

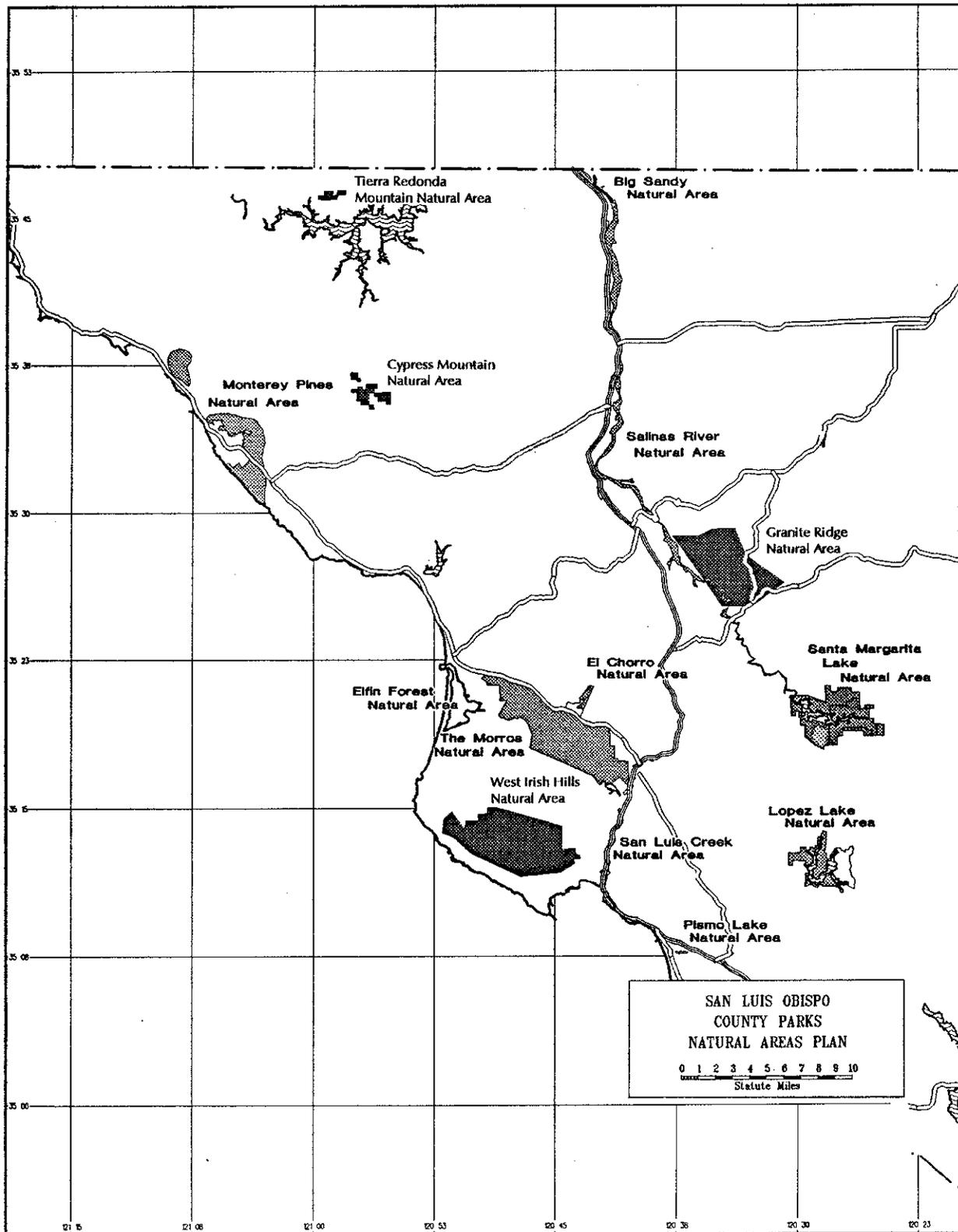
APPENDIX B: NATURAL AREAS PLAN

**Approved by Parks and Recreation Commission
June 18, 1992**

**Adopted by Board of Supervisors
September 1, 1992**

NOTE:

During the public hearings on the Agriculture and Open Space Element several revisions were proposed to the adopted Natural Areas Plan by the staff of the county Parks Division and the county Parks and Recreation Commission. The proposed changes have not been submitted to the county Board of Supervisors for consideration as a formal amendment to the adopted Natural Areas Plan. Text proposed for deletion is shown with ~~strike-over~~, while proposed new text is shown as shaded.



INTRODUCTION

San Luis Obispo County contains an abundant amount of open space, including areas of outstanding scenic value, areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space sites.

The County, approximately 2,122,000 acres, also includes vast areas of open land which are suited to uses which require open areas, including agriculture, grazing, mining, and the managed production of resources. Much of this land is included in areas managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Figure 1 illustrates the multitude and scope of local, state and federal agencies responsible for managing a variety of open space resources within the County. Figure 2 outlines undeveloped and total acreage of parklands operated by the Parks Division of San Luis Obispo County's Department of General Services.

| SUMMARY TOTAL ACRES OF LAND RESOURCES MAINTAINED BY RECREATIONAL/CONSERVATION PROVIDERS¹ | |
|--|------------------------------|
| PROVIDER | APPROX. TOTAL ACREAGE |
| U.S. Forest Service | 239,138 |
| Bureau of Land Management ² | 158,186 |
| Dept. of Defense - Camp Roberts | 26,000 |
| Monterey County (Nacimiento Lake) | 18,000 |
| California Dept. of Parks and Recreation | 14,549 |
| San Luis Obispo County Parks | 12,447 |
| Nature Conservancy | 12,000 |
| California Dept. of Fish and Game | 7,471 |
| Cal Poly University | 6,051 |
| City of San Luis Obispo | 541 |
| County Schools (Rancho El Chorro) | 250 |
| City of Paso Robles | 93 |
| City of Pismo Beach | 66 |
| City of Arroyo Grande | 60 |
| City of Morro Bay | 48 |
| City of Atascadero | 34 |
| Land Conservancy of SLO | 25 |
| Port San Luis Harbor Dist. | 10 |
| Templeton Comm. Service Dist. | 9 |
| City of Grover Beach | 8 |
| Creston Comm. Service District | 7 |
| ¹ Not all noted lands are available for public access. | |
| ² Nature Conservancy cooperatively manages approx. 150,000 acres of this land. | |

Figure B-1: Recreation/Conservation Lands in San Luis Obispo County

| SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY PARK ACREAGE | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| Facility | Undeveloped Acres (Approximate) | Total Acres |
| Coastal Access ways | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Halcyon Community Park | 14.0 | 14.0 |
| Lampton Coastal Accessway | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| San Miguel Staging Area | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Tefft Street Neighborhood Park | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| <u>Specialized Facilities</u> | | |
| Avila Bike Trail | 10.5 | 10.5 |
| Coastal Accessways (25) | 0 | 4.3 |
| Chalk Mountain Golf Course | 0 | 212.9 |
| Morro Bay Golf Course | 0 | 125.0 |
| Rios Caledonia Adobe | 0 | 2.8 |
| <u>Neighborhood and Community Parks</u> | | |
| C.W. Clarke Community Park | 2.0 | 11.5 |
| Cuesta Community Park | 0 | 5.0 |
| Hardie Community Park | 0 | 4.0 |
| Oceano Community Park | 0 | 11.8 |
| Paul Andrews Neighborhood Park | 0 | 1.0 |
| San Miguel Community Park | 0 | 4.3 |
| Santa Margarita Community Park | 0 | 2.0 |
| Shamel Community Park | 0 | 6.0 |
| South Bay Community Park | 1.5 | 6.2 |
| Templeton Community Park | 0 | 3.5 |
| <u>Regional Parks</u> | | |
| Biddle Regional Park | 20.0 | 47.0 |
| Cayucos Beach | 0 | 14.0 |
| El Chorro Regional Park | 670.0 | 710.0 |
| Heilmann Regional Park | 60.0 | 102.0 |
| Lopez Lake Recreation Area | 4,076.0 | 4,276.0 |
| Nipomo Regional Park | 80.0 | 144.0 |
| Santa Margarita Lake | 6,700.0 | 6,721.1 |
| TOTALS | 11,642.2 | 12,447.1 |

Figure B-2: Parkland Managed by San Luis Obispo County Parks

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved by Board of Supervisors
September 3, 1991

Open space is an irreplaceable natural resource. San Luis Obispo County presently includes unique open space resources with wilderness, habitat, scenic, recreational, historical, and archeological characteristics which should be protected and maintained for future generations.

It is the policy of San Luis Obispo County to encourage the conservation and preservation of those open space resources by employing a variety of methods. Cooperation among government agencies, private individuals and organizations should be central to those efforts, while respecting the rights of property owners.

The Open Space Subcommittee of the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission was established in order to develop a site specific plan for proposed Natural Area Preserves.

DEFINITION OF NATURAL AREA PRESERVES AS MANAGED BY COUNTY PARKS

An area of land or water managed by the Parks Division of the San Luis Obispo County Department of General Services which remains in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection for present and future generations.

FACTORS FOR PRESERVATION CONSIDERATION

Priority for consideration as a Natural Area Preserve will be given to those lands meeting one or more of the following factors:

1. Habitat values and biological diversity.
2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics.
3. Unique natural features, including unusual terrain or geological features.
4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities.
5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands or other natural areas.
6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth.

Natural Area Preserves will not be established or managed solely for any of the following purposes, although the presence of these factors may contribute to the rationale for establishing a Natural Area Preserve.

1. Watershed areas for surface water supplies or recharge areas for groundwater.
2. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flooding, earthquakes, unstable soils or landslides, or excessive noise.

CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

1. Where there is available public land.
2. Where there is a willing private landowner or donor.
3. When funds are available for management.

METHODS OF PROTECTION

A variety of techniques may be employed to implement natural area preservation. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Fair market value purchase.
2. Donation by landowner.
3. Exchange of property.
4. Transfer of surplus government property.
5. Use of state or federal grants.
6. Dedication of open space land to mitigate development impact.
7. Securing conservation easements.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Management guidelines will be developed for each proposed Natural Area Preserve with concern for: 1) natural resource values, 2) passive recreation opportunities, and 3) environmental education opportunities.

COORDINATION WITH BUILDING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT

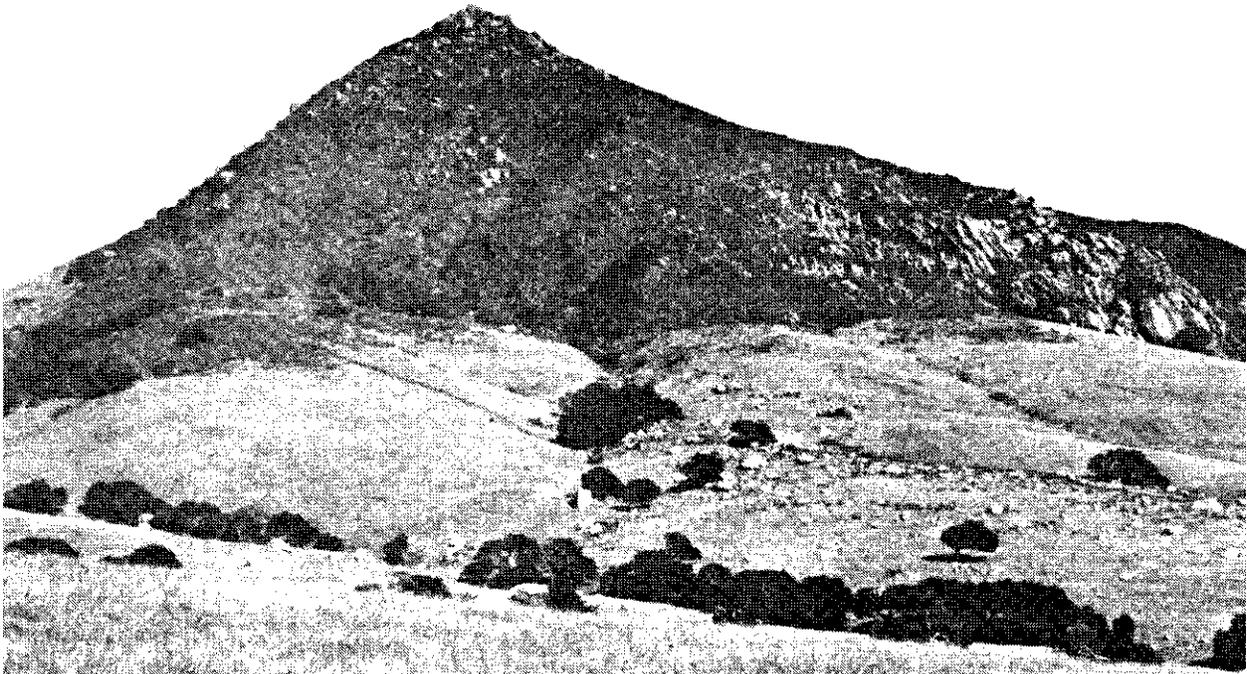
Coordinate Parks Division Natural Areas Plan with the Department of Planning and Building in order to protect significant open space and recreational features through the Agriculture and Open Space Element of the County General Plan.

While the County contains vast open space areas, the majority of persons living in San Luis Obispo County live in the relatively urbanized Coastal and Salinas River regions, and must often travel some distance to enjoy the large open areas.

Failure to provide adequate open space can result in several undesirable effects. Without a plan of natural areas and trails in place, or in the absence of the conscientious application of policies related to open space, new development can quickly consume valuable natural areas. Inappropriate development can also result in the loss of open space uses through the alterations of natural features.

Lastly, conflicting desires for uses of open space lands can result in heated controversy. Off-highway vehicle use within the County has resulted in tremendous conflicts, particularly in terms of trespass upon private lands and destruction of natural habitats. Other conflicts can also occur, such as over-use of sensitive lands for hiking, mountain bicycling, or recreation. Natural area preserves should not be used for purposes which are incompatible with the management goals and strategies outlined in this document or those detailed within site specific resource management plans.

