

NOYO HARBOR

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DRAFT APRIL 2019

NOYO HARBOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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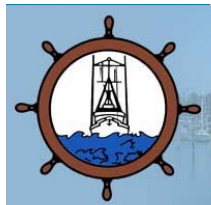
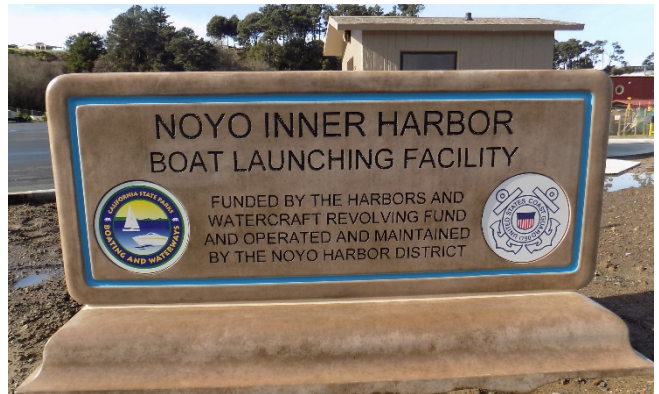
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Noyo Harbor District
Coastal Conservancy



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY TERMS

NOYO – The unincorporated harbor community near the mouth of the Noyo River, situated on both banks and surrounded almost entirely by the City of Fort Bragg. The Noyo River was misnamed by early settlers to the area after a former Northern Pomo village located a few miles to the north on Pudding Creek. (In fact, the Pomo name for the Noyo River is *Chemli-bida*.)¹

HARBOR - A natural or constructed coastal location offering safe mooring or anchorage for vessels. A harbor generally has land or man-made barriers on three sides with an opening through which vessels can safely pass. A port is a maritime commercial facility where ships may dock to load and unload. A fishing port is specifically for landing and distributing fish.

COMMUNITY - Groups of people typically sharing all or some of the following characteristics: territory; close and informal relationships; mutuality; common values and beliefs; organized interaction; strong group feeling; and/or cultural similarity.

SUSTAINABILITY – Upholding the health and integrity of economy, community, and environment over time.

PLAN – A detailed proposal that describes a set of actions for achieving an intended outcome. Community planning involves collecting relevant information and engaging diverse community members (often termed “stakeholders”) in identifying community needs and formulating a prioritized action plan that includes policies, projects, and funding sources.



¹ A.L. Kroeber, "California Place Names of Indian Origin," University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, 1916.

OVERVIEW

This Community Sustainability Plan (CSP) provides background information on commercial port and waterfront activity, assesses critical infrastructure and services, and engages stakeholders in prioritizing recommendations for policies and investments to sustain the economy, community, and environment of Noyo Harbor.

The CSP draws on input from key Noyo Harbor stakeholder groups, including commercial fishermen, charter boat operators, waterfront businesses, and members of the community at large. Stakeholder input was gathered by way of surveys, interviews, and public meetings. The Noyo Harbor District secured funding for this CSP from the State Coastal Conservancy.

The CSP is organized into in seven sections:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Noyo Harbor Plans and Land Use Regulations
- 3) Critical Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services
- 4) Economic Conditions and Performance
- 5) Environmental Conditions
- 6) Social Factors
- 7) Priorities, Recommendations & Implementation

CSPs are cited in the Magnuson Stevens Act as one potential method to avoid negative impacts to small fishing communities linked to the catch share program such as the one instituted in the Pacific groundfish fishery in 2011. CSPs also provide an opportunity for fishing community stakeholders to identify areas of common interest, prioritize action, and seek external funding to support specific projects. The Noyo Harbor District prepared this CSP to assess current conditions and create a comprehensive strategic plan for Harbor activities and improvements that are intended to generate broad economic, community, and environmental benefits.

Harbor and Working Waterfront Setting and History

Fishing is central to Noyo Harbor's identity and is tied closely to Fort Bragg's cultural and economic heritage. A community survey conducted for this CSP found that about 80% of area respondents were either "extremely" or "very" proud that Noyo Harbor is a piece of Fort Bragg's historical and cultural identity. Moreover, a commercial fishermen survey conducted for this CSP overwhelmingly indicated support for maintaining a working waterfront in Noyo Harbor.



Noyo Harbor and adjacent headlands served as a seasonal settlement for the Pomo people, who seasonally migrated between inland Mendocino County and the coast. Pomo gathered seaweed and mollusks from the rocks and caught salmon. Settlers established fisheries for salmon, rockfish, lingcod and halibut. As the north coast timber and fishing industries grew through the 1900s, the importance of Noyo Harbor to the local economy grew as well. Noyo Harbor is one of four main fishing ports between San Francisco and the Oregon border, and is the only harbor of refuge between Bodega Bay in Sonoma County and Humboldt Bay in Humboldt County.



