



General Management Plan (GMP) Amendment Overview

A **General Management Plan (GMP)** is established to provide management direction for resource preservation, infrastructure and visitor use. GMPs are required to evaluate the following (54 USC 100502):

- measures for the preservation of the area’s resources
- visitor carrying capacity
- type and general intensity of development for visitor use and enjoyment
- potential boundary modification

No boundary modification is proposed as part of this planning process.

A **GMP Amendment** is a document that partially amends an existing GMP to address particular locations or issues. This GMP Amendment is prepared consistent with the Settlement Agreement and NPS policy. It will amend the 1980 GMP for the planning area including lands within Point Reyes and the north district of Golden Gate.

Desired conditions provide direction for management and preservation of resources. They are established consistent with NPS policies and the park’s enabling legislation. The desired conditions for the planning are organized around the five key areas presented below.

DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR PRESERVATION OF ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION

- Ecological function, connectivity, and processes persist and thrive in communities, including wetland, grassland, forest, scrub, and dunes.
- Sources of air, water, noise, and light pollution are limited.

DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR PRESERVATION OF NATIVE SPECIES, INCLUDING THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

- Habitats and populations of threatened and endangered species, special-status, and rare species persist and are improved.
- Native plant and animal communities persist and thrive.

DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

- Populations and extent of invasive, non-native species are limited such that they do not, or only minimally, affect ecosystem processes and/or functions.

DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

- National Register of Historic Places (National Register) historic districts, including contributing landscapes and structures, are preserved in a manner that maintains their integrity.
- Historic and prehistoric archeological sites and ethnographic resources are preserved and maintained.

DESIRED CONDITIONS FOR PUBLIC USE AND ENJOYMENT/ VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Visitors have opportunities for diverse educational and learning experiences.
- Visitors have opportunities to enjoy expanded connections and greater access to diverse recreation including, but not limited to, hiking and wildlife viewing.





Elements Common to All Action Alternatives

The following elements related to **preservation of area resources, public use and enjoyment, and visitor capacity** are common to all action alternatives.

The GMP Amendment identifies management strategies to achieve desired conditions for the preservation of resources in the planning area (see Table 2, page 27 of the EIS). It also establishes a new framework for managing visitor capacity by identifying indicators and thresholds for the planning area, as well as monitoring protocols, management strategies, and actions that can be taken to help maintain desired conditions.

In addition, the GMP Amendment establishes a long-range vision to guide future management of the planning area. Specific strategies and project recommendations would be accomplished over time. Implementation would depend on available funding and additional site specific planning, including NEPA and NHPA compliance.

Examples of strategies and projects that the NPS would consider include:

- Improving hiking, biking, and equestrian access:
 - Enhancing trail connections through loop routes, connectivity with adjacent public lands, and north-south connectivity across the park.
 - Expanding access for multiple-use trails, with some trails designated for specific uses (e.g. hike only, bike and hike only, equestrian and hike only). Potential routes would primarily use abandoned or administrative roads (including ranching roads); new trail construction would be very limited.
- Expanding interpretation of historic districts and current ranching:
 - Collaborate with ranchers and other partners to interpret the story of ranching
 - Selected waysides focused at existing destinations, such as at trailheads, the visitor center and key pullouts
- Exploring opportunities to expand day use and overnight accommodations:
 - Picnicking; potential overnight use of vacant complexes as a concession operation; camping; new locations for volunteer accommodations; a partner-led education camp; and potential adaptive reuse at the RCA Receiving Station.





Zoning Framework

Each action alternative would amend the 1980 GMP zoning for the planning area.

Under alternatives B, C, D, and E, NPS would apply a new management zone, the Ranchland zone, to the planning area. This 28,700-acre zone would be managed to support the desired conditions for the planning area.

Ranching activities would only be permitted in the **Ranchland zone** and would be managed through additional subzones (see Subzones Banner). This new zoning would amend the 1980 GMP by replacing the Special Use - Pastoral Lands and Pastoral Landscape Management zones with the Ranchland zone.

Under alternative F, NPS would apply a new management zone to the planning area called the **Point Reyes Peninsula/Olema Valley zone**, which would replace the zones from the 1980 GMP. This 28,700-acre zone would be managed to support the desired conditions for the planning area and to recognize the Point Reyes Peninsula Dairy Ranches Historic District and the Olema Valley Dairy Ranches Historic District listed on the National Register.

NPS would also apply a **Historic Ranch Preservation subzone** that would be managed for the adaptive reuse of historic ranch complexes associated with the two historic districts.





Subzones

Under alternatives B, C, D and E, NPS would apply subzones within the *Ranchland zone*. The area of each subzone would differ by ranch and alternative.

RESOURCE PROTECTION SUBZONE

The Resource Protection subzone includes lands where no ranching activities, including livestock grazing, would be authorized to protect park resources, including surface waters, threatened and endangered species habitat, and cultural resource locations. Limited prescribed grazing may be authorized to meet NPS resource management goals and objectives.

RANGE SUBZONE

The Range subzone is identified as lands where grazing would be authorized, but more intensive activities would not be allowed because of the documented presence of sensitive resources, including rare plants, wetlands, riparian/stream/pond habitats, forested areas, and critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, as well as slopes greater than 20%. The authorized activities in this subzone would be limited to cattle grazing. Limited vegetation management and no diversification activities would be authorized.

PASTURE SUBZONE

The Pasture subzone is identified as lands where no sensitive resources are known to occur; therefore, a suite of vegetation management activities, including seeding and mowing, may be conducted in addition to grazing. The Pasture subzone includes grazed lands that are outside the Range subzone where introduced or domesticated native forage species exist and would be used primarily for the production of livestock. Depending on the alternative, some diversification activities and limited forage production would be authorized in the Pasture subzone.

RANCH CORE SUBZONE

The Ranch Core subzone is identified as the developed complex of buildings and structures on most ranches. Ranches without a developed complex or buildings that are not occupied by individuals associated with ranch operations would not have a Ranch Core subzone. The Ranch Core subzone would also include disturbed lands located immediately adjacent to the developed complex that do not contain or have the potential to affect sensitive resources. Depending on the alternative, these disturbed lands, not to exceed 2.5 acres, would be available for diversification activities and building new infrastructure.