This Natural Areas Plan, along with its guiding policy which was previously approved by the County Board of Supervisors, was developed by the San Luis Obispo County Open Space Subcommittee. This subcommittee was appointed by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission with the goal of encouraging the conservation and preservation of natural area resources within the County as they relate to park and recreational opportunities. This Plan is intended to be a long range park planning document, complementary to the existing Parks Master Plan and Trails Plan.



MANAGEMENT GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR NATURAL AREA PRESERVES

The following goals and strategies are intended to provide guidelines for the creation of site specific management plans for maintaining the delicate and sensitive biosystems at County operated Natural Area Preserves. Each Natural Area Preserve will be managed consistent with these goals, although variations will occur depending on the natural resources found at each site. Such management plans shall be approved, or as needed amended, by the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Commission prior to implementation.

The intent of these goals is to provide a general natural areas land management framework for the operation, maintenance and management of those Natural Area Preserves that are currently under or may come under the management of the County of San Luis Obispo through purchase from a willing landowner, dedication of open space land to mitigate development impact or cooperative agreement with another public agency.

NATURAL AREA GOALS

Goals are a fundamental commitment by the County of San Luis Obispo to provide a Natural Area Preserve that serves primarily to protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the area, while providing passive recreational opportunities. With this mission, the goals will direct all future activities at the preserve for years to come. They are:

1. Protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the site.
2. Provide a significant recreation/education experience for visitors from throughout the County.
3. Provide an appropriate interpretive program which will increase public understanding and appreciation of the significant natural and cultural resources of the site.
4. Provide managed public access which emphasizes enjoyment of the site's natural resources.
5. Achieve compatibility between protection of the site's natural resources and serving human use demands.
6. Manage Natural Area Preserves in a manner which is compatible with adjoining ecosystems.
7. Permit only those uses which are of a nonconsumptive nature compatible with preservation of the natural resources associated with each site.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Goal #1: Protect, restore and enhance the natural resources of the site.

Goal #1 Strategies:

- A) Identify resources that will provide the fundamental basis for managing the preserve site.
- B) Identify sensitive habitats and limit uses accordingly.
- C) Establish an ongoing resource monitoring and control program to ensure the protection of sensitive habitats.
- D) Where appropriate, initiate a native revegetation program and identify areas for mitigation bank exchange.
- E) Where appropriate, develop a program for the control of harmful non-native species.
- F) Develop a resting program for degraded/overused areas and guidelines for closure of such areas.

Goal #2: Provide a significant recreation/education experience for visitors from throughout the County.

Goal #2 Strategies:

- A) Develop a program to actively promote the use and appreciation of Natural Area Preserves to the people of San Luis Obispo County.
- B) Where appropriate, provide barrier-free access to the resource sites.
- C) Coordinate Natural Area Preserves with proposed regional trails.

Goal #3: Provide an appropriate interpretive program which will increase public understanding and appreciation of the significant natural and cultural resources of the site.

Goal #3 Strategies:

- A) Develop an interpretive program that offers a significant experience to all County residents.

- B) Recommend informative and visually low-profile interpretive walk nodes that promote both the visual and environmental qualities of the Natural Area Preserve.
- C) Develop a volunteer interpretive program that is coordinated through the County's Park Division.
- D) Develop an environmental education program for school age children and encourage the use of the Natural Area Preserves by educational organizations.

Goal #4: Provide managed public access which emphasizes enjoyment of the site's natural resources.

Goal #4 Strategies:

- A) Establish passive recreation opportunities that do not degrade or interfere with environmental resources at each site.
- B) Establish recreation use areas that do not degrade or interfere with environmental resources at each site.
- C) Enhance existing recreational use areas without further disturbances to the environment.
- D) Eliminate recreational uses that are incompatible with sensitive resources, i.e., off-road vehicles.
- E) Focus recreational uses to provide an interpretive and educational experience.
- F) Establish carrying capacities and seasonal limits for compatible recreational use.

Goal #5: Achieve compatibility between protection of the site's natural resources and serving human use demands.

Goal #5 Strategies:

- A) Limit development and activity within each Natural Area Preserve which is inconsistent with environmental protection of the site.
- B) Initiate a positive and informative signing system with an emphasis on environmental education.
- C) Establish a coordinated ordinance and regulation enforcement plan for each site.

- D) Establish a resource monitoring system to assess human impact on each preserve.
- E) Establish guidelines for closure of areas to recreational needs to protect the site's natural resources.

Goal #6: **Manage Natural Area Preserves in a manner which is compatible with adjoining ecosystems.**

Goal #6 Strategies:

- A) Establish a coordination program with other environmental and public agencies.
- B) Establish a coordination program with adjoining private property owners providing protection to the natural resources of each site.
- C) Identify critical interface areas and develop a management program that supports diverse ecosystems.

Goal #7: **Permit only those uses which are of a nonconsumptive nature compatible with preservation of the natural resources associated with each site.**

Goal #7 Strategies:

- A) Identify compatible and incompatible activities at each site.
- B) Establish guidelines for compatible activities at each site.
- C) Periodically evaluate the impact of activities allowed at each site for potential incompatibility.
- D) Develop an educational program for site users stressing nonconsumptive activity.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

~~Natural Area Preserves are divided into three categories:~~

~~**Natural Park:** A stand-alone preserve, not part of another park facility. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.~~

~~**Natural Area:** A preserve which is managed as part of another park facility. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.~~

~~**Community Greenway:** A preserve linking natural areas, or, adjacent to and shaping community or urban growth. Such an area shall remain in a predominantly natural or undeveloped state to provide resource protection, passive recreation and environmental education opportunities for present and future generations.~~

Location: Site of the proposed preserve, except in cases of generic habitat type.

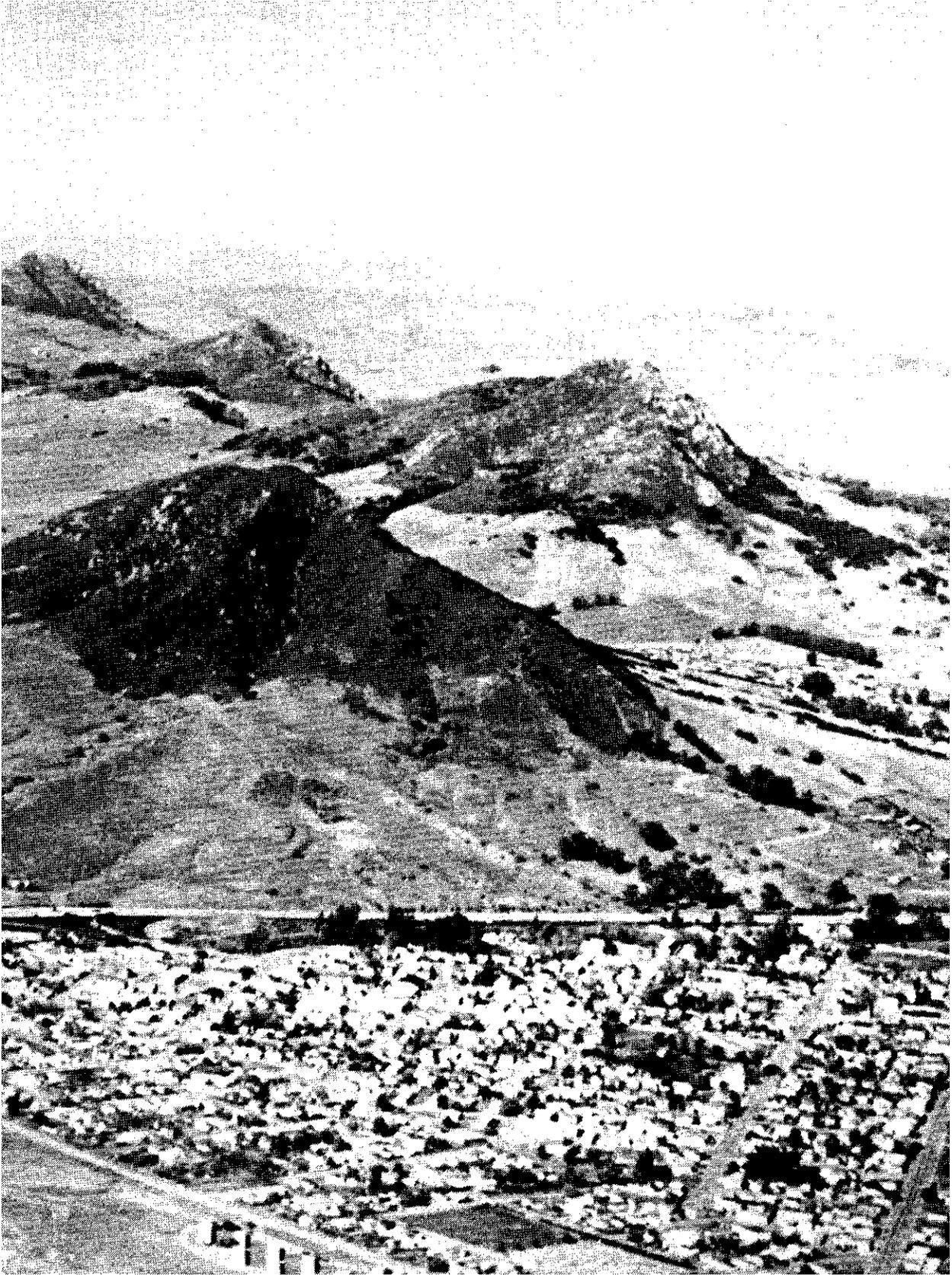
Description: A brief narrative of the significant features and/or habitat types qualifying a site for preservation.

Identified Natural Area Factors: These eight factors are defined in the policy statement as critical in determined need for preservation.

Management Objective: Specific site objectives beyond those contained in the Management Goals and Strategies.

Management Restrictions: Specific site restrictions which must be considered in developing site management plan.

Other Pertinent Information: Notes of interest and/or concern which may influence site selection or management.



**PUBLIC LANDS
COUNTY OWNERSHIP/MANAGEMENT**



UPPER EL CHORRO NATURAL AREA

Location: 1 mile north of San Luis Obispo off of Highway 1

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: San Luis Obispo County

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 300 acres

Description: Dominated by Dairy Creek and associated riparian habitat, this natural area, section of the park adjacent to El Chorro Regional Park and Dairy Creek golf course also contains large tracts of oak woodland and grassland; a vast array of wildlife including large populations of bobcat and turkey. The area is adjacent to other public lands and programmed for trail development leading to U.S. Forest Service property on West Cuesta Ridge through/across Cal-Poly property.

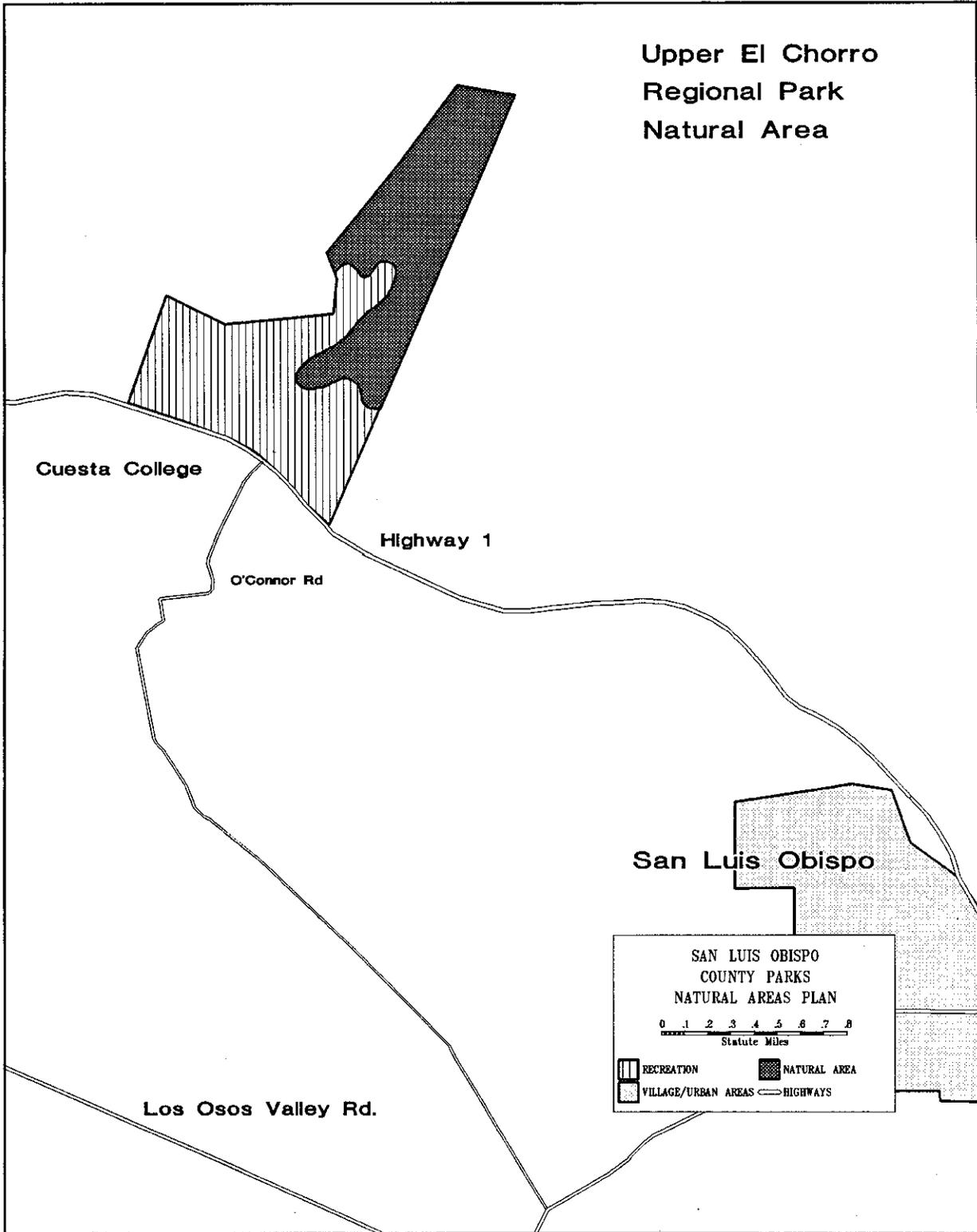
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- 3. Unique natural features
- 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Trail development expanded to National Forest on West Cuesta Ridge with habitat protection and riparian restoration. Implement interpretive program coordinated with County Schools. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Reforestation of riparian zone and reintroduction of native species. Explore cooperative management efforts with adjacent public landowners.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to unexploded ordnance. Mountain bikes limited to trails so designated.

