



ALEXANDRA KRUSE

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Concepts Newsletter 2003

In the National Park Service (NPS) planning process, we are required to assess a range of management strategies. Each one of these is built around an underlying *concept* that describes a possible direction for the future. These concepts were derived from public input. Five concepts — one no-action and four action concepts — have been translated into specific actions by the application of *management zones* over the park.

These are preliminary ideas for the General Management Plan (GMP). Each action concept consists of a map and a description of intent along with future actions. This is the first time they have been seen by you, the public. The concepts and management zones may contain some inconsistencies, specific treatments may not be explained, and/or ideas may not be fully

developed. This information is preliminary, and we need your input to fully refine future alternatives and management zones.

Please review the following preliminary management zones and concepts, and check to see if your ideas are reflected. If not, we need to know what we missed so that we can make sure our management zones and alternatives are comprehensive and will allow us to explore the widest possible range of options. (Keep in mind that in a GMP the level of detail will remain fairly broad. For example, the GMP may identify the appropriateness of certain activities such as hiking or camping in general areas of the park but may not identify specific locations or routes).

It is possible that you may like some but not all elements of one concept, or that you

may like a concept but disagree with the way we have translated it by the application of management zones. Maybe you have an entirely different vision that would address Point Reyes issues. We need to know the reasons for your likes and dislikes. With your comments we can reevaluate the number and scope of the management zones and concepts and modify them as necessary. This is the kind of feedback that will help us formulate the best possible future for the parks.

Don L. Neubacher
Superintendent
Point Reyes National Seashore

The National Park Service Mission

The mission of the National Park Service, as defined by Congress in 1916, is "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."
(1916 Organic Act)



SUSAN VANDER WAL

**Please help us update the future of lands under the care of Point Reyes National Seashore.
Please review the concepts on the following pages and share with us your thoughts
on these preliminary ideas. See back page on how to submit comments.**

Zoning: The Foundation of Park Management

Management zoning is a planning tool that helps to define appropriate resource condition, compatible use, and appropriate facilities. Most of the National Seashore is zoned under natural or cultural heritage zoning. Each of these two zones is made up of subzones that further specify management prescriptions. There are two other zoning classifications of lesser prevalence: the development zone and special use zone. A brief overview of each type of zoning is listed below.

NATURAL HERITAGE ZONES

Wilderness

Wilderness zoning is managed for preserving wilderness values, biological diversity, and ecological integrity. Visitors would have opportunities to be immersed in nature without intrusions. In areas federally designated as wilderness, access by foot or by horse is permitted, providing opportunities for solitude.

Natural

Natural zoning acts as a transitional zone between wilderness and developed zones. It connects developed sites via multi-use access corridors. Natural resources and processes would remain as undisturbed as possible, with minimal development including restrooms and trail access. There is a lower expectation of solitude and potentially more impact from civilization in this zone.

Reserves

Reserves are pristine areas with access limited, to protect areas of biological significance. Passive and low-impact visitor activities are permitted within reserves. Park staff and partners conduct research and monitor resources to maintain the reserves' biological integrity.

Marine Protected Areas

A marine protected area is any area of the marine environment that provides increased protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein.

CULTURAL HERITAGE ZONES

Cultural Landscapes Zone

The land in this zone is altered from its natural state for the purpose of preserving the historic agricultural scene. This zone preserves working agricultural landscapes as part of Point Reyes National Seashore and the northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Comprised of dairy and beef cattle ranches and fences, views in this zone are pastoral in nature.



ALEXANDRA KRUISE

Historic Sites

Historic resources in this zone are actively managed and preserved to maintain their significance. Many of the structures would be adaptively managed, and some modification would occur to accommodate visitor use. Sites like the historic Lighthouse and Pierce Ranch allow visitors to experience the past through park programming and self-guided trails. Most sites are easy to reach, offer interpretation of the resources, and often have amenities/facilities such as picnic tables, restrooms and parking.

Archeological Zone

This zone, which has a concentration of archeological sites, is designed to protect evidence of past human use including sacred sites of the Coast Miwok. Sites would not be marked, to prevent disturbance, and sacred sites could be accessed only with an appropriate authority. Visitor use in this zone would be limited to activities that do not impact archeological resources.

Development Zone

In areas designated as a development zone the natural environment is often modified to accommodate visitor and park operation needs. Roads, visitor centers, parking, and other facilities provide access and services but limit opportunities for solitude.

