

Milpitas Special Interest Area
Collaborative Management Plan

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Executive Summary –

Special Interest Areas (SIA's) are designated as places worthy of special management considerations to protect the values and features for which they are established. The Milpitas area was designated an SIA, because it possesses significant cultural resources that have changed slowly over the centuries. It has been used by Native Americans since prehistoric times and contains many archaeological sites, as well as standing historic structures. This 9,984-acre natural and historic landscape has a scenic character that would be preserved with the SIA designation. This management plan defines a course of action that can maintain or restore the desired natural and cultural character of the SIA while, at the same time, enhancing visitor experiences.

The opportunities specifically addressed in this plan are to:

- provide opportunities for people to experience and learn about the native people who lived in Milpitas.
- provide opportunities for people who consider Milpitas their ancestral home to visit it in its prehistoric and historic context and teach young people about their past.
- identify ethnobotanical resources and develop a strategy to maintain their abundance.
- address off-road and off-trail activities in order to maintain a natural setting and reduce damage to heritage sites, bedrock outcrops, native vegetation, and wildlife habitat.
- provide opportunities for solitude and places of personal introspection.
- provide ways to participate directly in the management of the SIA.

This plan proposes that the management approach for the Milpitas SIA would be collaborative and, as such, would require direct management and maintenance of the natural and cultural landscape. It is envisioned that collaboration would provide benefits, because participation would lead to direct results and a stronger sense of ownership.

The plan also suggests possible actions to be considered by collaborative parties and the Los Padres National Forest, Monterey Ranger District. These actions would be in support of the above opportunities and could specifically include:

- closing connecting roads between spur roads used to reach the river; restoring these routes to their natural condition.
- prohibiting the use of wheeled vehicles (including bicycles and skateboards) on the bedrock outcrops.
- fencing or use of other means to protect culturally sensitive sites from cattle grazing.
- developing a strategy that identifies a range of vegetation treatments (i.e., prescribed fire, herbicide, mechanical, grazing) to maintain the abundance of ethnobotanical resources.
- drafting a new grazing allotment management plan.

- providing a suitable combination of public education and regulations to protect rock outcrops and other aspects of the setting where the area is being damaged by recreational activities, such as bouldering, rock climbing, and biking.
- consulting with California Department of Fish and Game regarding modification to rules on hunting within the SIA.
- Evaluate the need to minimize or add a closure order for no target shooting within the SIA to provide opportunities for solitude and places of introspection.
- developing preservation plans for the Indians Adobe and the Merle Ranch so they can be used for education programs and overnight visitation.
- designing and implementing an interpretive program; installing interpretive signs, where appropriate, to inform visitors of the special character and history of Milpitas and its delicate nature.
- restoring Junipero Serra Peak to its natural character by removing debris.
- cleaning up the former YMCA Camp area adjacent to Memorial Camp.

Aside from the above possible actions, there are activities currently offered within the SIA that are recommended to continue with some modifications. These activities include:

- expanded use of volunteer site stewards and other volunteers to help monitor, protect, and restore fragile resources, including historic properties.
- day use of the SIA.
- dispersed camping opportunities.
- hiking and rock climbing opportunities. A suitable combination of regulations and public education regarding these activities would help protect sensitive vegetation and cultural sites.
- the current grazing permit, while considering modifications to emphasize grazing practices that help with vegetative management objectives and ensuring protection for heritage sites, native vegetation, and wildlife habitat.
- Monterey Ranger District stock management program, stationed at Merle Ranch.

Finally, it would be fitting to engage specialists and the Salinan people in an area-wide process of “ecocultural restoration.” Milpitas is important as an ethnographic landscape. Identifying the ethnobotanical resources and developing a strategy to maintain their abundance would provide an opportunity to bring back a more accurate representation of the prehistoric and historic landscape.