Other Pertinent Information: Ordnance scheduled to be removed in early 1992.
~~Restoration of Dairy Creek riparian zone scheduled for early 1992.~~



LOPEZ LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: 10 miles east of Arroyo Grande at Lopez Lake Recreation Area

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: San Luis Obispo County

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 3,0500 acres

Description: Rugged and primitive, the area is valuable as wildlife habitat with frequent sightings of many large mammals including bear and mountain lion. Nearly contiguous with U.S. Forest Service property.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

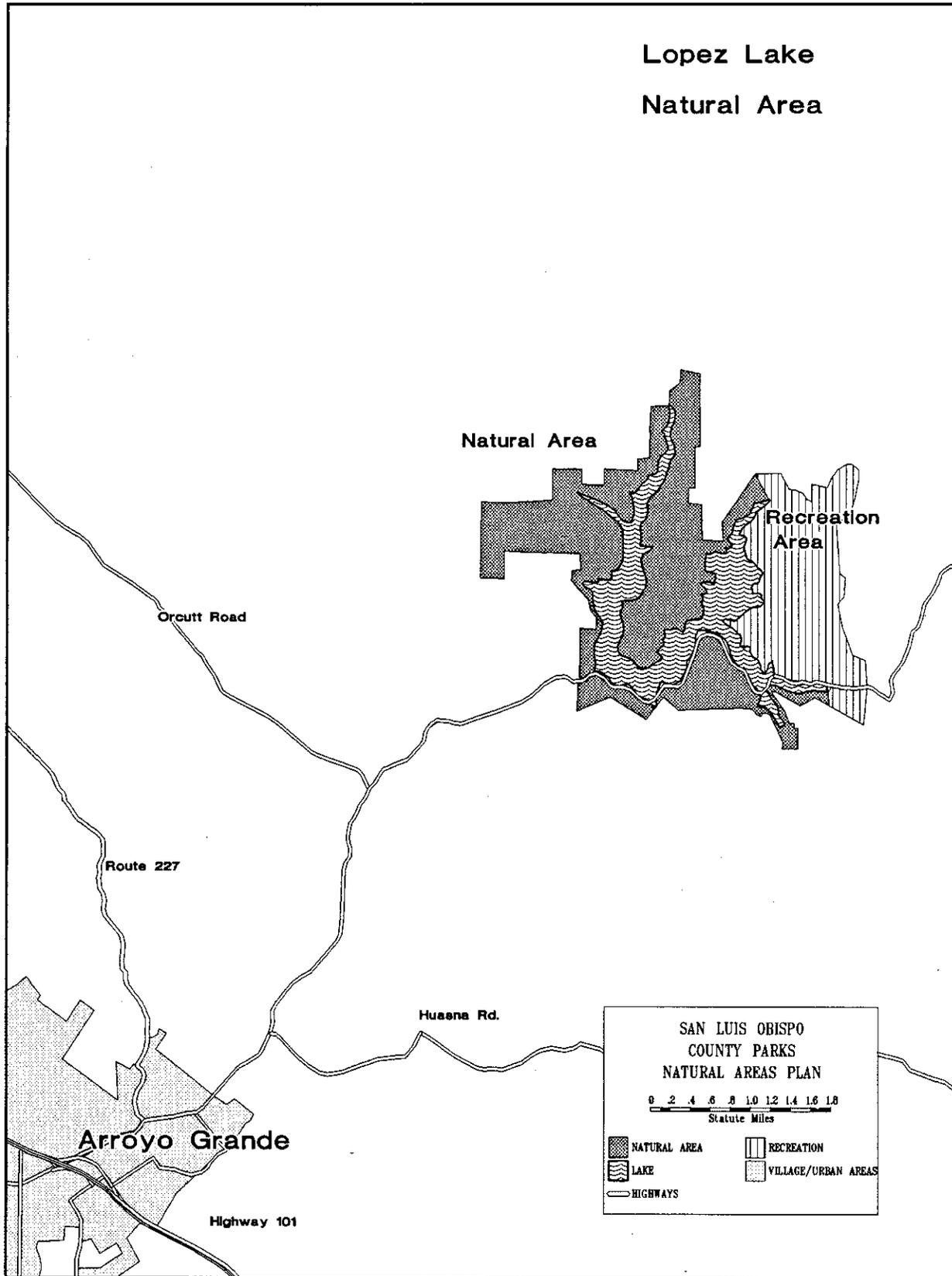
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Management Objective: Passive recreation consistent with habitat protection. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas.

Management Restrictions: Area may be closed to public access during periods of extreme fire danger.

Other Pertinent Information: Explore acquisition of or easement across adjacent land separating preserve from National Forest.

Lopez Lake Natural Area



SANTA MARGARITA LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: 8 miles east of the town of Santa Margarita at Santa Margarita Lake

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: The Army Corps of Engineers, and Bureau of Land Management and County

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 5,827 acres of Army Corps of Engineers property (including lake), approx. 2,000 1,876 acres of Bureau of Land Management property, and 452 acres of county property

Private Lands: 576 176 acres--willing seller; grant application for purchase submitted.

Description: The land is dominated with an oak/digger pine woodland forest with extensive areas of chaparral. Riparian habitat surrounds seasonal rivers and streams, ponds, and the lake itself. Excellent wildlife habitat for the Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, and Peregrine Falcon.

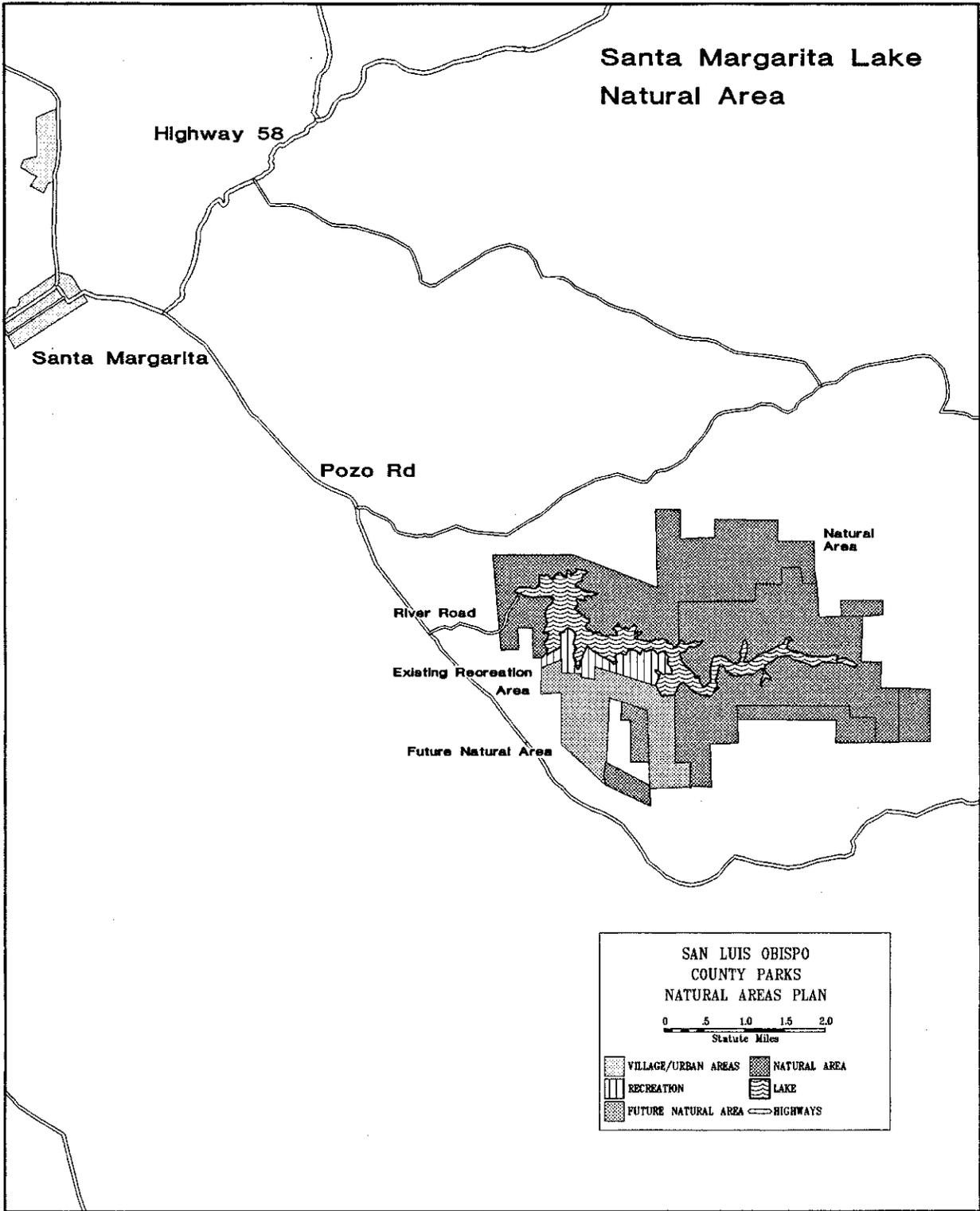
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- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation, passive recreation and habitat enhancement. Reintroduction of Peregrine Falcon. Reforestation of native oak woodlands and riparian habitat.

Management Restrictions: Restricted public access during periods of extreme fire danger. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Restrict public access to Peregrine Falcon nesting sites. Designate specific mountain bike routes.

Other Pertinent Information: Due to potential for an extensive trail network, a volunteer mounted patrol should be developed. Lake will continue to be operated as a fishery, however it is included as a part of the Natural Area.



ELFIN FOREST NATURAL AREA

Location: Southernmost area of Morro Bay Estuary

Public Lands: No Yes

Approximate Acreage:

Private Lands: 38.69 99.9 acres

Public Lands: 6 acres State Lands Commission; 51.2 acres State Parks Department; 32.7 acres County.

Description: A diverse and complex assemblage of natural plant communities including coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe, pygmy oak woodland, grassland, coastal dune scrub and oak manzanita association. Supports a documented 25 species of mammals, over 110 kinds of birds, and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians.