Special Uses

Special use zoning is found in only a few areas managed by Point Reyes National Seashore. Areas in this zone are impacted as permitted in special use agreements. The land in these areas is often open to the public, but noise and visual intrusions are prevalent. Also, public lands managed by others, such as state parks, are designated as special use areas and have specific management and visitor use guidelines.

Use these descriptions to evaluate the five concepts in the following pages.



ALEXANDRA KRUISE



BRUCE FARNSWORTH

The Concepts



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CONCEPT 1: CONTINUING CURRENT MANAGEMENT / THE NO-ACTION CONCEPT

Overview

The no-action concept represents the existing conditions at the park if current management actions and zoning continue. National Park Service staff would continue to manage the parks as directed in the current General Management Plan (1980). For the foreseeable future, there would be no major change in management direction. The parks would continue to be an active partner in a regional conservation strategy that would include other agencies and community organizations. Facilities and resource programs would continue as they have. This concept provides a baseline for evaluating changes and impacts in the other concepts.

Cultural Resources Protection

The cultural resource program would continue to focus on protection of archeological sites and preservation of historic landscapes and structures. As funding is obtained, many of the parks' 297 historic structures would be stabilized and preserved. Archeological sites would be reviewed and stabilized for long-term preservation. The "Cultural Landscape Zone" currently comprising 13 dairy and beef ranches would continue in operation. Leases would be renewed and continued under existing agreements. In areas where sensitive resources exist, measures would be taken to protect natural and other cultural features.

Natural Areas, Wilderness and Resource Management

The natural resource program would continue to focus on preserving and restoring ecosystems and applied research efforts. With more than half the National Seashore set aside as wilderness or natural areas, resource management activities would continue to focus

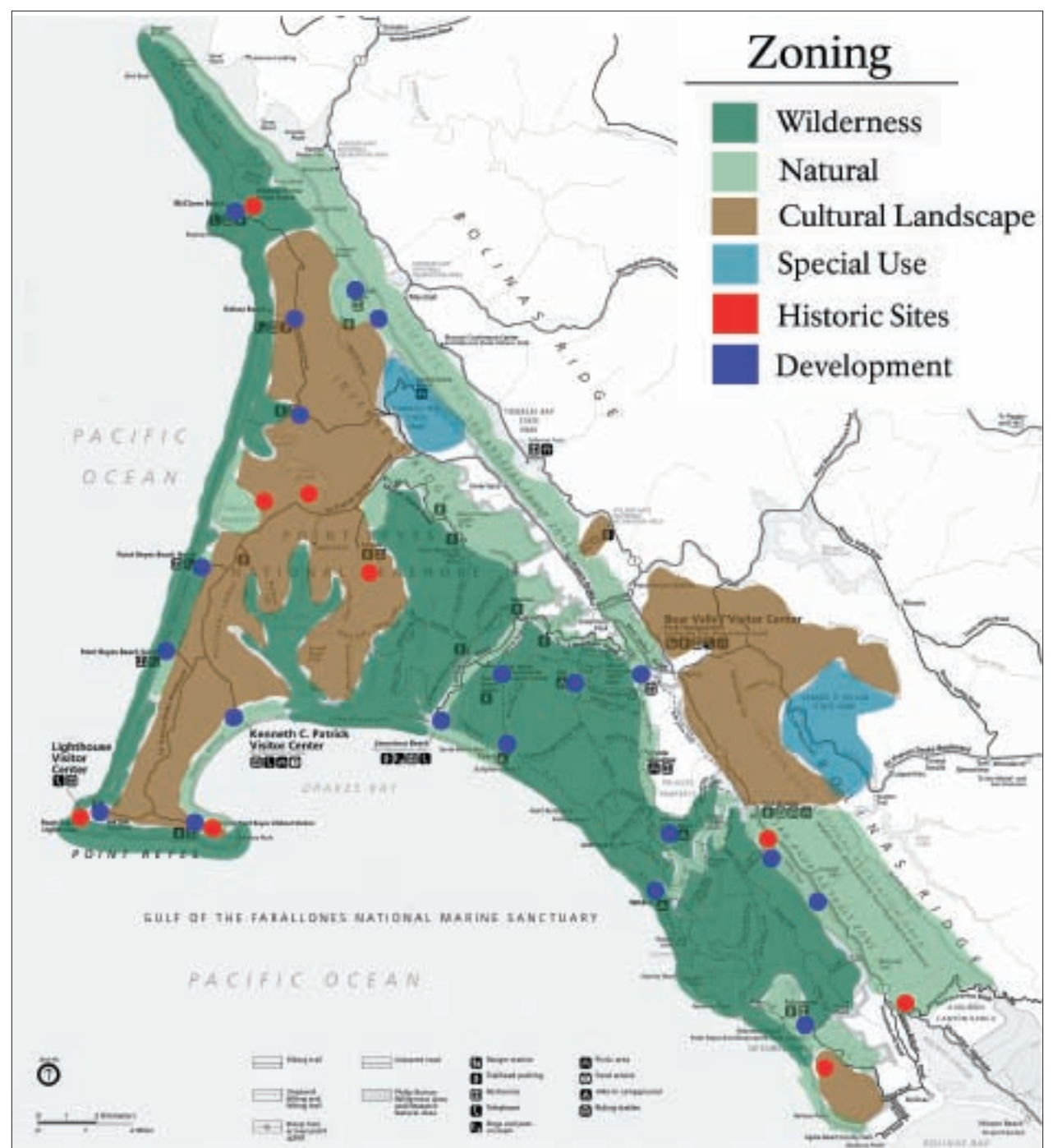
degraded would be protected. Invasive species would be removed from sensitive areas. Threatened and endangered species would be closely monitored and protected.