A business pro-forma (see appendix A) indicates an annual operating budget for collaborative stewardship of the Milpitas SIA to be \$xxx. In addition, capital investment for building restoration and landscape management are expected to be \$xxx. Annual operations and maintenance costs for each undertaking will vary and some, such as ecocultural restoration, may require environmental review. However, the Milpitas is an important place and deserves management to this scale. In addition, there appears to be adequate community and public support to begin and maintain momentum for collaborative stewardship.

Introduction –

Setting and Historical Uses.

On the eastern slope of the Santa Lucia mountain range, the San Antonio River has carved a broad valley on its way to meet the Salinas River. Near the headwaters of the San Antonio, the upper

reaches of the valley is about five miles wide and six miles long. That is the valley portion of the Milpitas Special Interest Area (SIA). Flanked by high ridges, the valley opens toward the south, where the river flows through an oak savannah. Two ecological zones dominate the SIA: dry mountain slopes covered by chaparral and a narrow but hospitable valley with an oak savannah that is crossed by streams joining with the river running through it.

Impressive outcrops of bedrock interrupt the valley bottom, helping to create opportunities for plants to grow in shaded, moist environments. Some of the outcrops are like fortifications protecting the plants and animals living there. Abundant rock alcoves and overhangs further increase the chances for protection from both the hot summer heat and the winter cold. Underground, the bedrock interrupts the flow of water, resulting in springs that contribute to moist wetlands and pools of standing water. All of this – the exposed arid brush land, the valley oaks, the stream bottoms, and the rock – provided an ecological diversity that served as a wealth of food and raw materials for people in the past, going back thousands of years.

Those people had a complex material culture that allowed them to adapt and survive in that environment. Only a small part of that material culture survives – usually things made of more durable materials or things that have been preserved in more favorable conditions. For example, bedrock mortars created by persistent grinding and pounding of acorns provide evidence of reliance on that particular food resource; chert projectile points, scrapers, and knives indicate changes over vast periods of time in choices for weapons and animal processing tools; and rock art sites that have withstood the weather and other destructive forces point to sophisticated belief systems.

Just after the mid-eighteenth century, the Spanish came – with their missions and presidios, priests and soldiers, followed eventually by colonizing citizens. That incursion had a devastating effect on the indigenous people of the valley. In many ways the early Spanish period was destructive, but the surviving native people adapted and continued their way of life as best they could. The result was a life-way of accommodation, in which some culture traits were preserved but many were lost and forgotten due to strong pressures from the Spanish. Mission San Antonio de Padua (1771), located only about 8 miles to the southeast of the SIA, was built during these years.

Mexico (including California) had gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and soon thereafter the Mexican government secularized the missions and sold or gave away the mission lands as land grants to favored Mexican citizens. Some of the indigenous people of the valley, such as the Encinales, returned to the lands of their roots and were able to live respectably by combining the skills of their ancestors and those that were forced on them at the missions. The Indians (or Encinales) Ranch dates back to this time, when Milpitas came to be the place name of this part of the valley, presumably because of its many small *milpas*, or horticultural fields.

A number of significant events that occurred around the middle of the nineteenth century affected California; the loss of much of the former north of Mexico to the United States was especially important. Soon the California gold rush was on, as was the rush for farm and ranching land; and this brought in hordes of people of northern European stock. Jolon, about 13 miles to the southeast, was the major commercial center closest to Milpitas. Wagon Cave and Merle Ranch were in use during this period.

The early twentieth century saw the conversion of Forest Reserves into the National Forests, with the Monterey being converted in 1907. The Indians Guard Station was constructed as a patrolman's residence in 1929.

Contemporary Uses.

The depth of history and the diversity of natural environment make Milpitas important to people today in many ways. People visit for a diverse range of values – from recreational to spiritual to scientific. Fortunately, there are many people who are advocates for the special nature of the Milpitas area, and they want to help keep it special. Some of the primary reasons people say they come to Milpitas are its opportunities for:

- Sightseeing and the calming influences the natural landscape can have.
- Challenging themselves and others physically by climbing, hiking, and mountain biking.
- Wildflower viewing, birding, and natural history education.
- Refining skills in hunting.
- Enhancing bonds with family, friends, and special interest groups through joint activities.
- Becoming emotionally stronger by visiting sacred sites and performing activities that strengthen bonds with ancestry.
- Managing cattle on the range, thereby broadening a sense of self reliance and independence, as well as accommodating the Forest Service multiple use philosophy.
- Expanding human knowledge and the fulfillment brought about through an objective understanding and physical experience of the natural and cultural landscape.