Noyo Harbor consistently ranks in the top 10 commercial ports in California in terms of ex-vessel value of commercial fish landings. Between 2013 and 2017, commercial fishermen landed 5 - 8.4 million pounds of fish annually in Noyo Harbor, with an annual inflation-adjusted value of \$8.2 - \$14.5 million. Dungeness crab and groundfish were the largest components of commercial landings in this time period. In 2018, Noyo Harbor District staff estimated approximately 159 deck hands and crew were employed on commercial fishing vessels in Noyo Harbor.



South Side Work Area

Noyo Harbor also supports a number of charter, sport fishing, and pleasure boating vessels. Data from charter boat operations indicate an annual average of 5,675 anglers were passengers on charter boats operating out of Noyo Harbor between 2011 and 2017. Many more anglers fish out of Noyo Harbor on privately-owned vessels. These visitors also support restaurants, lodging facilities, and other visitor-serving businesses in the harbor.

The Noyo fishing community has experienced a variety of setbacks in recent years, including red tide events that delay the Dungeness crab season, salmon season closures due to failed Sacramento River runs, and sea star wasting disease that led to declines in red sea urchin stocks and closure of the red abalone recreational fishery.

One important bright spot is the groundfish fishery, where many formerly overfished groundfish stocks have recovered. Moreover, salmon stocks have improved somewhat since the emergency closures in 2008-09, and Dungeness crab stocks remain fundamentally sound. These recovered stocks may serve as the foundation for a more robust economic future for the Noyo fishing community.

Waterfront businesses operate primarily on the north side of Noyo Harbor and serve commercial and sport fishermen, as well as visitors to the area. Based on interviews of waterfront businesses and estimates for non-respondents, peak waterfront business employment is estimated at 409, with off-peak employment at 295. Visitors are drawn to the Noyo Harbor area by the natural environment, outdoor recreation and sport fishing opportunities, and the region's cultural heritage.

Critical Services and Infrastructure

Noyo Harbor is an all-weather port and receives the most traffic of all ports between Bodega Bay and Humboldt Bay. The harbor contains a mooring basin made up of 256 berths of which approximately 43% contain commercial vessels. The slips can accommodate most vessels up to 65 feet in length. The Noyo Harbor District maintains a work hoist available for rental on the main pier for loading vessels, two boat launch facilities, parking, some storage area, restrooms, showers, trash bins and oil disposal services.

In 2018, the Noyo Harbor District undertook a major renovation project to the parking lot and boat ramp in south Noyo Harbor, with funding from a State Division of Boating and Waterways grant. The project included resurfacing the parking lot, a new drainage system for runoff into the Noyo River, a new sidewalk, new handicapped-accessible bathrooms, and a reconstructed boat ramp.



Another important project undertaken by the Noyo Harbor District was to repair the District's high dock. In January 2019, the California Coastal Commission granted an administrative permit for the District to repair its high dock. The high dock was originally built in 1968, and deferred maintenance led to a deteriorated condition that resulted in closure of the structure. A functioning high dock is essential to the local commercial fishing fleet for loading and unloading vessels, and the structure is also used by sport and transient vessels for docking, loading, and unloading of supplies. The repair work includes replacing approximately

29,480 square feet of existing decking boards and bump rails with new decking composed of treated lumber.

From 1930 to 1995, the harbor was dredged every one to two years, with the dredge spoils placed in an upland disposal site. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers currently provides for a two-year cycle of

maintenance dredging of the harbor entrance and river channel to a depth of 10 feet mean lower low water, two-year interim inspections, and periodic repairs of the entrance jetties.

There are approximately 25 businesses operating on the Noyo Harbor waterfront, including fish buyers with hoists and receiving stations, a retail fish market, vessel maintenance and repair facilities, and a shipbuilding facility. There is a local source for flake ice.