GMP Amendment Planning Area

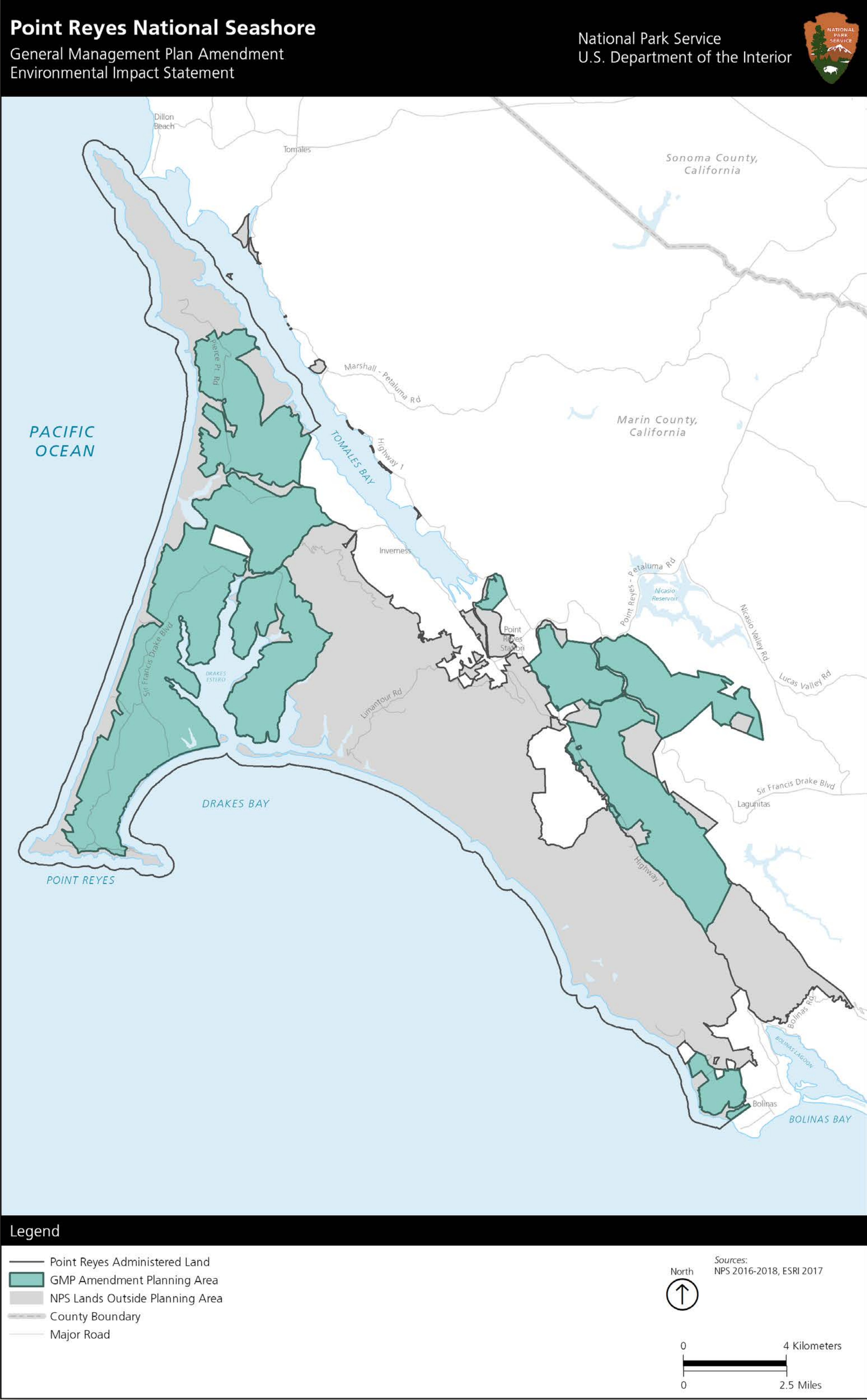
The National Park Service (NPS) prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a General Management Plan Amendment (GMP Amendment) for Point Reyes National Seashore and the north district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the EIS for the GMP Amendment is to establish guidance for the preservation of natural and cultural resources and the management of infrastructure and visitor use within the planning area. In this context, the EIS addresses the future management of tule elk and leased ranch lands in the planning area.