The Milpitas area offers many opportunities for people to gain lasting benefits. Fortunately, most of those who visit Milpitas are advocates who wish to work together to make it an even better place. The purpose of a Milpitas SIA management plan is to define a way for everyone with a stake in the management of the Milpitas SIA to help create and preserve that “better place.”

Los Padres Management Directive –

In 2005 the Los Padres National Forest recognized the uniqueness of the Milpitas area by designating it the Milpitas Special Interest Area. This special designation directed managers to maintain the character of the place so that it would continue to provide benefits to people and the environment. Special management considerations for the Milpitas SIA included:

- Protecting the Cultural Landscape.
- Protecting the Cultural Sites.
- Protecting the scenic nature of the area.
- Protecting Rock Outcrops.
- Enhancing Cultural Sites with Public Interpretation
- Maintaining the Mosaic of Vegetation.
- Enhancing Traditional Uses.
- Minimizing Improved Roads.
- Controlling Off-Road Vehicle Use.

Together these actions were intended to prevent degradation of the overall character of the Milpitas SIA. Normally Special Interest Areas are managed within parameters defined in the Forest Plan but only when specific actions arise such as road improvement or the reissuance of a special use permit. Rarely is a plan such as this one developed to address the maintenance and enhancement of the character and setting of a Special Interest Area.

A Proposed Management Plan –

The plan presented in this document defines a course of action specific to the Milpitas SIA to preserve and enhance the overall character of the place that makes it special. Specific actions tier from the Forest Plan and public comments from persons and groups with interests in how the Milpitas SIA is managed. Broad activities proposed in this plan are intended to improve the benefits people gain from Milpitas and to protect the ecosystem that contributes to those benefits. It does this by defining several programs that could be implemented by the Los Padres National Forest and its partners. These programs are:

Ecocultural Restoration Program. Based in the deep history of the Milpitas, the Ecocultural Restoration Program, would involve collaborative management of the plants and animals in a way that improves the health and relative abundance of resources important to people for subsistence, medicinal, and other cultural reasons. This program assumes that the vegetative mosaic desired in the Forest Plan is the result of direct manipulation of the landscape by people and that it may be lost without the re-introduction of historic management practices. Restoration objectives should include the protection and recovery of native sensitive flora and fauna in conjunction with native historic management practices. Practices, or treatments, would be developed and implemented through consultation with and direct participation of the Salinan people.

Inherent Benefits Program. This program recognizes the intrinsic value of the Milpitas SIA to descendants of the people who called it home for centuries. Today's descendants benefit from opportunities to visit the area and participate in traditional activities. The Inherent Benefits Program would involve consultation with people who find the Milpitas area important on an intrinsic level and identify the parameters necessary for achieving personal and community benefits. Partners would work together to identify how the setting of a place contributes to positive outcomes and the Los Padres National Forest will work toward providing such settings.

Historic Buildings and Sites Preservation Program. Historic resources in the built environment, such as the Encinales Adobe, the Merle Ranch, and Indians Guard Station would be restored or maintained to add value to management practices at Milpitas. It is expected that the Ecocultural Restoration program would provide opportunities for fee-based education programs and Merle Ranch could serve as the headquarters for such programs with the Encinales Adobe as a field station. The historic preservation program would emphasize the restoration and management of these properties and the protection of archaeological sites within the Milpitas SIA.

Outdoor Recreation Program. Camping and hiking are important activities within the SIA, and people achieve a range of benefits when they visit Milpitas for these purposes. Most people who visit Milpitas are there to engage in outdoor recreation. The outdoor recreation program would preserve opportunities for people to engage in outdoor activities and to balance outdoor activities with other management objectives.

