest orders.

### ***San Carpoforo Beach specific indicators:***

**Indicator:** Number of Western Snowy Plover nests, eggs, and chicks observed during breeding season (March – September).

**Threshold:** Monitor to establish baseline, no downward trend over time

**Indicator:** Number of incidents of dogs off-leash observed during breeding season (March-September).

**Threshold:** Monitor to establish baseline, no upward trend over time

This indicator tracks the desired condition for San Carpoforo beach that Snowy plovers and salmon thrive in a largely undisturbed ecosystem, with clean water and healthy, native vegetation that is not impacted by visitor use.

## **South Coast – Dispersed**

**Indicator:** Number of improperly disposed human waste, trash sites by specified area

**Threshold:** No more than five incidents per specific area per high use season

**Indicator:** Vehicle density: number of vehicles passing by a point (traffic counters)

**Threshold:** Monitor to establish baseline for high use season and determine appropriate threshold by road.

**Indicator:** Number of illegal campfires

**Threshold:** Two to three illegal campfires or unattended campfires per high use season, if monitoring shows that illegal campfires are becoming more frequent, the action could be further fire restrictions (in whole project area indicators)

**Indicator:** User created, new campsites

**Threshold:** No more than two new user created campsites identified in south coast dispersed area per high use season (this could be more restrictive in areas where designated dispersed camping is implemented)



**Indicator:** Large groups (75 or more people) occurring in the same area without a special use permit

**Threshold:** No more than one incident per high use season

**Indicator:** Number of vehicles that get stuck on National Forest System roads and require assistance per season

**Threshold:** Number of assists per season (based on current typical number as a starting point)

All of the indicators for the South Coast Dispersed zone relate to reducing impacts associated with dispersed camping, off-road vehicle use, and campfires. This relates to the desired conditions describing opportunities for uncrowded, dispersed primitive camping and sightseeing, with campsites clean and free of trash and human waste. Dispersed campsites accessed by the road system can be found on durable surfaces and in low density, so that campers can mostly escape the sights and sounds of others except for passing vehicles. Visitors know where and how to camp and travel in these remote areas, including recognizing and respecting wilderness boundaries and private property. The environment is resilient to impacts from recreational use.

## **Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River**

**Indicator:** Total number of campsites at Sykes Camp

**Threshold:** No more than # campsites (appropriate number to be determined through updated campsite inventory of the sustainable and durable campsites)

**Indicator:** New user-created sites that contribute to erosion to the river

**Threshold:** No more than two new sites per season

**Indicator:** Encounters with other parties in key locations (this could point to the need for a day use permit system)

**Threshold:** ROS encounters: Primitive: Typically, six or less encounters with other parties on trails, and less than three parties visible from camping sites.; Semi-primitive nonmotorized: Usually, 6-15 encounters with other parties on trails, six or less parties visible from camping sites. LPNF S1- The maximum visitor group size is 25 people.

**Indicator:** Motor vehicle intrusions

**Threshold:** zero tolerance; no intrusions observed over each year

All of the indicators relate to management of the wilderness and wild and scenic rivers in accordance with the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and support the desired condition that experiences range from remote feeling to occasional encounters with others. However, visitors are able to reach their intended destinations with minimal crowding and conflicts. Campsites are situated in durable locations that do not contribute to disturbances to cultural resources, erosion or sediment delivery to the wild and scenic river.

## Element 3: Identify Management Strategies

Visitor use management is the proactive and adaptive process for managing characteristics of visitor use and the natural and managerial setting using a variety of strategies and tools to achieve and maintain desired resource conditions and visitor experiences (IVUMC). Visitor use characteristics include the amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including visitor activities and behaviors. The primary goal of visitor use management is to maintain opportunities for high-quality visitor experiences while protecting natural and cultural resources.

### Differences Between Existing and Desired Conditions and Links to Visitor Use Characteristics

The tables provided in this section describe the gap between existing and desired conditions and consider potential causes or specific links to visitor use characteristics. This analysis helps to identify where management strategies or actions may be needed to move an area toward achieving the desired conditions. Some of the common reasons an area may not be meeting desired condition include:

- Type of visitor activity
- Behavior of visitors
- Inappropriate visitor attitudes or different expectations
- Timing of use
- Duration of stay
- Location of use
- Inadequate site durability
- Spatial distribution of visitation
- Amount of use

**Table 2: Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur area gap analysis**

<b>Desired Conditions – Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur area</b>	<b>Existing Conditions</b>	<b>Gap- difference between desired and existing conditions</b>	<b>Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b>
<p>Visitors are informed and educated as they arrive or prior to their visit, enabling them to choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels. Visitors experience a sense of awe, respect and appreciation for the outstanding scenery, natural and cultural resources, and sense of place.</p>	<p>Travel and tourism organizations currently highlight the outstanding resources and recreation opportunities in Big Sur. However on-site, real-time information about availability of different experiences, and skill levels required for backcountry opportunities may be lacking.</p>	<p>Online and on-site information to help visitors choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels, with real-time updates could be enhanced.</p>	<p>High number of visitors traveling into the area on Hwy 1 with a wide variety of expectations. Current communication methods do not allow for coordinated real-time updates.</p>
<p>Collaboration efforts and partnerships are robust between residents, business owners, non-profit partners and volunteers, state and county agencies, and environmental organizations. Visitor information is timely, readily available, and accurate.</p>	<p>The foundation for collaborative efforts is well established and focused through the Big Sur Multi Agency Advisory Committee, with members from local, county, state, and federal organizations. The committee facilitates communication and coordination among the governmental agencies that have jurisdiction within the Big Sur Area and the residents and landowners of the area.</p>	<p>Coordination of visitor information could be enhanced, especially regarding real-time availability of camping and lodging accommodations across different providers and messaging about opportunities and appropriate visitor behaviors and land use ethics.</p>	<p>Multiple jurisdictions and providers of a variety of opportunities.</p>

**Table 3. Overall project area gap analysis**

Desired Conditions – Overall Project Area	Existing Conditions	Gap- difference between desired and existing conditions	Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)
<p>Visitors experience Forest Service lands in Big Sur in a way that is centered on learning about the rich prehistory, history and cultural traditions of the area. Acknowledgement of cultural landscapes is presented to visitors which pays respect and honors the traditional custodians and ancestors of this place.</p>	<p>Visitors who take the time to research or study the area prior to visiting are able to learn. Information on cultural landscapes is not always easy to find for a casual visitor.</p>	<p>Information is available but may not reach many visitors.</p>	<p>Type of visitor use is centered around recreation pursuits and visitor information is often focused on providing this type of facts (locations, attractions)</p>
<p>The area offers refuge from everyday life challenges for the mind and body and the rejuvenation, relaxation, and renewal fostered by immersion in a stunning landscape with little development on Forest Service lands. In contrast to the amenities offered in adjacent Big Sur lands, the Forest includes rustic facilities and a large, remote expanse where self-reliance and backcountry skills are needed. A feeling of serenity and an authentic connection to nature and place is possible, particularly in areas distant from Highway 1.</p>	<p>This desired condition is likely true for many people, but increasing and unconstrained recreation use is threatening this.</p>	<p>Some visitors come with expectations that are not met because they anticipate facilities/convenience that do not exist</p>	<p>Visitor attitudes, expectations, and lack of distinction between providers</p>
<p>The threat of uncontrolled human-caused wildfire is reduced for visitors and residents to the greatest extent possible, while protecting the sacred, cultural and natural resources on the landscape.</p>	<p>People camping in dispersed areas commonly have campfires, even at prohibited times.</p>	<p>The threat of uncontrolled human-caused wildfire is high due to the desire for campfires and disregard for regulations, as well as the high number of campers during the fire season. There is a need to “change the culture” around campfires in some areas at risk</p>	<p>Inappropriate visitor expectations and attitudes. Lack of enforcement.</p>



Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

Desired Conditions – Overall Project Area	Existing Conditions	Gap- difference between desired and existing conditions	Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)
<p>Recreation activities do not significantly detract from the natural character of the forest or significantly impact or contribute to the degradation of resources such as scenery, cultural resources, soils, and vegetation, including native plants utilized by tribes and wildlife; or contribute to user conflicts. Visitors are aware of the importance of protecting natural and cultural resources, sensitive and endangered species, and threats from invasive species and how they can reduce their impact. Recreational activities do not prevent the landscape from recovering after fire events.</p>	<p>This desired condition is being met in some areas; there are specific areas of high concentration where visitor use is affecting natural resources.</p>	<p>Dispersed camping is affecting natural resources; the demand for this activity exceeds supply, leading to vegetation loss, wilderness intrusions, erosion, user-created trails, and sanitation problems.</p>	<p>Visitor expectations and attitudes; lack of real-time information on campsite availability; lack of knowledge and/or stewardship ethic. Lack of low to moderate cost camping opportunities in the area. Lack of enforcement.</p>
<p>The backcountry trail system brings hikers to scenic ocean vistas, redwood groves and rolling grasslands. Travel is often challenging and remote feeling when several miles from Highway 1 and more social at destination points and near trailheads. Access and parking may occasionally be difficult at times of higher demand.</p>	<p>This desired condition is being met in most locations. At locations close to Highway 1, there can be congestion and crowding. As visitors travel further into the backcountry the experience becomes more remote. As demand increases, this situation may change.</p>	<p>The desired condition and existing condition are similar in most trail system areas</p>	<p>Steep, long trails and little access; increasing popularity on social media may change this</p>
<p>To meet increasing demand, the highest and best use of existing public lands and facilities is identified to balance capacity across areas with untapped potential and areas currently above capacity.</p>	<p>There are several areas that are not being used to their fullest potential such as Brazil Ranch and Salmon Creek Station while other popular areas such as Pfeiffer Beach, developed campgrounds and day use areas, and dispersed camping areas are consistently full or above capacity</p>	<p>There are opportunities to explore use of existing public lands where visitation is low and may be able to relieve pressure from higher use areas, and opportunities to implement management strategies to better manage high use areas.</p>	<p>The untapped potential is likely due to staffing limitations, budgetary capacity for repair and reconstruction and lack of long-term plans for providing and marketing recreation opportunities in a way that connects the visitors with opportunities that match their expectations and desired experience.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

