

# Hope on the Horizon



## A Citizen's Guide to Expanding Our National Marine Sanctuaries

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# Preparing Your Comments:

## What You May Want to Consider

The pending expansion of our popular Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries northward to Pt. Arena to provide permanent protection from coastal offshore drilling has been thirty-five years in the making and involved tens of thousands of Californians. Now is the time to make sure we get it right, and this guide is intended to help bring this historic outcome to fruition.

The review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) provides this opportunity to allow the public to comment on various “Options” now being evaluated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In the case of the DEIS released for the proposed Boundary Expansion of the Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries, there are currently a total of five Options from which reviewers can choose:

**Option 3.2: Proposed Option**, expand Sanctuary boundaries, place a permanent ban on offshore drilling and seabed mining, and also create broad additional management authority described in item **(a)** below, plus impose new Personal Watercraft Zones as described in item **(b)** below, and exclude from the new boundaries the immediate vicinity of the Arena Cove pier (see page 3-2 of DEIS for details).

**Option 3.3: No Action Alternative**, maintain the status quo, with no boundary expansion, no offshore drilling ban, and no new protection outside of existing Sanctuaries, Interior Department controls oil and gas leasing at will (see page 3-34 of DEIS for details).

**Option 3.4: Application of Existing Sanctuary Regulations**, expand boundaries, keep existing regulations within present Sanctuaries and apply them to new expanded area (see page 3-34 of DEIS for details).

**Option 3.5: All of Arena Cove would be included within the expanded boundaries** plus adding the additional management authority contained in Option 3.2 (see page 3-39 of DEIS for details).

**Option 3.6: Different Jet-ski™ (MWPC) zones** would be imposed under this Option, see pages 12-17 of this *Citizen's Guide* for maps.

**Option 3.7: Other Alternatives not Adopted:** This Option simply describes other alternatives that were considered and eliminated, including expanding the boundaries further north and further south, exclusion of a larger area within Arena Cove from protection, and other choices not adopted (see page 3-42 of DEIS for details).

The public can also “mix and match” among the Options presented in the DEIS, picking parts of one and combining them with portions of another to create their own Customized Option to recommend, or requesting that this Expansion extend further to the north or south.

With *all* of the described Options, except the “no action” alternative, no leasing, exploration, or development of hydrocarbons or minerals would be permitted anywhere throughout the Expansion area. Under all of the proposed Options, **commercial and recreational fishing would continue** in the Sanctuaries, as it does currently, since fishing has long already been a part of the separate jurisdiction of the *Pacific Fishery Management Council* (see <http://www.pcouncil.org/>) and is not restricted by this National Marine Sanctuary designation.

## Other Important Details:

**(a)** Within the described range of Options considered in the DEIS, there are various proposed management approaches that can also be selected. You will likely notice, as you review the proposals, that one of the possible scenarios suggests that Sanctuary managers might be granted a new power to simply “not object” to unidentified future activities and projects that have “already been approved by other

federal, state, and local agencies”, but the DEIS fails to define what kinds of projects might be subject to this type of approval. This proposed new authority is already causing substantial public controversy, and concern about this broadened discretionary power has recently been expressed by formal resolution on behalf of the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Advisory Council on May 1, 2014, see:

[http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14\\_05/Authorization\\_reso.pdf](http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14_05/Authorization_reso.pdf)

**(b)** Another possible draft management Option that has generated concern would be the proposed imposition of arbitrary “personal watercraft zones” where disruptive Jet-ski™ (MPWC) activity would be concentrated amidst sensitive nearshore wildlife habitat within the Boundary Expansion area, and this plan has now been opposed by the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Advisory Council:

[http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14\\_05/mpwc\\_reso.pdf](http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14_05/mpwc_reso.pdf)

The Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Advisory Council did, however, fully support the proposed geographic scope of the Boundary Expansion itself:

[http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14\\_05/mpwc\\_reso.pdf](http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/sac/14_05/mpwc_reso.pdf)

The Boundary Expansion DEIS proposes to enhance existing Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS's) and create Special Wildlife Protection Zones (SWPZ) which are generally more protective of Sanctuary resources, precluding low aircraft overflights and close approaches by large maritime vessels which pose oil spill risks.

For maps showing these proposed Jet-ski™ (MPWC) locations, see pages 12-17 of this *Citizen's Guide*, and also explore the DEIS itself at:

[http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/expansion/CBNMS-GFNMS\\_DEIS\\_2014web.pdf](http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/expansion/CBNMS-GFNMS_DEIS_2014web.pdf)

The separate “Proposed Rule” can be viewed and downloaded at:

[http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/expansion/GFNMS\\_CBNMS\\_Expansion\\_ProposedRule.pdf](http://farallones.noaa.gov/manage/pdf/expansion/GFNMS_CBNMS_Expansion_ProposedRule.pdf)

## Some Helpful Suggestions You May Wish to Consider in Your Own Comments:

1. Support for the geographic configuration of the proposed Boundary Expansion in order to permanently preclude offshore drilling and protect our region's unique deep ocean upwelling from which nutrient-laden water provides the foodsource for our existing Sanctuaries, wildlife, and fisheries.
2. Support maintaining the current management practices that do not interfere with fishing in the existing Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank Sanctuaries, to be the model for the new Boundary Expansion waters under all Options being considered as well.
3. You may wish to express concern over a proposal that's called the "New Authorization to Approve Prohibited Activities Rule" and ask that it not be adopted, instead requesting that NOAA stick to the long-proven practices in the existing Sanctuaries until local input is obtained (see preceding item a).
4. While concentrated Jet-ski™ (MPWC) zones may ultimately turn out to be appropriate in some very-limited locations, the excessively large areas being proposed for the imposition of personal watercraft zones by the DEIS obviously are placed too close to critical marine mammal haulout rocks, remote peaceful beaches, and easily-disturbed seabird nesting colonies, so any future decisions about such "MPWC Sacrifice Zones" should be subsequently developed with direct participation from local residents who know the areas well and understand the jeopardy to vulnerable wildlife (see preceding item b).