These programs would be organized and managed in a collaborative way. Salinan descendants, interested parties, and communities would have a voice in how the SIA would look and what opportunities it would provide. The District Ranger could assign responsibility for management of each program to employees, who would coordinate meetings and draft management documents based on collaborative efforts guided by this management plan. Employees would help coordinate work projects with volunteers to achieve goals set out in this plan, as well as others. Education programs

could be part of the Ecocultural Restoration and Historic Preservation programs; employees would work with groups external to the Forest Service for their delivery. Formal partnership agreements could be used to support management efforts.

Possible Objectives within the Proposed Plan –

Many of the people who have a stake in the management of the Milpitas SIA and advocates for its creation would need direction to engage supportively with the Los Padres National Forest. This plan defines how support could be organized and what supporters could do to realize improved management and use of the SIA. Some possible specific objectives and actions are identified below, addressing opportunities and concerns recognized during one tribal meeting and one public meeting regarding the management of the SIA. Some actions, such as modifying grazing allotment activities or closing roads, may require environmental review. This plan is intended as a guide leading to more specific actions and does not consider potential impacts to resources to the degree required by policy; it is an organized starting point. Once accepted by the District Ranger, the Los Padres National Forest is stating its support for achieving the objectives in this plan and working together with groups and individuals to act collaboratively. Nevertheless, Los Padres National Forest participation would depend on adequate funding and time frames, as well as employee availability.

Management Objective: Maintain dispersed camping opportunities while reducing vehicle impacts to the natural landscape.

Actions –

- Identify problem areas where informal roads should be closed and the vegetation restored.
- Identify Forest developed roads and install signs and barriers to stop vehicle use on non-designated roads.
- Work with volunteers to restore damaged areas and monitor future impacts.

Management Objective: Provide interpretation at the entrance to the SIA and other areas of interest, to educate visitors about the importance of the SIA

Actions –

- Work with specialists and outside groups and develop an interpretive plan.
- Design, fabricate and install exhibits and signs

Some possible messages could include:

- The importance of the SIA and what special management means and why visitors should respect it and behave well.
- The history of the Milpitas and why the history is important to people today.
- Specific history of Wagon Caves, the Indians Adobe, Merle Ranch, and bedrock mortar sites. The unique character of the plants and animals.

Management Objective: Restore the Merle Ranch as an education center and a place for overnight use by education groups and individuals and continue its current administrative function as a place for boarding the Los Padres National Forest pack horses and mules.

Actions –

- Develop a business and management plan for the new uses at Merle Ranch
- Draft a rehabilitation plan for all buildings and the grounds at Merle Ranch.
- Rehabilitate the buildings according to the new plan

Management Objective: Restore the Encinales Adobe house and grounds for a new use appropriate to its cultural significance.

Actions –

- Develop a business and management plan outlining the new use for the site. Some possible new uses can be:
 - A cultural center for the Salinan people.
 - An interpretive and education site for ecocultural restoration fieldwork.
 - An on-site steward.
- Draft a rehabilitation plan for the house and the site.
- Implement the rehabilitation plan

Management Objective: Provide opportunities for people to connect with their ancestral past in ways beneficial to their lives.

Actions –

- Restore the Encinales Adobe so it can be used by descendants as a place to teach young people about their history. Improve the road to the Encinales adobe. Improve access to the cemetery at the Indians Adobe.
- Develop educational and interpretive programs relating traditional skills with the historic landscape.
- Involve law enforcement personnel with program development so they can be aware of the needs required for ceremonial activities.
- Develop a consultation group or committee to help direct actions relating to traditional activities and their benefits.

Management Objective: Maintain the vegetative mosaic landscape favoring plants beneficial for traditional uses and a healthy ecosystem.

Actions –

- Form a collection of partners to develop an “ecocultural restoration program” for the Milpitas. This program can:
 - Work together as an interdisciplinary group to develop an ethnobotanical management plan for the SIA.
 - Implement the ethnobotanical management plan with the Los Padres National Forest and other partners.
 - Combine vegetation management activities with public education and opportunities for people to learn about traditional uses of the landscape.
 - Work with the Salinan people as partners in the restoration program.