Desired Conditions – Overall Project Area	Existing Conditions	Gap- difference between desired and existing conditions	Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)
<p>The transportation system and its use have no or minimal impacts on resources including threatened and endangered species, sensitive species, native plants, cultural landscapes and resources, watersheds, and aquatic species.</p>	<p>Sections of roads such as Prewitt Ridge Road, Alms Ridge Road, and Plaskett Road cannot support the volume and type of traffic they receive; resulting in soil and vegetation impacts related to dust, off road use, proliferation of dispersed campsites, etc.</p>	<p>Impacts to the road system are causing a strain on Forest Service ability to keep up with annual maintenance needs and response to seasonal flooding and slide events.</p>	<p>Soil conditions, road development level, high number of miles to maintain, use of roads higher than design standards. Limited Forest Service Road maintenance budget</p>
<p>A wide variety of visually appealing, resilient landscapes are enjoyed by visitors and residents. These inspiring landscapes feature the diverse ecosystems and outstanding scenic attributes of Big Sur.</p>	<p>This desired condition is being met – efforts to improve forest resilience are ongoing (such as prescribed fire treatments and post fire and flood restoration efforts)</p>	<p>The desired condition and existing condition are similar in most areas.</p>	<p>There is an emphasis on maintaining scenic landscapes within all levels of management direction that apply to the project area.</p>
<p>Backcountry visitors will arrive in Big Sur and confidently know the availability and legitimacy of existing campsites that they are capable of accessing. Dust, traffic, resource damage and carbon footprint will be reduced in the backcountry by responsible use.</p>	<p>Visitors are frequently driving on forest roads in hopes of finding campsites, vehicles often inadequate for road conditions, information about backcountry road conditions is not readily available on-site. Road conditions are being impacted by the amount of traffic. This desired condition is very far from being met.</p>	<p>Use of forest roads far exceeds the desired condition in terms of impacts.</p>	<p>High demand for dispersed camping experience on ridges with coastal views, inability to find camping opportunities on the coast leading to higher numbers seeking dispersed campsites, lack of knowledge of road conditions and what is required for responsible use of these unique areas.</p>

**Table 4. North Coast gap analysis**

<p><b>Desired Conditions - North Coast</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics.  (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p><b>Brazil Ranch:</b>  Existing Program Emphasis from Forest Plan: The Brazil Ranch will be a place for conference and educational opportunities focused on environmental conservation, stewardship, and sustainability. Managed public access and recreation opportunities will be provided. Traditional land uses and resource conservation activities can be showcased and studied. Other small-scale special uses may be authorized.  Brazil Ranch will educate the visitor on the history, environment and traditional uses of the site and the larger area. Visitors will have a high number of encounters in a highly managed environment but be able to access more remote experiences from the site.</p>	<p>In early 2002 the Trust for Public Land and other partners purchased the land. In the fall of 2002 Congress gave the U.S. Forest Service the responsibility to manage and develop the land for public use. The site is currently an operational fire station with housing for fire crews working on the district.  The Big Sur Environmental Center leads hikes for the public starting at Brazil Ranch. This facility and area have unrealized potential for additional public access and education. Buildings and other structures need critical repair. The site should be evaluated for historic significance.</p>	<p>This facility and area have unrealized potential for additional public access, education, and recreation opportunities.  Buildings and other structures need significant repair.</p>	<p>Lack of Forest Service staff capacity to plan and manage additional public use.  Need for a plan to guide management and identify opportunities for this area.  Need collaborative partners with management and conservation education experience and capacity.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<p><b>Desired Conditions - North Coast</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics.  (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p><b>Multi Agency Facility and Pine Ridge Trailhead:</b></p> <p>This area serves as an information hub for the Coastal Zone; visitors are presented with timely, accurate information that will allow them to make informed choices about their recreational activities. Parking is typically available and trailhead information gives a clear picture of what visitors can expect on the trail.</p>	<p>This multi-agency facility is an information hub for the Big Sur Coast's high volume of visitors. Often there are lines of people waiting for services, and the staff can become overwhelmed by the amount of people needing assistance.</p> <p>There is such a high demand for services that there may be a need for alternative facilities, particularly at the south end of the project area.</p>	<p>There may be a need to increase staff at the Multi Agency Facility, or provide additional "self-help" information, volunteers, etc. to meet the high demand for visitor information in this location.</p> <p>Accurate and timely information would be enhanced through coordination of real time information as noted in the desired conditions for Partnerships and the larger Big Sur area.</p> <p>Parking is often limited during the busy season.</p>	<p>High demand for visitor information as people are traveling into the area from the north; the only real place for easily accessible information in one spot so it concentrates use.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<p><b>Desired Conditions - North Coast</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics.</b> <b>(Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p><b>Pfeiffer/Sycamore Canyon:</b></p> <p>Access to Pfeiffer Beach is through a slow-paced and enjoyable drive from Highway 1. Traffic flow allows adequate ingress and egress for residents to easily reach their homes. During non-peak visitation times, the beach allows room for several groups to stroll, take photographs, or enjoy stunning offshore views of surf and rock formations. It is possible to feel remote from the busy areas of Big Sur. Facilities are rustic and minimal yet provide for basic visitor comfort.</p> <p>Peak-visitation weekends offer a more communal experience with more encounters; however, people still enjoy the beach and time spent in nature. Partners and the forest work together to manage the highly valued resource and minimize user conflicts.</p>	<p>Pfeiffer Beach is an iconic destination that sees high visitor use made even more popular with extensive social media attention. A narrow single lane road (Sycamore Canyon Road) connects the parking area of this concessionaire-operated site to Highway 1. The road is bounded by private property on each side. The volume of visitors often exceeds the capacity of the beach, parking, and visitor facilities. People are occasionally directed to a pullout to wait for access, which adds to confusion and safety concerns. Pedestrian and bicycle use on Sycamore Canyon Road is not allowed for safety reasons. Congestion on this road presents a safety hazard for residents accessing their properties and for potential first responders. The Parks Management Company manages this area but occasionally cannot keep up with the impacts of visitation. The area of high visitor traffic to the beach is located on an important cultural site.</p>	<p>High visitor uses and road congestion conflict with the ability to experience a slow-paced and enjoyable drive.</p> <p>Heavy traffic along the narrow road conflicts with ingress and egress for residents' access to private property.</p>	<p>Popularity of this iconic beach destination, desire from visitors to experience this location along the coast partially driven by social media promotion.</p> <p>Demand for parking exceeds available parking spots, narrow road with limited pullouts causes congestion.</p> <p>Lack of information about road conditions and parking availability prior to reaching the turn off for Sycamore Canyon Road.</p>