Public hearings will be held in various local communities to solicit public input on all of this, and written comments by mail or online are also invited until June 30, 2014.

## Attending Your Public Hearings:

**May 22, 2014: Sausalito,** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Bay Model Visitor Center, 6 pm, 2100 Bridgeway Blvd., Sausalito, CA 94965

**June 16, 2014: Point Arena City Hall,** 6 pm 451 School St., Point Arena, CA 95468

**June 17, 2014: Gualala Community Center,** 6 pm, 47950 Center St., Gualala, CA 95445

**June 18, 2014: Bodega Bay Grange Hall,** 6 pm 1370 Bodega Ave., Bodega Bay, CA 94923

## How to Submit Written Comments:

You can also submit your comments by mail to: Maria Brown, Sanctuary Superintendent, Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, 991 Marine Drive, The Presidio, San Francisco, CA 94129

And you can submit your comments electronically online at:  
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NOS-2012-0228>

Please note that your comments, including any address, phone number, or identifying information you may include become public information, as with any comments of this kind.



## Saving Our Coast from Offshore Drilling and Spills: How to Achieve Permanent Protection

The current process of expanding coastal protection to more of the Sonoma and Mendocino coastline originated from the fact that there's no other practical method to secure permanent protection from offshore drilling for our region's federal waters except through the designation of a National Marine Sanctuary by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). National Marine Sanctuaries are our nation's underwater "crown jewels", much like our treasured national parks, and they provide a range of protections from damaging activities like sewage discharge from ships and oil drilling, while fishing and traditional compatible public uses continue.

We now stand near the successful conclusion of a long and persistent bipartisan effort that began in the late 1970's when then-President Jimmy Carter first announced a controversial plan to begin offshore oil and gas drilling in our coastal waters off of Bodega Head, Sea Ranch, and Point Arena in a proposal called "Lease Sale 53". Local businesses, fishermen, conservationists, and a bipartisan coalition of our elected officials all worked together to convince the Carter Administration that allowing risky offshore drilling in such rough waters amidst sensitive fishing grounds, where the local economy relies on a clean ocean, would be such a bad idea that the White House eventually withdrew our region from this Carter drilling plan.

Then, in 1981, President Ronald Reagan's new Secretary of the Department of Interior, James Watt, suddenly reversed the prior Carter oil leasing withdrawals here and thereby put the Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt coastlines back in the crosshairs of his own aggressive offshore drilling plans. As a result, also during 1981, Congressional pressure led to the designation of our first new Marine Sanctuary to provide permanent protection from offshore drilling

and other harmful activities around the seabird-covered Farallon Islands off of Marin County, an iconic site now known as the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

As Interior Secretary Watt continued to push for spreading drill rigs from San Diego to Humboldt Bay, a multi-state coalition in Congress teamed up with their colleagues from Massachusetts, where James Watt's similar offshore leasing plan was also being proposed for New England's famed Georges Bank fishing grounds. This partnership between East and West Coast Congressional Representatives and Senators eventually managed to cut off James Watt's funding for his offshore drilling plans off of Central and Northern California and Massachusetts and thereby created the first-ever annual legislative ocean drilling ban, or "Congressional Moratorium", in 1982.

Many Californians remembered all too well the earlier 1969 Santa Barbara oil rig blowout that had sullied their fragile beaches and their regional economy, and dedicated themselves to a multi-decade campaign to ensure that an offshore drilling disaster of similar proportions never happens here again. On the Central and Northern California coast, numerous cities and counties passed local ordinances prohibiting onshore facilities for offshore drilling, and every California Governor during this period has forcefully objected to offshore hydrocarbon leasing here. Coastal citizens showed up at massive public hearings in record numbers, working in truly bipartisan fashion with their elected officials to try to eventually bring about permanent protection for richly-productive coastal waters that are the heart of an irreplaceable ocean ecosystem that provides the base of our entire region's coastal economy.

## The "One-Year-at-a-Time" Annual Approach to Saving Our Coast Can Now Endure Forever:

The resulting congressional offshore drilling Moratorium was ultimately renewed each and every year for twenty-seven consecutive



years, in some cases succeeding in the House Appropriations Committee only by a very narrow margin. During the Administration of President George H.W. Bush, the White House also added an even stronger additional layer of temporary protection for our waters, called the “Presidential Leasing Deferrals”. In 1989, then-Congressman Doug Bosco was able to secure NOAA’s designation of the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary to protect a fragile underwater island off of Bodega Bay that is home to an abundance of unique marine life. And yet again, in the legislative aftermath of the damaging 1989 Exxon-Valdez oil spill disaster in Alaska, Congressman Leon Panetta in 1992 managed to convince Congress to enact the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to similarly protect the Santa Cruz-San Mateo coast and Big Sur. This historic accomplishment now meant that California’s coast enjoyed permanent protection from offshore drilling immediately around the Channel Islands, then continuing along the mainland coast all the way from Cambria up to Bodega Head. Protection of any waters outside of California’s existing Marine Sanctuaries, however, continued to remain subject only to the political uncertainties of the problematic annual renewal each year of the Congressional Moratorium.

Although the next President, George W. Bush, initially supported his father’s Presidential Leasing Deferrals throughout most of his two terms of office, he instead removed all protection from our coast just before he left office in 2009. At the same time, the emerging politics of a changing Congress then allowed the 27-year annual offshore leasing Moratorium to also expire in 2009. This now leaves the entire California coast outside of our present National Marine Sanctuaries open for offshore drilling at the sole discretion of whoever occupies the White House at any given time. Now left with no protection at all, much of our most important fishing grounds and popular visitor-serving economies will continue to be at risk from offshore drilling and related routine toxic pollution and oil spills, along with our region’s valuable *Clean Coast* economy.

