

Point Cabrillo Public Use Guidelines

Revised – February 2001

Introduction

These Revisions to the Point Cabrillo Public Use Guidelines were developed during a series of community meetings held between October 2000 and January 2001. The original guidelines were developed in 1988-89 to provide a basis for ongoing management policy for Point Cabrillo, and have served to guide the North Coast Interpretive Association and the Coastal Conservancy since that time. After 10 years it was determined that the Guidelines should be updated and it is hoped that the new Guidelines will serve as the foundation for future management decisions.

In examining the goals and guidelines for each section of this document, be aware that the Revised Guidelines differ from the original document in one significant way. For management purposes, the Revised Guidelines define the Light Station and the Preserve as separate and distinct areas within Point Cabrillo. Some directives only apply to one of the areas as stated. “Point Cabrillo”, when used independently of the definitions below, refers to both the Light Station and the Preserve. The entire property is currently held in public ownership.

“The Light Station” is defined as the 30.5-acre parcel purchased by the U.S. Government in 1908. This parcel includes the Light Station buildings, yards, the bluffs and fields surrounding and to the south of the Station buildings (to the historic fence line), the wetlands surrounding the pond, and Lighthouse Road [see attached map]. The property is designated on the National and State Registers of historic sites as the “Point Cabrillo Light Station”.

“The Preserve” refers to the undeveloped property (approx. 270 acres) surrounding the historic Light Station.

Additionally, the Revised Guidelines contain a section called “Management”, which gives directives for management policy and addresses the role of the community in future planning and stewardship of the Light Station & Preserve.

Thanks go to the many members of the community who gave their valuable assistance with the public planning process, and especially for their ongoing interest in and support of the Point Cabrillo Light Station and Preserve.

Summary of Goals

- 1. In order to preserve its outstanding beauty, historic integrity, and natural habitat values, Point Cabrillo shall be pedestrian-oriented.**
- 2. Recreational opportunities shall be provided for the local community and visitors to the Mendocino coast consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources, and without impacting the surrounding community.**
- 3. Educational programs and exhibits shall be developed to promote understanding of local and natural history and to foster awareness of the effects of humans on the natural environment.**
- 4. The Light Station shall be restored consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the rehabilitation of historic structures. The appearance shall reflect the period when the Station was under the management of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.**
- 5. Management activities shall support the continued functioning of the USCG aids-to-navigation.**
- 6. Within the Light Station, historic integrity and public safety shall be the primary considerations in management and maintenance decisions, balanced with natural resource protection and the concern for potential environmental impacts.**
- 7. Within the Preserve, the preservation of flora, fauna, and wildlife habitat shall be the primary considerations in management and maintenance decisions, balanced with concerns for public safety and public access.**
- 8. Point Cabrillo should feel and be natural. Planning for use shall emphasize enjoyment of the site as a wildlife preserve, maintaining the open space and serenity.**
- 9. Protection of sensitive species and habitats shall be given high priority wherever they occur within the boundaries of the property.**
- 10. Provide those visitor service facilities necessary to enable enjoyment and use by the local community and visitors to the Mendocino Coast and consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources, without negatively impacting the surrounding community.**
- 11. Activities and any new structures in the Light Station and Preserve shall be designed so as to minimize impact on natural, scenic, and historic resources.**
- 12. Management of the Light Station and Preserve shall adhere to the goals and guidelines of the Revised Public Use Guidelines.**
- 13. Community involvement in management decisions shall be maintained through an independent non-profit that has primary responsibility for stewardship of Point Cabrillo, and will assure that the local community will remain involved in the design, operation, and long-term management of the site.**

I. Public Access

Goals:

In order to preserve its outstanding beauty, historic integrity, and natural habitat values, Point Cabrillo shall be pedestrian-oriented.

Recreational opportunities shall be provided for the local community and visitors to the Mendocino coast consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources, and without impacting the surrounding community.

Guidelines:

1. Emphasis shall be placed upon low-impact recreational activities that bring the public closer to nature.
2. A trail system shall be structured to allow a variety of experiences, but designed to minimize visual and physical impacts on habitat and natural, scenic, and historic resources.
3. The trail system and visitation shall be developed and improved consistent with public access policies as outlined in the 1998 Point Cabrillo Public Access Plan.
4. Where necessary, improvements shall be made to the trail system to minimize impacts, direct access, and address public safety. Visitors shall be directed to remain on the trails.
5. Vehicular traffic within the Light Station and Preserve shall be minimized. The main access into the site shall be by foot. Bicycles may use Lighthouse Road, but shall not be allowed on trails. All equestrian use shall be prohibited.
6. The primary route for public access to the Light Station and Preserve shall be via the entrance at Point Cabrillo Drive. Pedestrian access points from neighboring properties shall not be improved nor shall the public be directed to these access points.
7. There shall be access opportunities for persons with limited mobility, including, where feasible, on improved trails. These shall be located and constructed so as to preserve natural, scenic, and historic resources.
8. For public safety and protection of the resources, access shall be clearly directed, but constructed barriers shall be avoided.
9. Unobtrusive seating is desirable in some locations including along Lighthouse Road and in the vicinity of the Light Station.
10. Access to the north cove beach shall be retained, with improvements where necessary to avoid erosion.
11. Point Cabrillo shall close to the public at sundown. Access to the Light Station after dark may be considered for special events or supervised activities.
12. To mitigate traffic impacts, a bike and pedestrian trail shall be accommodated adjacent to Point Cabrillo Drive that will provide for public enjoyment and safety, and become part of a contiguous coastal trail.

II. Education

Goal:

Educational programs and exhibits shall be developed to promote understanding of local and natural history and to foster awareness of the effects of humans on the natural environment.

Guidelines:

1. The existing interactive educational program and exhibits shall be continued and developed to meet the growing needs of the visiting public and shall reflect the unique history and resources of the Light Station and surrounding area.
2. The education program shall use low-impact, non-consumptive methods to minimize impacts on the Light Station, Preserve, and marine resources.
3. Education programs and exhibits shall continue to focus on maritime history, the marine environment, historical restoration, and the natural and cultural history of the Light Station, Pine Grove, and the Mendocino area. Programs shall provide opportunities for exploring environmental ethics and examining human impacts on plants, wildlife, habitat, and historical resources.
4. The ongoing process of historical research and restoration shall be documented and disseminated to the public. Opportunities for integrating historical research and restoration skills shall be explored as part of educational programming at Point Cabrillo.
5. Educational programs for school groups shall be designed to integrate with the curricula and needs of local and visiting schools and colleges.
6. Management shall support the recruitment and training of volunteer docents to address the needs of visiting school groups and the general public.
7. Environmental education professionals shall be hired as staff or under contract to facilitate quality educational experiences for school groups.
8. A new educational facility shall be designed and constructed so that the integrity of the natural, scenic and historic resources is maintained. Such facility shall be constructed adjacent to Point Cabrillo Drive or in a reconstruction of the Barn.

III. The Light Station

Goals:

The Light Station shall be restored consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the rehabilitation of historic structures. The appearance should reflect the period when the Station was under the management of the U.S. Lighthouse Service.

Management activities shall support the continued functioning of the USCG aids-to-navigation.

Within the Light Station, historic integrity and public safety shall be the primary considerations in management and maintenance decisions, balanced with natural resource protection and the concern for potential environmental impacts.

Definitions:

Light Station used herein, refers to the 30.5-acre parcel purchased by the U.S. Lightkeeping Service in 1908 and currently designated on the State and National Historic Registers. This parcel includes the Light Station buildings and yards, the bluffs and fields surrounding and to the south of the Station buildings (to the historic fence line), the wetlands surrounding the pond, and Lighthouse Road [see attached map].

Guidelines:

1. The historic integrity of the Light Station shall be retained and preserved.
2. The non-profit organization shall have the ability to operate the Fresnel lens as a private aid-to-navigation should it ever cease to be a Federal aid-to-navigation.
3. Signing shall be limited and designed to minimize visual contrast with the historic structures.
4. Parking within the Light Station shall be minimized. Parking areas, which may be necessary to conform to special needs requirements, shall be located to avoid sensitive resource areas and minimize the loss of scenic values.
5. Any new uses that are considered within the Station structures shall be designed in keeping with the pedestrian orientation and historical character of the site.
6. Any new buildings in the Light Station shall be limited to reconstruction of historic buildings in place during the period when the U.S. Lighthouse Service operated the Light Station.
7. The Light Station shall be available for public access and education consistent with goals for protecting the natural, scenic, and historic resources.

IV. Natural Resources

Goal:

Within the Preserve, the preservation of flora, fauna, and wildlife habitat shall be the primary considerations in management and maintenance decisions, balanced with concerns for public safety and public access.

Point Cabrillo should feel and be natural. Planning for use shall emphasize enjoyment of the site as a wildlife preserve, maintaining the open space and serenity.

Protection of sensitive species and habitat should be given high priority wherever they occur within the boundaries of the property.