**Table 5. South Coast – Coastal gap analysis**

<p><b>South Coast - Coastal Desired Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause(s) Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p>Visitors experience a modified natural environment with developed but rustic visitor facilities. Visitation levels are high and encounters with other visitors are routine. Visitors of all physical ability levels can enjoy this area and learn about its natural and cultural resources. Need for advanced outdoor skills or self-sufficiency would be low in most areas. Visitor comforts and basic needs are met.</p>	<p>Desired conditions are generally being achieved in this zone in terms of visitor experience.</p>	<p>Visitor information, interpretation, parking, and restroom facilities may not be adequate to meet needs.</p>	<p>Lack of visitor information portal for the south coast.  High demand for parking and facilities along HWY 1.</p>
<p>Developed campgrounds and day use areas are safe, clean, and welcoming, with opportunities for families and friends to socialize.</p>	<p>Plaskett Creek Campground with campsites nestled among large Monterey Pines is a concessionaire-operated campground on the east side of Highway 1. The campground is popular with families, surfers and cyclists touring Big Sur because of its scenic location and pedestrian access to Sand Dollar beach. Challenges include high demand, with very little availability on short notice, and safety for pedestrians (especially children) crossing Highway 1 on foot to access the beach.</p>	<p>Opportunities in developed campgrounds and day use areas are generally consistent with desired conditions, however demand exceeds supply.  Need to improve pedestrian and bike access from developed campgrounds to Sand Dollar Beach.</p>	<p>Greater demand for campsites and day use areas than supply can accommodate.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<p><b>South Coast - Coastal Desired Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause(s) Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p>Visitors are informed and educated as they arrive or prior to their visit, enabling them to choose activities and experiences tailored to their expectations and skill levels.</p>	<p>Ranger Station/Potential Southern Portal/Trailhead – This is a potential location for an information hub and shuttle stop for the south coast.</p> <p>The historic Salmon Creek ranger station (constructed in 1932) is adjacent to a trailhead and small parking lot to access the Silver Peak Wilderness. The building is in a significant state of disrepair. Lack of signage, and adjacent private property concerns can make accessing the nearby trails challenging. If renovated, this site could host an information hub for the South Coast.</p> <p>There is little information currently available to visitors accessing Big Sur from the south. There are also few facilities (toilets, trash cans, camping).</p>	<p>There is unrealized potential to use the Salmon Creek Station location to provide visitor information.</p>	<p>No Forest Service information portal on south coast.</p>
<p><b>Sand Dollar Beach:</b> Visitors can enjoy a long, uninterrupted stretch of sand and sea, with iconic views of rugged cliffs and opportunities for challenging surfing and family friendly day use activities close to amenities.</p>	<p>Desired conditions are generally being achieved at Sand Dollar Beach</p>	<p>Crosswalk across HWY 1 from the campground to the beach needs additional signing, potential traffic calming measures.</p> <p>Accessible path and interpretive signs are in place but need repair.</p>	<p>Desired conditions are generally being met with existing management.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<p><b>South Coast - Coastal Desired Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause(s) Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use characteristics. (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p><b>San Carpofo Beach:</b> Visitors can enjoy activities such as sightseeing and relaxing in an undeveloped beach environment, close to the highway yet with a wild and remote feel once people leave the road.  Snowy plovers and salmon thrive in a largely undisturbed ecosystem, with clean water and healthy native vegetation that is not impacted by visitor use. Dogs are controlled during visits and do not present hazards to wildlife. There may be times when demand exceeds the parking availability for this location.</p>	<p>Dispersed camping has caused impacts to threatened and endangered species including snowy plover nesting and to salmon habitat through visitor presence, trash, and human waste. Demand for parking here has led to safety issues with vehicles parking along the highway. People experiencing homelessness have very few options in the immediate area and have congregated in this location, causing impacts from human waste and long-term presence.</p>	<p>Due to important resources in this area, careful management and consideration of appropriate recreational use is needed. Parking is not adequate for demand.</p>	<p>High demand for beach access, and easy access from HWY 1.  Visitors may be unaware of the presence of threatened and endangered species, and potential impacts.  Use by unhoused people for camping (non-recreational camping).</p>

**Table 6. South Coast – Dispersed gap analysis**

<p><b>South Coast Dispersed Desired Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause(s) Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use Characteristics (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p>The area offers opportunities for dispersed primitive camping and sightseeing in an uncrowded setting with sweeping ocean views as a backdrop. All campsites, roads and trails are clean and free of trash and human waste.</p> <p>There is a feeling of “getting away from it all” for those who are prepared and skilled in backcountry travel. Dispersed campsites accessed by the road system can be found on durable surfaces and in low density, so that campers can mostly escape the sights and sounds of others except for passing vehicles. User-created pathways and campsites are non-existent.</p>	<p>Forest roads connect Highway 1 to wooded valleys and high ridges in the general forest area. These areas offer dispersed camp sites with highly scenic and sought-after views up and down the Big Sur coast and out to sea.</p> <p>These roads also provide critical access for private inholdings and their residents. The roads are impassible in bad weather conditions or in cars not designed for offroad driving. Increased use has increased impacts including road damage, cutting of locks on gates, disputes with nearby landowners, camping in prohibited areas, litter and human waste, damage to vegetation and illegal campfires, and increased fire risk. Campers may be driving these roads looking for sites due to lack of availability in their preferred locations on the coast. They also may be uniformed about current conditions, types of vehicles needed for roads, and leave no trace techniques.</p>	<p>Often more demand than number of available campsites (amount of use)</p> <p>large group size/parties (type of use)</p> <p>number of user-created campsites and spur roads are expanding and may not be in sustainable locations (ability of sites to handle use, spatial distribution of use)</p> <p>campsite impacts, litter, human waste, illegal fires damage to vegetation and other resources (inappropriate visitor behavior, ability of sites to handle use)</p> <p>Some visitors are unprepared for backcountry travel or don’t have vehicles appropriate for the road conditions.</p>	<p>Lack of available campsites on the coast</p> <p>High cost of campsites or lodging on the coast</p> <p>Uninformed or unprepared visitors, inappropriate visitor behavior in some situations</p> <p>Campsites and roads not able to handle the amount of use they receive.</p> <p>Pressure created by social media posts about this particular camping experience.</p> <p>Lack of opportunities offered by other providers that allow access to similar views and experiences.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<p><b>South Coast Dispersed Desired Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Likely Cause(s) Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use Characteristics (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b></p>
<p>Visitors know where and how to camp and travel in these remote areas, including recognizing and respecting wilderness boundaries and private property. The environment is resilient to impacts from recreational use.</p> <p>Visitors and residents share a mutual respect for the landscape and each other; and a recognition of the importance of shared stewardship of the resource. Private land and wilderness boundaries are clearly understood and respected. Prior to embarking on a drive inland from the coast, visitors have adequate information to understand what the recreational experience will be like, regulations for the area, and what skills and equipment are needed.</p>	<p>User created campsites and associated impacts are increasing. Vehicle encroachment into wilderness and private lands is occurring, Wilderness boundaries are not signed (or signs are removed by visitors)</p> <p>Wilderness and private land boundaries are either not known, or not respected. Visitors are uninformed or unprepared for conditions</p>	<p>Wilderness and private lands encroachment is occurring.</p> <p>Visitor information is not easily available.</p> <p>Previous incursions are visible and encourage repeated use.</p>	<p>Lack of wilderness boundary signs or awareness of the location of wilderness and wild and scenic river boundaries or management direction.</p> <p>Visitors not well informed on local conditions and visitor ethics such as leave not trace.</p> <p>Lack of understanding and/or lack of respect for wilderness and wild and scenic rivers.</p>
<p>The road system offers opportunities for challenge and exploration, while remaining sustainable relative to the amount of traffic it receives. While some roads may be closed or restricted, there are other maintained roads available.</p> <p>Road condition information educates visitors on the types of vehicles appropriate for travel, as well as their maintenance level and the recreational opportunities the roads access. Information is accurate and easily available. Facilities and enforcement of regulations are adequate and appropriate for visitor use and volume.</p>	<p>Extensive road system provides opportunities for challenge and exploration, however, may not be sustainable for the amount of use received. Recent fire and flood events have resulted in extensive road closures.</p> <p>Vehicles inappropriate for road conditions often get stuck and need assistance. Drivers may lack the skill to safely use the roads. Enforcement presence may not be adequate for the amount of use.</p>	<p>Vehicles and drivers not appropriate to road conditions (unprepared or uninformed visitors, ability of roads to handle use)</p>	<p>Visitors not well informed about local road conditions.</p> <p>Forest Service road maintenance efforts cannot keep pace with impacts from high use.</p> <p>Soil conditions and road maintenance levels contribute to impacts and maintenance needs.</p> <p>Road closures contribute to less access in some areas while demand for access is increasing.</p>