Recognizing that irreplaceable national treasures and our coastal-dependent regional economic base would constantly be in jeopardy if ocean drilling were allowed in such a fragile area, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and her colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, along with Senator Barbara Boxer and with help from Senator Dianne Feinstein, worked for eight years to pass a bill that would expand California's present National Marine Sanctuaries further northward to encompass the unique ocean upwelling center that provides the foodsource for our existing Sanctuary waters. In 2008, Representative Woolsey's Sanctuary Expansion bill passed with no objections in the House, but the Senate did not take it up. It remained alive in the Senate the following year, but unfortunately time ran out and this bill did not achieve final passage there.

In December of 2012, President Obama and his top Administration officials made an agreement with Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and key leadership of the California Congressional delegation that had three parts: (1) To begin a National Marine Sanctuary Expansion process based on the boundaries of the Woolsey bill. (2) The process would take no more than eighteen months, the time needed to secure public review for the necessary documents. (3) The Expansion would include the long-elusive permanent prohibition on offshore oil and gas leasing and drilling.

The local reaction to this stunning new announcement throughout the affected coastal communities was overwhelmingly positive. A subsequent series of local public meetings, held by NOAA during the spring of 2013 to "scope out" the range of issues to be considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, drew large and supportive turnouts in Bodega Bay, Pt. Arena, and Gualala. At these meetings, the vast majority of those attending supported the new Sanctuary Boundary Expansion and many even requested that the same type of protection be expanded further northward to include all of Mendocino County, or even all of Humboldt County. There was virtually no discussion at these scoping meetings of altering the proven management authority already used by NOAA within the

existing Sanctuaries or of initiating any new or broader management regime anywhere in the waters to be included during the planned Boundary Expansion.

On April 14, 2014, NOAA opened a new public comment period on the present Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and also on a Proposed Rule, both laying out the expansion of the existing Cordell Bank and Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries northward to Alder Creek in Mendocino County.

While clearly encompassing the long-sought permanent protections from offshore drilling and the anticipated expansion of the Sanctuary boundaries northward to Pt. Arena, these draft documents also contain a few unexpected surprises, described elsewhere in this publication, leaving refinement of the remaining details for the proposed Sanctuary Expansion up to the public, from whom comments on how to improve this proposal are now invited until June 30, 2014.

Permanent protection from offshore drilling and other compelling threats to our coast, with your help, is finally about to become a reality here.

This is now our Grandchildren's Coast.

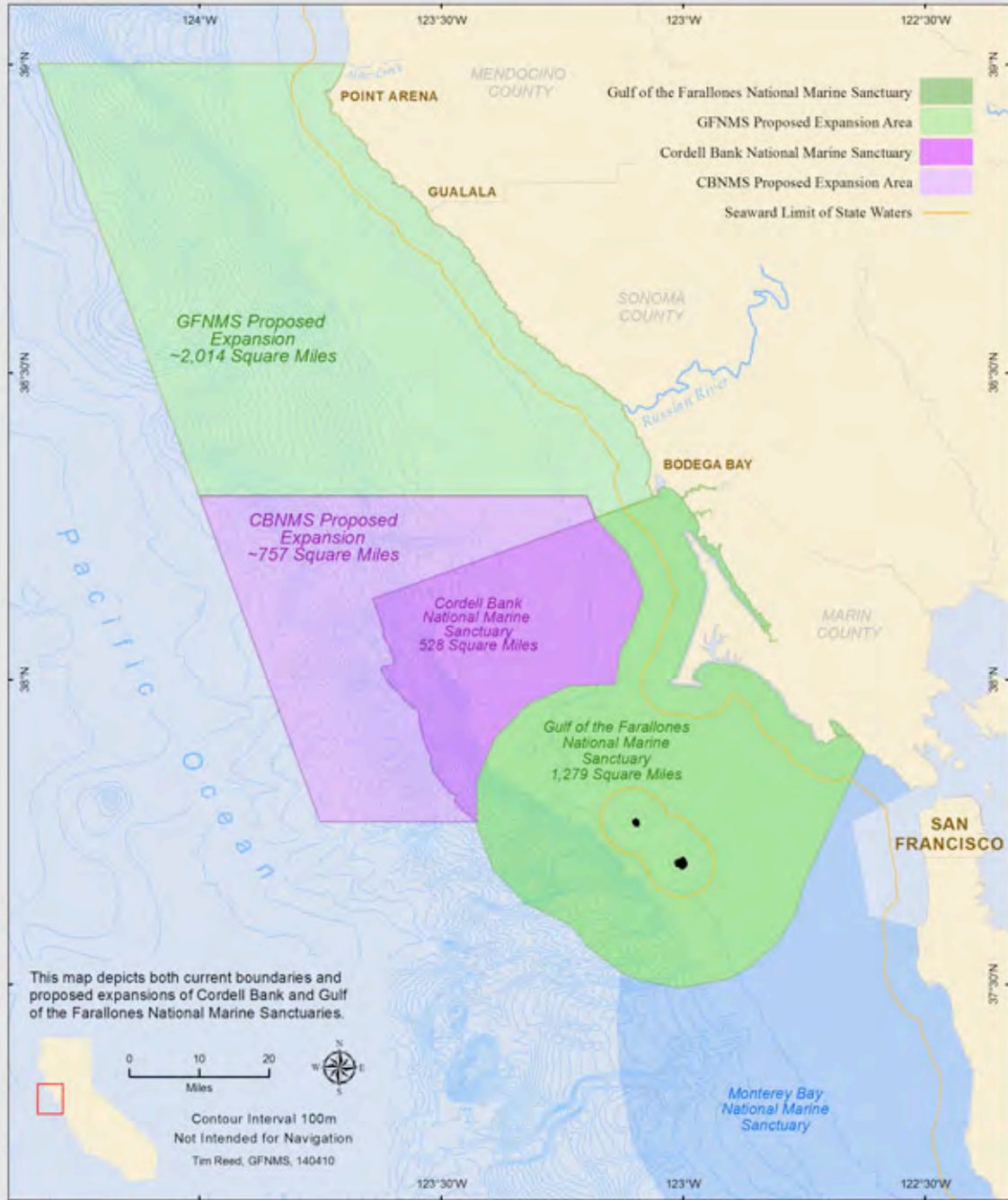
by Richard Charter, Bodega Bay, May 2014  
<http://SanctuaryExpansion.org>  
email: [waterway@monitor.net](mailto:waterway@monitor.net)  
Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/1mMn9UO>