Visitor Opportunities and Experiences

Visitors to the parks would continue to have many diverse opportunities. The spectrum would continue to include passive recreation like bird watching and wildlife viewing to more active opportunities like backcountry hiking and camping. The Seashore would continue to maintain and operate three visitor centers, four backcountry campgrounds, its system of trails and access to beaches and boating. Exhibits and educational waysides throughout the park would continue to offer opportunities for education. Ranger-led talks and walks would continue at current levels. Exhibits, films and waysides would be updated and replaced to keep them relevant to visitors as funding becomes available. Relevant resource education would be available for students and visitors.

on inventory and long-term monitoring of plant and animal species. Habitat restoration would also continue as a major focus. Creeks that have been closed for salmon protection would be restored; wetland areas that are

Below: Concept 1 map





SUSAN VAN DER WAL

CONCEPT 2: SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES



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Overview

Under this concept, park management would be focused on the preservation of native species and natural processes and the restoration of biodiversity. Wilderness and natural zoning would be expanded to enhance the natural qualities of the park. Changes in land use would increase scenic qualities and expand habitat for native species. As a result, the cultural landscape zone would be reduced through time. Ranches with significant historical integrity would continue to be preserved. Visitor experience would shift to activities with low environmental impacts as wilderness and natural zones expand. The trend throughout the Seashore would be toward fewer buildings and facilities.

Cultural Resources Management

Under this option, cultural resources would be managed to preserve the most historically significant sites and structures. Historic structures would be maintained to the best possible level of protection. At a