**Table 7. Wilderness and wild and scenic rivers gap analysis**

Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Desired Conditions	Existing Conditions	Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions	Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use Characteristics (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)
<p>Visitors leave with an increased appreciation for the people who lived there before us, for the ecological function of the wilderness, the wild and scenic river’s outstandingly remarkable values and the other natural, cultural, and scenic resources in this area.</p>	<p>The trailheads have wilderness messages and information exists on FS and other websites; it is unknown how many visitors absorb or take away this appreciation or understanding of the resources.</p>	<p>This desired condition is likely partially met for some visitors; others are not reached with appropriate focused messages.</p>	<p>Many people are likely just looking for a backcountry experience and do not take the time/are unaware of the history, the designations, and other resources of the area.</p> <p>Need for increased human presence, either volunteers or Forest Service staff.</p>
<p><b>Pine Ridge Trail to Sykes Camp and Connecting Trails:</b></p> <p>Visitors travel a narrow footpath, providing a sense of remoteness and discovery, with occasional breathtaking views of the far-off Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>Signs of human modification of the natural and cultural landscape are minimal to support a sense of discovery and immersion in a natural habitat with rolling hills, redwoods, dense vegetation, far-off ocean vistas, and picturesque peaks. Visitors are aware of how to have a safe, enjoyable experience. Amenities and services within these areas support basic visitor access and navigation of trails but are minimal. Experiences range from remote feeling to occasional encounters with others. However, visitors are able to reach their intended destinations with minimal crowding and conflicts.</p> <p>Campsites are situated in durable locations that do not contribute to disturbances to cultural resources, erosion, riparian damage or sediment delivery to the wild and scenic river. As night falls, campers can experience dark, starry skies and can hear the sound of a free-flowing river.</p>	<p>The high volume of visitors means parking is limited and there is competition for the available campsites. The hot springs at Sykes, ten miles from the trailhead, draws visitors who are often unprepared for the hike or unaware of proper leave no trace techniques.</p>	<p>Higher encounters with others in the area from Pine ridge trailhead to Sykes camp than may be desired for wilderness.</p> <p>Numerous campsites at Sykes camp, many are located close to the river.</p> <p>Visitors occasionally modify the hot springs pools at Sykes Camp for their convenience, impacting the water quality and free-flowing characteristics of the wild and scenic river.</p>	<p>Popular trail with easy access from parking area at the multi-agency facility and from the Campground</p> <p>Visitors may not be aware of wilderness or wild and scenic river management requirements.</p> <p>Some visitors may expect amenities and convenience.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<b>Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Desired Conditions</b>	<b>Existing Conditions</b>	<b>Gap – difference between desired and existing conditions</b>	<b>Likely Cause or Specific Link to Visitor Use Characteristics (Amount, type, timing, and distribution of visitor use, including activities and behaviors.)</b>
<p>The majority of both wilderness areas are characterized by unconfined recreation and a sense of freedom; if restrictions are in place, they are the minimum necessary to protect cultural and natural resources and enhance wilderness character and wild and scenic river values. The overall goal for both wildernesses is to preserve and protect wilderness character.</p>	<p>Inadequate preparation by users, concentrated use, high levels of encounters, campsite impacts in some areas, and vehicle trespass into wilderness off of Forest roads for camping.</p> <p>Trails near Highway 1 have limited parking, creating congestion and safety issues; people park on the highway and walk to the trailhead.</p> <p>Current road closures have eliminated some access points to wilderness, causing concentration of use in other areas of the wilderness. Gaining access to some trails forces visitors to hike through neighborhoods, or to end up on a closed road miles from services.</p>	<p>Wilderness encroachment by vehicles in some locations.</p> <p>Use is concentrated where parking is available, however limited.</p> <p>Need for visitor information about the available trail network and presence of private lands.</p>	<p>Lack of awareness or respect for wilderness boundaries.</p> <p>Lack of legal campsites on the coast or on road system leads to intrusions into wilderness for camping.</p>
<p>In other areas of the wildernesses outside of popular trails, access may be challenging and trails difficult. Solitude, remoteness, natural quiet, and a chance to use wilderness skills such as navigation and route-finding characterize these areas. Encounters with others may be low; the sounds of birds, wildlife, and wind dominate rather than human-made noise.</p>	<p>Conditions outside of popular trail corridors are largely meeting the desired conditions.</p>	<p>No gap at present</p>	<p>Distances and other challenges are likely maintaining this desired condition.</p>

## Visitor Use Management Strategies and Actions

Management strategies for visitor use management generally involve modifying type of use, visitor behavior, visitor attitudes and expectations, timing of use, location of use, or spatial distribution of use; increasing the ability of sites to handle use or reducing use or increasing the supply.

The following management strategies and actions have been identified to achieve and maintain the desired conditions related to visitor use, and to help resolve the issues associated with visitor use. The management strategies and actions are organized by project zone and grouped by the three fundamental categories of management actions including education and information, engineering (including infrastructure and site design), and enforcement actions.

In general, the least intensive actions, or actions that are the least restrictive to visitor opportunities and experiences, that can achieve desired conditions should be used first.

Consider visitor use management strategies such as increased education, information, and improved infrastructure to resolve use conflicts prior to implementing visitor use restrictions or limitations.

Indirect management approaches attempt to influence user behavior indirectly rather than through regulations or restrictions, examples are information, education, or physical changes to encourage responsible behavior. Direct management approaches directly affect what users can and cannot do, examples are rules, area closures, permits, etc. (Driver & Moore 2005).

The management strategies and actions identified include both near-term actions and longer-term actions that will require additional planning and coordination. Management strategies and actions will be updated and adjusted as needed during implementation. Individual projects identified would be considered through an appropriate level of analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and any other compliance needs would be addressed when they are ready to be implemented.

Implementation of this strategy will be phased over time subject to available funding and resources. The forest will continue to look for creative and diverse funding and partnership opportunities to support this effort. Budget restrictions, requirements for additional data or regulatory compliance, and competing forest priorities may prevent or delay implementation of some actions.

## Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur Area

Several larger scale social issues have been noted during development of the Partnerships and Larger Big Sur strategy, and while the Los Padres National Forest cannot address these issues alone, there are opportunities to work in partnership to move toward sustainable solutions. Addressing issues such as traffic congestion, lack of housing for full time and seasonal employees, homelessness, climate change and associated risks such as increasing fire and flooding will require long-term coordinated efforts.

**Table 8. Education - Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur area**

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Information sharing and coordination</b>
Actions	<p>Facilitate sharing of real time information about campsite and lodging capacity between federal, state, and local agencies and private businesses.</p> <p>Develop Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about access, permit systems, types of accommodations and services, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• online information</li> <li>• phone tree for overnight accommodations.</li> <li>• consistently updated FAQs for each provider</li> </ul> <p>Coordinate with tourism entities to encourage marketing a broader spectrum of opportunities rather than just the iconic “Instagram” sites. Incorporate messages about recreating responsibly.</p> <p>Monitor social media (Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, (X) for awareness of events, visitor experiences, potential issues to address, and messaging aligned with desired conditions.</p> <p>Establish a volunteer entity to assist with public education.</p> <p>Google and Apple maps updated for areas of public access to avoid people being directed to private lands or closed areas.</p>
Future planning steps	<p>Coordinate with social service organizations to provide information and assistance to non-recreational campers. Opportunities for focused outreach and assistance in areas where the use is not in compliance with camping stay limits or when such use may be displaced.</p>

**Table 9. Engineering - Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur area**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Transportation and infrastructure coordination</b>
Actions	<p>Local businesses coordinate creative opportunities to accommodate some of the public demand for parking, toilets, and trash cans.</p> <p>Work with state and private partners to identify overflow camping options on or near the coast to accommodate late arrivals when all campsites are full (with limitations on length of stay).</p> <p>Big Sur Area Shuttle System Partnership</p> <p>Tourism funds reinvested into infrastructure; partnerships to leverage funds on joint projects.</p>

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Transportation and infrastructure coordination</b>
Future planning steps – Shuttle System	<p>Coordinate shuttle system along the coast in partnership with Forest Service, State Parks, and local businesses. Stops at Forest Service trailheads and day use areas, State Parks and campgrounds, local businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fleet of shuttle busses that rotate through at set times.</li> <li>• Identify shuttle parking and stop locations (consider Point Sur, multi-agency facilities, and other locations) Determine range of shuttle service along the coast.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Shuttle buses could provide internet connection for access to information on the shuttle.</li> <li>◆ Opportunity for interpretive information and outdoor ethics information, translations to multiple languages on shuttle ride.</li> </ul>
Future planning steps – accommodations and housing	Participate in collaborative efforts to find creative solutions to housing issues for seasonal and full-time staff

**Table 10. Enforcement - Partnerships and the Larger Big Sur area**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Law Enforcement presence and patrol</b>
Actions	Increased Law Enforcement Presence and coordination between law enforcement entities
Future planning steps	Big Sur Fire annual academy: incorporate training for local patrol of campfires, fire basics, youth engagement, partnership, and volunteer opportunities.

## Whole Project Area Management Strategies

**Table 11. Education - whole project area management strategies**

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts</b>
Actions	<p>Information, interpretation, and sign plan to increase availability and accuracy of pre-trip planning information and education about camping opportunities, visitor ethics (websites, social media, tourism partners), regulations, and natural resources.</p> <p>Tribal coordination for information and interpretation</p> <p>Use creative social media campaigns and current social media strategies, engage social media influencers to share messages about visitor ethics, types of camping opportunities, fire risk, etc.</p> <p>Develop a signage plan for recreation and safety information, insuring consistent graphic imagery, color palette, and 508-c compliance. Plan should include accessibility standards for pedestrian/handicap access, mounting height and placement of public bulletin boards.</p> <p>Guided tour opportunities</p>



<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts</b>
Future planning steps	<p>Prioritize the area's most needing information and develop a phased approach for disseminating information.</p> <p>If there is capacity to manage additional special use permits, put out a request for proposals targeted to those activities and locations that could benefit from interpretation and modeling of low impact skills. If there is competitive interest, move to a prospectus with specific criteria to meet desired conditions.</p> <p>Incorporate interpretation and information about relevant fish and wildlife species, rules, and regulations, and how to protect sensitive species into recreation site information. Include public education about how weeds are spread during recreation activities (boots, tires), how to prevent weed spread, and impacts of invasive species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential species include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Snowy Plover</li> <li>◆ Salmon</li> <li>◆ Red Legged frog</li> <li>◆ Smith's blue butterfly (especially habitat)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Incorporate interpretation and information about vegetation, fuels management, fire, and fire behavior into recreation site information. (fuel breaks, smoke, impacts from wildfire, campfire safety).</p> <p>Coordinate with tribal representatives to determine how they would like to partner and have presence throughout the project area, develop land acknowledgement wording to use in interpretive and informational materials.</p> <p>Provide visitor information and interpretive text in multiple languages including English and Spanish, consider additional languages as needed based demographics of frequent visitor groups.</p>

**Table 12. Engineering – whole project area management strategies**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience</b>
Actions	<p>Provide accessible facilities.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to increase safe roadside parking, restrooms facilities and trash cans, that are consistent with viewshed considerations.</p> <p>Consider use of temporary, portable restroom facilities in place during peak visitation (contracted), location TBD.</p> <p>Interagency coordination on management of invasive weeds such as pampas grass and other species, especially along roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated weed inventory, treatment, and monitoring.</li> <li>• Limit roadside parking to designated pull-offs.</li> </ul>