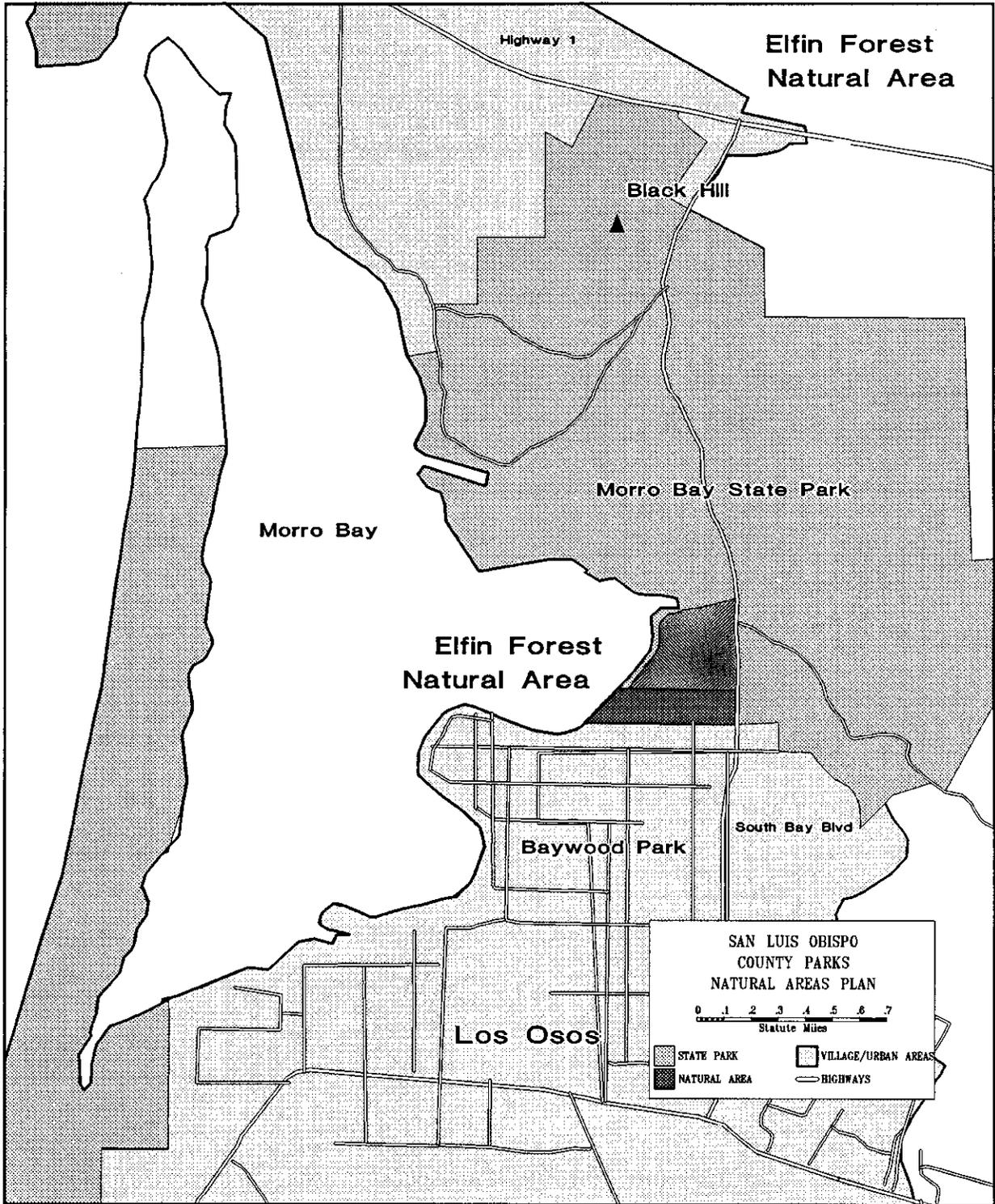
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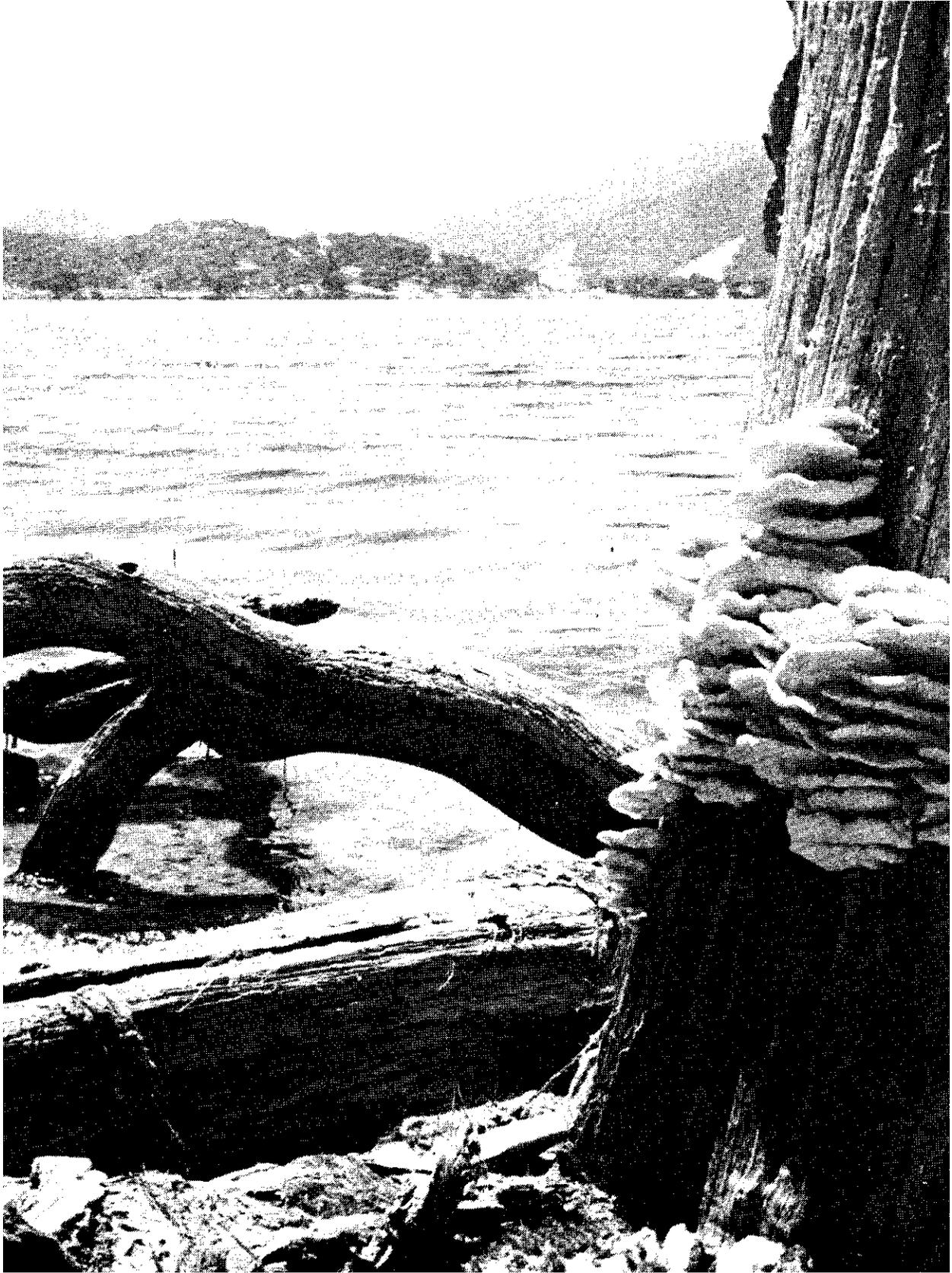
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Management Objective: Preservation of archaeological sites, habitat protection and passive recreation, environmental education.

Management Restrictions: Public access limited to foot traffic only. May require fencing to protect native species from domestic predators.

Other Pertinent Information: ~~A grant has been submitted to partially fund the purchase.~~ Adopted park agreement with Small Wilderness Area Preserve (SWAP) for joint management/maintenance.





**PUBLIC LANDS
COUNTY MANAGEMENT PROPOSED**



PISMO LAKE NATURAL AREA

Location: Fourth Street in Pismo Beach

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Fish and Game

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 69 acres--7 east of Fourth Street, 62 west

Private Lands: 1 acre - willing seller (would provide public access)

Description: A highly endangered freshwater marsh surrounded by urban development. Considerable filling of the marsh has occurred in the past, with siltation occurring due to careless land development. Roughly 50 acres are wetlands and the rest composed of upland grasslands, riparian and oak savannah. Resting/feeding stop for migratory waterfowl.

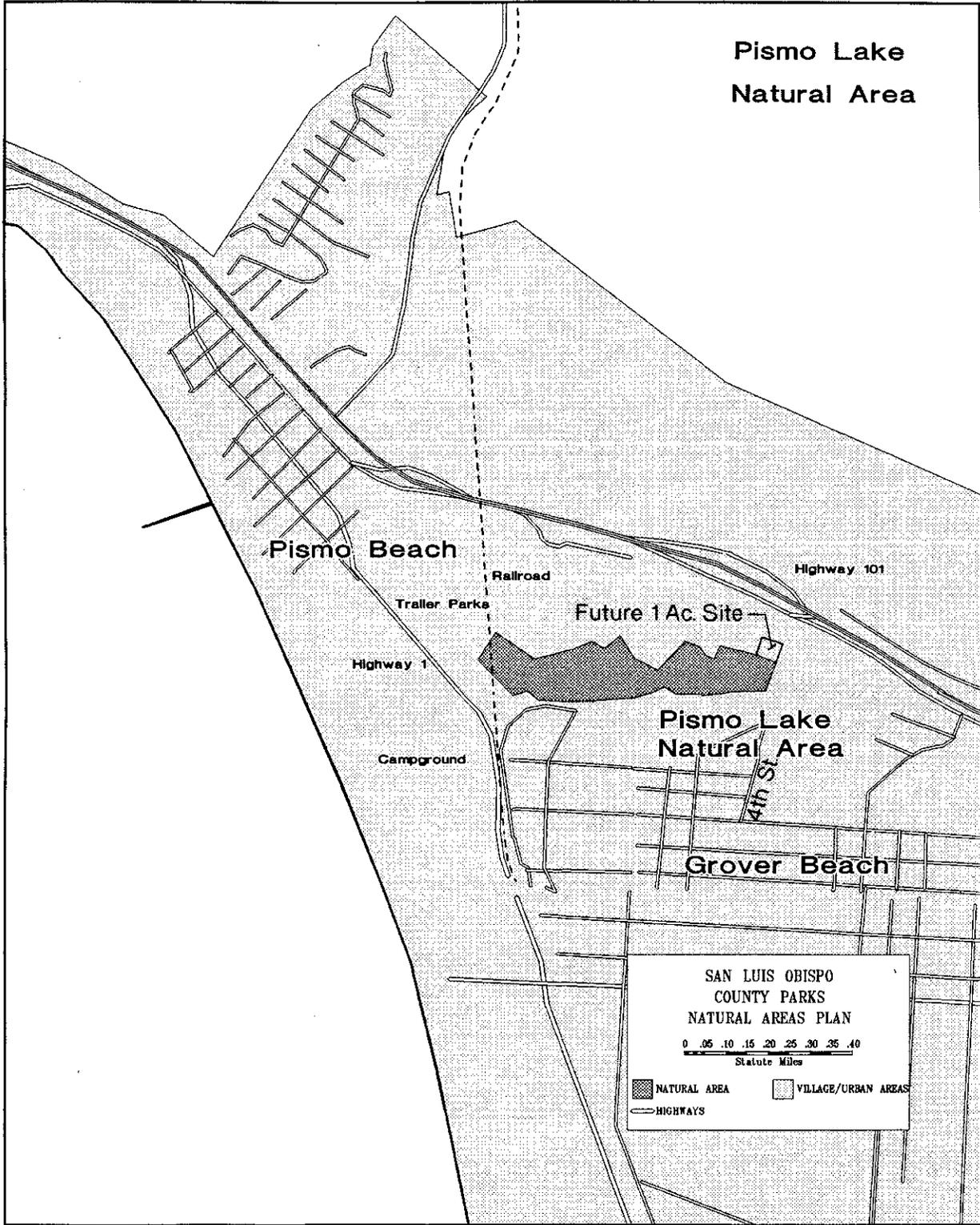
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Management Objective: Cooperative agreement with Dept. of Fish & Game and adjacent communities to provide limited visitor serving development consistent with habitat protection. Improved signs, fencing, access trails, view points.

Management Restrictions: Public access should be controlled by docent or Department led walks.

Other Pertinent Information: Coastal Resource Conservation District provided funding for Department of Fish and Game to restore lagoon. Small parcel on Fourth Street should be acquired to permit public access into preserve.



BIG SANDY NATURAL AREA

Location: Northeast of San Miguel at San Luis Obispo County line with some acreage in southern Monterey County

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Fish and Game and County of SLO

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: 735 Acres Dept. of Fish & Game; 2 acres County.

Private Lands: 300-600 acres, between three landowners. ~~Development will dedicate 12 acres to County of San Luis Obispo~~

Description: Riparian habitat on the Salinas River. Two landowners between the San Luis Obispo County property and Big Sandy, one landowner immediately south of San Luis Obispo County property in San Miguel. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

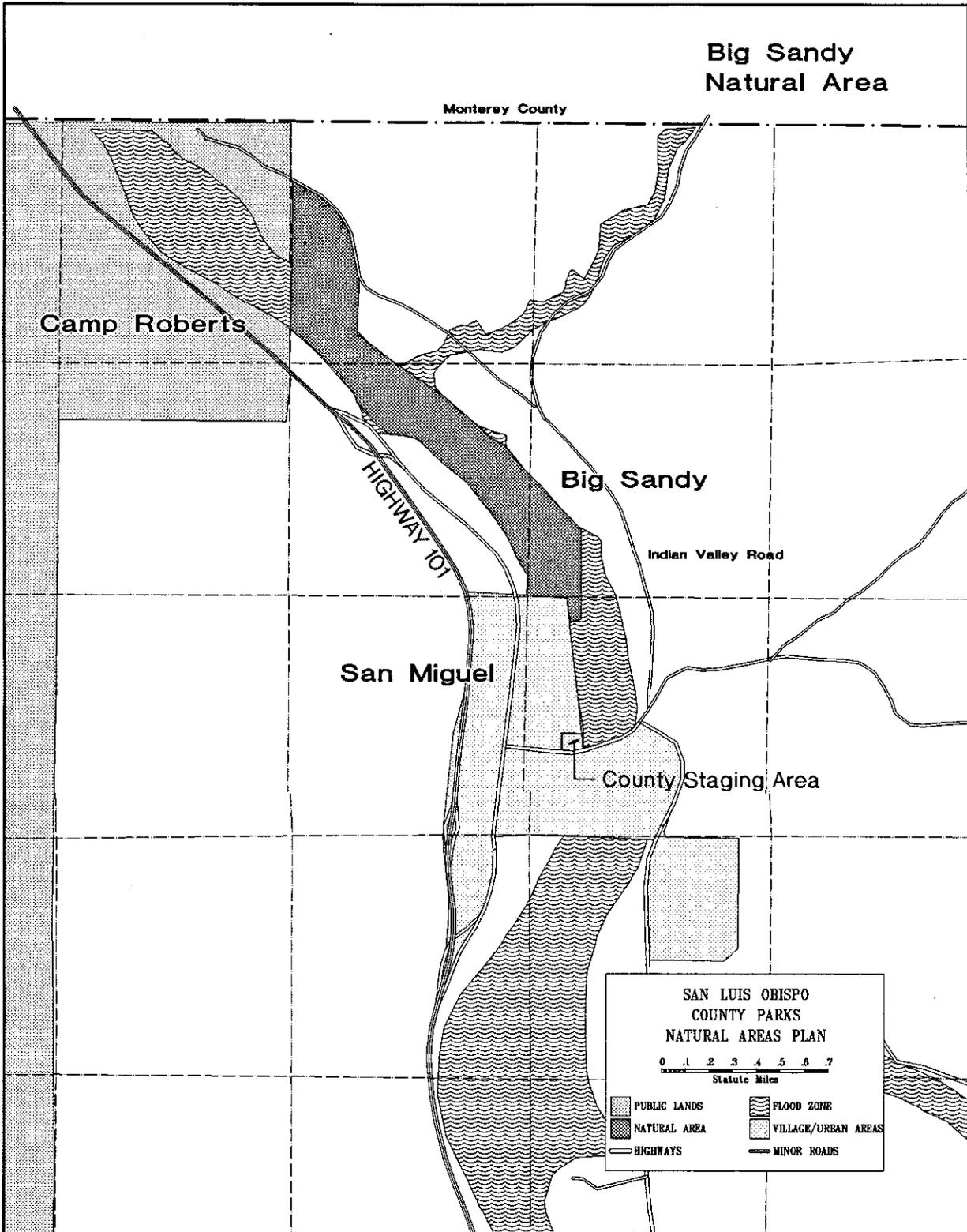
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- 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: To protect the wildlife values of the Salinas River Corridor. Erosion control and restoration of riparian corridor.