Key Findings

At a stakeholder open house held in February 2019, participants were given “Harbor Dollars” that they could use to indicate the importance of various issues confronting Noyo Harbor. Key findings are summarized below:

- 1. Fuel Dock.** The #1 issue receiving “Harbor Dollars” was the need for a fuel dock. Moreover, in a survey of commercial fishermen conducted for this CSP, respondents indicated that a fuel dock was a top need. There is no fuel dock in Noyo Harbor. There is a fuel dock upstream at Dolphin Isle Marina, primarily servicing smaller vessels due to the shallow depth of the upstream channel. Lack of a fuel dock likely keeps some larger transient vessels from stopping in Noyo Harbor.
- 2. Flake Ice.** Participants in the stakeholder open house selected “upgraded flake ice/cold storage” as the #2 issue receiving “Harbor Dollars.” Respondents to the fisherman survey indicated that flake ice supplies were below average in terms of adequacy. Flake ice supplies are important for fishermen as a way to keep fish fresh onboard vessels while at sea. Currently, the only supplier of flake ice reports that they are a volunteer-run operation with equipment that is at or near the end of its useful life.
- 3. Dredging.** Harbor entrance and channel dredging was the #3 issue at the stakeholder open house, and the top issue for waterfront businesses who were separately surveyed for this CSP. Several factors potentially undermine regular channel dredging. Harbor channel dredging by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is largely funded through the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), which receives revenue from taxes on waterborne cargo and on cruise ship passengers. There has been a growing gap between HMTF receipts and Congressional appropriations for dredging.

Thus, a challenge to maintaining this critical service in Noyo Harbor is identifying match funding, which can come from either local or State sources. Another challenge to sustaining channels of adequate depth in Noyo Harbor is the lack of a permanent dredge spoils disposal site. Dredge spoils are temporarily stockpiled at an upland site, and in the past have been trucked to various locations for upland disposal. There is no permanent upland disposal site in the area, trucking spoils is costly, and the interim ocean disposal site expired in 1997.
- 4. North Harbor Vehicle Access and Parking.** Participants at the stakeholder open house indicated that improved North Harbor vehicle access was the 4th largest recipient of “Harbor Dollars,” and this was also tied for second most frequently cited need in the waterfront business survey. Concerns about vehicle access relate to the lack of a secondary emergency access into the north

harbor area as well as issues relating to inadequacy of parking for both automobiles and delivery vehicles. Improved public parking in the North Harbor area was tied for the second most frequently cited needs in the waterfront business survey.

- 5. Mooring Basin.** Reconstruction and reconfiguration of the mooring basin was the #5 issue identified by participants at the stakeholder open house using their “Harbor Dollars.” The Harbor District has completed the initial conceptual planning and cost estimates for the mooring basin project. It is anticipated that the mooring basin improvements would be constructed in phases over a period of three years with a total cost of approximately \$9.3 million.

- 6. Fish Cleaning Station.** A public fish cleaning station on the south side of Noyo Harbor was the #6 issue identified by participants at the stakeholder open house using their “Harbor Dollars.” A fish cleaning facility is a common amenity offered in harbors such as Noyo with active charter and recreational fishing operations.



- 7. Local Coastal Program Update.** An updated Local Coastal Program (LCP) was the #7 issue identified by participants at the stakeholder open house using their “Harbor Dollars.” The interest behind an LCP update is to make it easier for businesses to locate, expand, or remain in the harbor by lessening the restrictions on allowable uses imposed by the Fishing Village land use designation.

- 8. Fish-buyers, Receivers and Processors.** The 8th most important issue receiving “Harbor Dollars” at the stakeholder open house was the need for more fish buyers, receivers, and processors. In addition, respondents to the fisherman survey indicated that the number of fish buyers was below average in terms of adequacy. Declining landings of groundfish and salmon since the 1990s has led to an associated declining in the number of fish buyers operating in Noyo Harbor. For example, the number of receivers who buy groundfish landed by trawlers in Noyo Harbor declined from 8 in 1996-2000 to 4 in 2011-2015.

- 9. Gear Storage and Repair Site.** A shoreside gear storage and repair site was the #9 issue identified by participants at the stakeholder open house using their “Harbor Dollars.” The availability of gear storage and repair sites is a particular concern for commercial fishermen, and there is potential benefit for CPFV operators and sport fishermen as well.

10. Improved Hoist Facilities. Respondents to the commercial fisherman survey indicated that improved hoist facilities were a top need. This was also the #10 issue receiving "Harbor Dollars" at the stakeholder open house. Forthcoming improvements to the high dock may address this concern.



11. Boatyard/Marine Services and Supplies. Respondents to the commercial fisherman survey indicated that additional boatyard and related marine repair services were needed in Noyo Harbor, as such services were deemed inadequate. This was also the #11 issue receiving "Harbor Dollars" at the stakeholder open house. Presently, there is one boatyard business operating in Noyo Harbor.