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience</b>
Future planning steps	<p>Assess facilities for accessibility (to meet current The Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) requirement and address deficiencies (prioritize the ones used most often and areas to shift future demand).</p> <p>Identify locations for placement of portable toilets and trash cans during peak visitation season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Criteria – season dates, visual screening from Highway 1, existing parking, types of acceptable units.</li> <li>• Identify vendors and funding options.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for partnerships.</li> </ul> <p>In the event of landslides, flooding, fire or other natural disasters that may impact recreational access and public safety, refer to the paper: <i>Using the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council's Visitor Use Management Framework to Conduct a Rapid Assessment During Uncertain Times in National Park Service Units</i></p> <p>Consider potential impacts or benefits to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all management actions (such as new permits, fees, or site development and reconfiguration), seek opportunities to provide low-cost camping opportunities, fee free days, youth engagement events, etc.</p>

**Table 13. Enforcement - whole Project Area Management Strategies**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Provide a presence and needed restrictions to protect resources and provide for human health and safety</b>
Actions	<p>Policies and procedures for emergency closures due to events such as landslides, floods, and fire.</p> <p>Seasonal or year-round fire restrictions for high-risk areas and seasonal post-fire recovery closures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased law enforcement and field staff presence/increased collaboration with other agency law enforcement</li> <li>• Establish a resident hotline that is available on weekends and evening hours for reporting non-emergency incidents and designate personnel to answer it.</li> <li>• Increased fines for illegal campfires</li> </ul>
Future planning steps	<p>Determine level of staffing needed to support desired conditions. Collaborate with other agencies for patrols and compliance checking.</p> <p>Ensure that each facility has documented procedures for closures.</p> <p>Identify areas most at risk from wildfire and write forest orders for seasonal or year-round closures.</p>

## North Coast Management Strategies

**Table 14. Education – North Coast management strategies**

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts</b>
Actions	<p>Increase staffing at the Multi-Agency Facility, Big Sur Station Visitor Center with Los Padres Forest Association, Forest Service, and volunteer resources.</p> <p>Real-time campsite availability information shared between agencies.</p> <p>Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs.</p> <p>Pre-trip planning information made readily available.</p> <p>Education on biophysical resources</p>
Future planning steps	<p>Pursue grants or other opportunities (55+ program, other agencies, volunteers) for adding more multi-agency facility staff.</p> <p>Incorporate potential educational and interpretive themes: Area history, fire ecology, Native tribes, coastal and forest ecology, traditional land use, Brazil Ranch history</p>

**Table 15. Engineering - North Coast management strategies**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience</b>
Actions	<p>Develop a transportation plan for Pfeiffer Beach</p> <p>Consider opportunities to increase bathroom and trash can capacity at existing developed sites.</p> <p>Develop a long-term masterplan to fully utilize Brazil Ranch without damage to historic, natural or recreation resources. Include interpretation, educational programming, community engagement, landscape, and structures.</p> <p>Explore steps to mitigate high traffic times, such as a “Park it” initiative combined with a shuttle system.</p> <p>Complete a trail and trailhead inventory and provide trail network information to the public. Consider opportunities for locating additional trailheads or increasing parking at existing trailheads.</p>
Future Planning Steps – Brazil Ranch	<p>Collaborate with other agencies on landscape level ideas for the area (e.g. potential trail to Bixby Bridge and trail networks, conference offerings, educational offerings, recreational opportunities, shuttle services, etc.)</p> <p>Evaluate the site for possible historic status at the state or national level. Consider what kind of designation supports and enhances the education and conference uses proposed.</p> <p>Consider short-term, mid-term, and long-term parking and camping opportunities (dispersed or developed) at Brazil Ranch</p> <p>Discuss with tribes the potential for cultural appreciation and interpretation.</p>
Future Planning Steps – Pfeiffer	<p>Purchase and install signs for informing visitors when site is full, in coordination with CalTrans.</p>

Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Utilize or reconfigure existing facilities to improve visitor experience</b>
Beach Transportation Plan	<p>Conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis for various options to mitigate safety concerns on Sycamore Canyon Road. Options could include a reservation system, shuttle service, timed entry, open to all on certain days or times and not on others, or guided trip/pilot car only. All options would need to accommodate resident and residential services traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If a reservation system, determine the best instrument to manage (recreation.gov, other online system, in person permit at MAF, onsite personnel).</li> <li>○ If timed entry, determine the capacity of the road and when vehicles would be allowed to exit/enter and how this would be enforced.</li> <li>○ If open only at certain times/days, determine staffing or infrastructure needed (gates, booth at entrance)</li> <li>○ If a special use/guided opportunity, release a request for proposals in advance of a prospectus.</li> </ul> <p>Develop a safety protocol for closure of Sycamore Canyon Road and Pfeiffer beach in the event of heavy rains, flooding, debris flows, and wildfires.</p>
Future Planning Steps – General	<p>Develop a texting information service, live updates such as sign outside facilities, Instagram, Facebook, etc., regarding closure and wait times and alternatives to popular areas to modify behavior/timing.</p> <p>Collaborate with other agencies to reduce private vehicle usage on the coast through shuttles or other public transportation.</p> <p>Consider opportunities to increase bathroom capacity and add animal proof trash cans at existing and future developed sites (Pfeiffer Beach, multi-agency facility, Brazil Ranch, etc.)</p>

**Table 16. Enforcement - North Coast management strategies**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Provide an increased presence and needed restrictions at Pfeiffer Beach</b>
Actions	<p>Concessionaire Staffing (or other) to support consistent management and regulation.</p> <p>Additional patrol and enforcement of existing day-use and campfire limitations</p>
Future Planning Steps	<p>Determine level of staffing needed to support desired conditions.</p> <p>Install additional signage and update website, social media, and signage before people reach Pfeiffer Beach.</p>

## South Coast – Coastal Management Strategies

Table 17. Education - South Coast – Coastal management strategies

Education Strategy	Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts
Actions	<p>Install information kiosks at key access points. Staffed kiosks at the bottoms of Nacimiento, Los Burros, and Plaskett Roads during peaks use season. Consider Forest Service, partner, and volunteer staffing options for the kiosks.</p> <p>Utilize Salmon Creek station as a portal information station, consider temporary staffing options for peak use season, pending long term future development plan.</p> <p>Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs.</p> <p>Prepare Salmon Creek Station Master Plan</p>
Future Planning Steps	<p>Develop a long-term masterplan to fully utilize Salmon Creek Station without damage to historic, natural or recreation resources. Include interpretation, educational programming, community engagement, landscape, and structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Historical/Architectural assessment of Salmon Creek Station to determine options for the historic building and the site.</li> <li>○ Plan should include staffing plan, parking, housing for volunteers/staff, and potential other amenities (trail connections, horseback riding opportunities, gift shop). Prioritize which amenities/services are most important and determine phases of development.</li> <li>○ Identify and pursue grant funding for operations.</li> </ul> <p>Design interpretive and informative kiosks and signs and install where most needed (snowy plovers for San Carpoforo, camping and campfires in other areas, access points to south coast roads)</p> <p>Work with other agencies to develop a method of reporting when campgrounds are full/have sites available</p>



**Table 18. Engineering - South Coast Coastal management strategies**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites</b>
Actions	<p>Ensure public access to restroom facilities at the Mill Creek, Willow Creek, and Sand Dollar Day Use Areas (DUA's), appropriate signs and consistent policy to manage.</p> <p>Explore appropriate management of recreation use at San Carpoforo Beach including viability of restrooms and parking expansion (Consider potential uses of the Forest Service parcel across highway from existing site south of bridge).</p> <p>Determine maintenance backlog needs at existing sites and maintain existing sites to standard.</p> <p>Identify locations to safely provide community campfires within developed sites to provide the desired experience while reducing individual campfires.</p> <p>Determine opportunities for expanding or reconfiguring existing developed sites to meet camping demand.</p> <p>Determine best management for developed sites.</p>

Engineering Strategy	Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites
Future planning steps - General	<p>Update the Recreation facility analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider opportunities to expand existing campgrounds (Plaskett, Kirk Creek) or modify system to allow individual campers to use group sites when not reserved for groups.</li> <li>• Campsites along Plaskett Creek Road – approximately 10 existing dispersed sites could be designated and managed as a more rustic camping option. Management options could include Forest Service, Concession, or partner groups. This would require road work for easier access and designating sites. Potential trail connection to Plaskett Campground.</li> <li>• Potential to add walk in campsites at Kirk Creek in the trees.</li> <li>• Potential for campsites south of Sand Dollar Day Use area.</li> <li>• Consider locations for overflow campsites available for last minute arrival, limited to one night – potential in lower areas of Mill Creek and Willow Creek day use area.</li> <li>• Consider use of the former Nacimiento Fire Station as a campground or day use area, within existing footprint (opportunity for interpretation about fire and site history).</li> <li>• Research Forest Service parcel just north of Ragged Point (approximately 150 acres) potential for campsites. Work with Lands for status, options.</li> <li>• Consider potential to allow dispersed camping in other areas such as Convict Flat and near Pacific Valley Station. Area south of Sand Dollar and near Station 17, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Determine maintenance backlog needs at existing sites.</p> <p>Consider opportunities to expand restroom capacity at any of the existing Day Use Areas and trailheads.</p> <p>Complete an analysis to determine best site management (concession, agency, partner).</p> <p>Research and pursue state or other grants for funding.</p> <p>Work with state and private partners to identify overflow camping options on or near the coast to accommodate late arrivals when all campsites are full (with limitations on length of stay).</p>