Management Objective: Provide opportunities for hunting while discouraging target practice and the vandalism it brings.

Actions –

- Explore the possibility of limiting hunting and the use of firearms to big game hunting seasons.
- Use interpretive signs to educate visitors about shooting restrictions
- Develop education materials for Fort Hunter Liggett personnel educating them about what the Milpitas area is and why target practice is banned there.
- Explore opportunities to increase enforcement for protection of resources.

Management Objective: Protect cultural sites and bedrock outcrops from damage.

Actions –

- Restrict the use of wheeled vehicles, such as mountain bikes and ATVs to established roads and trails.
- Improve the fence protecting Wagon Cave and The Indians Ranch to prevent cattle from entering the area.
- Design and install an access trail to Wagon Cave that does not impact cultural deposits.
- Construct a barrier to prevent visitors to Wagon Cave from standing on the bedrock mortars.

Management Objective: Reestablish a formal Site Steward Program.

Actions –

- Utilizing the former Site Steward Program model, develop classroom and field training modules.
- Assign impacted sites for monitoring.

Management Objective: Provide opportunities for visitors to see the scenic beauty of the Milpitas SIA.

Actions –

- Maintain asphalt road and major pull outs and parking areas.
- Allow for guided tours through special use permit authority.

Management Objective: Provide forage for cattle in a way that complements ethnobotanical management objectives.

Actions –

- Develop a new allotment management plan with grazing prescriptions that complement ethnobotanical resources, maintains functional riparian areas, and uses infrastructure as needed to reduce cattle grazing impacts on heritage sites.

Management Objective: Restore Junipero Serra Peak.

Actions –

- Remove debris from the former lookout that is not compatible with wilderness values.
- Restore and protect the ethnobotanical aspects of the sacred heritage site.

Management Objective: Rename Junipero Serra Peak.

Actions –

- Settle on an appropriate name that would be agreeable to the majority of the Salinans and others; for example, choose Santa Lucia Peak or a Salinan name such as *Pimlokam* or *Stavok'ale*.
- Go through the U.S. Board on Geographic Names or Congress to accomplish the change of names.

Management Objective: Restore the area at the abandoned YMCA Camp, at Memorial Camp.

Actions –

- Remove debris.
- Eliminate safety concerns (protruding rebar, wire).
- Restore the aesthetic nature of the land.