NEED

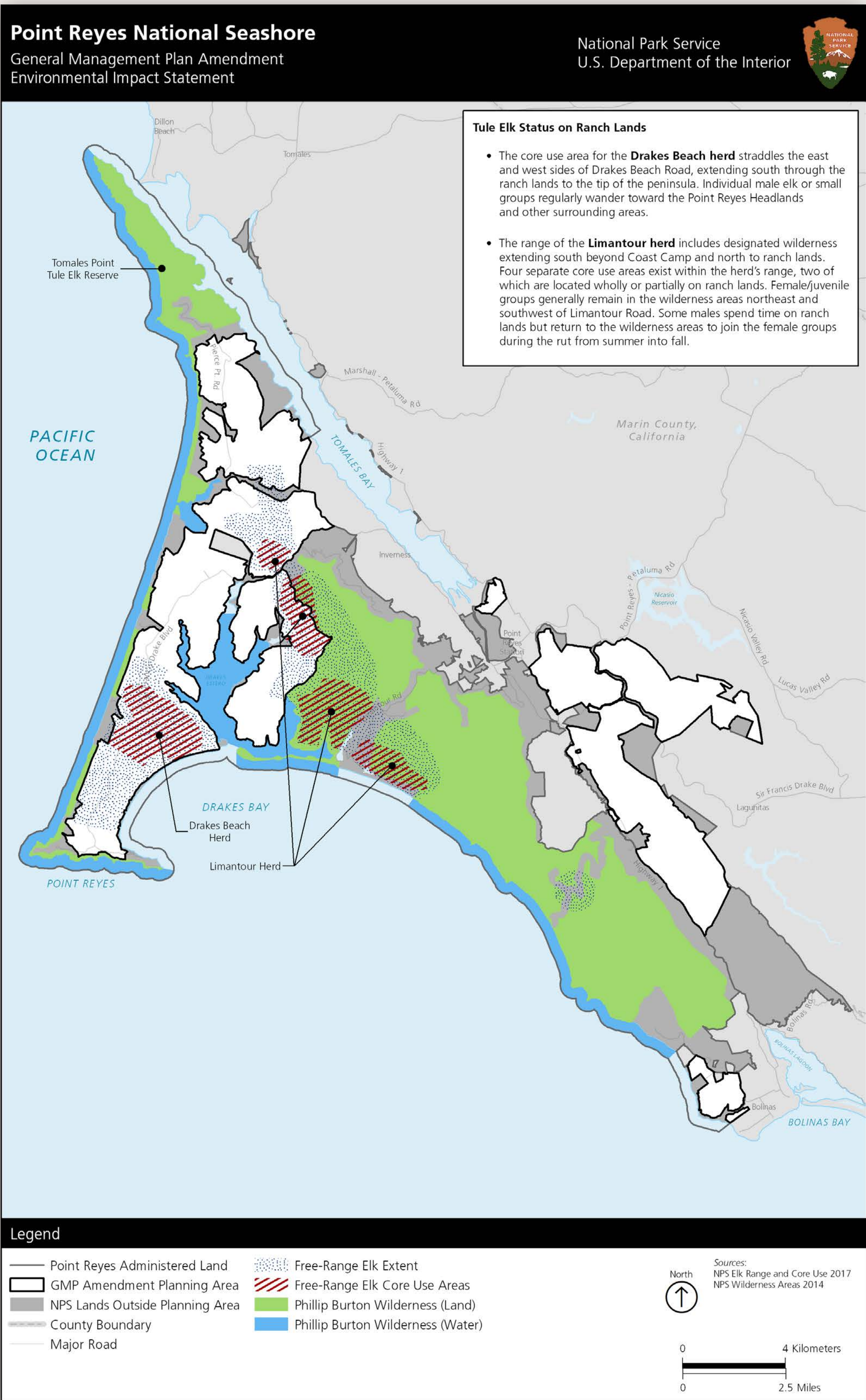
Action is needed at this time to address the management of approximately 28,000 acres of land currently leased for ranching, which is the park’s highest priority planning issue. Action is also needed to comply with the terms of the Settlement Agreement approved by the US District Court for the Northern District of California on July 14, 2017, under which NPS agreed to prepare a GMP Amendment addressing the management of lands currently leased for ranching.





Tule Elk on Ranch Lands

Tule elk, the smallest subspecies of North American elk, live only in California. Tule elk were extirpated from Point Reyes by the 1860s. Consistent with Public Law 94-389, ten tule elk were successfully reintroduced to a 2,600-acre fenced wilderness reserve on Tomales Point in 1978. This enclosed herd has grown to one of the largest in California, comprising 432 animals by late 2018.



In 1999, consistent with the 1998 Tule Elk Management Plan Environmental Assessment, the NPS established a free-ranging tule elk herd from 28 animals. There are now two independent free-ranging herds. The Drakes Beach herd was estimated at 124 animals at the end of 2018. The Limantour herd was estimated at 174 animals at the end of 2018.

Existing management of tule elk within the planning area has primarily been focused on the Drakes Beach herd. Ongoing activities in these areas have included fence repair and lowered crossings in areas of concentrated elk movement, providing fence materials to ranchers for repairs, water development away from grazed pastures, weed control, pasture mowing, pasture offsets for ranchers to offset forage lost to grazing elk, and hazing elk from active pastures to areas not leased for grazing.





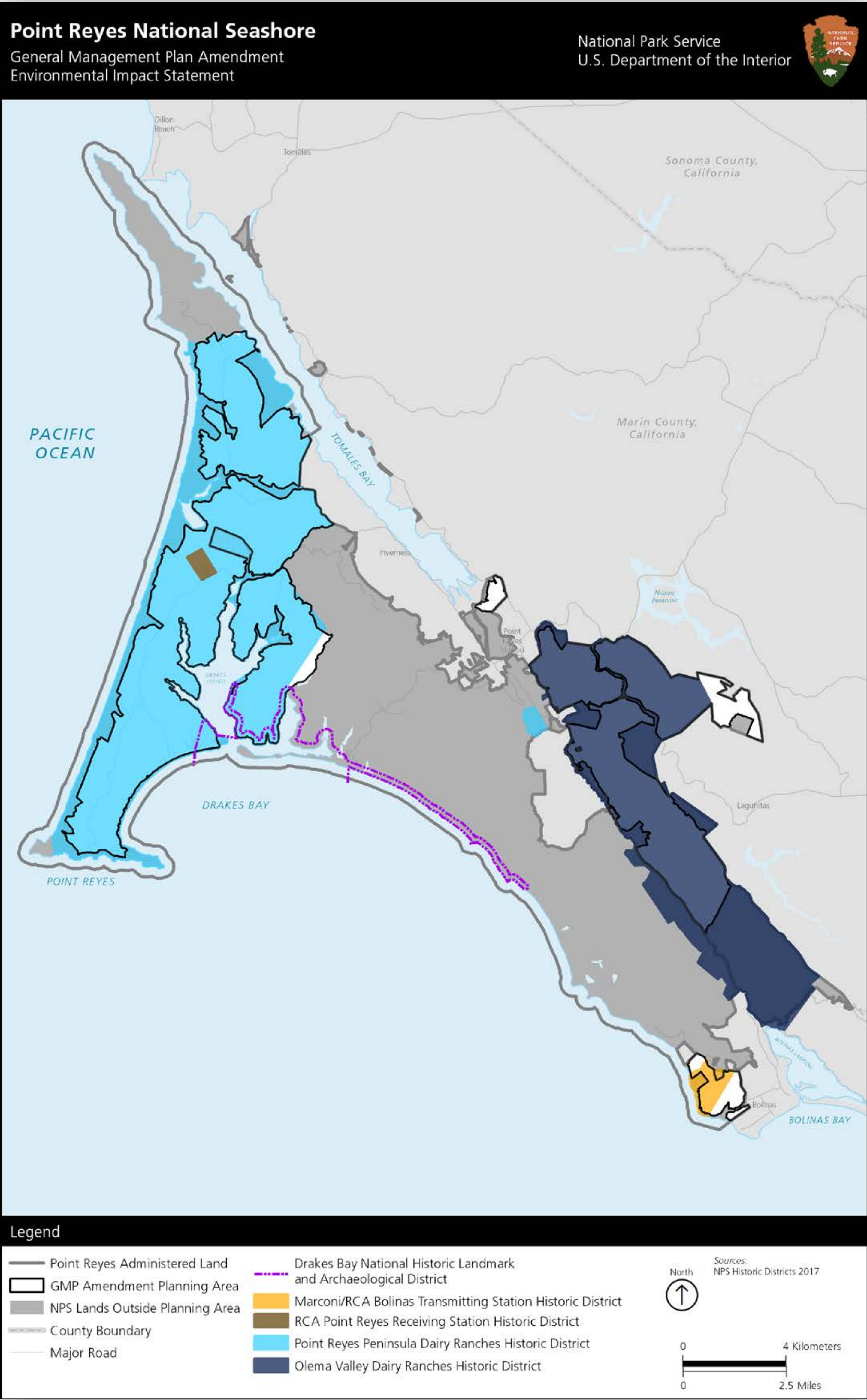
National Register Historic Districts/ Section 106 Process Information