Management Restrictions: Limit access for off highway vehicles

Other Pertinent Information: Access and staging areas could be provided at County owned property in San Miguel and at Big Sandy Wildlife Area.



WEST IRISH HILLS NATURAL PARK AREA

Location: South of Montaña de Oro and east of Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the southernmost point of the coast range's geomorphic province.

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Several large parcels, approximately 1200-1500 acres.

Private Lands: Various. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition (noted on map within diagonal lines). Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

Description: Rugged area which provides a variety of plant communities including the coastal sage scrub, coast live oak, Bishop pines and limited areas of riparian habitat. As many as nine state or federally listed rare, threatened or endangered animal species may occur in this area.

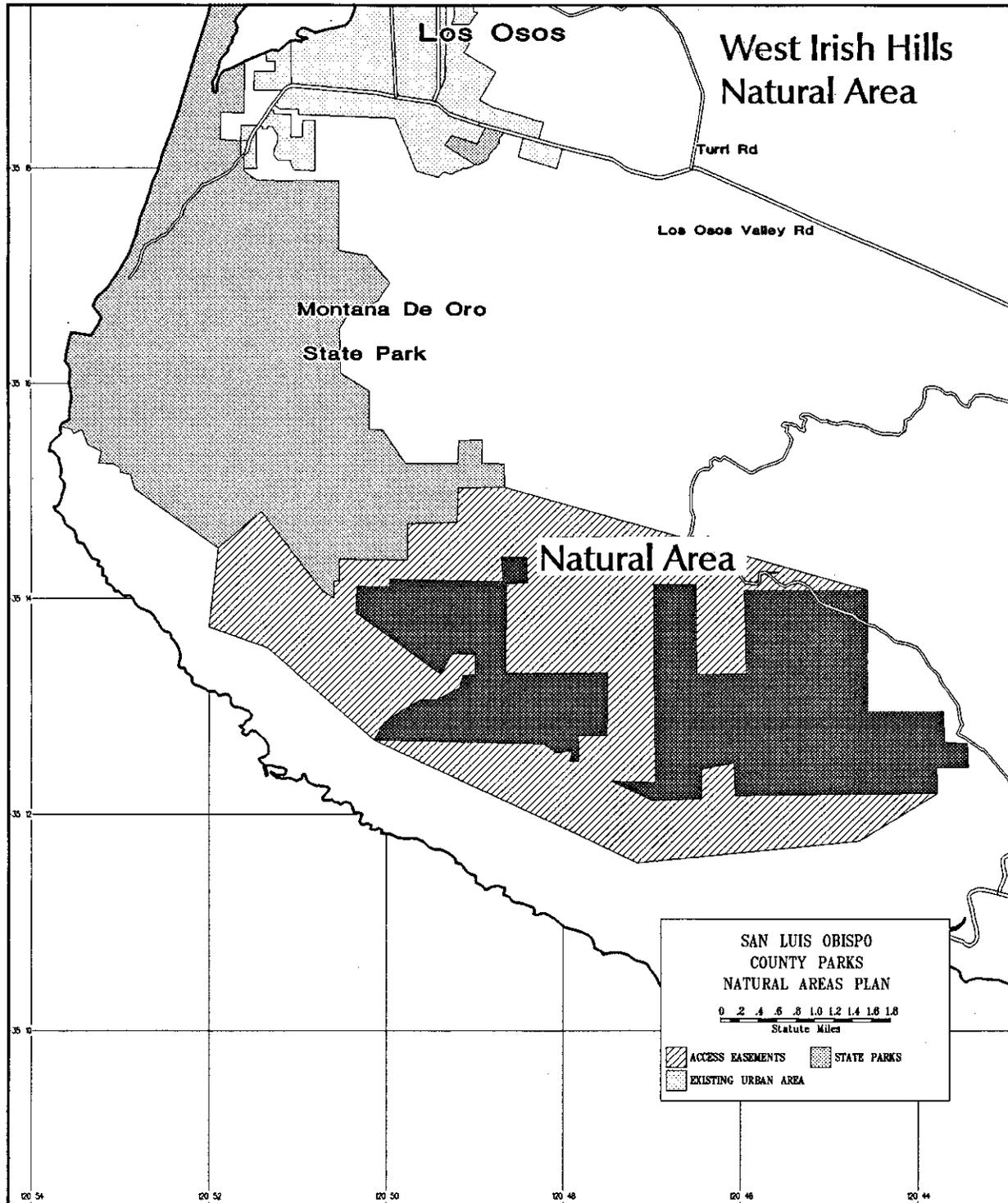
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Management Objective: Passive recreation consistent with habitat protection. Trail access from Avila Beach to Montaña de Oro State Park.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to periods of extreme fire hazard. Proximity to Diablo Canyon Power Plant requires careful access development and site management plan.

Other Pertinent Information: Depending on acquisitions of private lands, property could be an extension of Montaña de Oro State Park. If so, management of the area by State should be considered.



CYPRESS MOUNTAIN NATURAL PARK AREA

Location: Santa Lucia Range south of Nacimiento Reservoir

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately ~~1,000~~ 1,092 acres

Description: Large Sargent Cypress trees groves, several rare and endemic plant species may exist, and along with other unique ecological conditions. The area is landlocked from public access by large private parcels. A spring in the general area provides water for a varied animal populations; there are particularly abundant reptile and amphibian populations in the more moist areas.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- 3. Unique natural features
- 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
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- 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

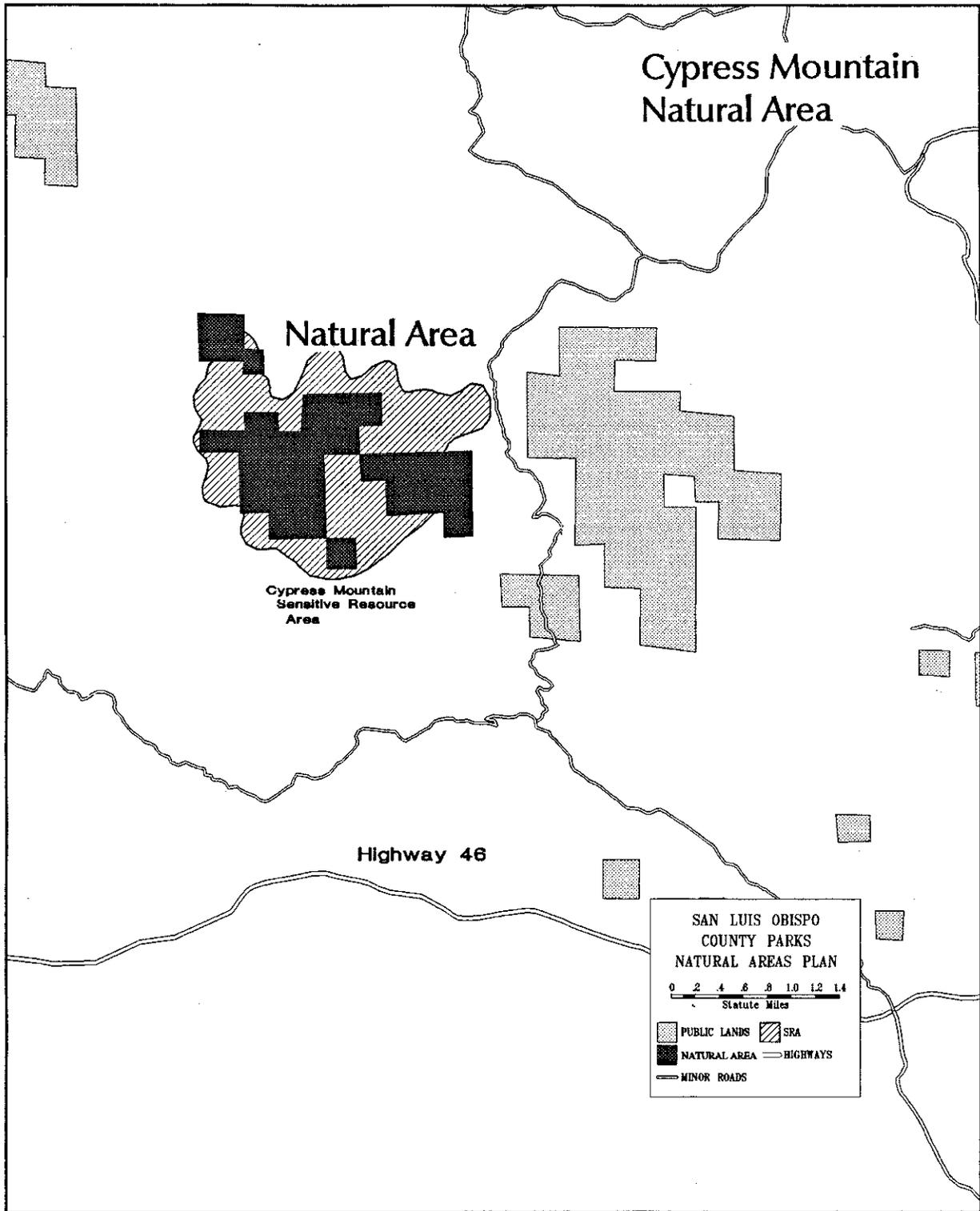
Management Objective: Have a joint management agreement with the Bureau of Land Management and/or other conservation entities to provide public access for passive recreation, nature study and habitat protection for watershed and habitat protections, and secondarily for limited and controlled environmental education opportunities. Because of the unique ecological values of Cypress Mountain, future public access, unrelated to the above stated environmental education opportunities, is not recommended.

Management Restrictions:

Restricted access due to the following: ~~periods of extreme fire hazard:~~

- 1. Area is landlocked from public access;
- 2. Area has extreme fire hazard due to highly combustible vegetation and would be closed to public access during times of high fire hazard.
- 3. Protection of endangered plant or animal species.

Other Pertinent Information: Access is limited as the public lands are landlocked by a large private parcel. Cypress Mountain is designated, in the most recent BLM Caliente Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, as an "Area of Critical Environmental Concern." There is no access as the public lands are landlocked by private parcels. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.



TIERRA REDONDA MOUNTAIN NATURAL PARK AREA

Location: Situated near the San Luis Obispo / Monterey County line north of Nacimiento Reservoir.

Public Lands: Yes

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 1,300 acres

Description: Tierra Redonda is a broad, table-top mountain with precipitous slopes. Several small, intermittent creeks originate near the crest. There are Native American artifacts and remains on the mountain top. Natural communities include grassland, savannah, chaparral, limestone streamside habitat, sand dunes and marshlands, as well as the predominant oak woodland community. One of the largest concentrations of Chorizanthe species in the world is found in this area.

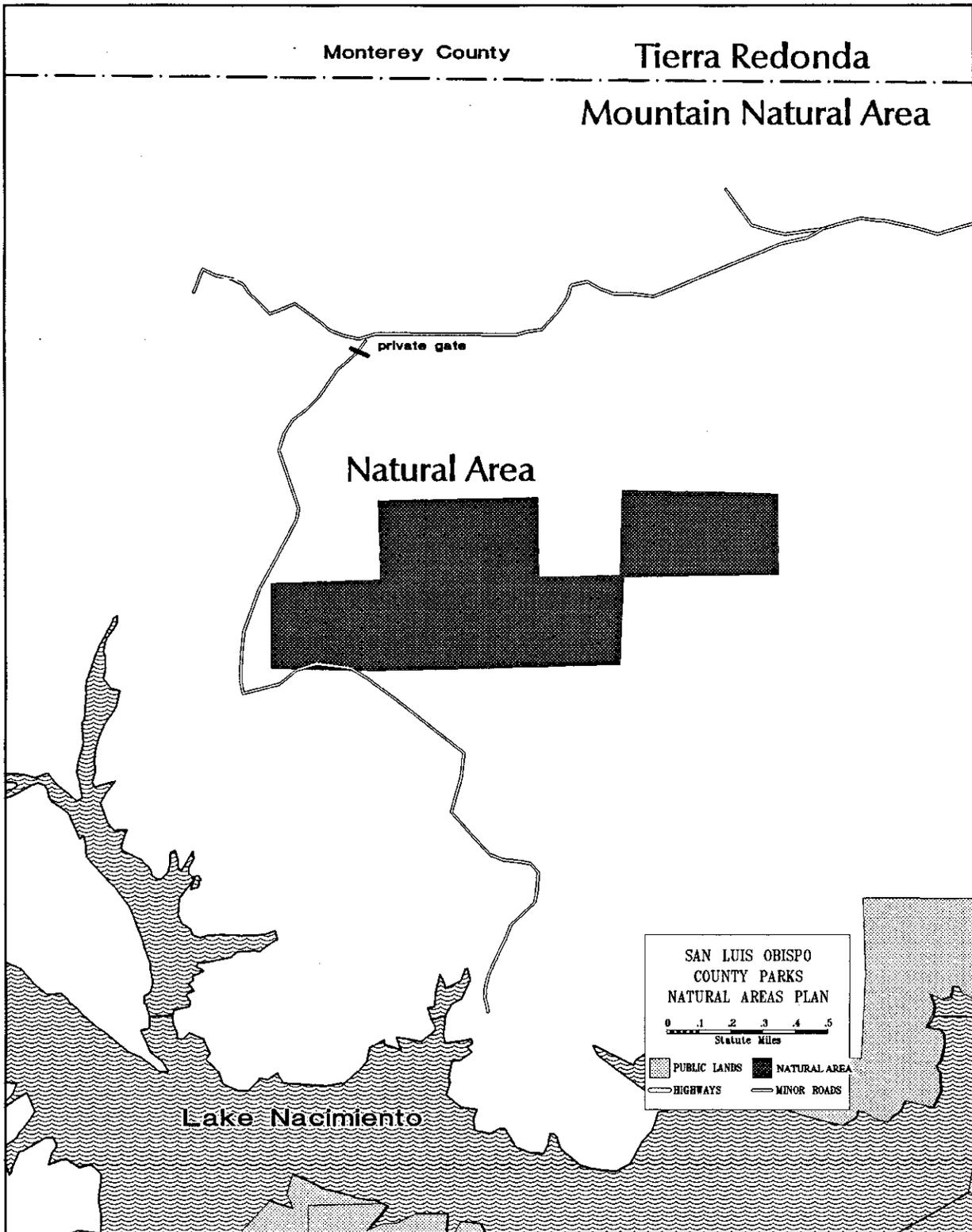
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Joint management agreement with Bureau of Land Management to provide public access for passive recreation, nature study and habitat protection.