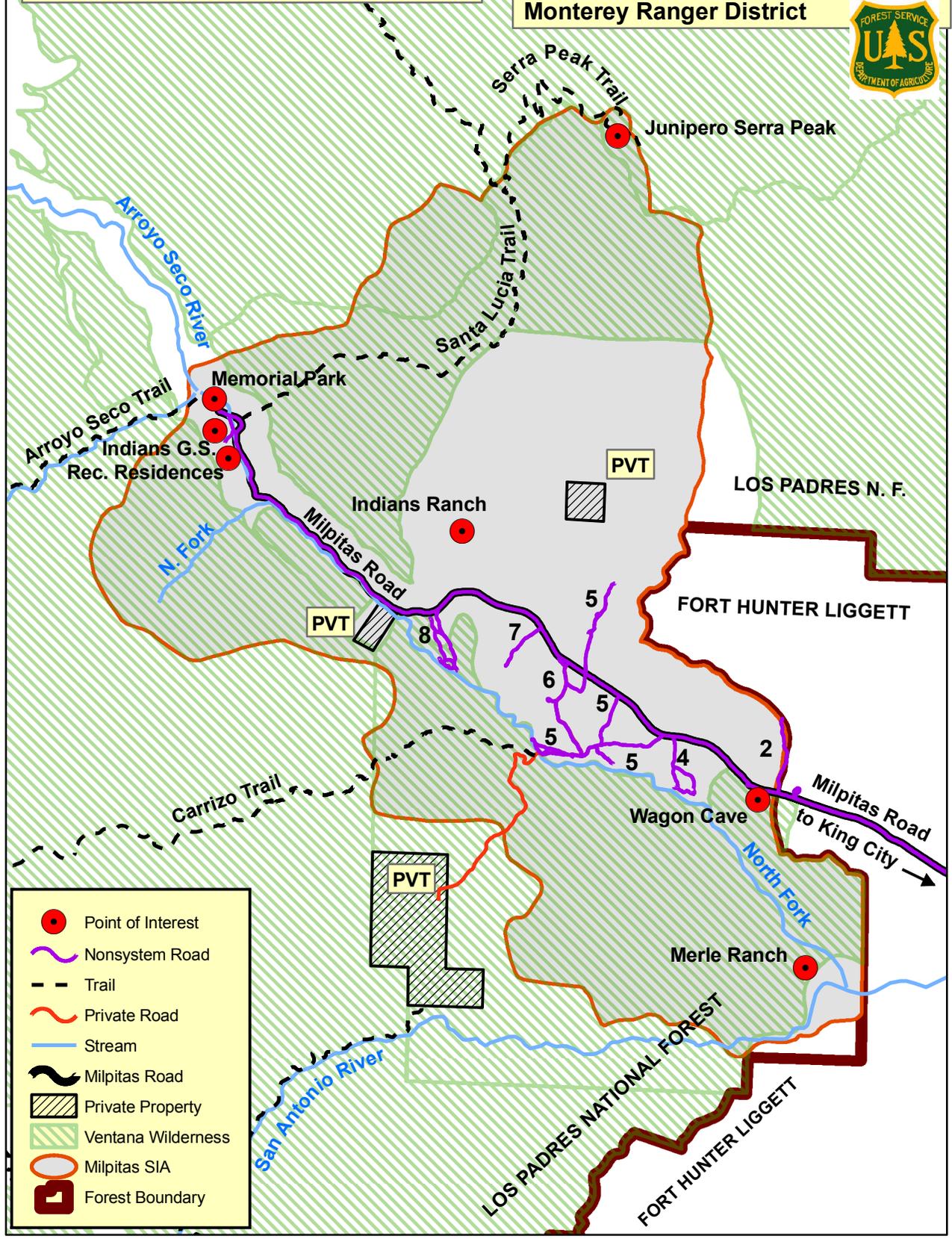
Appendix A (**PENDING**)
Business Pro-forma

This appendix reviews the costs of operations and maintenance of current proposed opportunities within the SIA. It is pro-forma in that it outlines the anticipated costs and potential income (if any) of the proposed programs.

DRAFT



**MILPITAS SPECIAL INTEREST AREA
LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST
Monterey Ranger District**



- Point of Interest
- Nonsystem Road
- Trail
- Private Road
- Stream
- Milpitas Road
- Private Property
- Ventana Wilderness
- Milpitas SIA
- Forest Boundary