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites</b>
Future Planning Steps – San Carpoforo	<p>Explore potential for development of Forest Service parcel across the highway from San Carpoforo Beach and south of bridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold design workshop with Recreation, Landscape Architect, Engineering, and resource specialists to determine feasibility and develop conceptual ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potential for parking, day use, overnight use, vault toilet</li> <li>◆ Trail connections</li> <li>◆ Potential location for vault toilet</li> <li>◆ Coordination with CalTrans for traffic safety, and Forest Service wildlife, botany, soils for resource concerns</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft concepts into Proposed Action and Alternatives for analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).</li> <li>• NEPA Analysis and Public involvement</li> <li>• Decision</li> <li>• Determine Funding Sources/Implementation phases</li> </ul>

**Table 19. Enforcement - South Coast Coastal management strategies**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Provide a presence and needed restrictions</b>
Actions	<p>Enforce relevant forest orders at San Carpoforo and consider the need for a seasonal restriction to protect plovers.</p> <p>Increase law enforcement presence in the evenings.</p> <p>Create a citizen channel for reporting incidents</p>
Future planning steps	Develop any necessary agreements to coordinate law enforcement and volunteer patrol.

## South Coast – Dispersed Management Strategies

**Table 20. Education - South Coast dispersed management strategies**

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts</b>
Actions	<p>Focused education on reducing impacts from large events and road use.</p> <p>Real-time campsite availability information shared between agencies.</p> <p>Interpretive messaging including videos, kiosks, signs.</p> <p>Pre-trip planning information made readily available.</p> <p>Education on biophysical resources</p>

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to inform visitors and reduce impacts</b>
Future planning steps – General	<p>Develop a multi-agency education plan including different topics/visitor groups. Include delivery methods, effectiveness evaluation, and coordination ideas between agencies. Actions from this plan could be implemented in phases.</p> <p>Design interpretive and informative kiosks and signs and install where most needed. Develop a staffing plan for kiosks at coastal roads during high use season.</p> <p>Develop a method of reporting when campgrounds are full/have sites available</p>

**Table 21. Engineering - South Coast dispersed management strategies**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites</b>
Actions	<p>Pilot “designated dispersed” camping system. Implement designated dispersed system in one priority area as a pilot and document process (criteria to identify sustainable sites, capacity, implementation process, public education, monitoring). Evaluate and replicate pilot in other areas as appropriate. Implement communication plan (website, chambers, etc.) to explain locations, access, and challenges of camping areas. Plaskett (from HWY 1 approximately 4 miles to the private inholding) is proposed as the first pilot “designated dispersed” camping area (one access point, existing campsites, high use, immediate impact). Future designated dispersed camping areas could be considered for Prewitt Ridge, Los Burros Road from HWY 1 to the Coast Ridge Road, Alms Ridge, and San Martin Top area, etc.</p> <p>Enforce requirement for special use permits for large groups (over 75), include stipulations for port-a-potties, access considerations, site-clean up, etcetera.</p> <p>Identify road maintenance needs and capacity to maintain adequate fire or emergency ingress/egress and provide recreational access.</p> <p>Seek partnerships and funding to support road maintenance needs.</p> <p>Determine opportunities for expanding, reconfiguring, or adding new developed sites to meet camping demand.</p>

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Engineering Strategy	Reduce visitor impacts and increase health and safety at sites
<p>Future Planning Steps – Designated Dispersed Camping Pilot</p>	<p>Identify appropriate number and location of proposed dispersed/designated sites on Plaskett and document baseline condition using a protocol that is replicable.</p> <p>Identify sustainable campsites (road access, slope, vegetation, fire risk, proximity to private lands, etc.) in a variety of sizes and location features (view, forest, etc.) Provide information/maps where these are available prior to a visitor entering the road.</p> <p>Determine best method of showing site location (marker, etc.) and how to describe site limitations (camp within a certain number of feet, site boundaries described)</p> <p>Install barriers where needed to discourage use of unsustainable sites and reduce encroachment into Wilderness. Where possible, use natural barriers such as boulders, steep slopes, poison oak, down trees, private property.</p> <p>Determine regulations and restrictions for these sites (campfire restrictions, number of vehicles, length of stay, fees)</p> <p>Determine best management of sites (concession, partner, agency) and best method of implementation (permit, gate combination, staffed entrances, entrance from existing campground) and take appropriate steps (camp hosts, prospectus, additional personnel)</p> <p>Consider impact of a permit system on diversity, equity and inclusion and determine ways to lessen those impacts; for example, a reservation system with a quota or limited number of dispersed sites (such as: 80 percent reserved, 20 percent first-come-first-serve, or 50/50) and release of sites if there are no-shows.</p> <p>Consider facilities needed (toilets, trash cans, where feasible) and if not, best methods to ensure health and safety from human waste disposal. Ensure any facilities are not in the viewshed. Encourage alternative waste management solutions (pack-it-out).</p> <p>Inform the public of this change before implementation via social media and other avenues, including the reasons why it is being piloted.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring plan to determine if this action causes additional use on other south coast roads.</p> <p>Determine a method of enforcement for non-compliance, particularly in the evenings</p>
<p>Future Planning Steps - General</p>	<p>Involve engineering in road capacity discussions and analysis.</p> <p>Involve Special Uses in developing permit stipulations for large groups (locations, fire restrictions, toilets), post signs at road entrances and online with this requirement.</p>

**Table 22. Enforcement - South Coast dispersed management strategies**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Provide a presence and needed restrictions</b>
Actions	<p>Increase law enforcement presence in the evenings and early mornings.</p> <p>Increase on-site volunteer or paid information/education/patrol.</p> <p>Consider needed restrictions: a no campfire or limited campfire regulation for the south coast roads and noise restrictions.</p> <p>Collaborate with other agencies through agreements for patrol presence.</p>
Future planning steps	Develop any necessary agreements to coordinate law enforcement and volunteer patrol

## Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Strategies

**Table 23. Education – Wilderness and wild and scenic rivers management strategies**

<b>Education Strategy</b>	<b>Implement a suite of actions designed to increase understanding and reduce impacts</b>
Actions	<p>Kiosks with information at south coast roads and trailheads</p> <p>Ambassadors at trailheads and in the wilderness.</p> <p>Education message or video tailored to wilderness visitors (video or other that visitor is required to watch/sign)</p>
Future planning steps	<p>Develop a professional video or online flyer for users to watch or sign; determine if this would need to be done at the multi-agency facility or all online. Work with other agencies to contact visitors before they arrive to manage expectations.</p> <p>Design interpretive and informative kiosk signs and install where most needed; a pilot system may be the best way to see if they get vandalized or prevent behaviors like wilderness incursions.</p> <p>Continue and expand support for the current Ventana Wilderness Alliance (VWA) ambassador program; outreach to locals to see if they would like to participate; provide key messages for participants.</p> <p>A non-agency volunteer “social media manager” could be enlisted to view and interact with posters (Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, X) in an educational and informative way. Also consider that there are other ways to reach people than through social media: libraries, chamber publications, attendance at community group meetings, etc.</p>

**Table 24. Engineering - Wilderness and wild and scenic rivers management strategies**

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce campsite impacts in the Sykes area</b>
Actions	<p>Determine appropriate number and location of campsites in Sykes area (and possibly the other wilderness trails in the project area)</p> <p>Rehabilitate campsites that are not desired and encourage use of campsites that are durable</p>



Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy

<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce campsite impacts in the Sykes area</b>
Future planning steps	<p>Inventory campsites using agreed-on, replicable protocol.</p> <p>Produce map showing all campsites, coded to show those that will remain.</p> <p>Determine an acceptable level of durable sites.</p> <p>Determine methods to rehabilitate undesirable sites (iceberg, natural barriers, signs if no other method would work).</p> <p>Determine the best way to prevent new site development (above methods, designation of sites, posting sites).</p> <p>Produce a trailhead map showing site locations and number of sites available, with alternate suggestions for visitors. This would be posted at the trailhead and online.</p>
<b>Engineering Strategy</b>	<b>Reduce motor vehicle intrusions</b>
Actions	<p>Install barriers along south coast roads on wilderness boundary.</p> <p>Sign boundary where appropriate.</p>
Future planning steps	<p>Identify areas of most concern and concentrate there; use different methods to see which is most successful.</p> <p>Monitor to see if these actions prevent additional incursions.</p> <p>Encourage residents to report location of intrusions.</p>

**Table 25. Enforcement - Wilderness and wild and scenic rivers management strategies**

<b>Enforcement Strategy</b>	<b>Enforce restrictions on visitor use</b>
Actions	<p>Maintain active agency presence in the field, particularly at Sykes and near wilderness boundaries on south coast roads but possibly including the other camps prior to Sykes.</p> <p>Enforce no campfire regulations in the wilderness.</p> <p>Ensure “tubs” at Sykes don’t get built up (remove/restore).</p> <p>Permit system for overnight use linked to the number of appropriate campsites on the Pine Ridge Trail.</p>