Management Restrictions: Restricted access due to periods of extreme fire hazard.

Other Pertinent Information: Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.



ROCKY CANYON GRANITE RIDGE NATURAL PARK AREA

Location: East of the City of Atascadero

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 2,000 acres

Private Lands: Several owners of large parcels which would provide access have expressed an interest in easements, acquisition, etc.

Description: The California Native Plant Society has identified several plant species in the area which are on the CNPS List for Endangered Species. The area is rich in wildlife including a large population of mountain lions and raptors. Isolated deep canyon locations feature the oak/digger pine community. Public land is landlocked by private ownership. Conservation and access easements to public lands will be necessary if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

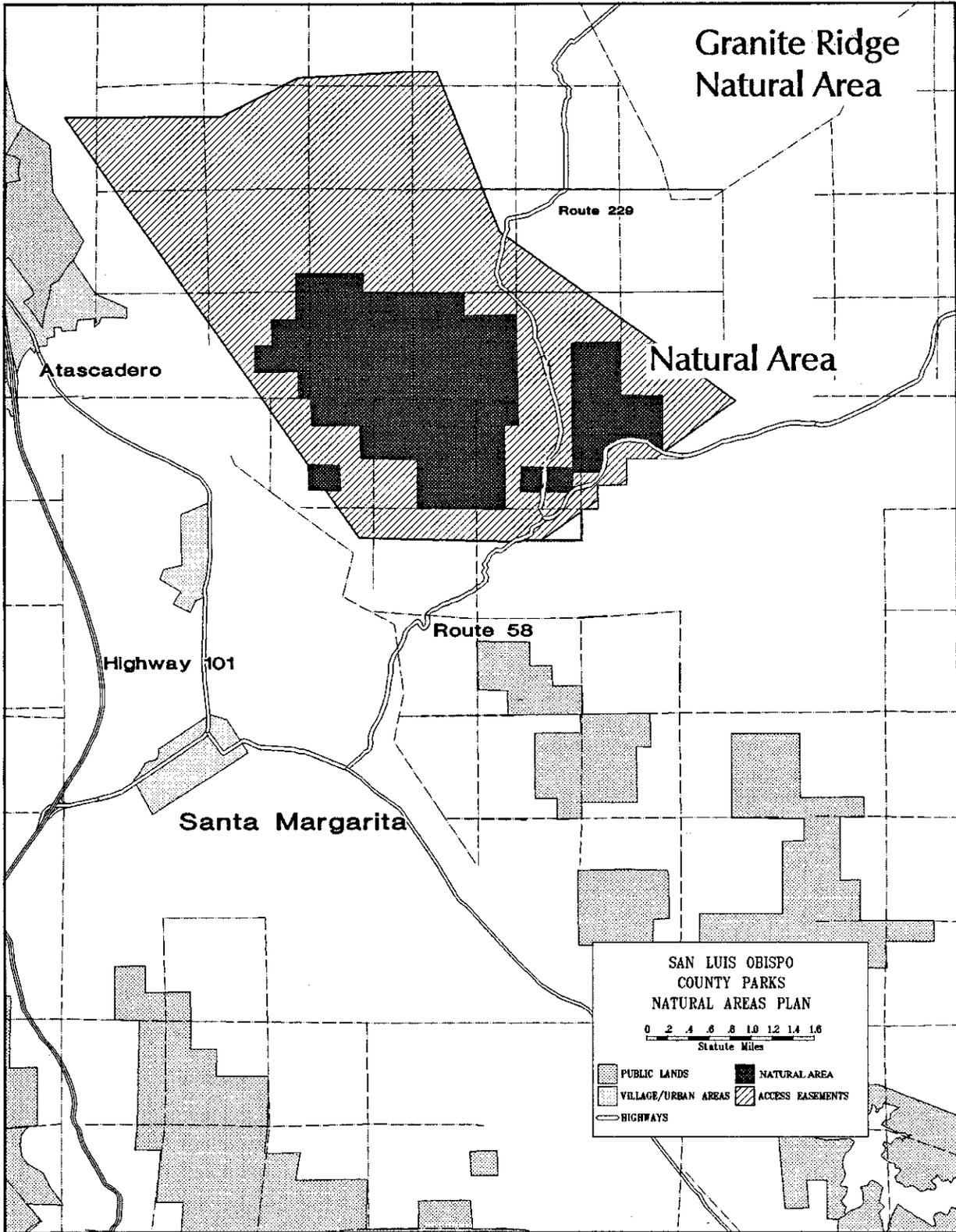
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

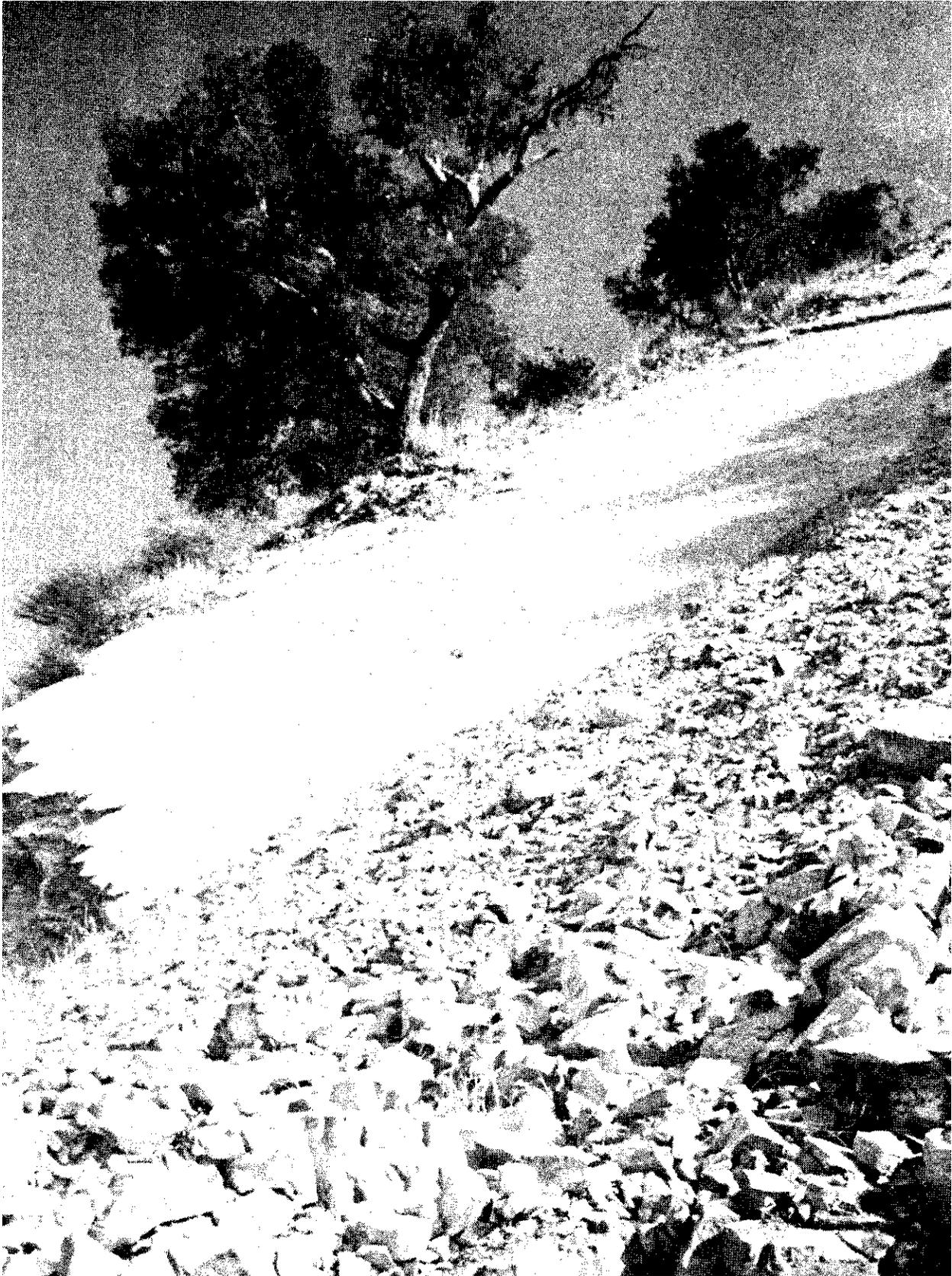
- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Joint management agreement with Bureau of Land Management to provide access for passive recreation, nature study, habitat protection and restoration of area.

Management Restrictions: Limit access of off-highway vehicles. Restrict access due to periods of extreme fire hazard. Limit mining activity within Natural Area.

Other Pertinent Information: Majority of land was burned in a 1989 fire. Restoration of native chaparral should be a primary consideration.





~~PRIVATE LANDS~~
~~WILLING SELLER/DEDICATION~~

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ELFIN FOREST NATURAL AREA

Location: ~~Southernmost area of Morro Bay Estuary~~

Public Lands: ~~No~~

Approximate Acreage:

~~—————Private Lands: 38.69 acres~~

Description: ~~A diverse and complex assemblage of natural plant communities including coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe, pygmy oak woodland, grassland, coastal dune scrub and oak manzanita association. Supports a documented 25 species of mammals, over 110 kinds of birds, and 11 species of reptiles and amphibians.~~

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- ~~(xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity~~
- ~~(xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics~~
- ~~(xx) 3. Unique natural features~~
- ~~(xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities~~
- ~~(xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands~~
- ~~(xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth~~
- ~~() 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge~~
- ~~(xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise~~

Management Objective: ~~Preservation of archeological sites, habitat protection and passive recreation.~~

Management Restrictions: ~~Public access limited to foot traffic only. May require fencing to protect native species from domestic predators.~~

Other Pertinent Information: ~~A grant has been submitted to partially fund the purchase.~~

Photo moved to page 23

TEMPLETON COMMUNITY GREENWAYS

Location: ~~Templeton; main section near Las Tablas and Bethel Roads~~

Public Lands: ~~No; future dedication as a condition of development.~~

Approximate Acreage:

Private Lands: ~~35-50 acres will be dedicated as a condition of development.~~

Description: ~~The land is highlighted by rolling hills of exotic grasslands and ancient valley oaks with some small sections of riparian habitat.~~

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- ~~() 1. Habitat values and biological diversity~~
- ~~(xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics~~
- ~~() 3. Unique natural features~~
- ~~(xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities~~
- ~~(xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands~~
- ~~(xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth~~
- ~~() 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge~~
- ~~() 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise~~

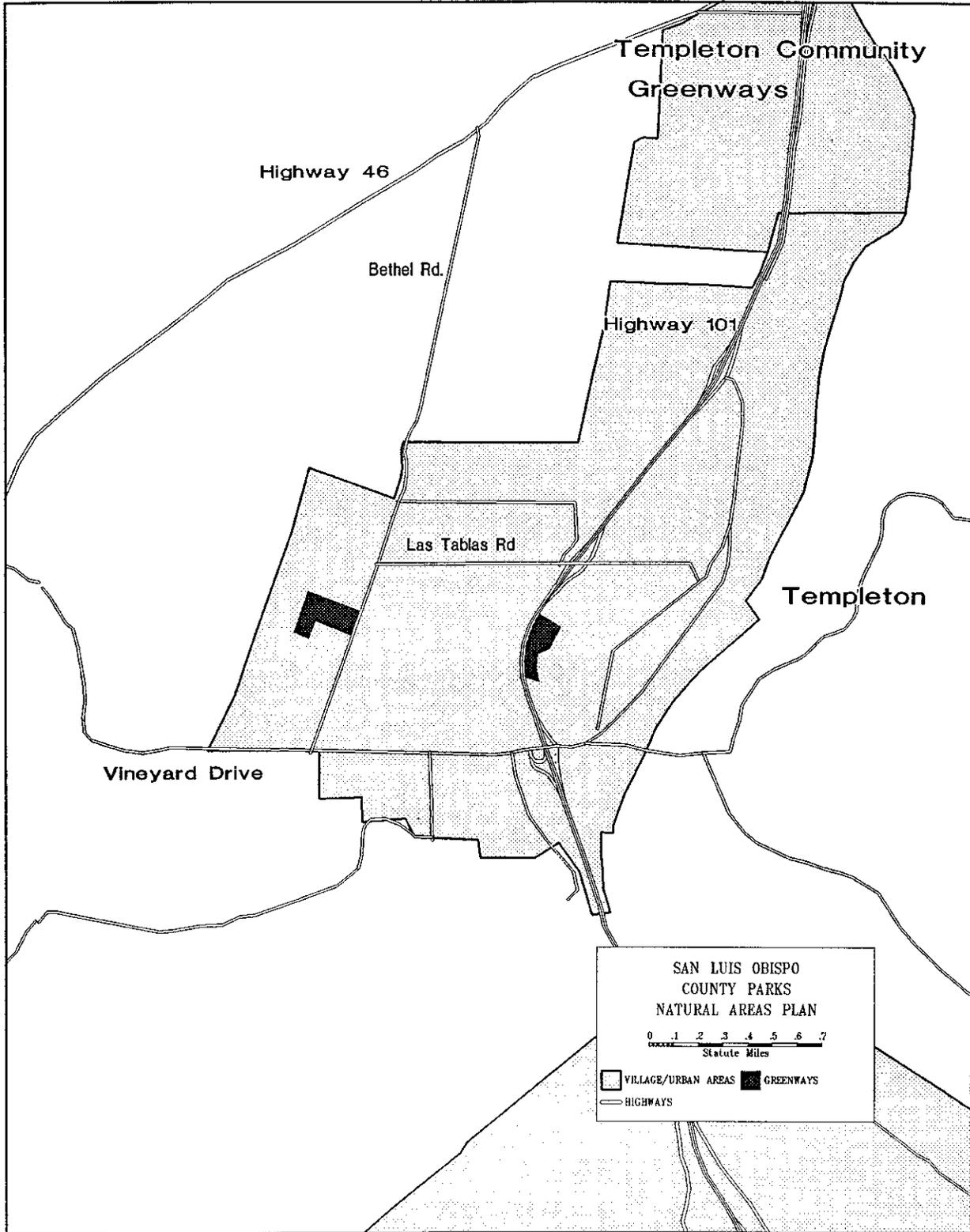
Management Objective: ~~To provide habitat protection and public access. Reduce grazing and eliminate from riparian zones. Re-introduction of Valley Oaks.~~