MILPITAS SPECIAL INTEREST AREA

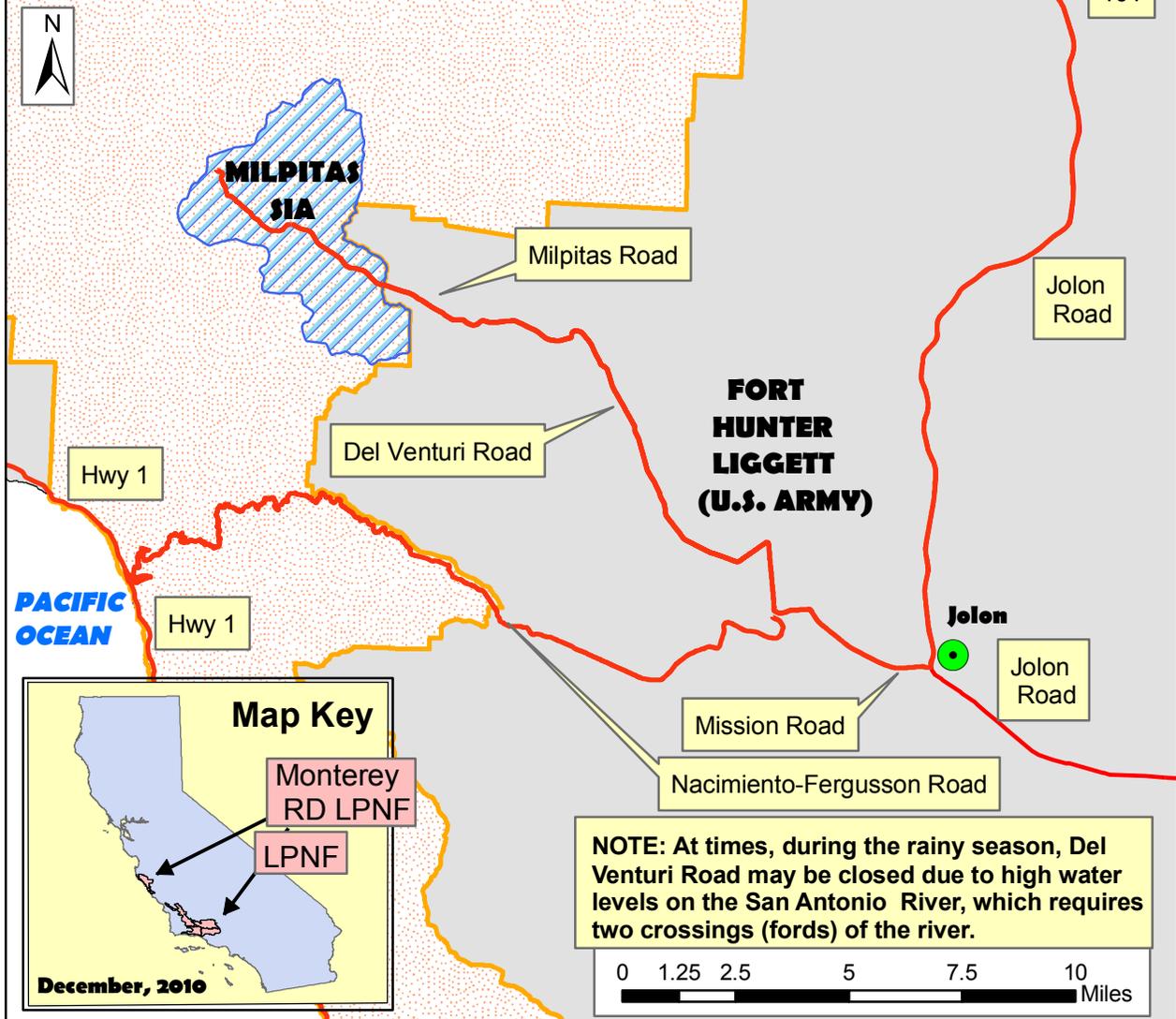
LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST
Monterey Ranger District



Scale 1:250,000

DIRECTIONS FROM HWY. 101 NEAR KING CITY --
Take Jolon Road south for about 18 miles to Jolon and the intersection with Mission Road within Fort Hunter Liggett U. S. Army base. Turn west and travel on Mission Road for about 3.1 miles, where the road bears left at the Nacimiento-Fergusson Road monument. Continue on for about 2.3 miles to Del Venturi Road. (You will have passed the Nacimiento-Fergusson Road ford and bridge over the San Antonio River; that road goes to the coast and Highway 1.) Travel on Del Venturi Road for about 12 miles to the Los Padres National Forest Boundary and the Milpitas Special Interest Area. (Del Venturi Road name changes to Milpitas Road before reaching the SIA.)

	Milpitas SIA
	Monterey R.D.
	Road
	Places



Map Key

Monterey RD LPNF
LPNF

December, 2010

NOTE: At times, during the rainy season, Del Venturi Road may be closed due to high water levels on the San Antonio River, which requires two crossings (fords) of the river.