As part of this planning process, NPS is requesting your comments on the General Management Plan Amendment and its effects on historic properties.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties.

WHAT IS A HISTORIC PROPERTY?

A historic property is any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure or object included in, or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, including artifacts, records, and material remains related to such a property.



HISTORIC PROPERTIES THAT MAY BE AFFECTED:

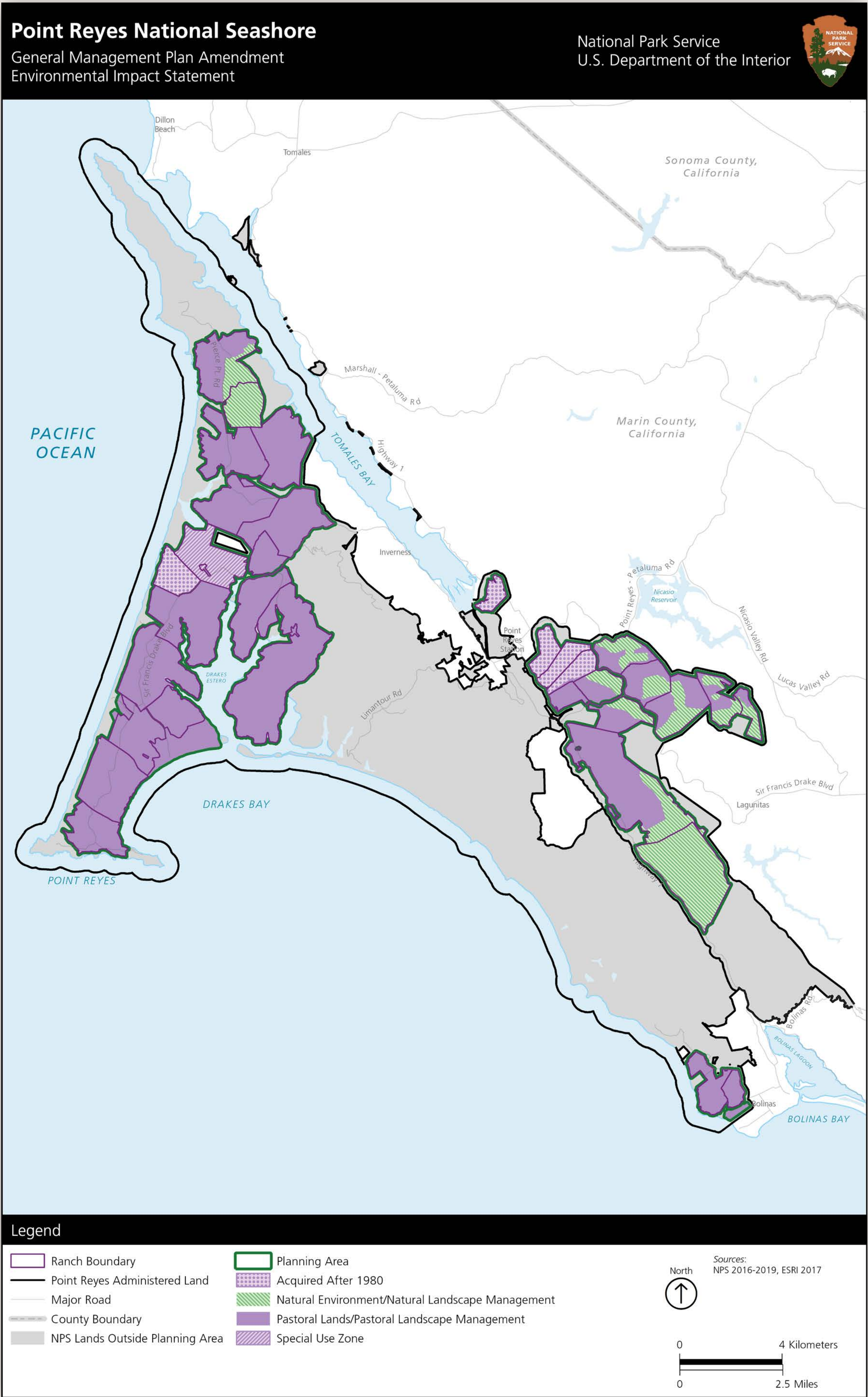
- The Point Reyes Peninsula Dairy Ranch Historic District**
 - Contains 160 contributing resources that include 107 buildings, 17 sites, and 36 structures. There are 155 non-contributing resources, including 127 buildings, 1 site, 26 structures, and 1 object.
 - 14 ranches retain their ranch building core and contribute to the historic district.
 - Three ranches do not retain individual integrity of their ranch core but still retain historic features such as fences, roads, windbreaks, and grazing lands that contribute to the historic district.
- The Olema Valley Dairy Ranches Historic District**
 - Has 157 contributing resources, comprising 97 buildings, 19 sites, and 41 structures. There are 28 non-contributing buildings and 1 non-contributing structure in the district.
 - 13 individual ranches retain their ranch building core and are contributing to the larger historic district. Six ranches do not retain individual integrity of their ranch core but still contain historic features, such as fences, roads, windbreaks, and grazing lands that contribute to the overall characteristics of the historic district.
- The RCA Point Reyes Receiving Station Historic District**
 - Contains a cluster of three Art Deco style station buildings situated at the end of a quarter-mile-long access road. Other contributing resources include an antenna field, entrance road/allée, and a transformer vault.
- The Marconi/ RCA Bolinas Transmitting Station Historic District**
 - Has eight contributing buildings, two contributing sites including a large antenna field, three contributing structures, and five noncontributing buildings and structures.