Management Restrictions: ~~Due to size of parcels, fencing should be considered to control access.~~

~~-~~

Other Pertinent Information: ~~Mow strips should be cut in late spring along urbanized fringe for wildfire control.~~

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~~PRICE CANYON NATURAL PARK~~

~~Location:~~ East of the City of Pismo Beach

~~Public Lands:~~ No

~~Approximate Acreage:~~

~~Private Lands:~~ Shell Oil property, approximately 1552 acres.

~~Description:~~ Contains a variety of communities including riparian along Pismo Creek, oak woodlands and grasslands. Potentially harbors a variety of rare plants which only grow in the presence of oil or oil shale. Numerous roads to oil sites provide opportunities for use as trails.

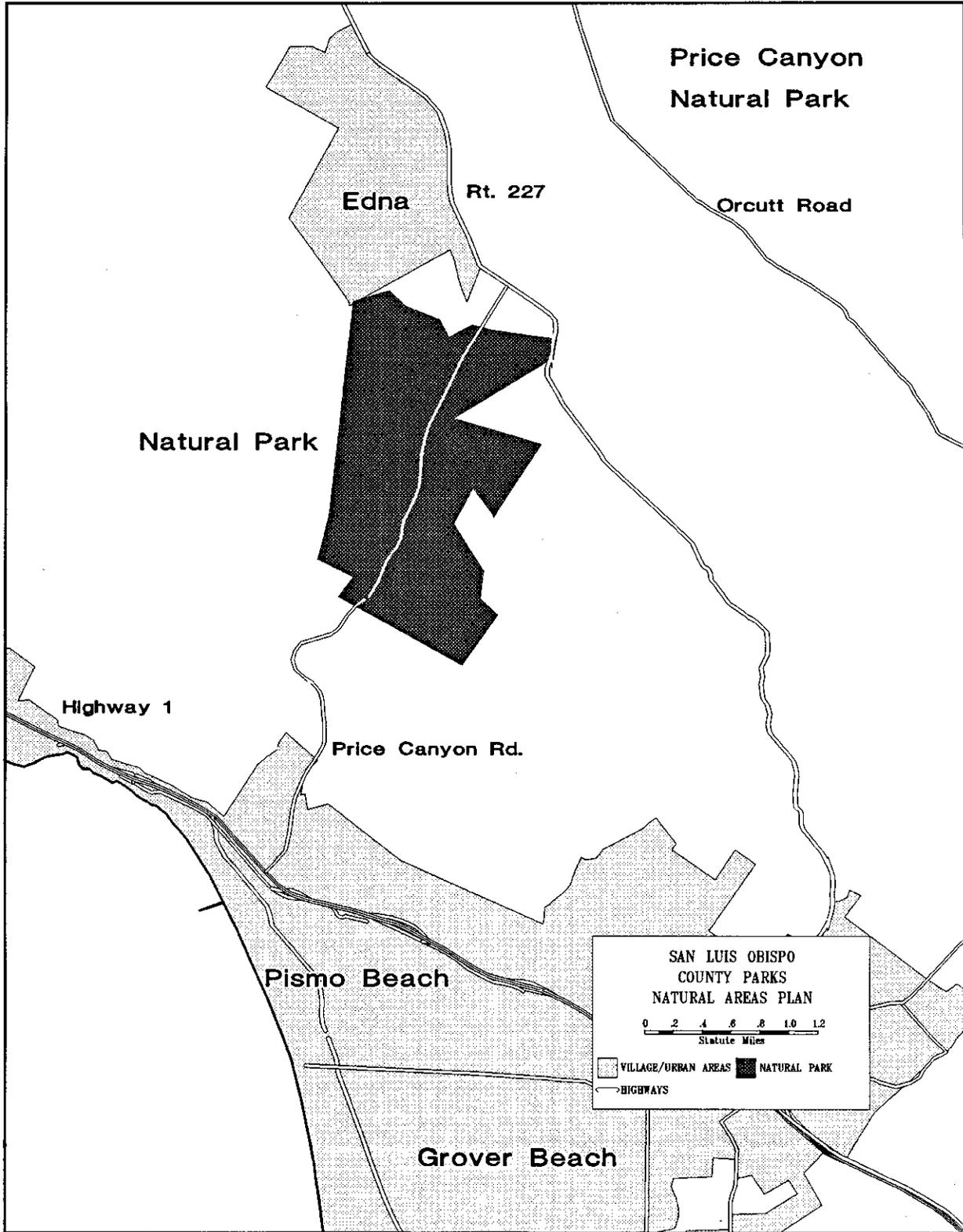
~~Identified Natural Areas Factors:~~

- ~~(xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity~~
- ~~(xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics~~
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- ~~(xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth~~
- ~~() 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge~~
- ~~(xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise~~

~~Management Objective:~~ Restoration of native environment, habitat protection and passive recreation opportunities. Because of oil activities, environmental education should be a major consideration.

~~Management Restrictions:~~ Restrict and control off-highway vehicle use.

~~Other Pertinent Information:~~ Toxic waste removal will be a major consideration. Forty to sixty areas of property should be segregated and developed for more intensive park activities.





SIGNIFICANT BIOLOGICAL, GEOGRAPHIC, OR RIPARIAN HABITAT

The following list of proposed Natural Area sites is intended to identify critical habitat types or geographic features which merit preservation. The proposals are not site specific. In each case, sites based on these criteria should be identified and explored for preservation, using public lands whenever possible.



THE MORROS NATURAL AREAS

Location: 12 mile east/west stretch of land from San Luis Obispo to Morro Bay

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Cal Poly, Camp San Luis, Cuesta Community College, California National Guard, San Luis Obispo County.

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 2,500 acres

Private Lands: Various. Conservation and access easements to public lands should be explored if funds are not available for acquisition. Acquisition and/or easements will only be sought from willing landowners or donors.

Description: A unique continuous stretch of volcanic peaks forming a divider between Los Osos Valley and Chorro Valley, which extends from Islay Hill to Morro Rock. Sparsely populated and mostly used for grazing, dry farming, and irrigated field crops on the level areas.

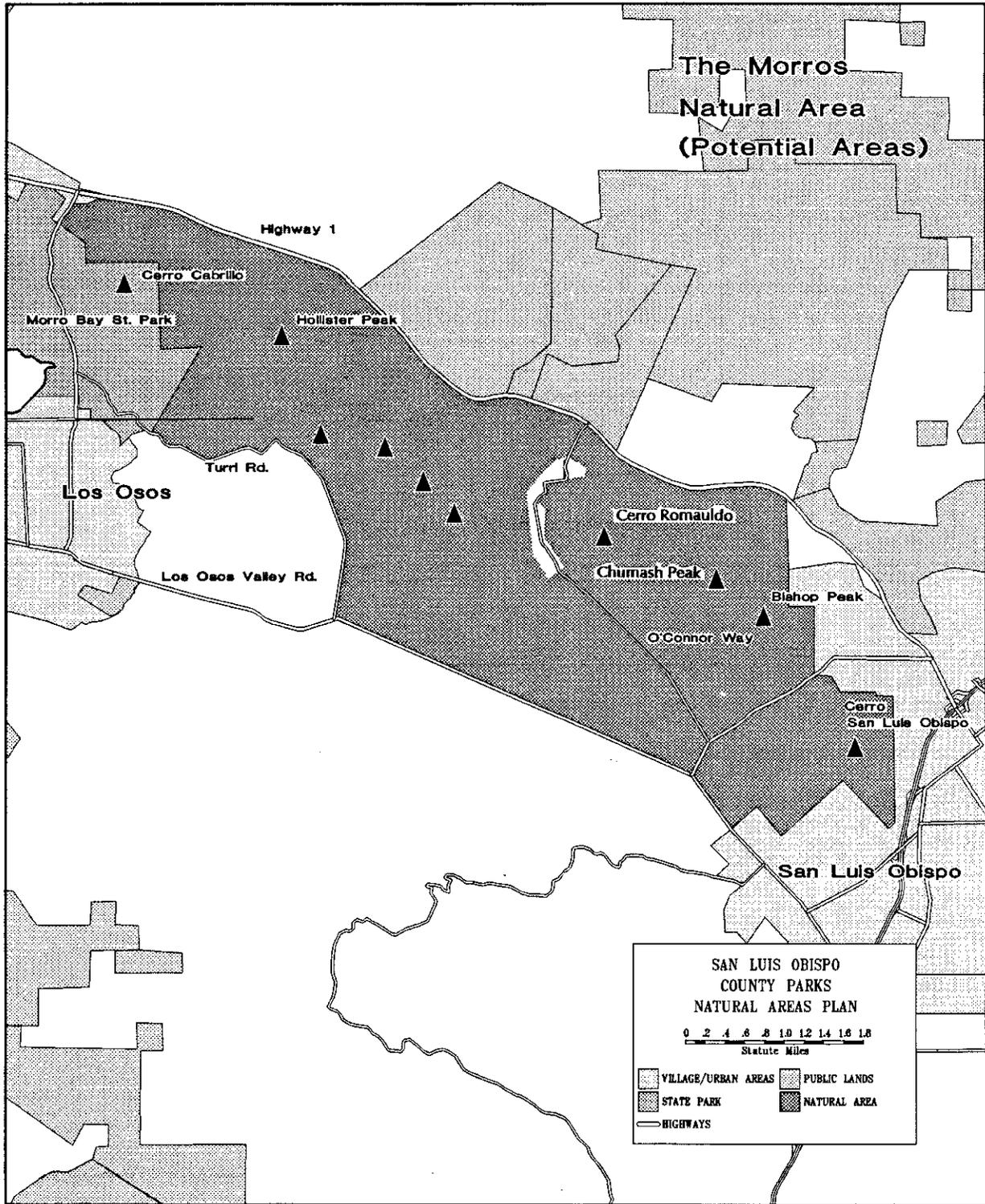
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and preservation of native habitat, environmental education and passive recreation. Public agencies should be encouraged to open their lands to public access. ~~Long range goal is the protection and public management of The Morros and eventual establishment of an integrated Morros Natural Park.~~

Management Restrictions: Protection of adjacent agricultural operations. Control access to restrict off-highway vehicles. Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Public access should be restricted to those lands open to public use.

Other Pertinent Information: Efforts must be coordinated with the several other agencies and landowners involved in protection of The Morros.



SALINAS RIVER NATURAL AREAS

Location: Dam at Santa Margarita Lake north to County line.

