



PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Date: May 22, 2008

Six members of the public were in attendance, along with three individuals from the California Department of Parks and Recreation and three consultants. Introductions were made all around, and the attendees were reminded that this is “your park”, so getting their ideas and input is very important. After some background information on the area, the Navarro-by-the-Sea Research Center for Riparian and Estuarine Research organization, and the scope of the project, an informal discussion ensued, the highlights of which are summarized below.

Discussion Summary:

- ◆ **Vision:** What should the area look like in the future? Would just like to see the area fixed up. Any improvements would be good. This question also resulted in discussion of how much of the structure(s) can be preserved, where to start and stop with renovations. The Inn’s foundation will need to be replaced, which is a big job and a challenge, but planners are aware of that. The area is to be “rehabilitated”, not “restored”. Rehabilitation allows more flexibility for adaptive reuse and incorporating designs that will accommodate American with Disabilities Act guidelines, for example.
- ◆ **Wetlands:** Why does the map show some wetlands uphill? When asked how wetlands could exist in the slopes above the Inn, it was explained that the delineation included factors considered by both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State Coastal Conservancy. The Conservancy has less stringent standards and defines wetlands within the Coastal Zone as including any one of three criteria (e.g., simply the presence of certain plant species), where the USACE requires that all three criteria (vegetation, soils, and duration) be met. Therefore the vegetation documented on the slopes qualified the area indicated as wetlands.

It was noted by the consulting team that some area (approximately one acre or slightly more) shown as wetland is actually underlain by pavement. Removal of that pavement would present an opportunity to enhance that habitat, and perhaps mitigate for other impacts that may result from the Specific Area Plan.

- ◆ **Vegetation Management:** There are a number of trees that are dead or dying on the slopes above the Inn. They pose both a safety hazard and fire danger. Additionally, invasive plants such as periwinkle and ivy are a contributing factor to the trees' decline and should be controlled. The Specific Area Plan will include prescriptions for vegetation management. Vegetation management could provide many job and volunteer opportunities. Could get kids to help with wetland restoration, as is done in other places, like Marin.

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- ◆ **Drainage and Slope Stability:** There is a large culvert on the old road bench. Question: How long has culvert been there? Answer: Originally from the 1940s but enlarged sometime between the 1960s to the 1980s. Question: Where does it drain? Answer: Around the Inn. Question: Was any information learned from the geotechnical engineer who was in the field with consultant today? Answer: Yes, and it is positive information in terms of the geological concerns about rehabilitating the historic Inn. A report should be available soon and will be posted on the Navarro-By-The-Sea website.
- ◆ **Sanitary Facilities:** Consideration should be given to self-composting toilets near the Inn. There are “compost” toilets that have been utilized in other projects where conventional facilities are problematic. Could be a possibility for this site. A consultant has been hired to advise on the septic system; even an improved leach field is going to be hard to get.
- ◆ **Capacity:** Have to consider level of use site will likely generate. What would be visitation be? How much traffic? Water use? Or – will it remain about the same? Maybe a smaller footprint would suffice, rather than engineering something bigger than really needed. Level of use will likely be influenced by how much the site is promoted. Currently, not many people other than locals know of Navarro Beach, and there is scant signage. State Parks does plan to sign the Navarro River Redwoods State Park on Highway 1. A “Coastal Access” or “Visitor Center” sign could be added, to call more attention to the beach.

One attendee predicted that in the near future, limits on fuel availability and its high cost will lessen the number of visitors to the area. It was also noted that use may be self-limiting depending on the availability and type of sanitary facilities that can be developed.

State Parks pointed out that there is currently no General Plan for Navarro River Redwoods State Park. A General Plan will take a holistic look at the entire park unit and its resources, from the beach to the upstream limits, and will help determine the anticipated number of users, resource management directions, facility improvements, fee structures, and the like. Do not have to have all the answers right now as part of the focused Specific Area Plan.

- ◆ **Security / Park Residence:** How can / will the area and be patrolled once the historic structures are renovated? Suggestion that the Mill Manager’s House could be a place someone could live as “gatekeeper” such as a CA State Park Ranger residence was well received. Some felt this is essential.
- ◆ **Water Supply:** The Mill Manager's House currently has a water supply from a source on the slopes that no one can find. As a source, this would not meet current public health standards. The team's consultant has recommended drilling a well. A rainwater collection system that draws from stored water rather than drawing from running rivers and streams was suggested. Water supply should also be sufficient for fire suppression purposes.
- ◆ **Energy:** Alternative energy sources should be used. Solar probably wouldn’t work because there’s not enough consistent sunlight, but wind power is a possibility.

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- ◆ **Climate Change:** Climate change needs to be considered. It is hard to plan for, but shouldn't be ignored.
- ◆ **Inn / Visitor Center:** All who spoke up thought that it is a good idea to utilize the Inn as a Visitor Center. Suggestions for its programming included:
 - Could have historical information about area background; how site was used.
 - Include interpretive information about the entire watershed and restoration efforts; how indigenous people co-existed with watershed without harming it.
 - As a cultural resource, shouldn't be presented as an isolated site – link to Fort Ross, ecological ladder, Pomo site.
 - Should also do oral histories.
 - One participant felt logging exhibits shouldn't be included, as the practice did damage to the watershed. It was pointed out that logging is part of the site's history and that the compound is there because of it.
 - Visitor Center could make area more multiple-use, so when kids come out, they can get some education as well have a place to run off energy. Should attract students from both local schools and elsewhere.

A strong expression was made that the Inn should be able to be used as a community center for local residents to gather. Although a CA State Park, the site should retain its local appeal. It was noted that the main floor of the Inn is essentially one big room, so the idea of a multi-purpose facility is viable.

Question: How many square feet is the Inn building? Answer: Consultants and staff weren't certain; will get information and post it on the website.

- ◆ **Events:** The potential as a rental site for events should be considered, thus bringing in revenue; however such use may be limited by lack of flush toilets.
- ◆ **Vehicular Circulation:** parking will likely be limited near the Inn. Buses for student trips could drop children off at the inn and park at the beach. However, many schools not carpool.
- ◆ **Pedestrian Circulation:** The consultant noted that depending on the use of the two buildings there may be a need to develop a separate pedestrian route off the existing road between the Inn and Mill Manager's House. If parking were at the Beach this would be extended. Reaction to the idea of a boardwalk to safely get people around was solicited. Attendees generally liked this idea, although there is a "pinch point" that may be a hindrance from a construction perspective. Wooden structures also require a lot of maintenance, and funds to do so are difficult to obtain for CA State Parks. There are materials other than wood, TREX for example, that could be considered. Examples of that already exist in other nearby parks.

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- ◆ **Coastal Trail:** Enthusiasm was expressed from an immediate neighbor to implement the Coastal Trail as a safe alternative to walking on Highway 1.

The meeting was concluded with thanks to those who attended and encouragement to pass along comment forms to friends and neighbors should anyone else wish to provide guidance. It was also noted that the Center's website will post the summary and additional information about the project; the public is encouraged to visit the website.