

History of the Marin Coast Affecting Fire Risk



Weather Changes

Lengthening Fire Return Intervals

- Declining coastal fog
- Longer, hotter dry seasons
- More intense rain events

Vegetation Changes

Spread of invasive species and forest pathogens has resulted in tree mortality and altered native communities.

Over the last hundred years grassy woodlands and shrublands in northern California have transitioned to denser forests.

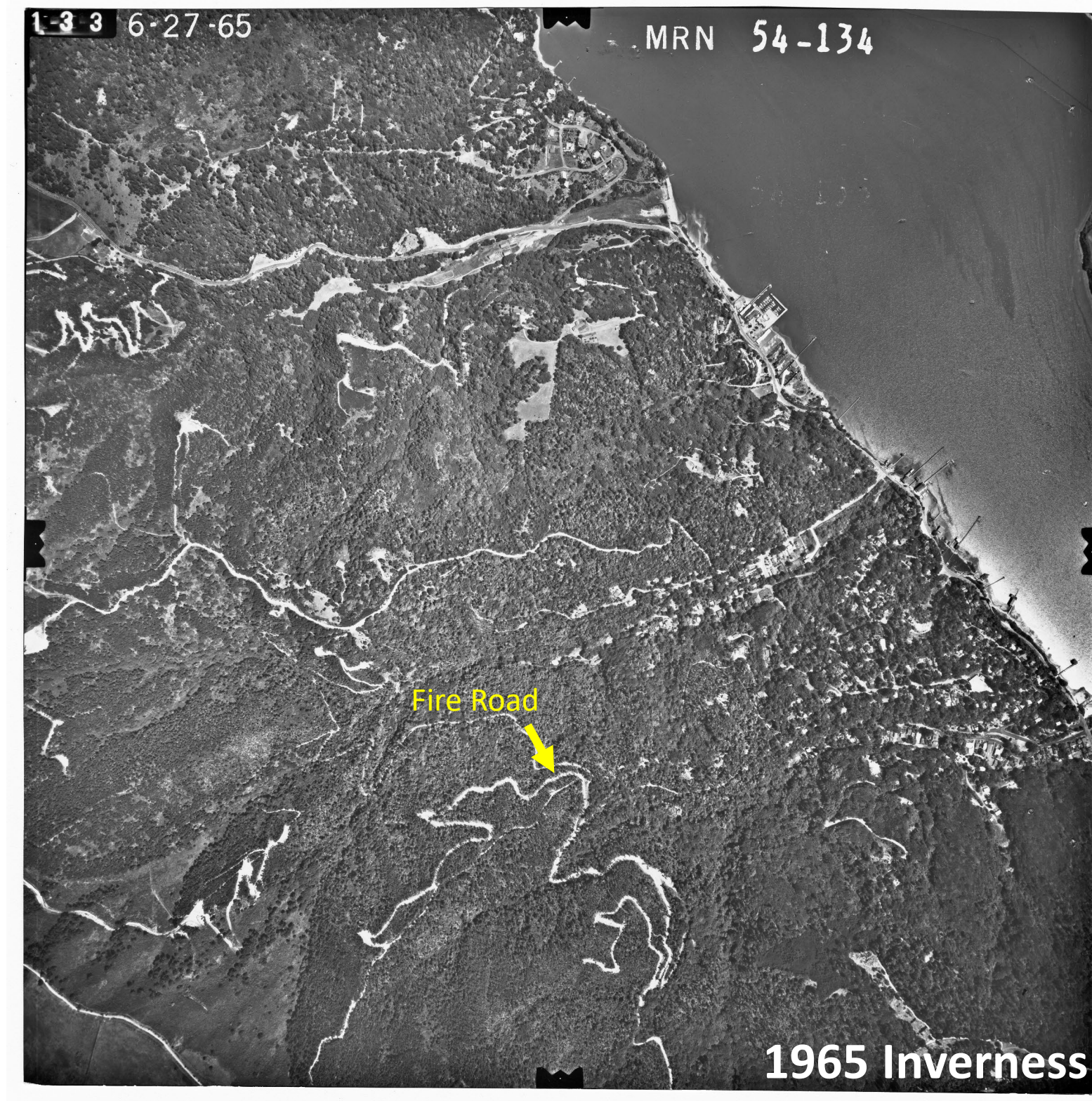
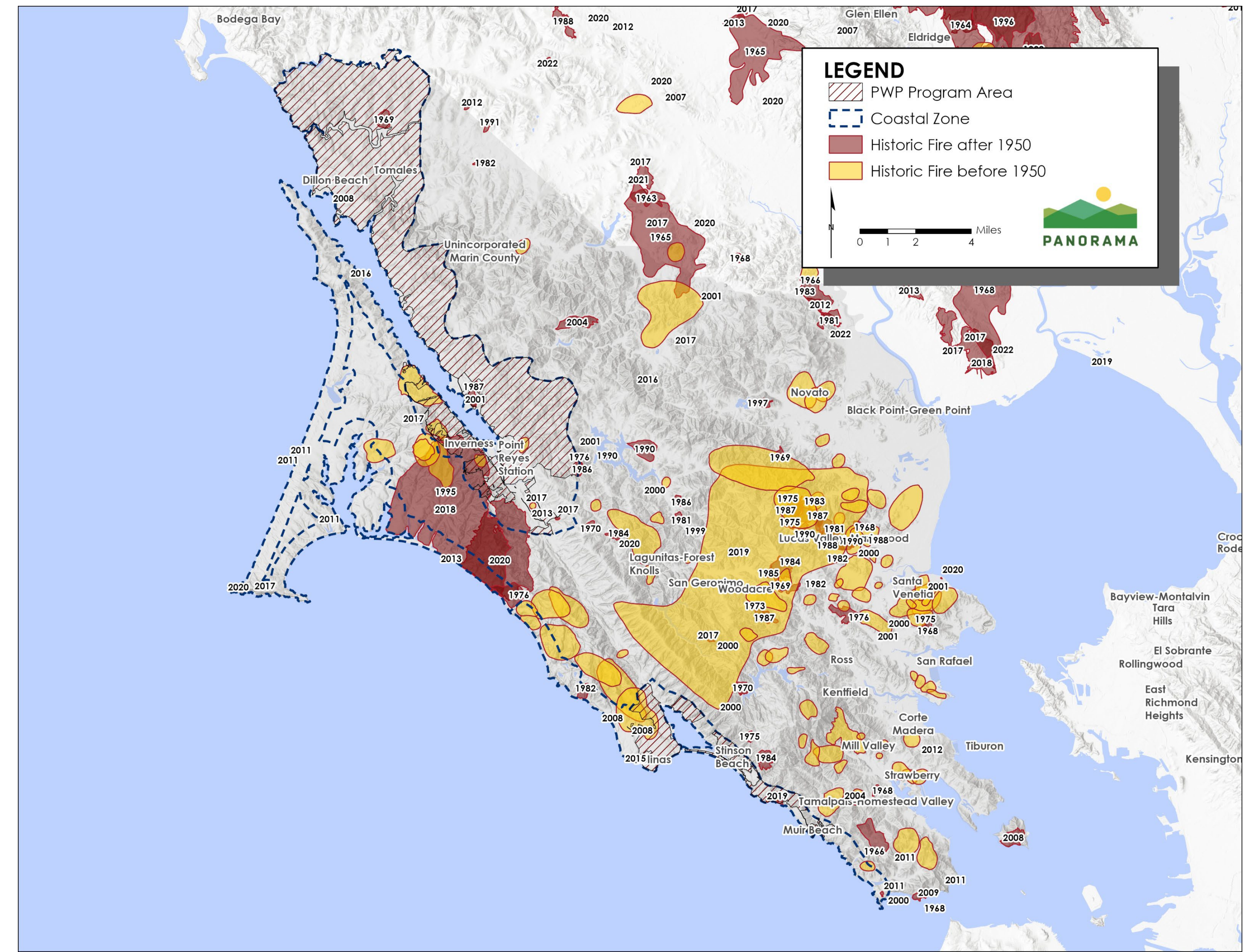
The comparison of historic imagery to present day shows denser vegetation (compare the visibility of roadways in 1965 to current visibility) as well as encroachment of shrubs and trees into grasslands.