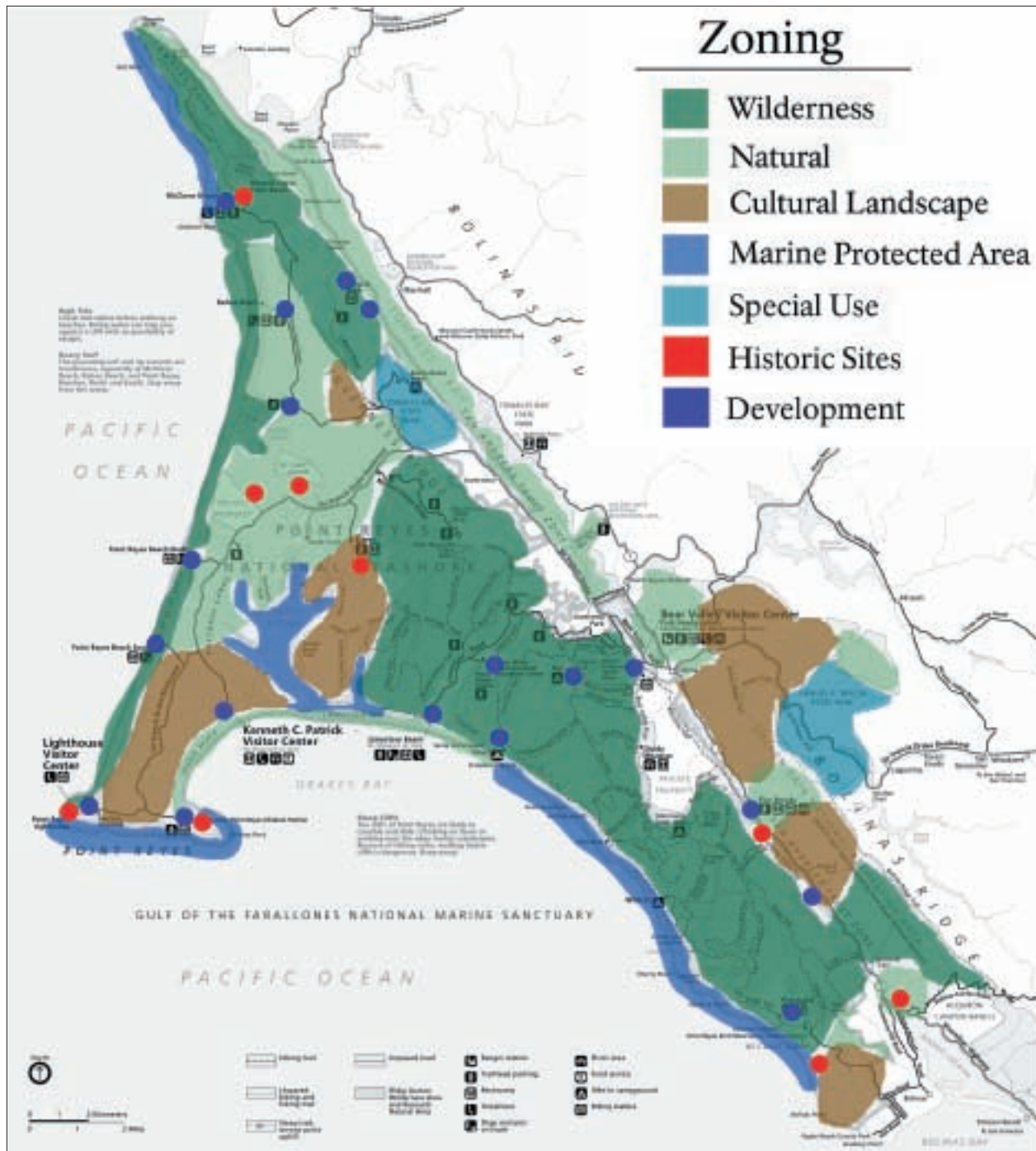
minimum, all statewide and nationally significant sites would be preserved for public enjoyment. Beef and dairy operations would continue until original permittees discontinue ranching activities. Archeological sites would be documented and protected. Sacred and endangered archeological sites would also receive priority and be protected and maintained.

Natural Areas, Wilderness and Resource Management

Resource preservation and restoration would be the overriding consideration in the parks. Under this concept, park managers would expand wilderness and natural areas and give greater focus to ecosystem preservation and restoration. To improve ecological integrity, invasive exotic species removal efforts would be expanded. Scientific research and species monitoring would be expanded to gather more baseline data on ecosystem health and population trends. Marine protected areas and research facilities could be created (in cooperation with California Department of Fish & Game) to better understand and preserve the ocean environment that surrounds the park.

Visitor Opportunities and Experiences

Under this concept, there would be more opportunities for solitude and improved wildlife viewing and vistas. The visitor opportunities would focus on low-impact activities. Some backcountry camping areas would be altered to promote wilderness camping, and the trail system would be expanded. Beach access, picnic areas and all visitor centers operations would remain open, consistent with current management; however, new exhibits, education programs and waysides would focus on wilderness, resource science and stewardship themes. The winter shuttle operations would continue.



At left: Concept 2 map



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The Concepts

CONCEPT 3: ENHANCED PARK VALUES BY BALANCING CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION

Overview

Only minor zoning changes from Concept 1 would occur under this concept. A few areas zoned as cultural landscape would be reclassified as natural areas, protecting sensitive natural resources, while two historic ranching districts would be established to preserve working agricultural landscapes. Throughout the parks, natural resource monitoring, and restoration efforts would be expanded to protect the parks' ecological resources. Some access corridors into the wilderness zone would be removed, dispersing visitor use and increasing wilderness values. Only minor additional park facilities would be built if existing structures were not available.

Cultural Resources Management

The parks' historic resources would receive the same level of protection as they have under the current management. The cultural resource program would continue to focus on protection of archeological sites and the preservation of historic landscapes and structures. Under this concept, a special archeological zone would be established to protect the sacred sites and cultural identity of the Coast Miwok people. Ranching would be continued and promoted to preserve historic cultural landscapes. In areas of sensitive natural resources ranching would be excluded.