All action alternatives include preservation strategies that aim to keep historic buildings occupied. Preservation strategies include rancher occupation and/ or adaptive reuse. Adaptive reuse options include NPS operational use, NPS partner use, occupation by a non-park entity compatible with park purpose and desired conditions. If no use can be found, NPS may consider mothballing or demolition of structures. The anticipated effects to these various historic properties are discussed in the EIS along with the other environmental consequences for each alternative.





Alternative A

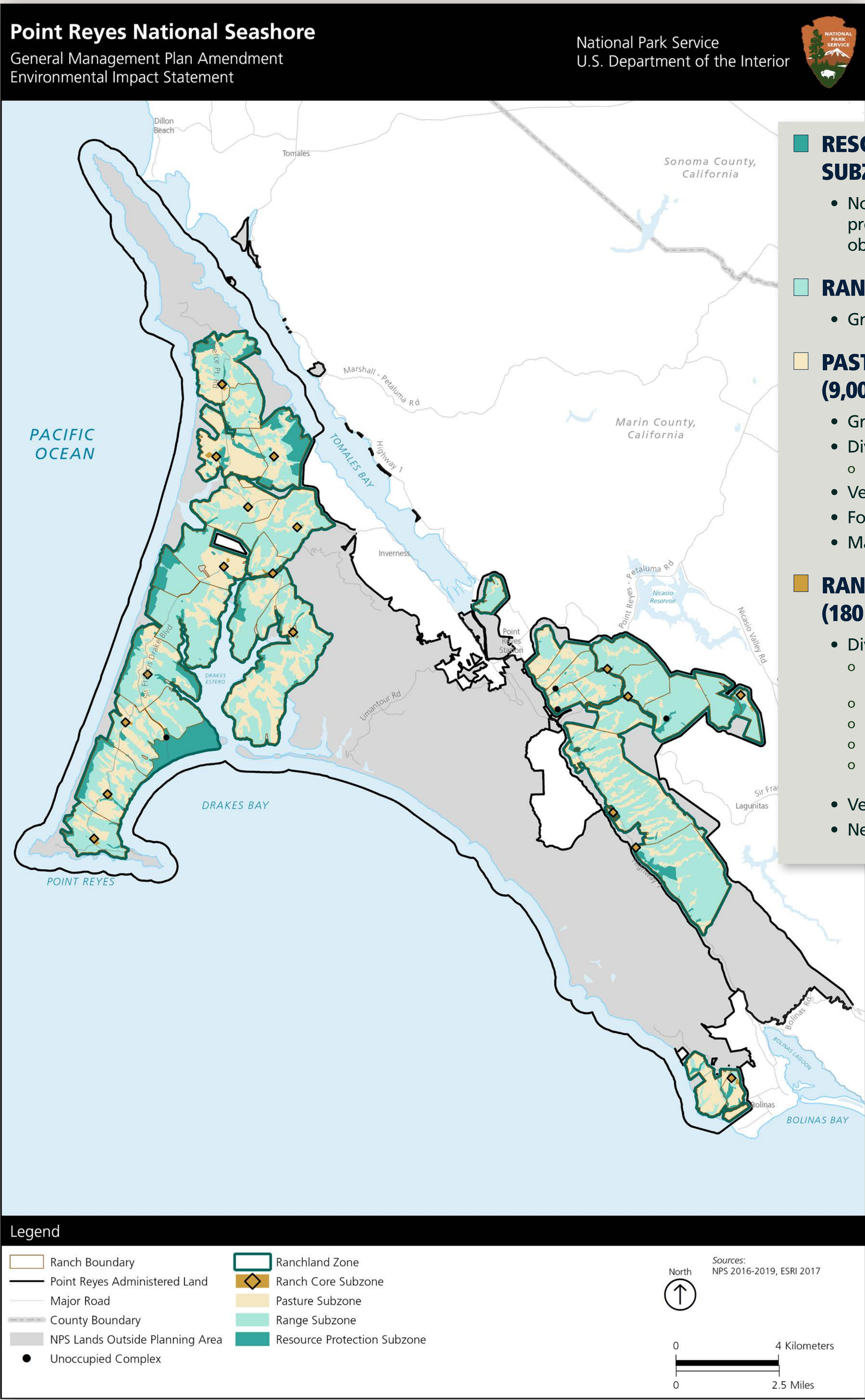


- Continues ranch operations at current scale. Inconsistency between the 1980 land management zones and current operations would continue.
- Issues new lease/permits on 27,000 acres with terms of 5 or 10 years.
- Authorizes diversification and management actions and improvements on a case-by-case basis.
- Continues existing management of tule elk.





