

Permanently Protect

The **STORNETTA** **PUBLIC LANDS**

Where water meets land and water



The Stornetta Public Lands have been called one of the most significant parts of the Mendocino coastline. Stornetta is where the Garcia River meets the Pacific Ocean with more than 1,130 acres of rugged cliffs, rumpled dunes and rolling meadows along the Mendocino County coast in California.

Permanently protecting the Stornetta Public Lands as a part of the National Conservation Lands would ensure the lands are preserved for future generations to enjoy.



Public support

The Stornetta Public Lands are widely valued by the local community and there is strong support to see the lands and Garcia watershed further protected. A variety of elected officials and community leaders were instrumental in making Stornetta a part of the National Conservation Lands, or National Landscape Conservation System.

In 2009, Rep. Mike Thompson of California introduced a bill to permanently protect the Stornetta Public Lands as part of the National Conservation Lands. The bill received support from the local business owners, Mendocino District Superintendent and the County Fish and Game Commission. Discussions are ongoing with Rep. Thompson's office to reintroduce the legislation.

A haven for wildlife

Stornetta is home to important wildlife habitat, several riparian corridors, extensive wetlands, ponds and other water sources, cypress groves, meadows and sand dunes. Off the coast is a healthy population of California Sea Lions and Seals the bay protected by a vast mesa while bobcats roam through the grasses above.

Migratory waterfowl, shore birds, raptors, and several special status species are seen here. Stornetta is one of the prime birding locations in Mendocino County for multiple bird species including Great Blue Herons, Peregrine Falcons and Laysan Albatross. The Black Oyster Catcher, one of the birds of special concern, feeds on mollusks in the splash zone at Stornetta and the area provides the perfect area for tundra swans and other migrating birds to nest and feed.

In addition, the Garcia River runs through Stornetta forming an estuary as it feeds into the Pacific Ocean. The Garcia River is prime Coho and Chinook salmon habitat. It is the target of extensive restoration efforts and is a key recovery area in recent Endangered Species Act listings.



Recreational opportunities

Stornetta is open to the public for daytime activities including hiking, fishing, bird watching, nature photography and wildlife watching.

History

Until recently, this scenic landscape has been enjoyed mostly by Stornetta family members and friends. The Stornetta family ran a large dairy operation, raising beef cattle, potatoes and row crops.

In 2005, title of the Stornetta Ranch was transferred to the Bureau of Land Management to ensure its long term

protection and accessibility to the public. Under a conservation easement, the Stornetta family retains title to 80 acres of the ancestral family ranch and continues a cow-calf operation and vegetable farming on the land. The arrangement reflects a new model for land preservation providing a balance between public access and wildlife protection and ongoing commercial uses.

The Stornetta Public Lands are managed currently by BLM under a set of interim management rules.

Public Lands and Prosperity

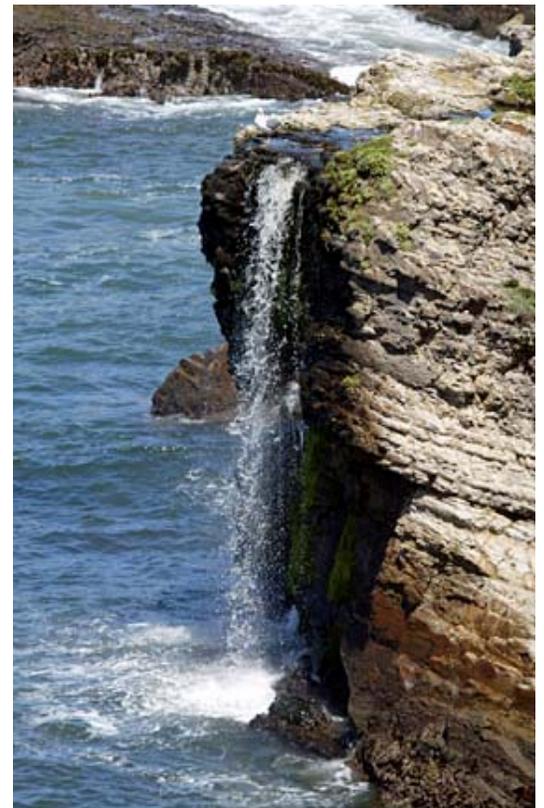
A large and growing body of literature demonstrates that protected public lands assist western communities working to promote a more robust economic future.ⁱ

- The counties in the West with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands.ⁱⁱ
- Protected natural amenities—such as pristine scenery and wildlife—help sustain property values and attract new investment.ⁱⁱⁱ

National Monument status

When Larry Stornetta transferred his family's lands to BLM, he stated, "I hope the public takes care of this land, that they appreciate its beauty. That it's never abused or depleted."

Permanently protecting the Stornetta Public Lands as a National Monument, either on its own - or as expansion of the existing (and bordering) California Coastal National Monument – would protect the current recreational and research uses of the area and ensure the lands are preserved for future generations to enjoy.



Chronicle / Michael Maloney

ⁱ For a summary of recent literature, see: http://headwaterseconomics.org/wphw/wp-content/uploads/Protected_Lands_Economics.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Rasker, R. 2006. An Exploration into the Economic Impact of Industrial Development versus Conservation on Western Public Lands. *Society & Natural Resources* 19(3): 191–207.

ⁱⁱⁱ Deller, S. C., T.-H. Tsai, et al. 2001. The Role of Amenities and Quality of Life in Rural Economic Growth. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83(2): 352-365.