Natural Areas, Wilderness and Resource Management

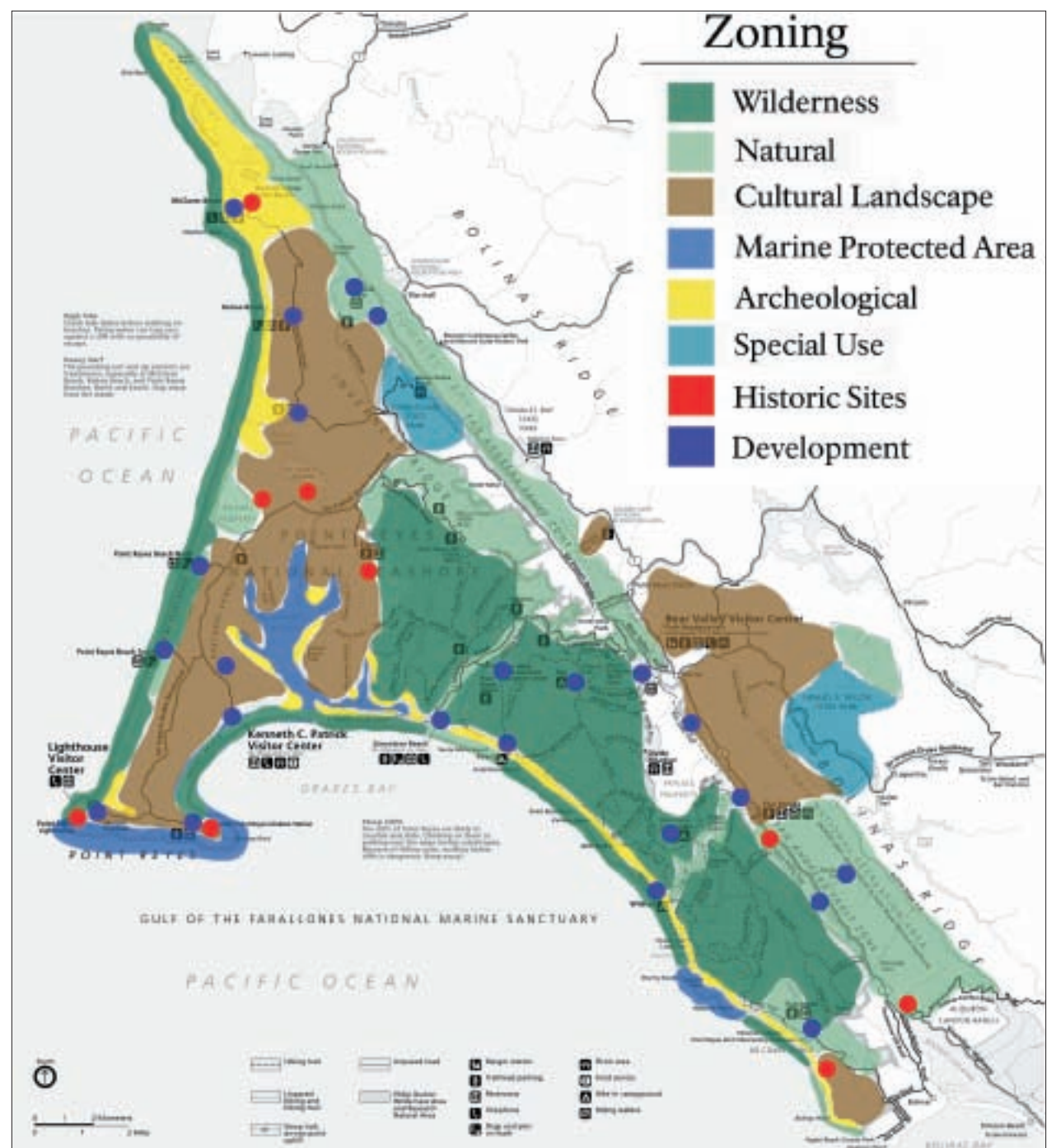
Under this concept, a variety of actions would be conducted to help preserve park natural resources. National Park Service staff would continue exotic species removal. Ecosystem restoration would be a major focus. Scientific research and species monitoring would be expanded to gather more baseline data on ecosystem health and population trends. Marine protected areas and research facilities could be created (in cooperation with California Department of Fish & Game) to better understand and preserve the ocean environment that surrounds the park.

