

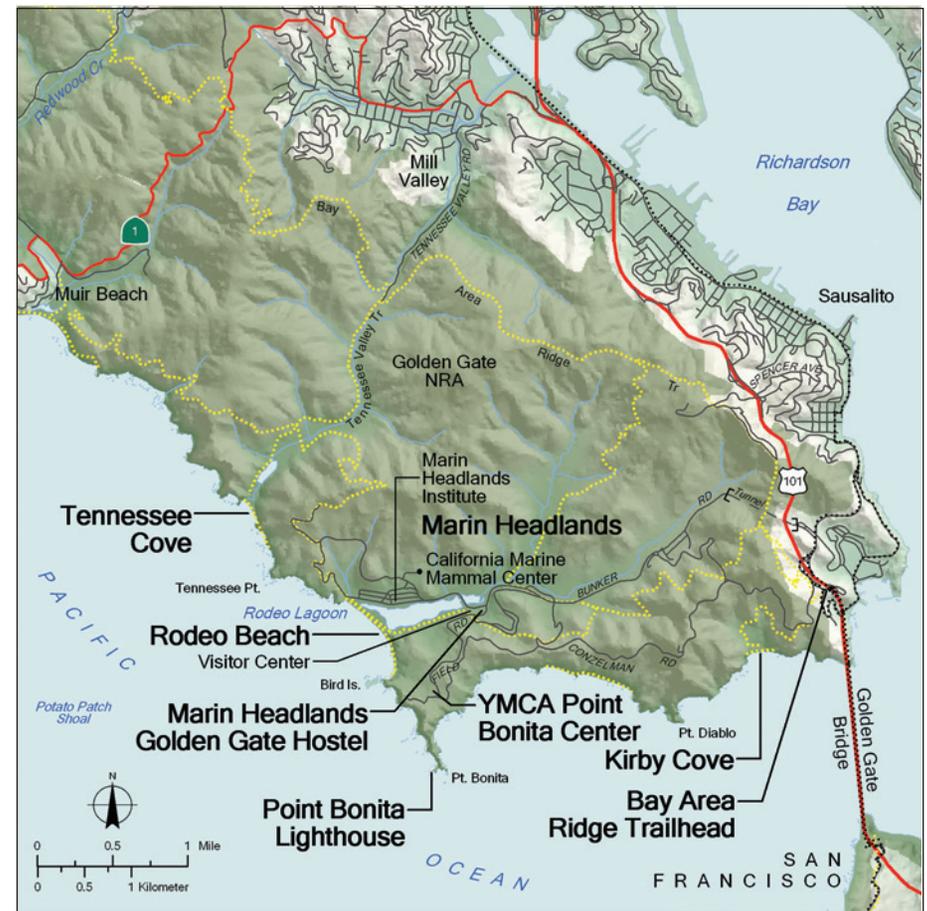
# Coastal Commission Raises Standard for Guidebook Mapping

By  
Jonathan Van Coops  
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Cartographers at the California Coastal Commission have raised the bar for guidebook maps with their recent efforts in the Commission's newest publication, *Experience the California Coast*. Subtitled *A Guide to Beaches and Parks in Northern California*, the book is the first of a scheduled four volume set of regional coastal guidebooks being published by the University of California Press and contains 51 color maps, all produced in-house by the Commission's Mapping and GIS unit using some of the latest geographic information system, or "GIS" technology available. In an era when many guidebooks still contain maps produced using graphics oriented "illustrator" type computer programs, the Commission has used a sophisticated mapping software called "ArcView GIS" to create 42 color topographic maps, 7 regional maps, and 2 foldout maps of California and its adjacent part of the Pacific Ocean. The result is a visually stunning and highly useful set of maps, providing a clear and professional format for locating more than 341 beaches, parks, campgrounds, nature preserves, and outdoor recreational sites on or near the coast. The detailed maps also locate the California Coastal Trail and the Bicentennial Bike Route.

The Commission's geographers are no strangers to guidebook map publication, having previously prepared hundreds of maps for both the best-selling *California Coastal Access Guide* and *California Coastal Resource Guide*, however, the new series marks a turning point for the state agency in that it is the first time the Commission has used GIS technology for all of the cartography contained in the book. First published in the 1980's, the earlier books contained maps produced with pen and ink and eventually a semi-automated technique combining scanned versions of hand drawn maps and computer assisted drafting (CAD). This current mapping effort is expected to help the regional guide series to exceed the strong sales of the Commission's previous books, which together have been among the Press's all-time best-selling publications.

The key to the maps is twofold, a result of the publisher's decision to print all of the book's photos and maps in full color, and the cartographic approach,



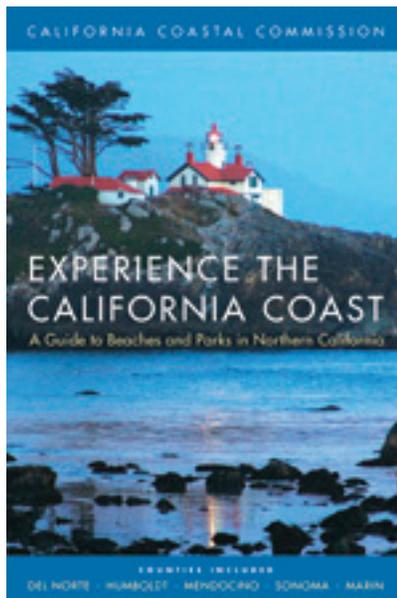
Marin Headlands Detailed Map Example  
(map scale approximately 1:85,000)

which makes use of "shaded relief" to represent topography on each map. Whereas in the past, this approach would have required actually drawing or painting in the color shading that represents the terrain and elevation, public domain data now exists that can be processed and used to portray all of the mountains and valleys of the state in color and sharp relief, allowing the map reader to see how rugged or flat the terrain is in any given area. The Commission staff itself is enjoying this cartographic benefit for the first time. Fault lines, river valleys, marine terraces, rocky cliffs, flat and rolling farmland; all of the coastal landforms can be depicted as the backdrop, or base map, with roads and text labels added to identify the features and destinations located along the coast. The electronic format of the maps will allow the maps to serve multiple purposes, including those supporting the Commission's regulatory and planning programs.

Due out in bookstores November 11, 2005, the guide is meant for all coastal visitors, and is intended to introduce the richness and diversity of the northern California coast. It includes a field guide approach for describing the natural resources and a comprehensive list of beaches, parks, and paths to the shoreline accessible and available for use by the public, as well as a list of commercial recreational outfitters and guides, including fishing boat services, kayak rentals, and equestrian facilities. The purpose of the regional guide series is to contribute to a better understanding of the importance of coastal resources and a wider appreciation of the coast among Californians and the greater public. Without a doubt, the maps will help further this goal.

More information is available from UC Press at [www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/10390.html](http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/10390.html), and the California Coastal Commission Mapping and GIS Unit at [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov) or (415) 904-5200.

*Jonathan Van Coops is the Coastal Commission's Mapping/GIS Program Manager, and together with Greg Benoit, Project Cartographer, responsible for the design and production of maps included in the regional guidebook series Experience the California Coast.*



Mendocino County Map Example  
(map scale approximately 1:250,000)