



Westport Municipal Advisory Council

P. O. Box 307, Westport, CA 95488
www.westportmac.org

November 6, 2013

Ken Wiseman, Executive Director
Parks Forward Commission
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Wiseman:

The Westport Municipal Advisory Council (WMAC) was created by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to survey community opinion and advise the County and other government agencies on a variety of issues that affect the WMAC community. We are writing the Parks Forward Commission to provide input from our community on the two State Parks in our sphere of influence. These views are solely those of the WMAC and do not necessarily represent the official position of the County.

Westport Union Landing State Beach

This park provides spectacular ocean views and coastal access with campgrounds located atop scenic bluffs. WULSB was recently on a potential closure list. The community opposes any future plans to close this park unit and urges the Parks Forward Commission to recognize the strategic location and recreational functions of this park. The following comments offer suggestions for protecting and enhancing this unique park.

- 1) As the most northerly State Park in Mendocino County situated on the coast along Highway 1, this facility offers a strategic coastal camping location and other services for motorists and bicyclists traveling north and south along Route 1/Pacific Coast Bicycle Route. The vision for this park unit should recognize this strategic location and strive to improve services to increase park utilization and revenues.
- 2) This park is heavily visited by local Native American Tribes who are allowed to camp without paying fees. That legitimate use and lost revenue must be taken into account when reviewing this park's viability. The WMAC suggests that a community service credit be given for unpaid usage to replace the forgone revenue if an economic analysis is used to assess the viability of keeping this park unit open.
- 3) The rural village of Westport is a mile south of this park. Closing the park would create a significant negative impact on the retail businesses that serve park visitors, as well as local residents who work in those establishments. Those facts should be considered in any analysis of this park unit.
- 4) Improved facilities for bicycle campers could increase utilization and contribute to revenues. A separate camping area with solar showers and wind breaks in the closed southern portion of the park would be valuable. The WMAC also supports improvement of the old coast highway segments in this park as a segment of the California Coastal Trail System for use by pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 5) Develop an online reservation system that accepts credit card payments.
- 6) Keep the Abalone Point camping area open for visitors.

MacKerricher State Park

The vision for this park should include significant California Coastal Trail access between the Ten Mile River and the City of Fort Bragg, consistent with the park's approved General Plan. Repair and maintenance of the existing haul road coastal trail for pedestrians, bicycles, and the less able should be prioritized. Plans to deliberately destroy portions of that trail should be abandoned. The trail should be recognized as a way to improve resource protection and provide a safe alternative to Highway 1 for bicyclists.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thad M. Van Bueren".

Thad M. Van Bueren, Chairman

cc: Loren Rex, Superintendent, Mendocino Coast District
Supervisor Dan Gjerde; Tim Mitchell (Clerk of the Board of Supervisors)