Visitor Opportunities and Experiences

Changes in zoning would create a diversity of activities that are presently nonexistent. A backcountry camping zone for low-density, low-impact camping would be opened. Elsewhere in the parks, new group and individual camps would open and expand access. In the front country, all opportunities and access currently available would be maintained. Improvements at trail heads, a safe bike lane, a developed drive-in campground and roadside improvements could be potentially added. The winter shuttle operations would continue.



Below: Concept 3 map





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CONCEPT 4: EMPHASIS ON IMPROVED VISITOR EXPERIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ACCESS



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Overview

This concept would improve visitor experiences by providing more opportunities to enjoy and learn in the parks. The parks would be managed to provide a wider range of visitor experiences and would reach out to a greater diversity of visitor groups of all ages, abilities, and economic and ethnic groups. Natural and cultural resources would be

managed to allow additional recreation while protecting resources. The focus would be on providing low-impact outdoor recreation activities.

Cultural Resources Management

The cultural resource program would continue to focus on protection of archeological sites and the preservation of

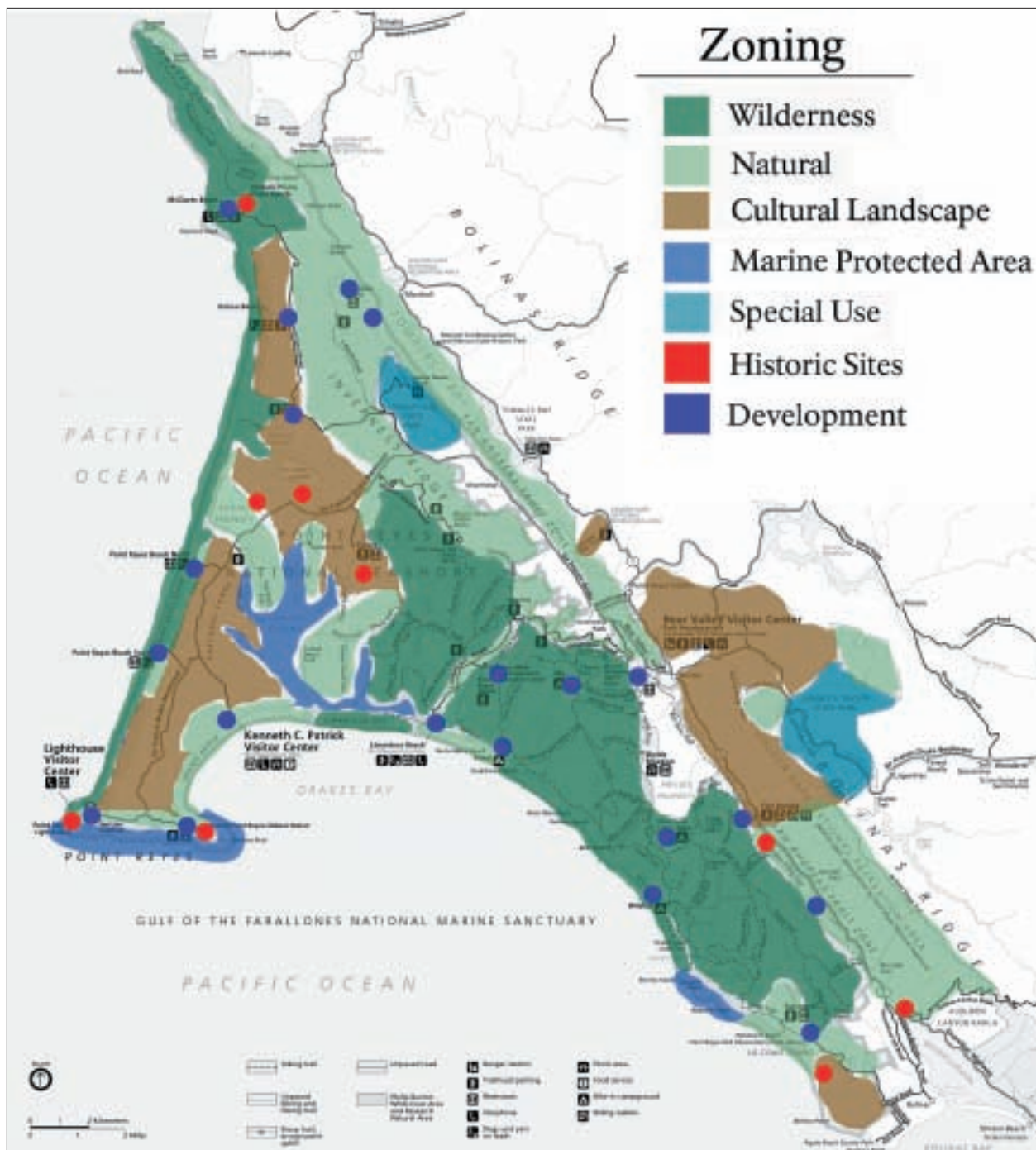
historic landscapes and structures. Some minor rezoning in ranching areas would occur to protect sensitive habitat and coastal areas.