Alternative B: NPS Preferred Alternative



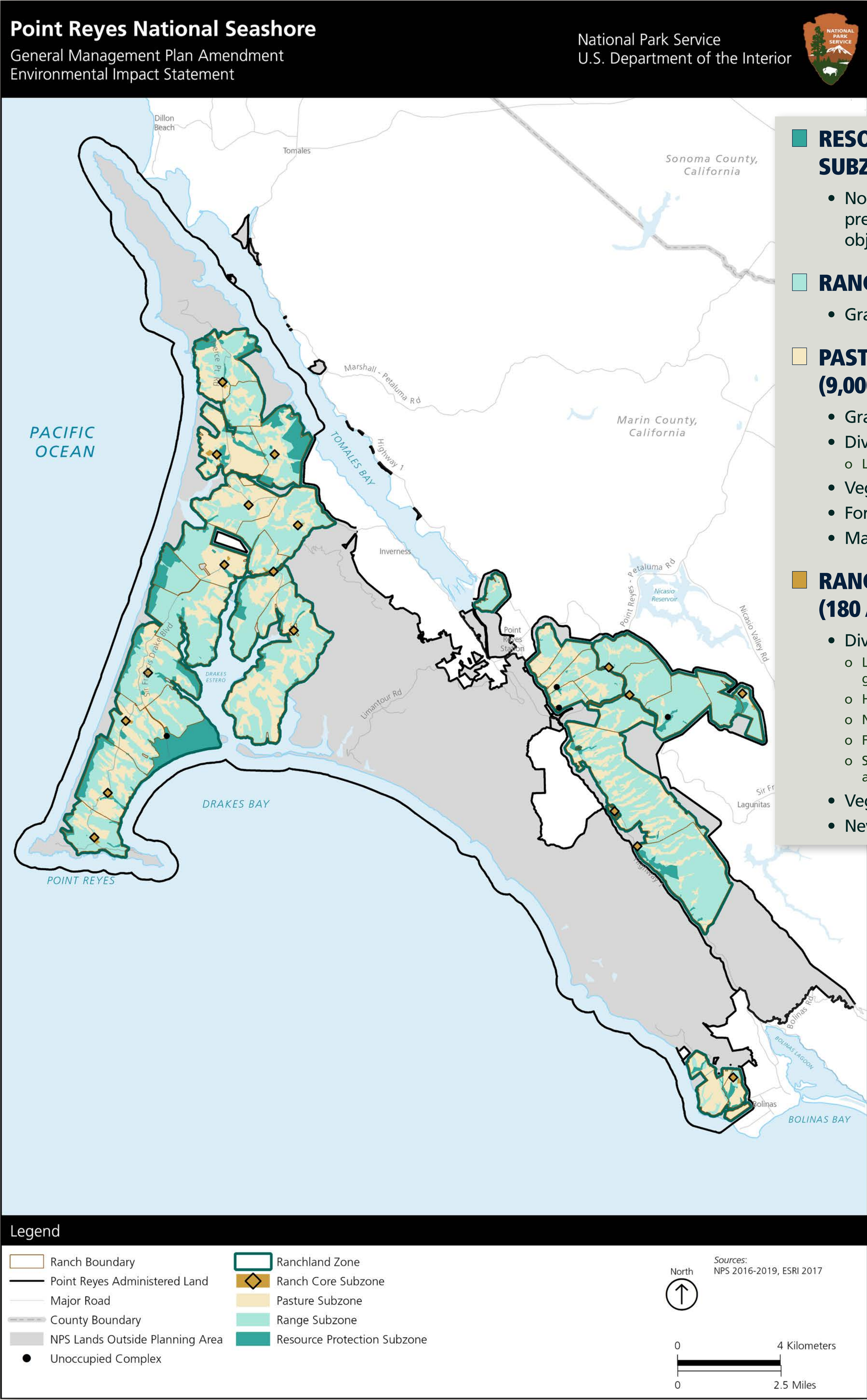
- RESOURCE PROTECTION SUBZONE (2,600 ACRES)**
 - No ranching activities authorized; NPS prescribed grazing to meet resource objectives
- RANGE SUBZONE (16,900 ACRES)**
 - Grazing only
- PASTURE SUBZONE (9,000 ACRES)**
 - Grazing
 - Diversification activities
 - Livestock species - sheep, goats, chickens
 - Vegetation management
 - Forage production (1,000 acres)
 - Manure management
- RANCH CORE SUBZONE (180 ACRES)**
 - Diversification activities
 - Livestock species - pigs, chickens, sheep, and goats
 - Horse boarding
 - Non-irrigated row crops
 - Farm tours and farm stays
 - Small scale processing and sale of local agricultural products
 - Vegetation management
 - New development

- Issues new lease/permits on 26,100 acres with 20 year terms.
- Permits ranching activities only in the Ranchland zone and manages ranching through additional subzoning - Resource Protection, Range, Pasture, and Ranch Core subzones.
- Establishes a viable population threshold of 120 adult elk for the Drakes Beach herd that is also compatible with authorized ranching. NPS would manage to that level using lethal removal methods or, if practicable, translocation outside the park. Current elk management activities would continue.





