

COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE:

A Ten-Year Special Use Permit with Option for Extension; Rehabilitation of Existing Facilities; and Construction of New Processing Facilities.

This alternative permits DBOC to continue to utilize onshore facilities within the Seashore (PRNS) pastoral zone to support shellfish cultivation in Drakes Estero pursuant to its leases from the California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG]. DBOC would pay “fair market value” for use of the on-shore facilities, which would take into account the value of interpretive services provided and the investment needed to rehabilitate existing facilities and construct new processing facilities. The rehabilitation and construction work would be as described in the discussion of Alternative D.

Under this alternative, DBOC will collaborate with relevant organizations, including but not limited to the NPS, the CDFG, the UC SeaGrant program and other educational and research agencies and in developing interpretive programs and scientifically valid research projects as recommended by the NRC and MMC. This alternative provides educational opportunities for people of all ages, including Seashore visitors, students and researchers, relating to estuarine ecology and mariculture.

This alternative is consistent with the “national interest” expressed in President Clinton’s May 26, 2000 Executive Order 13158 directing the Departments of Commerce (DOC) and Interior to expand and strengthen the “Nation’s system of marine protected areas.” It respects the California Fish and Game Commission designation, effective May 2010, of Drakes Estero as a State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), a protected area in which recreational clam digging and shellfish cultivation pursuant to CDFG leases are permitted. DBOC’s operation within a SMCA and PRNS presents a unique opportunity for collaborative research that supports the policies of the National Shellfish Initiative [Initiative] announced by NOAA and DOC in June 2011, and responds directly and positively to NRC and MMC recommendations regarding collaborative efforts to inform adaptive management of Drakes Estero.

This alternative supports the goals of the Initiative, which are to increase domestic seafood production, create sustainable jobs and restore marine habitats. It provides opportunities for research as called for by the Initiative, “. . .on the interactions between shellfish and the environment in terms of climate change, ocean acidification, naturally occurring pathogens and parasites, and other factors . . .” This alternative supports DBOC’s efforts to restore native oysters in Drakes Estero and to study the potential for native oysters to withstand the effects of global ocean acidification now beginning to affect all Pacific coast shellfish.

This alternative sustainably supports the local economy by continuing to attract thousands of ethnically diverse visitors to West Marin every year and continuing to provide over half of the San Francisco Bay Area’s sustainably farmed shellfish. It protects desperately needed affordable housing for farmworkers on remote Point Reyes ranches.

Under this alternative, DBOC will continue to provide essential oyster shell for environmental programs, such as the San Francisco Bay Native Oyster Restoration Project, the SF Bay Bird Observatory Snowy Plover Habitat Enhancement Project and the California Department of Fish and Game Least Tern Habitat Enhancement Project.

This alternative supports a landscape that is ecologically and economically sustainable. It is consistent with the natural resource management provisions in the PRNS General Management Plan, and enables the Seashore to collaboratively integrate ecosystem science and natural and cultural resource management to better understand and manage relationships among the physical, biological, and cultural elements of a working land and seascape, while maintaining its distinctive "sense of place and character."