Natural Areas, Wilderness and Resource Management

Providing visitors with a healthy ecosystem, to improve visitor experience and educational opportunities, would be a goal of resource managers. Exotic species removal, habitat restoration projects and scientific research would be conducted. Marine protected areas and research facilities could be created (in cooperation with California Department of Fish & Game) to better understand and preserve the ocean environment that surrounds the park.

Visitor Opportunities and Experiences

Whether visitors are looking for solitude and wilderness, a scenic drive, or an opportunity to understand the Seashore's resources, a variety of experiences would be offered. Educational offerings would be expanded for school groups and the public through science-based programs at an ocean life education center and throughout the parks. Front-country access and experiences would be improved by managing views and improving road and trailhead conditions. Camping opportunities would be expanded to include a developed campground, new walk-in sites and a wilderness camping zone for dispersed low-impact camping. New trails would also be added to the backcountry, while visitor services would be expanded in the front country. Visitor centers with improved exhibits would operate with extended summer hours. Exhibits would be updated with new multimedia technology. The winter shuttle operations could expand beyond current operations.



At left: Concept 4 map



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

CONCEPT 5: ENHANCING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Overview

The parks' 297 historic structures, and archeological resources would be protected with a special emphasis on preserving working agricultural landscapes. Under this concept there would be a net gain in agricultural lands though some grazing exclusions would be employed, protecting sensitive natural and cultural resources. Natural resource monitoring and restoration efforts would be continued, to protect the parks' ecological resources. To improve visitor experience, low impact recreational opportunities such as trails would be expanded, while new park facilities would only be built when absolutely necessary.



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Cultural Resource Management

To enhance working agricultural landscapes, and the pastoral scene, ranching and grazing would be expanded to preserve the agricultural character of Point Reyes National Seashore and the northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. An archeological zone would be established to protect the sacred sites and cultural identity of the Coast Miwok people.

opened linking areas of cultural significance. Beach access and picnic areas would remain open. Through partnerships, two new education centers would be opened, one focusing on sustainable agriculture and the other on Native American history and heritage. The winter shuttle operations would continue.