Enforcement Strategy	Enforce restrictions on visitor use
<p>Future planning steps – Permit System</p>	<p>Determine desired overnight capacity. Consider space for tents and party size. Consider the sights and sounds from occupied campsites and how that would affect visitor experience. Consider typical party size, ROS, and use patterns (season, weekend/weekday, encounters between others, length of stay), and document the typical number of campsites/people at Sykes and how this deviates from desired conditions.</p> <p>Determine best method for implementing the system: recreation.gov, a percentage of walk-up, all permits issued by MAF in person.</p> <p>Determine if fees would be charged and whether fees would be retained to support on-site projects and/or wilderness rangers.</p> <p>Implement a public notification plan a season in advance so visitors know what to expect.</p> <p>Monitor other wilderness locations to see if this system is displacing people to other locations.</p> <p>Enforcement and checking of permits are the key to success.</p> <p>Permits should have rules and regulations listed; other forests have sources for ordering permits.</p> <p>Monitor day use to see if people are attempting to hike to Sykes and back in one day because they could not obtain a permit.</p> <p>Provide parking spaces that are prioritized for those with an overnight permit.</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider an off season where no permits are required unless this would not meet the desired conditions for the area.</li> <li>• Consider the best method for no-shows: release for walk-up after a certain time or not available. Consider charging a small fee to prevent no-shows (fee is required if using recreation.gov but is not retained by the agency)</li> <li>• Consider impacts of a permit system on diversity, equity and inclusion and determine methods that would facilitate access for underserved populations (library permits that could be checked out, a percentage of walk-up permits, information in other locations than online)</li> <li>• This may be an appropriate time to update the Big Sur Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive River Management Plan with a user capacity.</li> </ul>

## Identifying Visitor Capacities

The following locations with high visitor use and associated impacts to natural resources and the visitor experience have been identified as areas that would benefit from development of site-specific visitor capacities and strategies to manage visitor use within those capacities. The considerations and steps to identify visitor capacities in these specific areas are outlined here.

The IVUMC defines visitor capacity as the maximum amounts and types of visitor use that an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are consistent with the purposes for which the area was established.

Visitor capacities may be used to inform and implement the management strategies selected as part of this visitor use management strategy.

Development and implementation of any permits or limitations needed to manage use within identified capacities should allow for some first-come, first-serve, walk up opportunities, opportunities for residents, and fee free days. Consideration should be given to potential impacts of permit systems on diversity, equity, and inclusion (Rice et al 2022).

## **Pine Ridge Trail**

- The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum class for this area is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized. Guidance for encounters between people for this Class is usually 6-15 encounters with other parties on trails and 6 or less parties visible from camping sites.
- Conduct a campsite inventory at the three camps (Sykes, Barlow Flat, and Ventana) and determine the number of sites that are situated in durable locations and would meet the desired condition. Multiply this by the typical group size, or the size that would fit within the campsite boundaries (consider typical number of tents per party). This is the overnight capacity. This capacity should be adjusted if thresholds are reached.
- Day use capacity may be determined based on trail design (are parties needing to step off the trail to allow others to pass?), encounters with others, available parking, conflicts between users, or a combination of all these factors. Determine the limiting factor for day use. If it is parking, for example, use the number of parking spaces x the typical party size x typical turnover. This factor can also serve to limit encounters if that is desired. If user encounters are the limiting factor, this is more challenging, but a formula would consider typical user patterns (morning, afternoon, evening hikes), typical distance covered, and number of parties that would reach the 6-15 encounter rate. A very rough estimate would be 15 encounters x 3.5 people x 3/day. Since day use capacities are difficult to determine, limitations should occur only when resource or social conditions dictate.
- Parking space at the multi-agency facility could be designated for overnight use and a percent left over for day use and for multi-agency facility visits.

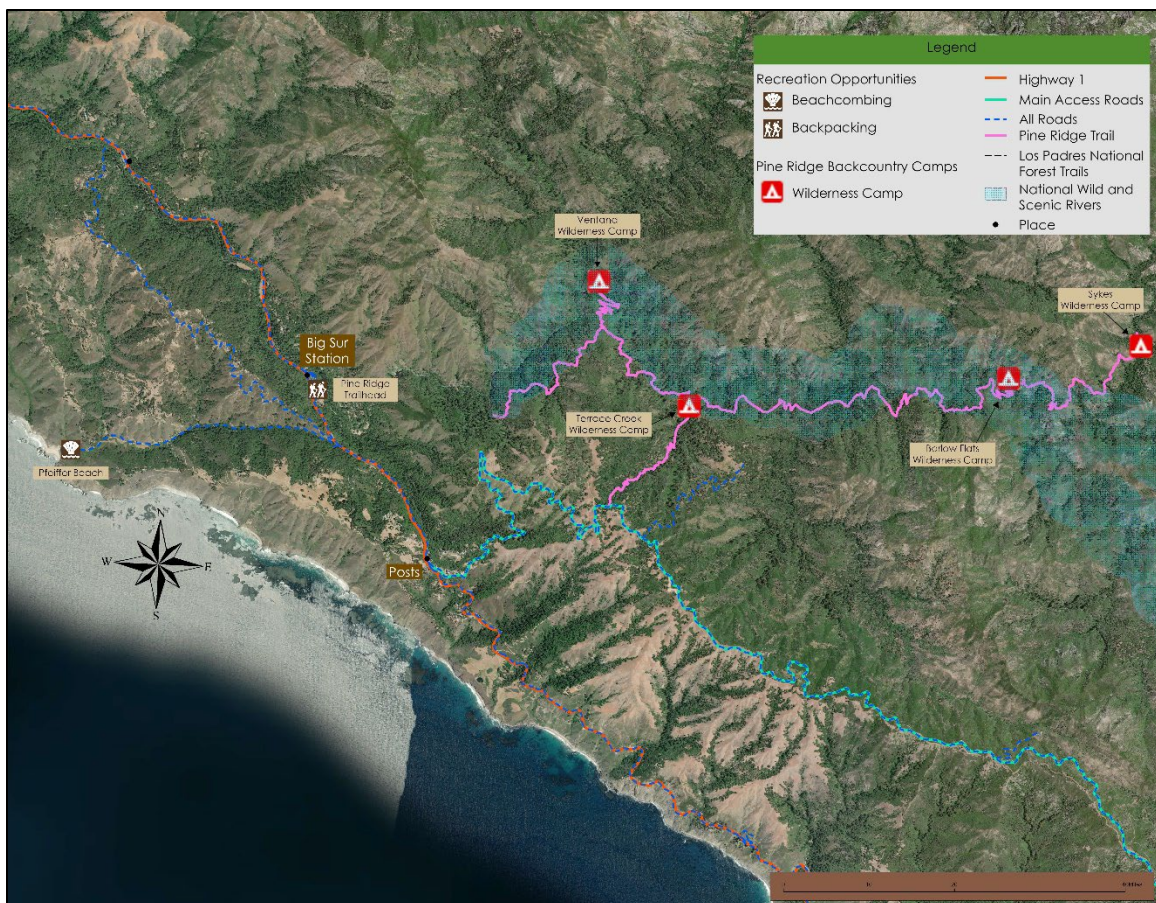


Figure 24. Pine Ridge Trail Area Map

### Pfeiffer Beach/Sycamore Canyon Road

- Determine the limiting factor (likely parking availability). A formula could be number of parking spots x typical group size x parking lot turnover.
- If people at one time is another factor of concern and egress/ingress by residents and emergency services, a number of cars per hour could be used for capacity. This would be determined by evaluating the average speed that would need to be maintained to drive the road in a safe yet expedient manner. For example, if the desired condition was to ensure that any single vehicle could drive the road in ten minutes, the number of cars per hour could be estimated at a 25-mph speed.

#### Potential formula:

- 2½ miles of road
- Ten minutes travel time estimated if going 25 MPH.
- Two-way traffic with single lane travel and pullouts
- One-quarter (1/4) mile theoretical distance between traffic in one direction
- One-quarter mile (.25-mile) gap over 2½ miles of road = 10 cars one direction.
- If acceptable to have same gap on both directions = 10 cars the other direction

- Total capacity= 20 vehicles at any given time traveling over the 2½ miles of road.
- Caveat: If all are somehow spaced at approximately 1/4 mile and following recommended speed of 25 mph to keep that spacing.
- If a shuttle system is implemented, a total capacity at one time for the beach area would need to be determined. This would be estimated based on desired conditions on the beach, leaving enough space and privacy for visitors to experience the area without feeling crowded. Depending on the size of the shuttle, 12-25 people at one time could disembark at one time and if several shuttles were operating, the facility and social capacity could become overwhelmed.
- Example: if a shuttle bus with 12 passengers runs every hour for eight hours, and assuming some visitors stay for only one hour, but others stay for longer, there would be a potential for 60 people on the beach at any one time.

#### Management of capacity:

- Several options could be considered: advanced reservations, reserve some for first-come-first-serve options, allow unreserved time slots to be use as first-come-first serve, shuttle pick up and drop off area, limited number of shuttle bus trips per day, consider staggering schedule around individual vehicle reservations times.
- Provide a set number of vehicle reservations per day available for residents (explore options for local pass, reduced fees for residents, fee-free days).
- Information and education around vehicle reservations and shuttle system to introduce new system and inform visitors of the process to obtain a permit.