Guidelines:

1. Access shall not be directed into wetlands, the inter-tidal zone, and other sensitive habitats. Interpretive information will be provided to increase public understanding of these resources.
2. The trail system shall be improved, as necessary, to minimize impacts on soils and plants and control public access. Low, rustic boardwalks will be utilized where practical, especially where trails will cross riparian drainages.
3. To avoid conflicts with nocturnally active wildlife, Preserve trails shall close at sundown.
4. Dogs shall be leashed and under control, and remain on trails at all times to minimize conflicts with wildlife.
5. A program of landscape control and restoration shall be designed and supported. The program shall provide for replanting of eroded or denuded sites, preservation of historic or landmark plantings, and control of invasive exotic plants. Mature stands of exotic, woody species shall be preserved for their habitat value, but their seedlings shall be controlled, and a program of gradual replacement with native species shall be implemented.
6. To enhance the natural scenic setting of Point Cabrillo, and when financially feasible, the existing electric utility lines along Lighthouse Rd. should be relocated underground.
7. Interpretive signage shall be designed and placed for minimal impact on the natural, scenic, and historic resources.
8. No hunting, harvesting, or collecting of animals, plant life, or artifacts by the visiting public shall be allowed.

V. Visitor Service Facilities

Goal:

Provide those visitor service facilities necessary to enable enjoyment and use by the local community and visitors to the Mendocino Coast and consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources, without negatively impacting the surrounding community.

Guidelines:

1. Improvements shall be designed and located to minimize the need for construction of roadways. Access shall be on a walk-in basis as far as possible.
2. Automobile parking areas shall be limited in size by the visitor carrying capacity of Point Cabrillo, as determined by flora and fauna baseline studies.
3. Public camping shall not be permitted within the Preserve.
4. The principal vehicular parking site for visitors shall continue to be located in the vicinity of Point Cabrillo Drive and Lighthouse Road, near the main entry control point. It shall be of a size adequate to prevent parking overflow onto Point Cabrillo Drive.
5. Any public restrooms shall be built adjacent to the principal parking area, within the Light Station, and in any new educational facilities, and shall be limited to these locations. Chemical toilets shall only be used on a temporary basis for special events.
6. New facilities shall be designed to minimize impact on the surrounding community, consistent with preservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources.
7. All visitor service facilities shall be handicap accessible.
8. The farmhouse near the entry gate shall be restored or reconstructed and used for interpretation purposes as an example of a historic Pine Grove farmhouse.
9. Any new visitor center shall be located adjacent to Lighthouse Road and Point Cabrillo Drive at the entrance to the property. Building a visitor center shall not occasion the necessity for an additional public parking area. The visitor center may also accommodate educational activities.

VI. Control of Environmental Impacts

Goal:

Activities and any new structures in the Light Station and Preserve shall be designed so as to minimize impact on natural, scenic, and historic resources.

Guidelines:

1. Locate visitor service and new educational facilities in the eastern portion of the property adjacent to Point Cabrillo Drive. Use topography and vegetation to make these facilities effectively "invisible" as viewed from the Light Station and the principal public trails.
2. Use of pesticides and herbicides shall be avoided in the Preserve except under rare circumstances where a critical need demands extraordinary measures. Alternative means of control shall first be thoroughly researched and tested. Chemical components and application methods shall be selected for the least possible impact on neighboring species.
3. Conflicts with surrounding residential areas shall be minimized through use of landscape screening, wooden fencing, signing, and trail alignments, but new obstructions to existing private views into Point Cabrillo shall be avoided.
4. All automobile use areas shall be designed to reduce erosion potential and to contribute to groundwater recharge. Permeable surfacing materials shall be used wherever feasible.
5. To minimize impacts on the bluffs and inter-tidal zones and to protect the Marine Reserve, recreational diving shall not be permitted from the shoreline of the Light Station and Preserve.
6. Baseline flora, fauna, and avifauna studies shall be conducted to determine an appropriate visitor "carrying capacity" for Point Cabrillo. Monitoring programs shall be ongoing and results shall be assessed at least every 3 years to determine the actual impacts of public use on key species. Public access opportunities shall be developed incrementally based on the results of this monitoring program.
7. Management decisions and all scheduling shall take into account the safety of resident, migratory, nesting, and sensitive species.
8. Location and design of wastewater disposal systems for the Light Station and Preserve shall assure that wastewater disposal does not degrade water quality within the ocean or any on-site or adjacent groundwater basins.
9. To protect native species, feral cats and dogs shall be controlled by live trapping and relocated to appropriate facilities.
10. A fire protection system for the Light Station and Preserve shall be developed and maintained.
11. The archaeological resources of Point Cabrillo shall be protected and the historic activities of Native Americans and Pine Grove settlers shall be examined and documented.