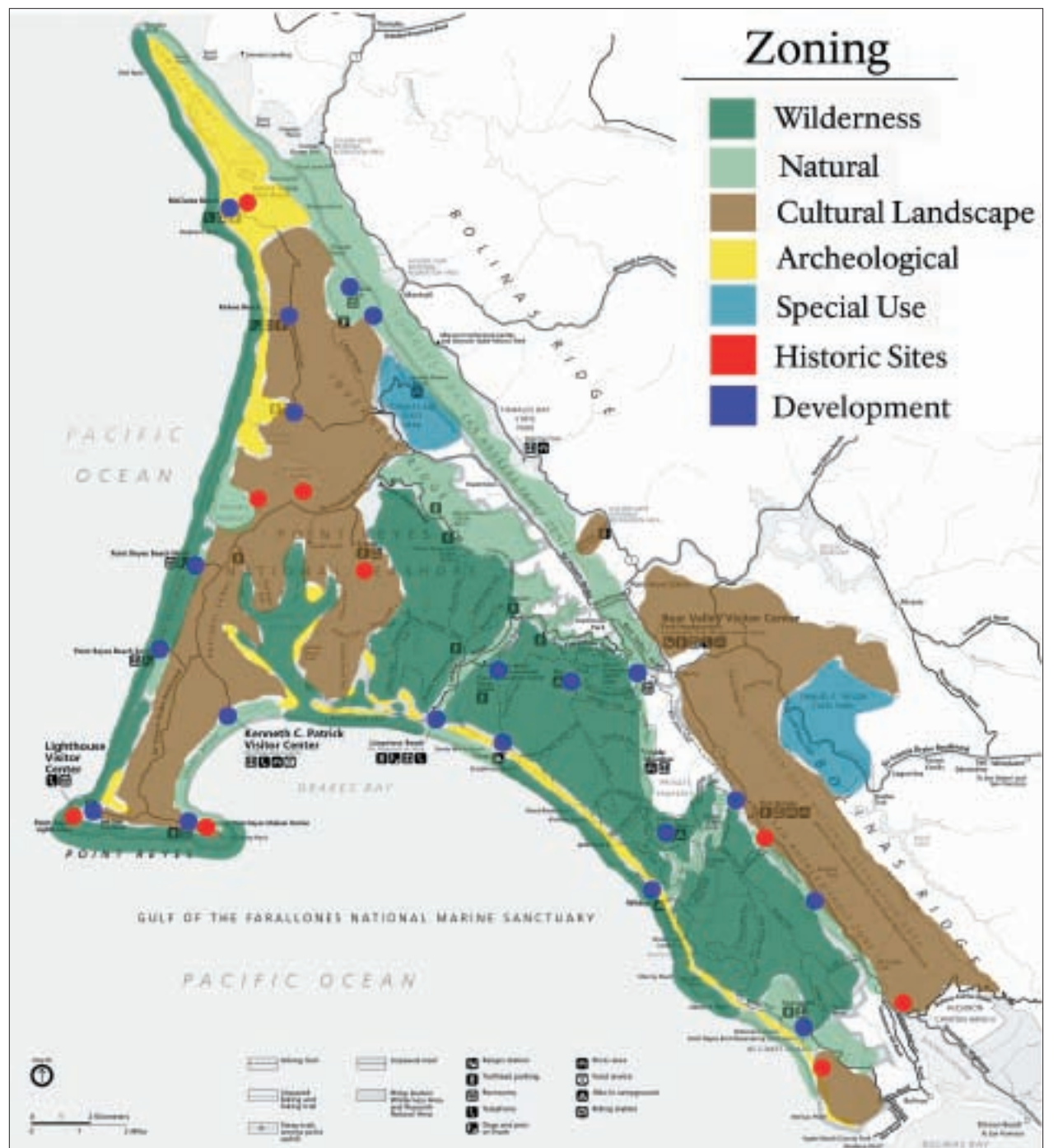
Natural Areas, Wilderness and Resource Management

As in Concept 1, the natural resource program would continue to focus on restoring species and ecosystems, inventorying and monitoring, and applied research efforts throughout the parks. Federally designated wilderness would not be altered, providing habitat for much of the flora and fauna of the two parks.

Visitor Opportunities and Experiences

The majority of visitor opportunities and experiences would remain consistent with existing management; however, there would be an added emphasis on the human history of the Point Reyes area. New trails would be

Below: Concept 5 map



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NEXT STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

- u Prepare and publish for distribution and public comment the draft GMP/EIS (Winter 2005).
- u Receive public comment on draft and incorporate into final plan (Winter 2006).

Stay Informed and Involved

Join our mailing list and send us your comments. You'll be notified of any future meetings and receive any future documents for review.



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PLANNING STUDIES CURRENTLY UNDER WAY

The following studies are providing background information to assist park management with the updating of the General Management Plan.

Completed as of publication date for this Newsletter:

- 1 Trail Inventory and Condition Assessment
- 1 Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
- 1 Transportation Management Study
- 1 Transit Analysis for Point Reyes National Seashore
- 1 GIS Vegetation & Wetland Delineation Map
- 1 Threatened and Endangered Species Evaluation and Mapping

Still under way:

- 1 Cultural Landscape Report
- 1 Administrative History
- 1 Historic Resource Study of Tomales Bay
- 1 Fire Management Plan
- 1 Archeological Overview and Assessment
- 1 Cultural Evaluation Study for Tocaloma
- 1 National Register Nominations for Olema Valley and Point Reyes Ranches as well as Radio Site



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Point Reyes National Seashore Facts

u NATURAL FEATURES

- ◉ 80 miles of coastline
- ◉ 26 threatened and endangered species
- ◉ over 900 species of flowering plants
- ◉ over 490 species of birds recorded
- ◉ 50 species of mammals
- ◉ 28 species of reptiles and amphibians
- ◉ 32,000 acres of wilderness

u CULTURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES

- ◉ 297 historic structures



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



SUSAN VAN DER WAL



JOHN DELLOSSO

Submit your comments to us by January 31, 2004 — via mail or email at ann_nelson@nps.gov.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Point Reyes National Seashore
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956

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