#### **Designated Dispersed camping pilot area.**

- Overnight capacity would be dictated by number of campsites available.
- Campsites along Plaskett Creek Road – approximately 10 existing dispersed sites could be designated and managed as a more rustic camping option. Would require road work for easier access and designating sites. Potential trail connection to Plaskett Campground.
- Actual capacity (number of people overnight at one time) would be the campsites x desired party size, based on environmental and social factors. Each campsite should be evaluated for potential of users increasing the barren core or campsite boundary; some campsites may have more capacity than others. Barriers may need to be installed or regulations about camping distance from signpost. Consider the number of tent spaces or vehicle parking space.

#### Management of capacity:

- Phase 1 identify and designate campsites; special order, inform public of change to camp only in designated sites, first-come, first-serve, pack it out, patrol and monitor for compliance and occupancy rate – educational phase.
- Phase 2 if needed develop a permit system (during the high use season) for designated campsites.
- Phase 3 full permit/fee system



- ◆ Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA)<sup>2</sup> Expanded Amenity Requirements: To charge a fee for developed camping a majority of the following must be provided:
  - Tent or trailer spaces
  - Picnic tables
  - Drinking water
  - Access roads
  - The collection of the fee by an employee or agent of the federal land
  - Management agency
  - Reasonable visitor protection
  - Refuse containers
  - Toilet facilities
  - Simple devices for containing a campfire (fire ring)
  - Informative signage

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<sup>2</sup> Recreation fees, authorized by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, enables federal land management agencies to reinvest standard amenity, expanded amenity, and special recreation permit fees back into the recreation sites. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/passes-permits>



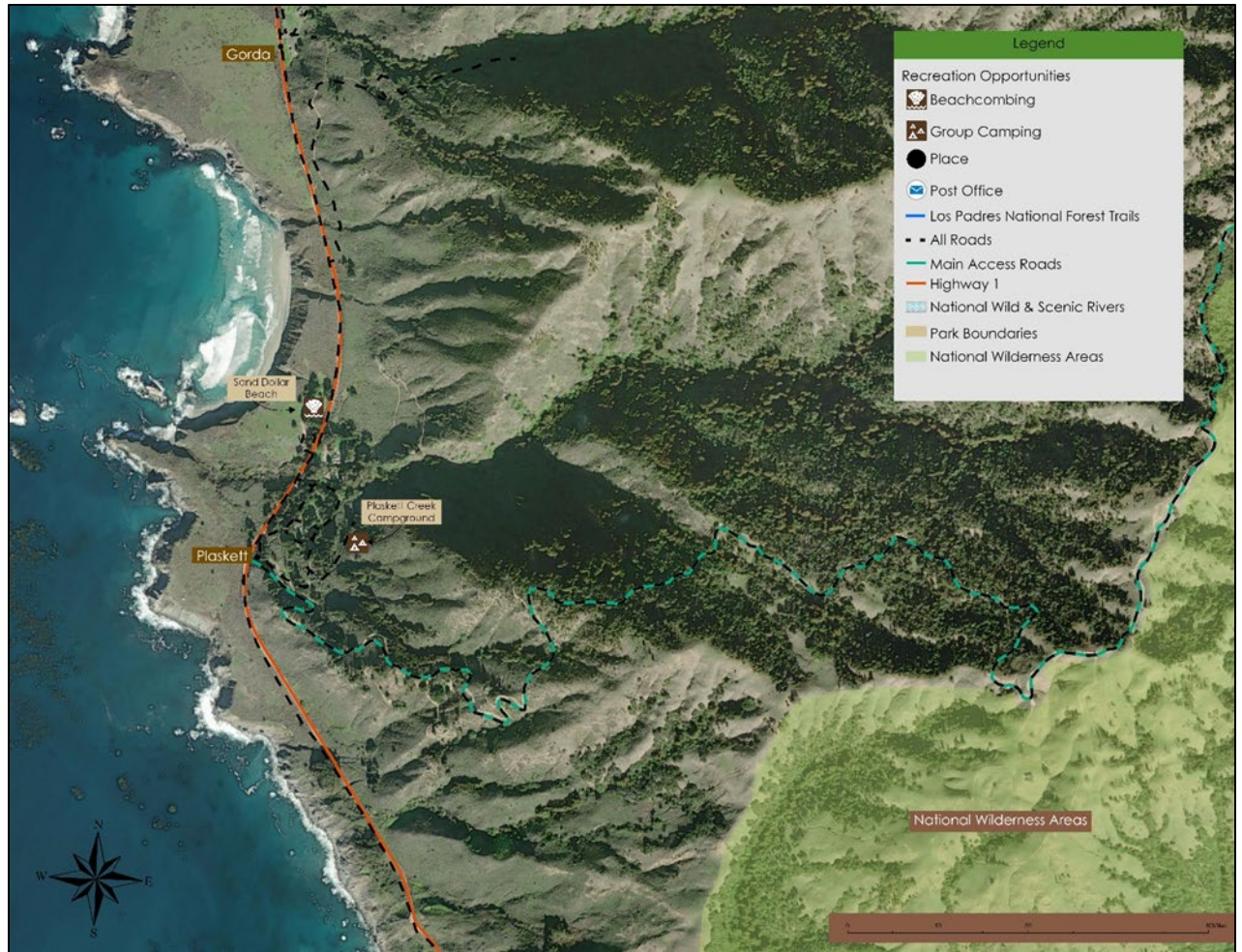


Figure 25. Designated dispersed camping pilot area map

## Monitoring Strategy

Visitor use management is an iterative process in which management decisions are continuously informed and improved through monitoring to determine the most effective way to manage visitor use to move toward the desired conditions. As monitoring of conditions continues, managers may modify or add indicators if better ways are found to measure important changes in resource and experiential conditions. If monitoring shows that thresholds are being approached or exceeded, additional management actions may be implemented.

**Table 26: Monitoring Strategy**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Monitoring strategy</b>	<b>Recommended Frequency</b>
Indigenous land acknowledgment	District, partners, and Tribes collaborate to review and ensure land acknowledgments exist in official visitor information sources	Yearly
Partnerships in place	Partners and District document meetings and partnerships; partnerships are evaluated and refined as needed	Yearly
Education available	Partners and District review existing education methods and sources	Yearly
Human-caused fires	District keeps a running total and evaluate every five years to see if the threshold has been reached	Yearly documentation, five-year review
Sykes campsites	Forest Service staff, partner groups, and/or volunteer groups conduct campsite inventory to ensure desired sites remain at the same level	Every 3 years
User-created campsites at Sykes and other camping areas	Forest Service staff, partner groups, and/or volunteer groups conduct campsite inventory to identify user-created sites	Every 1-3 years
Wilderness encounters	Forest Service staff, partner groups, and/or volunteer groups conduct encounter monitoring (random sampling) from trailhead to Sykes Camp	Monthly during high use season
Motor vehicle intrusions into wilderness	District and partners keep running total based on anecdotal observations (tracks, vehicles spotted); could set up a citizen report system	Yearly documentation
Improper disposal of human waste (south coast dispersed area)	District recreation staff monitors campsite areas	High use season monitoring bi-weekly
Vehicle density on south coast dispersed zone roads	Camera or other remote device such as a traffic counter	Bi-weekly and on holiday weekends
Illegal campfires in south coast dispersed zone	District coordinates with local law enforcement and residents to gather this information	During fire closures, yearly
User-created new campsites in south coast dispersed zone	District or volunteers conduct campsite surveys	Every 1-3 years
Large group gatherings in south coast dispersed zone	District coordinates with local law enforcement and residents to gather this information	Yearly documentation
Vehicles needing assistance in south coast dispersed zone	District coordinates with local law enforcement to gather this information: local residents may also contribute	Yearly documentation

*Coastal Zone Visitor Use Management Strategy*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Monitoring strategy</b>	<b>Recommended Frequency</b>
Illegal camping in south coast coastal zone	District coordinates with local law enforcement to gather this information; volunteers may also provide documentation	Weekly in "hot spots" such as San Carpofofo
Drive time, Sycamore Canyon Road	Patrols by district staff	Weekly during high use season
Number of people on Pfeiffer Beach at one time	Random sampling	Use only if a shuttle is permitted here; monthly during high use season
Resources available at the MAF	Sample by observation or reports from MAF staff	Bi-weekly during high use season
Day use parking available at the MAF	Sample by observation or reports from MAF staff	Bi-weekly during high use season

## **Element 4 Implement, Monitor, Evaluate, and Adjust**

The final element in the VUM framework is to implement management strategies and actions and adjust them based on monitoring and evaluation. Appendix C, Management Action Priorities, identifies the short-, medium-, and long-term management strategies and actions, by zone. This is a prioritized summary of management actions, some that may be ready for immediate implementation, and others that would require additional planning, coordination, and compliance work. Many of the management strategies and actions may benefit from further coordination with local community partners, adjacent land managers, and volunteers.

As management strategies and actions are implemented over time, ongoing monitoring will help to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions in achieving the desired conditions. Management actions would be adjusted if needed to achieve desired conditions and the rationale for the adjustment would be documented.

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