- *with additional project support from the Herbert W. Hoover Foundation.*
- *all photos, textual content, publication design © 2014 by Richard Charter; maps by NOAA Sanctuaries.*
- *and with special thanks to all who brought our spectacular coast to this point in time in so many ways.*

# PROPOSED EXPANSION

Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary  
Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary  
April 2014



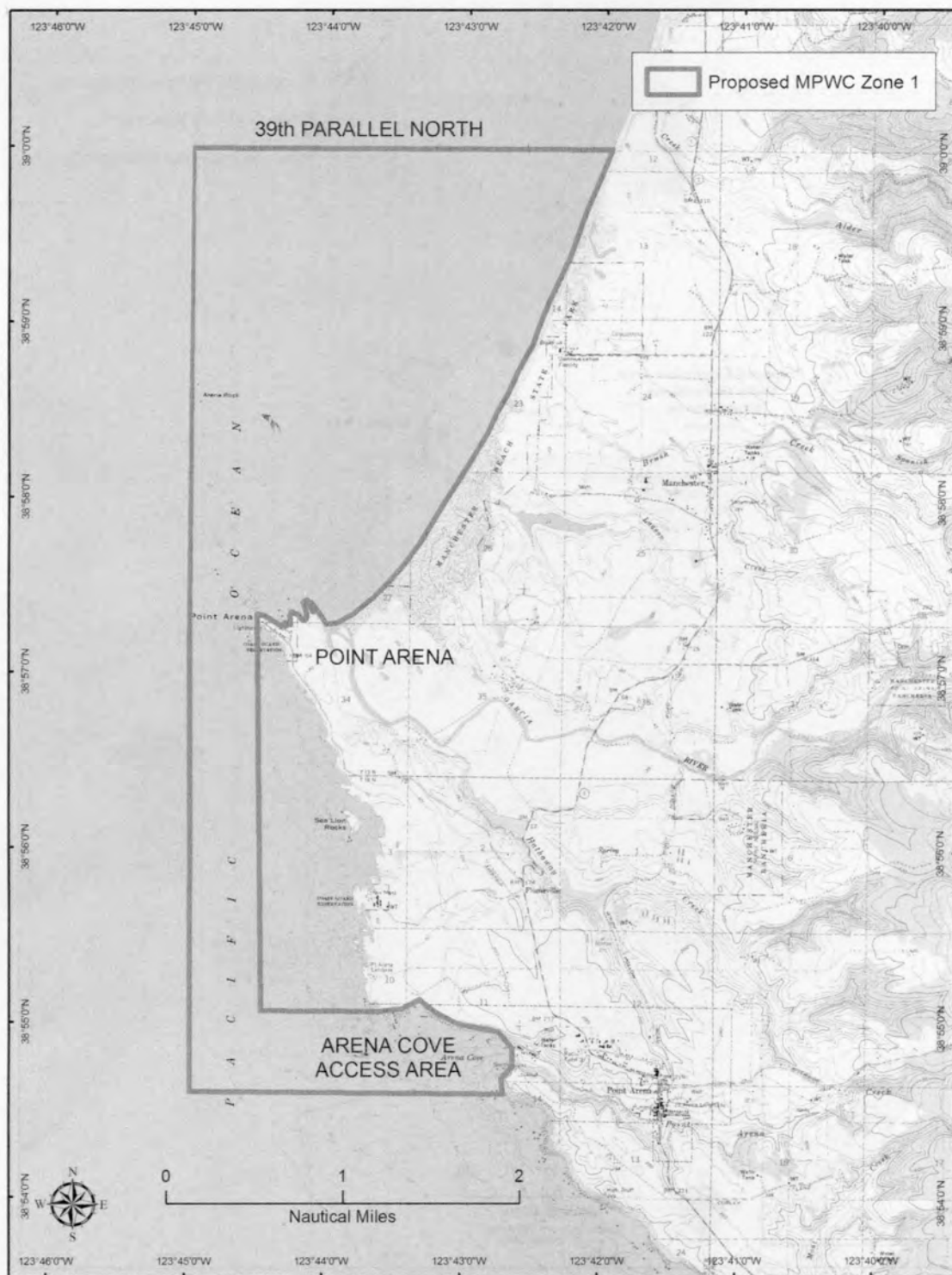


Figure 3.2-12. Proposed MPWC Zone 1

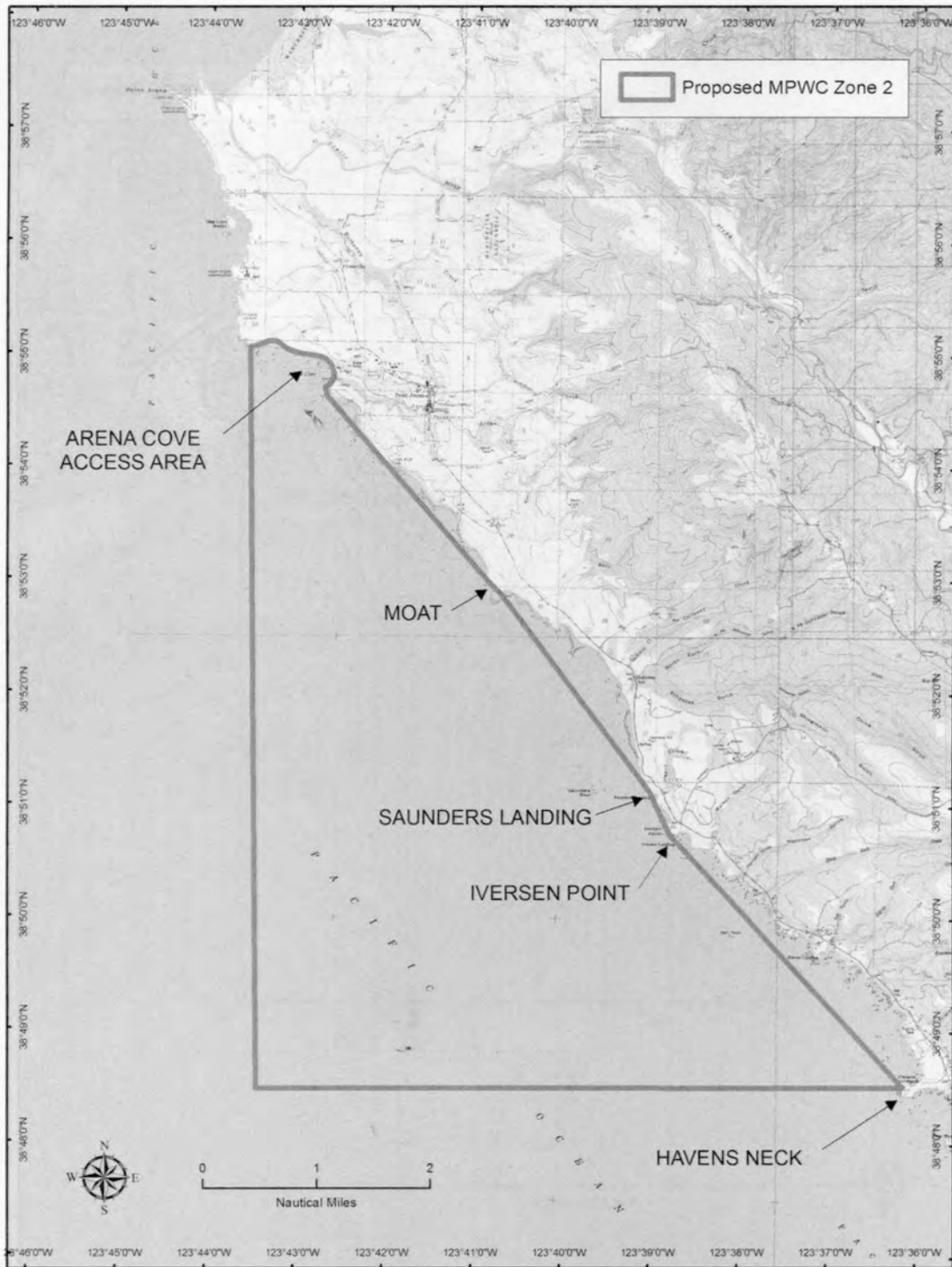