Reference: Fertel, Hannah M., et al. 2023. "Vegetation Type Change in California's Northern Bay Area: A Comparison of Contemporary and Historical Aerial Imagery." Forest Ecology and Management 542 (August)

Marin County mapped fire perimeters (average interval)

- 1852-1884: 10.1 years
- 1884-1916: 18.8 years
- 1917-1969: 32.3 years
- 1971-2020: 38.5 years

Reference: Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. 2023. "Marin Regional Forest Health Strategy."



What is a Public Works Plan?

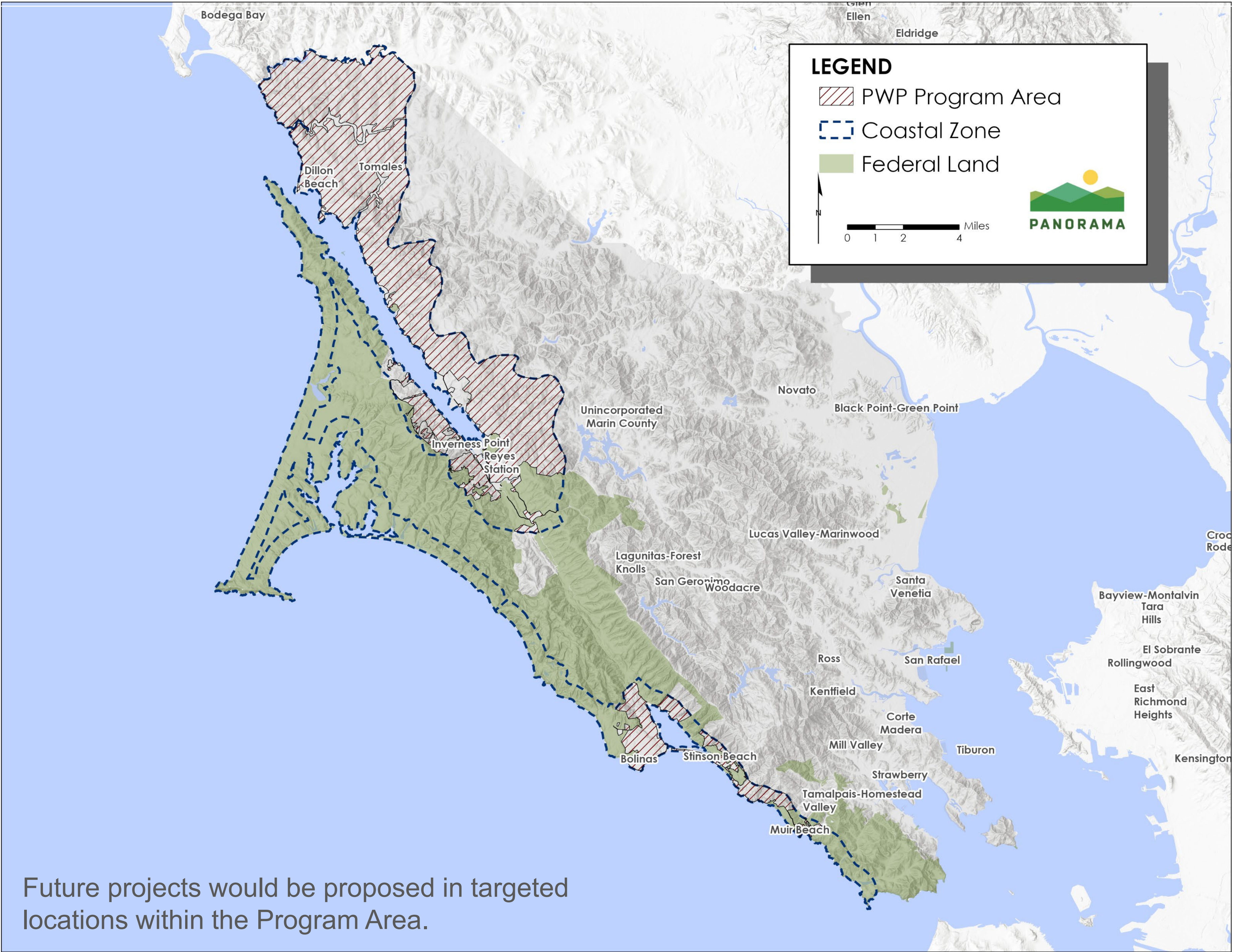
Regulatory Context

Coastal Act of 1976: Guides how land along the coast is developed or protected and created the California Coastal Commission to make land use decisions for the coast.

“**Development**” within the Coastal Zone requires a Coastal Development Permit. “Development” includes “the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations” (PRC § 30106).

Vegetation treatment activities to reduce wildfire risk and increase landscape resiliency are often considered “development”.

Public Works Plans (PWP) are meant to provide a single document that establishes a framework for comprehensive and streamlined planning, reviewing, and permitting in the Coast for a suite of related activities that would otherwise trigger the need for individual Coastal Development Permits.



Marin County Forest Health and Fire Resilience PWP

- Designed in consultation with staff from the Coastal Commission, Marin County Community Development Agency, Marin Wildfire and its member agencies, and major land management agencies including California State Parks
- Allows for the streamlined review and authorization from the Coastal Commission of individual vegetation management projects in Marin County’s Coastal Zone that are consistent with the allowable activities in the PWP
- Uses the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) concepts and structure including a suite of treatment types, treatment activities, and Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) and mitigation measures
- Includes specific project standards and Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards to address the scope of future projects, tribal coordination and community engagement, and reduce impacts on sensitive resources from future projects