Alternative C

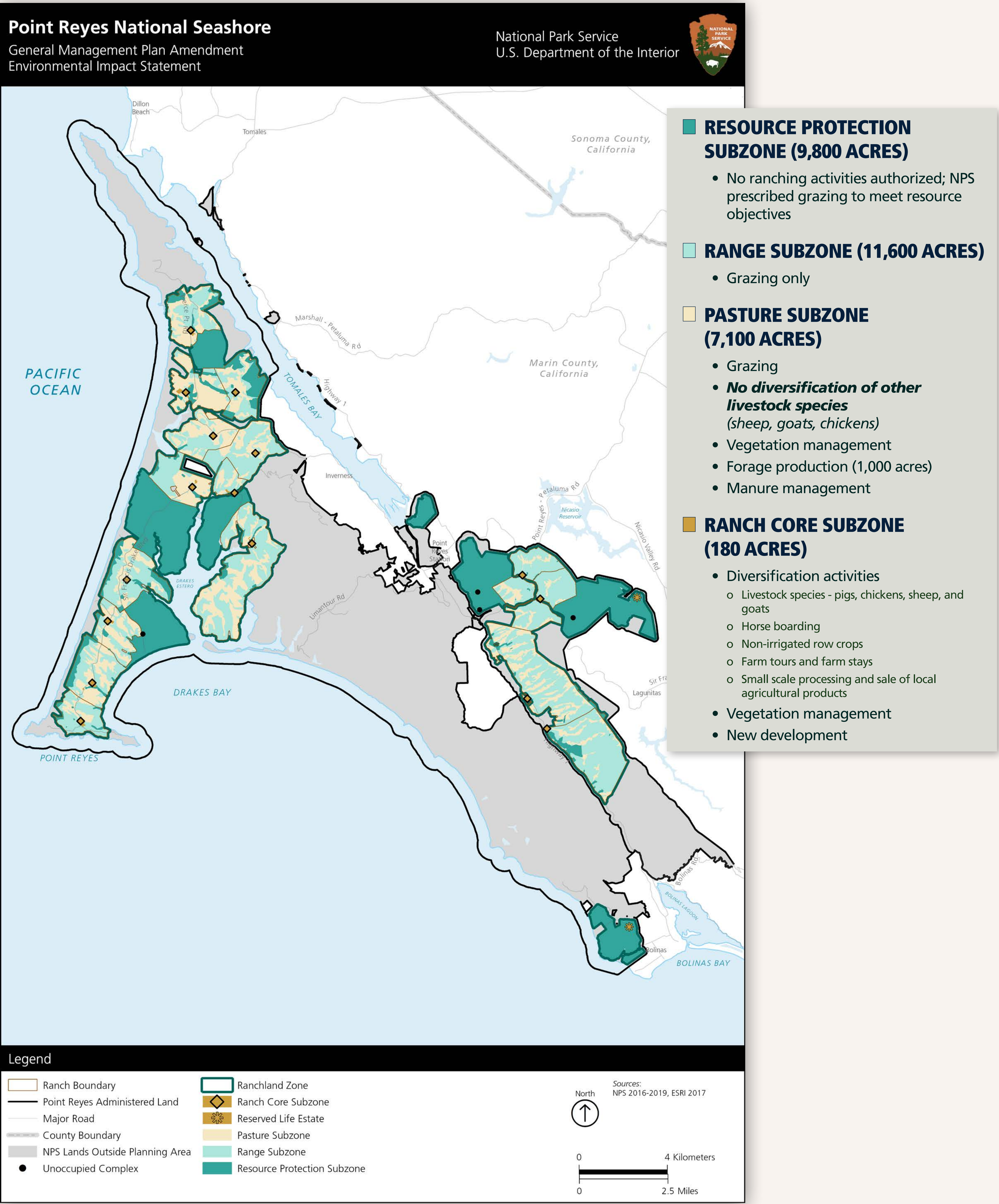


- Applies the same zoning framework and ranch management as Alternative B.
- Eliminates the Drake Beach tule elk herd using lethal removal.





Alternative D



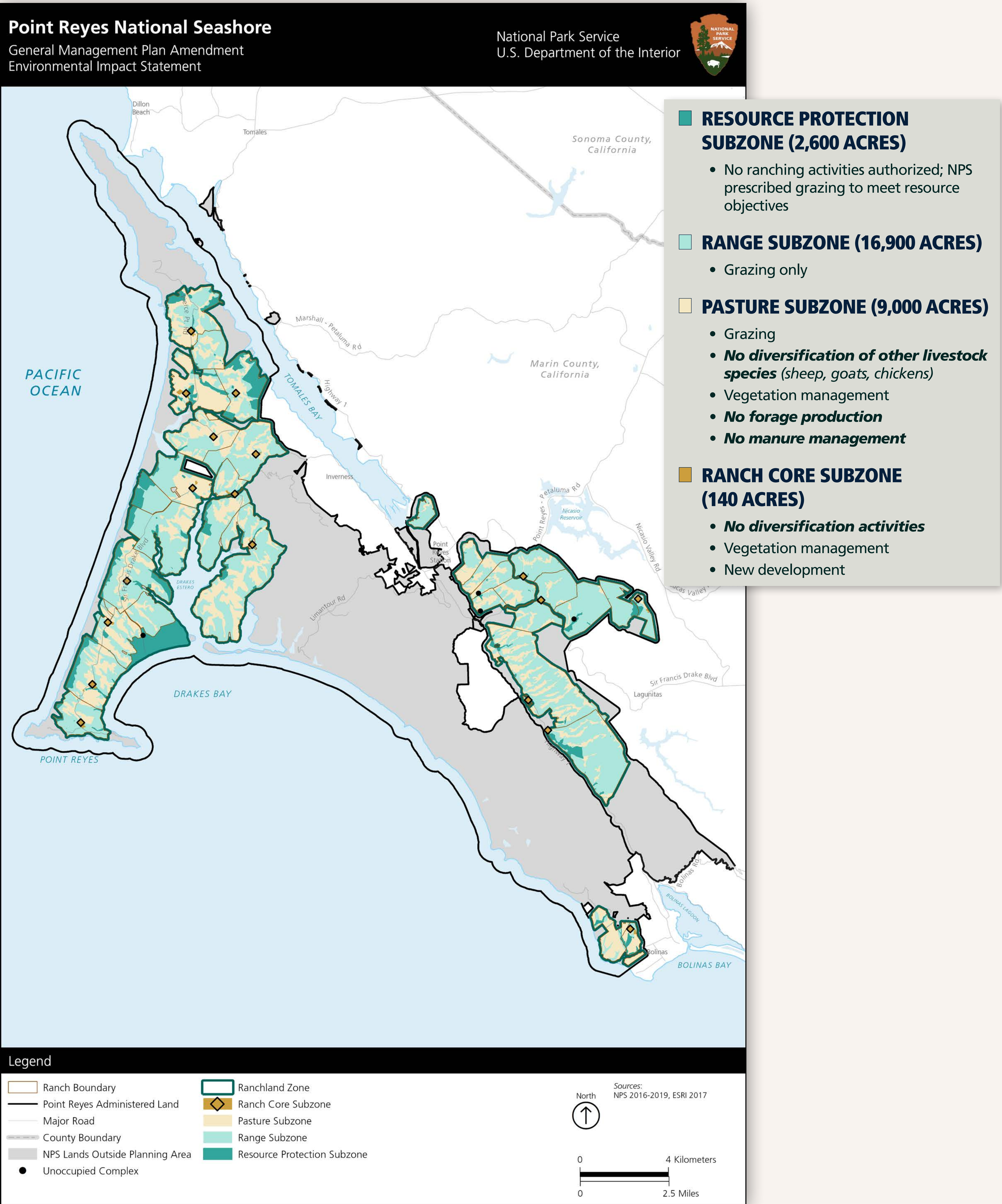
- Phases out ranching operations on approximately 7,500 acres.
- Issues new lease/permits on 19,000 acres with 20 year terms

- Applies a similar subzoning framework and ranch management as Alternative B.
- Manages the Drakes Beach herd the same as Alternative B.