Figure 3.2-13. Proposed MPWC Zone 2



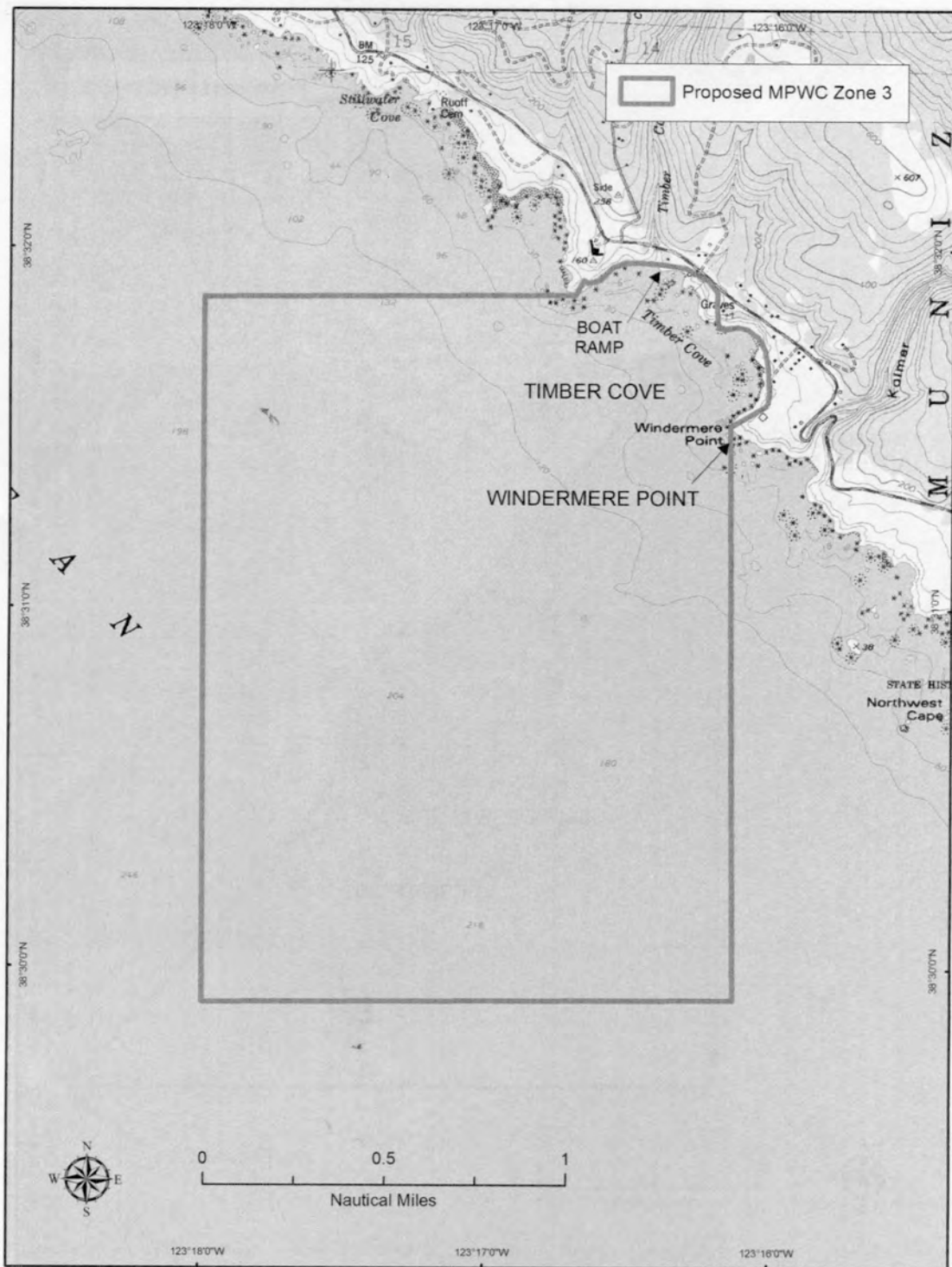


Figure 3.2-14. Proposed MPWC Zone 3

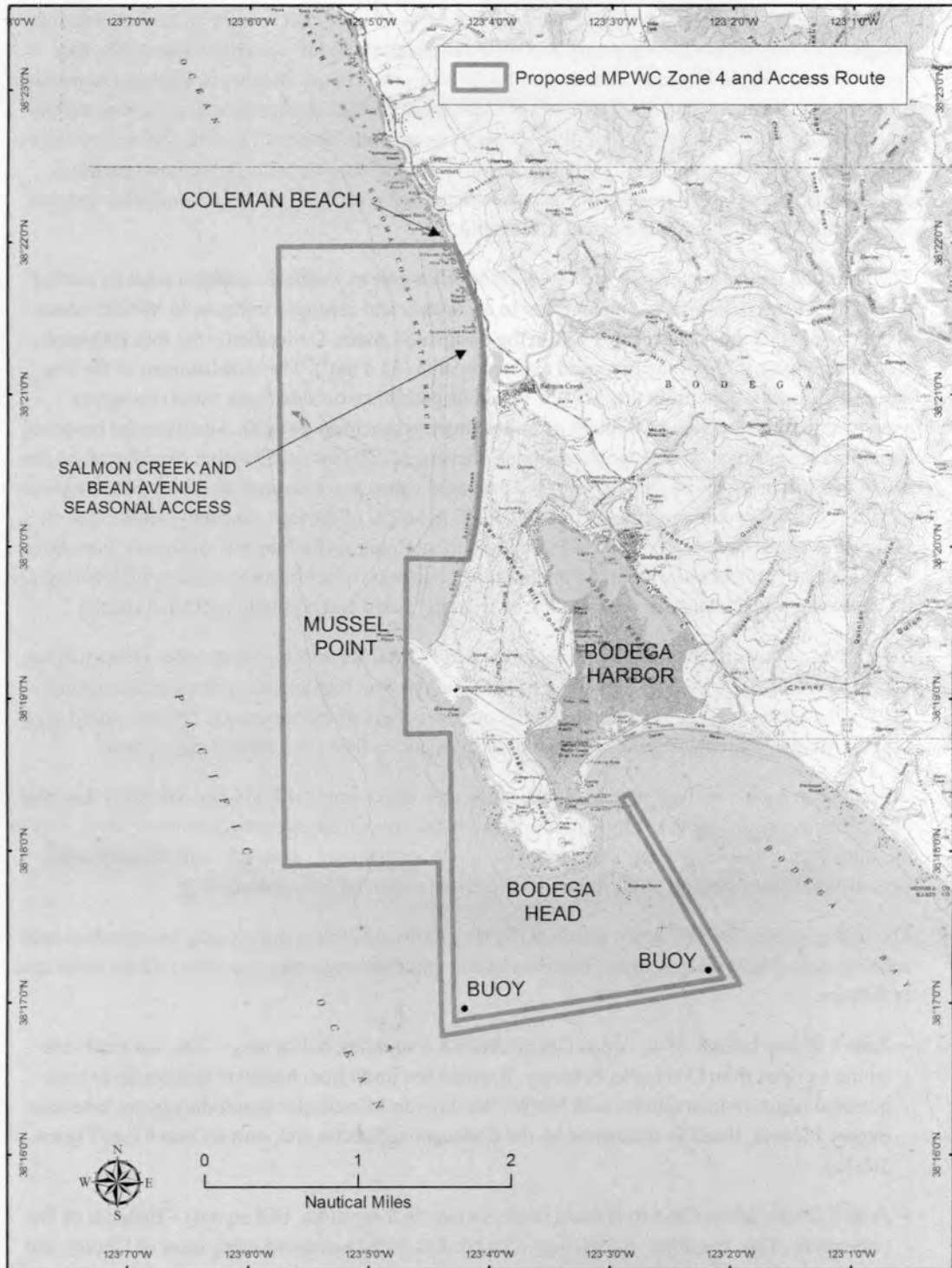


Figure 3.2-15. Proposed MPWC Zone 4

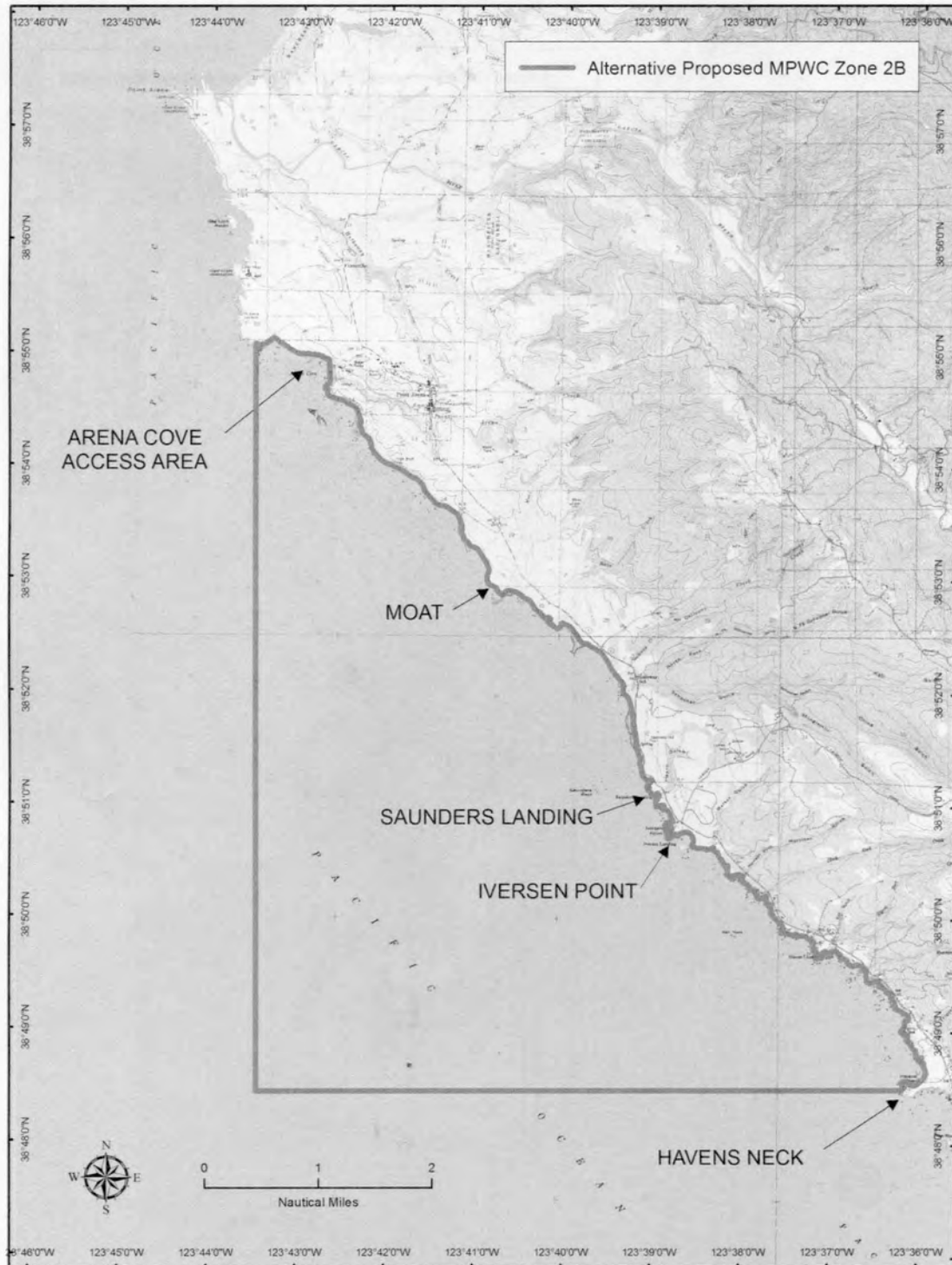


Figure 3.6-2. Alternative MPWC Zone 2B