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--OWNERSHIP: Calif. Department of Fish and Game, City of Atascadero, Atascadero Mutual Water District, Bureau of Land Management

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Approximately 1000+ acres

Private Lands: Various

Description: Dominant community is riparian. The corridor is a mixed bag of public and private ownership which creates access restrictions. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

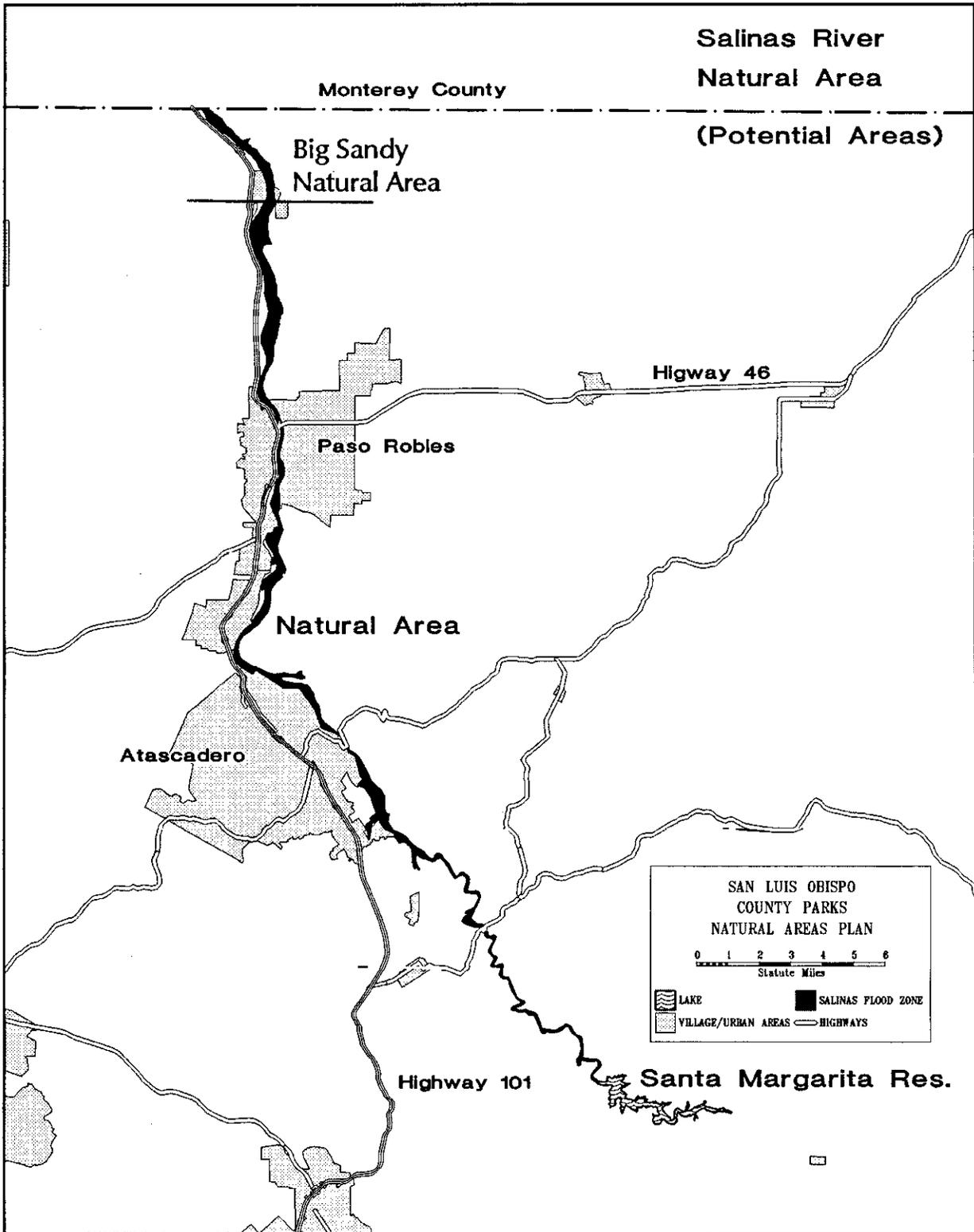
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- () 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- () 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and protection of riparian habitat, environmental education and passive recreation.

Management Restrictions: Control off-highway vehicles. Limit mining activity within Natural Area.

Other Pertinent Information: ~~A Resource Management Plan is in progress by the Resource Conservation District, Soils Conservation Service, National Parks Service Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program, County Parks, and various private landholders.~~ Should develop a comprehensive Resource Management Plan. If Salinas Dam is raised there is potential for mitigation funds to purchase conservation easements and riparian restoration.



SAN LUIS OBISPO CREEK NATURAL AREAS

Location: From the City of San Luis Obispo to Pacific Ocean

Public Lands: Combination

IF YES--**OWNERSHIP:** City of San Luis Obispo, County of San Luis Obispo, ~~Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo~~

Approximate Acreage:

Public Lands: Various

Private Lands: Various

Description: The 18 mile stream flows live year round from its headwaters below Cuesta Ridge to its ocean confluence at Avila Beach. Excellent examples of riparian habitat. Also supports the southernmost population of steelhead in California. Many agencies and projects are involved with the creek. City of San Luis Obispo should be lead agency within their jurisdiction. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

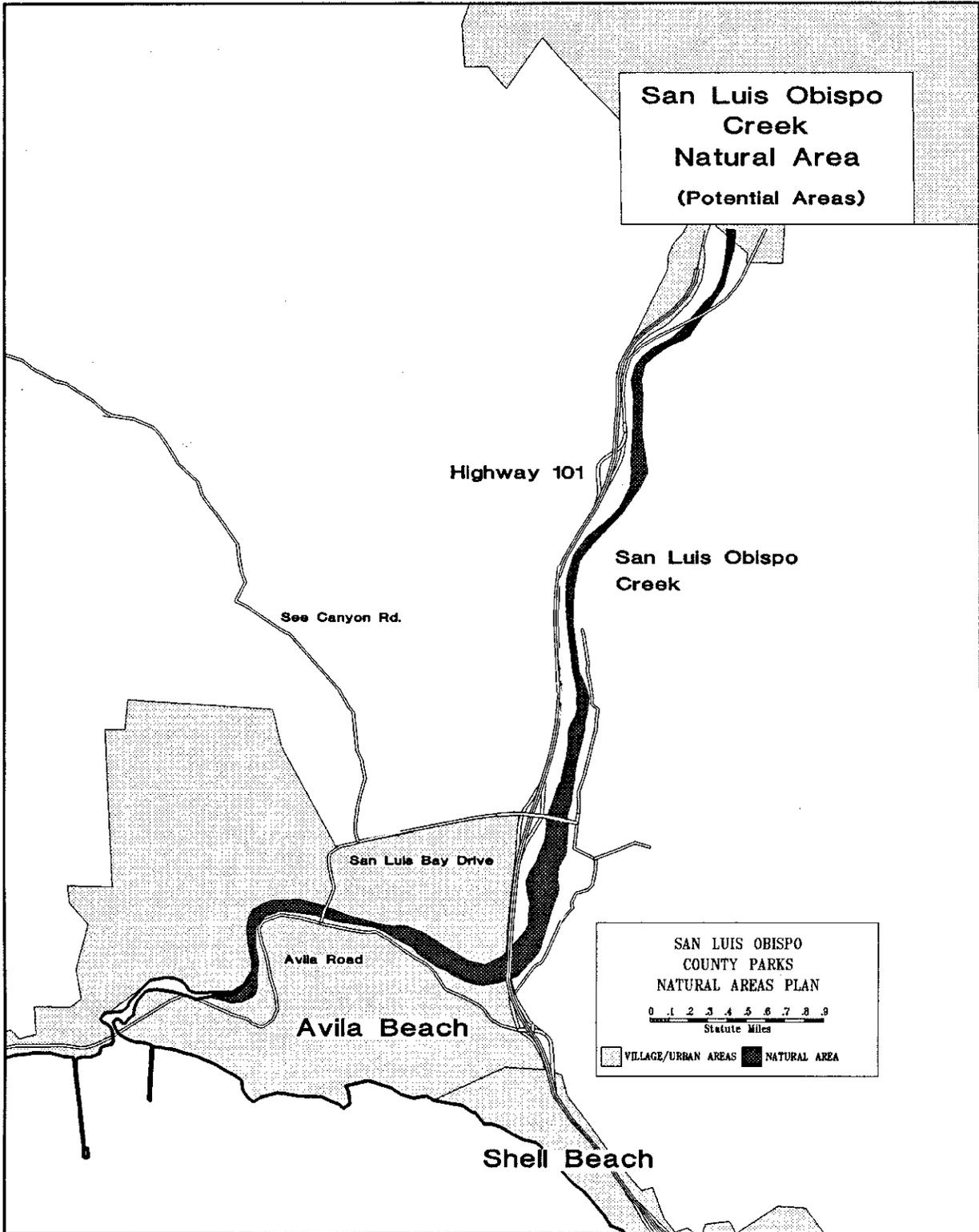
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Restoration and protection of riparian habitat, environmental education and passive recreation opportunities.

Management Restrictions: ~~Foot traffic only.~~ Where appropriate, manage grazing to control and protect grasslands and riparian areas. Public access limited to Avila bikeway.

Other Pertinent Information: Efforts should coordinate with San Luis Obispo Creek Task Force.



MONTEREY PINE NATURAL AREAS

Location: Cambria, various sites

Description: This grove extends from direct ocean influence zones to the drier interior uplands, and gene variations occur within this range. The various microhabitats within the forest include a number of rare and endemic species. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

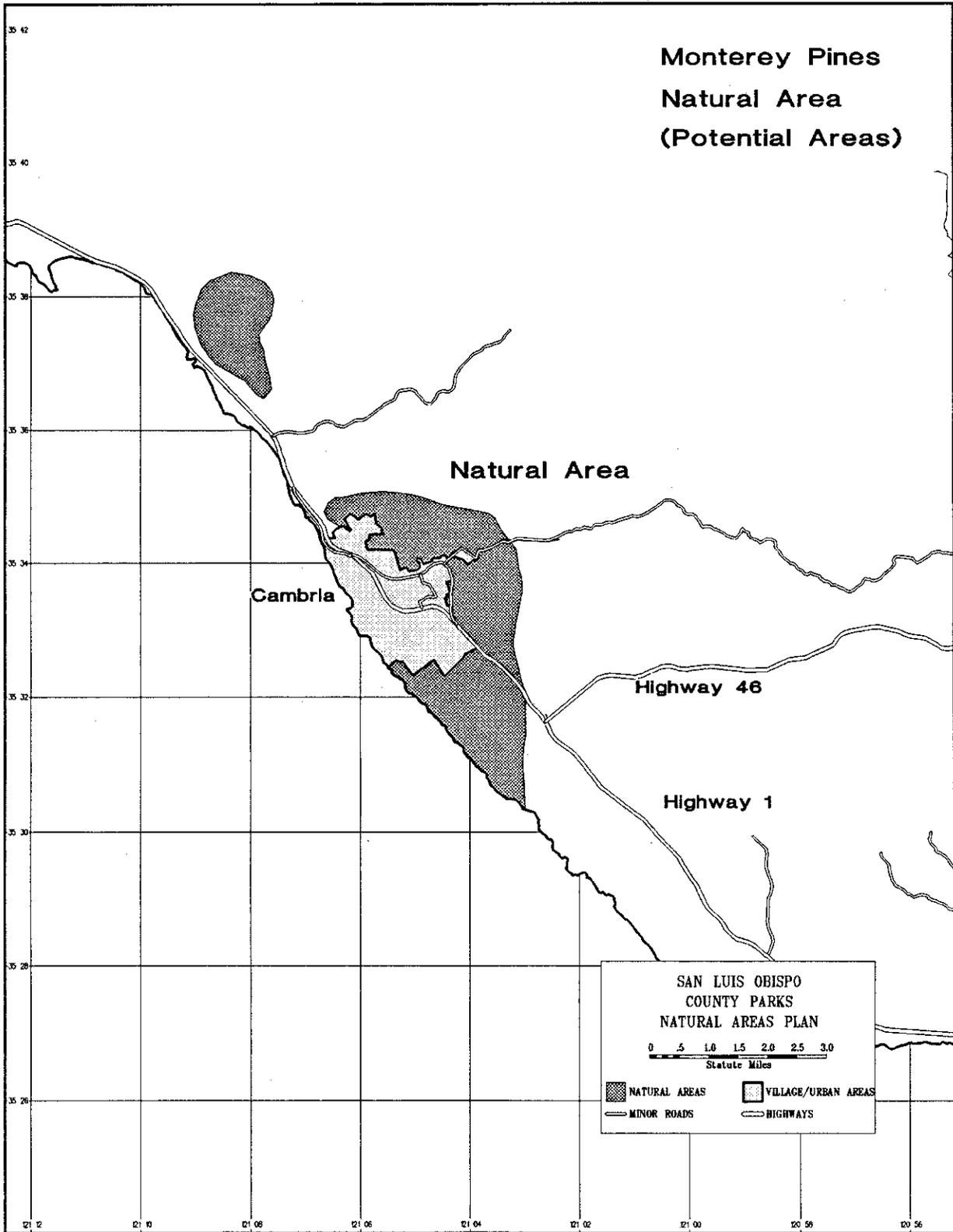
Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- (xx) 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of native groves, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this major habitat is important. Emphasis should be placed on managing the entire ecological system of this habitat type.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with ~~Green Space land trust~~, Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County and County Department of Planning and Building.



MONARCH BUTTERFLY NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations

Public Lands: 17 acres in Los Osos have been identified to be deeded to County with recordation of Monarch Grove subdivision (Tract No. 1589)

Description: Groves of trees used as over-wintering sites for Monarch butterflies, critical to the survival of western U.S. populations of this species. Potential sites in San Simeon near Sebastian's Store, and on the Nipomo Mesa and Los Osos. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- 3. Unique natural features
- 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation of wintering sites, passive recreation and nature study. Environmental education on this important species and associated habitat.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County Department of Planning and Building and California Department of Fish and Game.



OAK WOODLAND NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations, especially near Huasna and Adelaide

Description: These two areas contain vast stands of native oaks, for the most part undisturbed by urbanization. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- (xx) 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of native oak groves, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this important habitat.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County Cooperative Extension and Department of Planning and Building.



COASTAL NATURAL AREAS

Location: Various locations

Description: California's coastal zone contains a variety of unique habitat types, diverse biological species and majestic scenic vistas. The threat to these sensitive coastal zones continues, despite statewide preservation measures. Of particular concern are intertidal pools and estuaries. Site identification will occur when a suitable area of public land is located or dedicated, or in cooperation with a willing seller or donor.

Identified Natural Areas Factors:

- (xx) 1. Habitat values and biological diversity
- (xx) 2. Scenic, historic or cultural characteristics
- (xx) 3. Unique natural features
- (xx) 4. Passive outdoor recreation and/or environmental education opportunities
- (xx) 5. Corridors adjacent to or connecting public lands
- 6. Greenbelt areas shaping urban growth
- 7. Watershed areas for surface water or underground recharge
- (xx) 8. Areas important for protection of public health and safety, having high exposure to risk from fire, flood, earthquakes, unstable soils, or excessive noise

Management Objective: Preservation management of sensitive habitats, passive recreation and nature study. Removal of non-native species. Environmental education on this important region.

Management Restrictions: Public use should be restricted to activities associated with environmental education and nature study.

Other Pertinent Information: Coordinate site identification with County ~~Cooperative Extension~~ and Department of Planning and Building and State Dept. of Fish and Game.