VII. Management

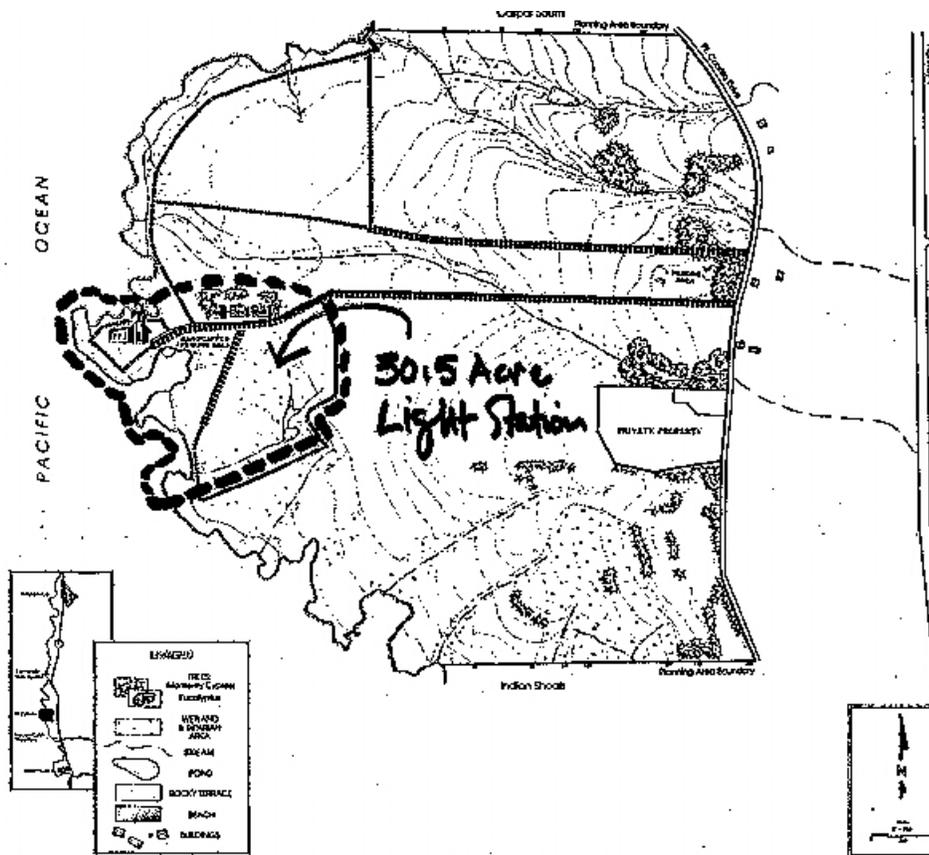
Goal:

Management of the Light Station and Preserve shall adhere to the goals and guidelines of the Revised Public Use Guidelines.

Community involvement in management decisions shall be maintained through an independent non-profit that has primary responsibility for stewardship of Point Cabrillo, and will assure that the local community will remain involved in the design, operation, and long-term management of the site.

Guidelines:

1. The North Coast Interpretive Association shall adopt a new name and create new articles of incorporation as an independent non-profit entity and continue to serve Point Cabrillo. The NCIA directors shall have responsibility for the transition.
2. The Light Station and Preserve shall remain undivided and held in trust for the public.
3. To support the stewardship of Point Cabrillo, the non-profit shall retain and determine the use of the buildings, consistent with the Revised Public Use Guidelines.
4. The non-profit may generate income from the site and outside sources. Income generated by the non-profit shall be retained and used by the non-profit for the benefit of Point Cabrillo.
5. Any revisions to or departure from the Revised Public Use Guidelines will be determined with public input. Major use, policy, or budgetary, changes proposed for the site by the owners shall be reviewed with the non-profit and the community prior to implementation
6. Management shall support meaningful volunteer participation in programs, administration, and operations. Volunteers shall have influence in the design and management of programs on an ongoing basis.
7. The non-profit shall develop a master plan that shall guide activities at Point Cabrillo for future generations. The master planning process shall be conducted within 18 months of the date this publication is adopted by the community.



PUBLIC ACCESS TRAILS

SYMBOL	IMPROVEMENT	DESCRIPTION
	BDA PAVED AND PAVED TRAILS	IMPROVED AND MAINTAINED FOR PUBLIC USE
	UNPAVED TRAILS	SOME ARE MAINTAINED FOR PUBLIC USE
	PARKING AREA	PAVED PARKING AREA FOR BICYCLES
	HANDICAPPED PARKING AREA	PAVED PARKING AREA FOR BICYCLES

POINT CABRILLO PRESERVE
MENDOCINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA JANUARY, 1998

Public Access Trails

A project of
 The Coastal Conservancy & The Santa Cruz Invertebrate Association