Respondents to the commercial fisherman survey indicated that the availability of ship chandlery (marine supplies) is inadequate and thus needed in Noyo Harbor. This was also the #11 issue receiving "Harbor Dollars" at the stakeholder open house (along with boatyard/marine repair services). There is no longer a ship chandlery business operating out of Noyo Harbor, and thus vessel operators must travel out of the area to procure vessel parts and supplies or order online and wait for deliveries.

12. Sidewalks, Trails and Bike Lanes. Improved sidewalks, trails and bicycle lanes was the #12 issue identified by participants at the stakeholder open house. Conversations at public meetings indicated this need was particularly acute in the North Harbor area, and a third of waterfront businesses surveyed indicated that such sidewalks were needed. Improved sidewalks, shoulder, and pedestrian/bicycle access was the #2 most desired issue in the community survey, and the lack of these was cited by 75% of community survey respondents as the reason for why they do not visit Noyo Harbor.

More than 75% of community members responding to the survey for this CSP indicated that they would be "very" or "extremely" likely to attend fisherman's or farmer's markets and make purchases if they were held at a facility in Noyo Harbor. Roughly the same percentage of community members responding to the survey indicated they were "very" or "extremely" likely to attend community events in Noyo Harbor such as festivals, fairs, crafts/flea markets, annual celebrations, or public performances involving music, theater, or other performing arts.



Recommendations

The recommendations in Section 7 are intended to have economic, environmental and social benefits and are based on fishing industry and community, interviews surveys and stakeholder events. In addition, City of Fort Bragg representatives, Non-Governmental Organizations and local businesses were consulted. Recommendation development was also shaped by an economic, social and environmental assessment of the fishing community operational setting. The recommendations are intended to facilitate fishing community and working waterfront sustainability, to establish long term continuity, and to maximize economic, social and environmental return on investment.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KEY ISSUES Facilities, Access, Regulatory Concerns, and Marketing	
Facilities	
Ice House	Pursue full rehabilitation or new construction of ice making facility and cold storage.
Fuel Dock	Establish an operational fuel dock in conjunction with mooring basin reconstruction so boaters do not need to rely on more distant sources.
Gear switching, repair and dry storage space	Identify suitable location for this needed amenity to support commercial operations.
Mooring Basin reconfiguration/reconstruction	Assemble funding and undertake multi-year process to reconstruct mooring basin facilities.
Fish Cleaning Station	Establish a fish cleaning station in the south harbor to support charter and recreational fishing and to ensure proper disposal of fish waste.
Noyo Harbor District Facilities Master Plan	Prepare comprehensive facilities master plan as groundwork for necessary capital improvements to support commercial and recreational fishing.
Access	
Dredging management	Identify opportunities for District to finance necessary dredging of the mooring basin and upper Noyo River as well as for maintaining suitable disposal site for dredged materials.
North Harbor circulation improvements	Establish a secondary emergency access to/from the north harbor; improve parking and access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
Environmental and Regulatory Concerns	
Fisheries access	Examine diminished fishing opportunities that undermine the economic viability commercial fishing in the region whether through natural fluctuations, or fisheries regulations.
Sea-Level Rise	Collaborate with regional partners in preparation of a Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment to ensure essential public infrastructure will withstand the effects of projected sea-level rise.
Local Coastal Program amendment	Encourage Mendocino County to amend the very restrictive zoning regulations enforced under the Fishing Village land use designation.
Promotion and Marketing	
Increased tourism facilities	Increased use/marketing of updated district facilities (south side) and marketing of events.
Coordinate with Visit Mendocino and Visit Fort Bragg	Reach out to local and regional tourism agencies to ensure that Noyo Harbor is promoted as a visitor destination. Consider options for branding locally- and sustainably-harvested seafood.

Funding Sources

The CSP lists nearly 20 potential funding sources, primarily grants and loans for which the District could be eligible. They include State, federal and local sources as well as public-private partnerships and conservation NGOs. The CSP also identifies resources that are available to local businesses to obtain business assistance and low-cost financing.

Appendices

Appendices include the following documents to provide the District and fishing community with additional resources when considering implementation opportunities.

Appendix A – Community Outreach Documents

- Waterfront Business Survey Methodology, Survey, and Results
- Fishing Community Survey and Results
- Community Member Survey Methodology, PSA, Survey, and Results
- Noyo Harbor Community Sustainability Plan Stakeholder Meetings
 - Stakeholder list
 - Stakeholder Meeting #1 Agenda and Summary Notes – September 26, 2018
 - Stakeholder Meeting #2 Agenda and Summary Notes – November 8, 2018
 - Stakeholder Open House Agenda, Guide, & Summary Results – February 13, 2019

Appendix B

- Sea Level Rise Analysis