Alternative E

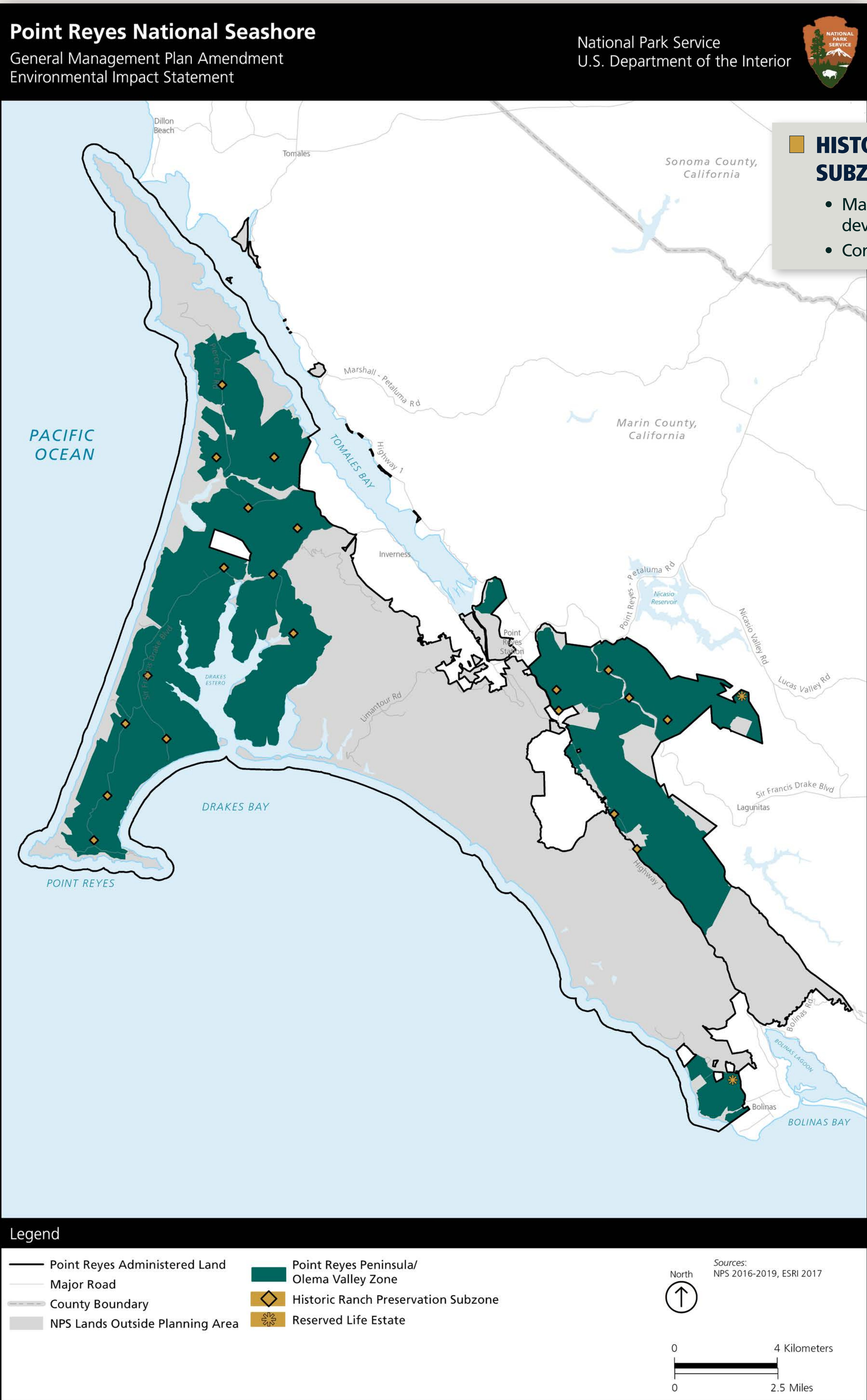


- Phases out dairy operations over a 5-year period; ranchers may convert to beef operations.
- Issues new lease/permits on 26,100 acres with 20 year terms.
- Applies a similar zoning framework and ranch management as alternative B
- Takes no action to limit the population growth or geographic extent of the tule elk population within the boundary of Point Reyes; elk management would be similar to alternative A





Alternative F



- Phases out all ranching permits over a 5-year period; ranching is discontinued within the planning area. Prescribed grazing may be used to meet NPS resource management goals and objectives.
- Applies a new management zone, the Point Reyes Peninsula / Olema Valley zone, on 28,700 acres.
- Implements expanded GMP elements related to preservation of area resources, public use and enjoyment, and visitor capacity (see Elements Common to All Action Alternatives).
- Considers limited, non-lethal management measures for elk until cessation of ranching operations. Once ranching operations cease, new herds would be allowed to develop in Point Reyes, and the elk fence at Tomales Point would be removed, consistent with the removal of other boundary fences in the planning area.



Public Involvement

The draft EIS is available for a 45-day public review and comment period under the NEPA. This comment period will also satisfy the public involvement requirement under Section 106 of the NHPA

HOW TO COMMENT

Comments related to Section 106 of the NHPA and the effects to historic properties may be submitted following the same methods for the EIS process described below.



Submit written comments at an in-person public meeting



Submit comments electronically at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/POREGMPA>



Mail or hand deliver written comments to
park headquarters:

**Point Reyes GMP Amendment EIS
Superintendent
Point Reyes National Seashore
1 Bear Valley Road
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956**

EIS SCHEDULE

SUMMER 2019	Draft EIS released to the public for a 45-day review and public comment period, including public meetings
FALL 2019	NPS develops a Final EIS for the GMP Amendment
WINTER 2020	Final EIS released to the public; 30-day waiting period
SPRING 2020	Record of Decision signed by the NPS Pacific West Regional Director

The public comment period will close on
Monday, September 23, 2019

Comments will not be accepted by fax, e-mail, or any other way than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.