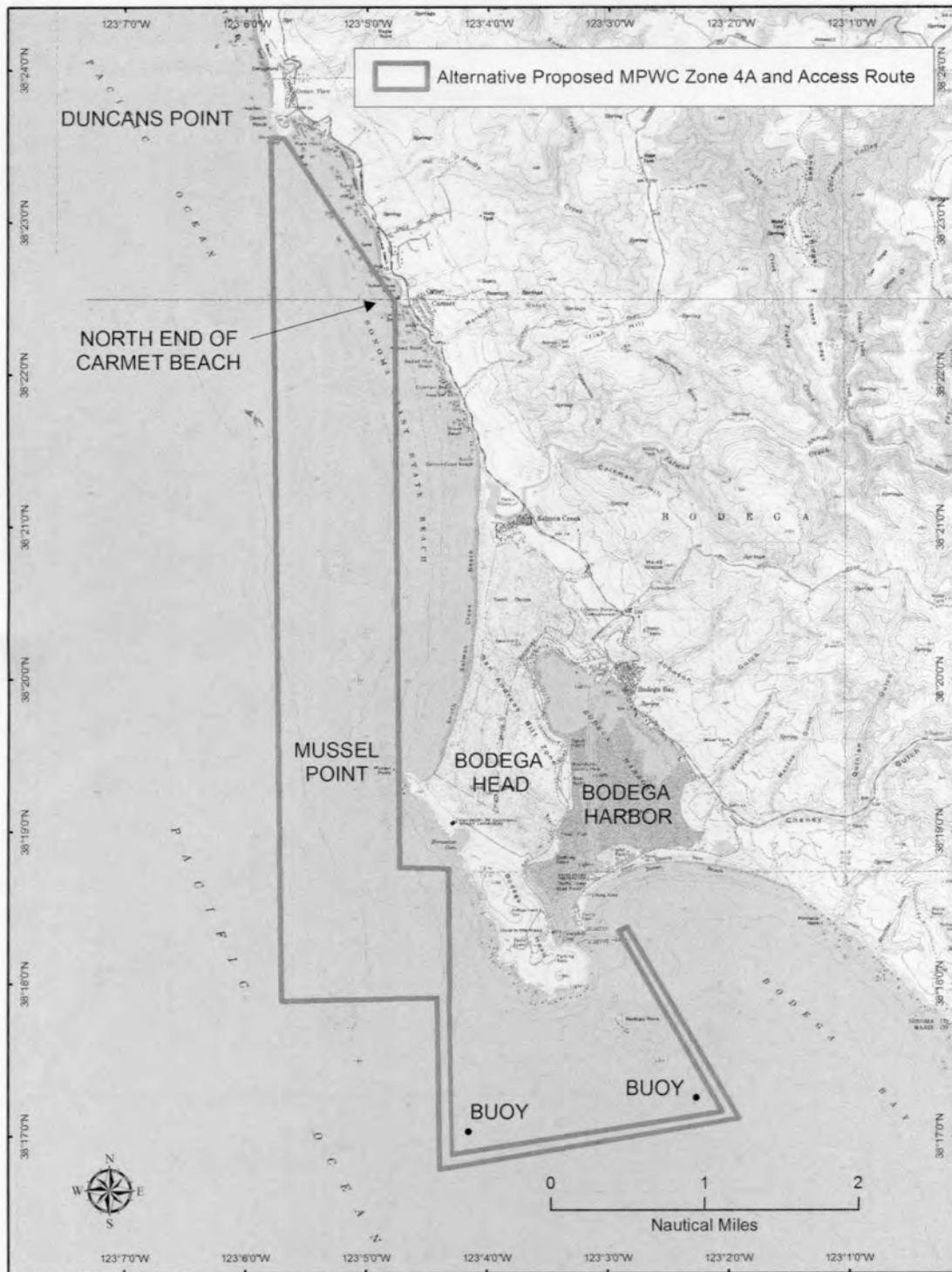


Figure 3.6-3. Alternative MPWC Zone 4A

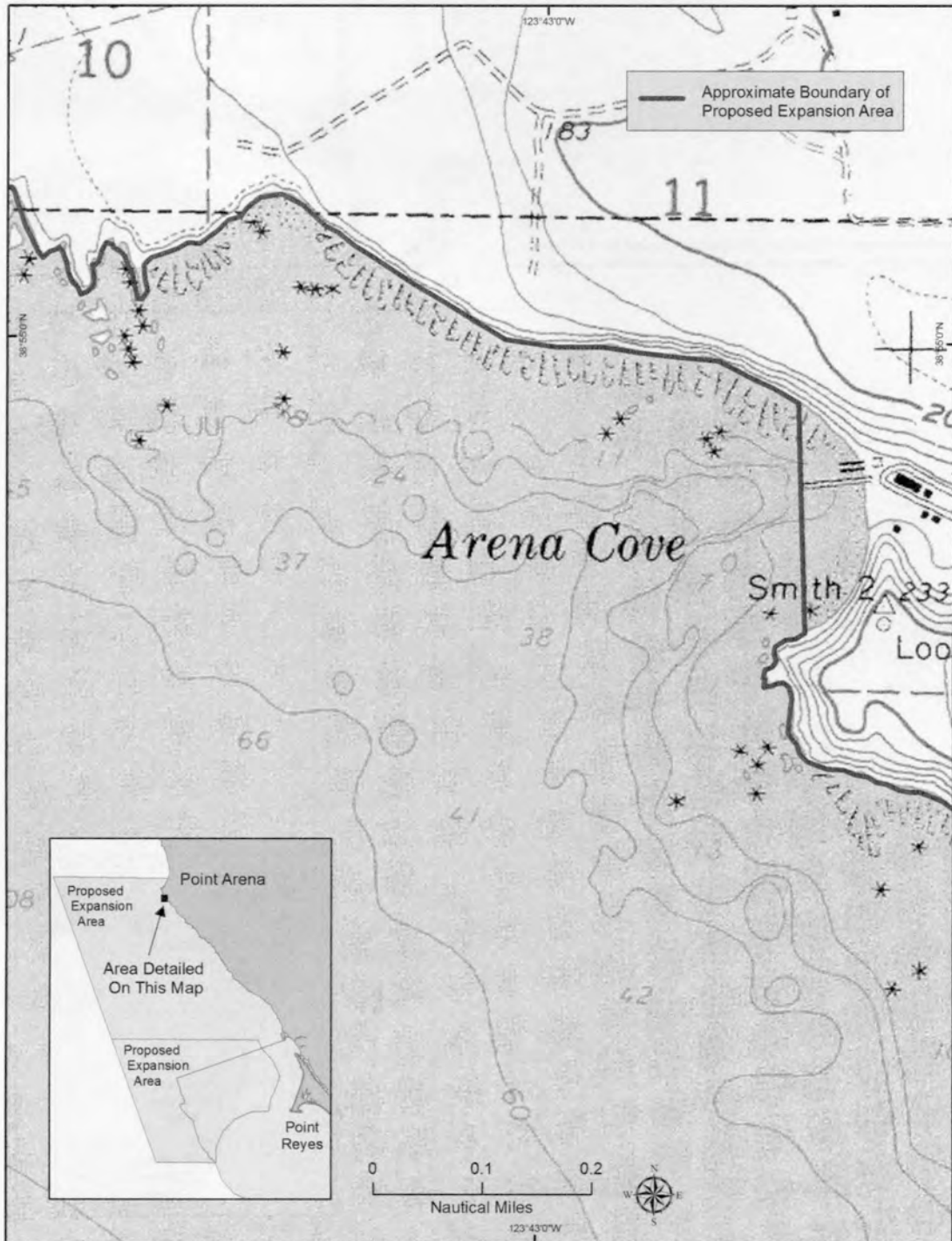


Figure 3.2-2. Arena Cove Harbor Detail – Proposed Action





*I need the sea because it teaches me.  
I don't know if I learn music or awareness,  
if it's a single wave or its vast existence,  
or only its harsh voice or its shining one,  
a suggestion of fishes and ships.  
The fact is that until I fall asleep,  
in some magnetic way I move in  
the university of the waves.*

*- from The Sea by Pablo Neruda*