

# Auburn State Recreation Area

## General Plan and Resource Management Plan

### Declaration of Purpose and Unit Vision

#### Agency Mission Statements

The missions of the California Department of Parks and Recreation and, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation within the U.S. Department of the Interior establish the context for the management of the Auburn-Folsom South unit and purpose and vision for the Auburn State Recreation Area:

##### California Department of Parks and Recreation

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

##### Bureau of Reclamation

To manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public consistent with the authorized purposes of the project.

#### Declaration of Purpose

Public Law 89-161 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to construct, operate and maintain the Auburn-Folsom South Unit (Unit), American River Division, Central Valley Project, under Federal reclamation laws. As a principal part of the Unit, the law authorized the acquisition of lands for and construction of the Auburn Dam and Reservoir to provide for the purposes of water supply, hydropower generation, outdoor recreation, public use and enjoyment, and fish and wildlife enhancement. The law specified that non-Federal public bodies may agree to administer lands for these purposes, with certain cost-sharing provisions.

The purpose of Auburn State Recreation Area is to preserve and make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the outstanding recreational, scenic, natural, and cultural values of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, Lake Clementine, the steep river canyons, and associated upland areas, while recognizing that Congress may determine that an Auburn Dam and Reservoir may be constructed at some time in the future. The area's rugged and varied terrain provides for a wide variety of water-related and upland, backcountry and close-in outdoor recreation with outstanding opportunities for appreciation of the recreation area and relaxation for visitors of all abilities. The area's natural values include riparian corridors, oak woodlands, conifer forests, chaparral and grasslands; habitat for sensitive species including ringtails, peregrine falcons, foothill yellow-legged frogs, yellow-breasted chat, willow flycatchers and Sierra Nevada red fox; and unique geologic formations. Cultural resources within the area include Native American sites; paleontological resources; and important historic sites and artifacts associated with ranching, mining, water conveyance and transportation.

#### Vision for Auburn State Recreation Area

Auburn State Recreation Area offers important recreational opportunities, natural and cultural resources, and educational and interpretive values. These values are maintained while providing for the management and stewardship of the nation's water resources. The recreation area is managed by a collaborative partnership of agencies, concessionaires, and volunteers.

The area's recreational values include access to the North and Middle Forks of the American River, which are renowned for whitewater boating. The river, along with Lake Clementine and seasonal creeks, provide swimming, fishing, and other water-oriented recreation for visitors of all ages and abilities. Upland recreational pursuits attract visitors seeking relaxation, access to the natural environment, exercise, solitude, and social experiences in outdoor settings that range from easily-accessible developed areas to remote backcountry areas. The scenic river canyons and forested uplands and ridges support many trails for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. Popular recreation activities include rock climbing, history appreciation, hunting, and recreational gold panning.

The recreation area provides for the perpetuation of important natural and cultural resources. Habitats within the recreation area support populations of native aquatic and terrestrial species including special status plant and animals. The area provides wildlife corridors and sensitive riparian and oak woodland communities. The recreation area is within the traditional homeland of the Nisenan or Southern Maidu, and Native American sites abound. Historic resources are prevalent from the early 1800s, the gold rush, and more recent mining, timber harvesting, and transportation and dam construction activities.

Educational and interpretive opportunities provide visitors with a connection to the area's cultural and natural history. Visitors also learn about the Auburn Dam and Reservoir, as well as the area's current role in water resource management and as a venue for extreme endurance sports.

**Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) General Plan (GP) and Resource Management Plan (RMP)**  
**Alternatives Land Use Designations**  
**Public Review Draft**

ASRA has been divided into 11 proposed management zones that reflect geographic areas with similar existing conditions and issues. Each management zone may include one or more activity nodes, which are smaller areas where specific actions or facilities would be located. The intensity of land use in some management zones and activity nodes would change due to changes in activities and/or facilities proposed under each alternative. The table below, shows the land use designations for each management zone and activity node under each alternative. The locations and land use designations for proposed management zones and activity nodes are displayed on separate alternatives maps. The land use designations are defined as follows:

- **Recreation (High and Medium Intensity).** Areas that allow more intensive recreational use in a developed and structured setting. These areas accommodate the highest levels of visitor use in the SRA, provide vehicle access to recreational and interpretive activities and facilities, and are of a sufficient size to locate the parking, utilities, and infrastructure needed to support the visitor use. The focus of resource management in these areas is to minimize or avoid additional impact to resources. The Recreation designation is further classified by intensity of use. High Intensity Recreation represents the most extensively-developed areas in the SRA\* and the major gateways for visitors. Medium Intensity Recreation areas are somewhat less developed and offer fewer facilities.
- **Resources (Low Recreation Intensity).** Areas whose natural and cultural resource values will be protected while allowing lower intensity recreation and interpretation that is compatible with, and dependent on, the resource values. These areas offer opportunities for more challenge- and adventure-based recreational activities in a more natural setting. Facilities in these areas (if provided) tend to be more primitive than in Recreation areas and direct vehicle access may not always exist. Resource management in Conservation areas emphasizes protecting and restoring natural processes with only minor modification of non-sensitive resources permitted to accommodate additional visitor use.
- **OHV (High and Medium Intensity).** Areas which allow for motorized off-road vehicle use, in addition to other compatible uses as described in the High and Medium Intensity Recreation Use designation.
- **Administration.** Areas with facilities associated with the operation and maintenance of the SRA or nearby public lands. These areas provide vehicle access, and are of a sufficient size to locate the parking, utilities, and infrastructure needed to support administrative and visitor use. Interpretive and visitor information facilities and activities may be provided. Portions of these areas are generally restricted to staff and related personnel associated with facilities operations. Resource management in Administration areas generally emphasizes modification of natural processes to accommodate operation and maintenance facilities. Public lands in the vicinity are administered by the Auburn Recreation District, Placer County Water Agency, El Dorado County, Placer County, U.S Bureau of Reclamation, the U. S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, thus multi-agency facilities may be appropriate in these areas.

*\*It should be noted that “High” or “Medium” Intensity land use for ASRA will not be comparable to Folsom SRA’s similarly-labeled land use. Land Use Intensity should be considered relative only to other areas of ASRA.*

ASRA Comparison of Land Use Designations by Alternative (Red text identifies proposed land use change)						
Zone	Management Zone Name/ Activity Node	Acres	No Action Alternative (NAA)	Resource Management Emphasis (RME)	Increased Resource Management and Recreation (IRRM)	Recreation Emphasis (RE)
1	<b>Knickerbocker</b> A. Knickerbocker Flat B. Cool Staging Area C. Knickerbocker Road Corridor Remainder of Management Zone	<b>3,124</b> 1,779 46 424 875	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium C. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium C. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – High C. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – High C. Recreation – High Resources – Low Recreation
2	<b>Auburn Interface</b> A. Birdsall, China and Oregon Bar B. Rocky Point/Salt Creek C. Core Sheds D. PCWA Pump Station E. Lower North Fork View Remainder of Management Zone	<b>1,610</b> 162 353 1 27 256 812	A. Recreation – Medium B. Resources – Low Recreation C. Administration D. Administration E. Resources – Low Recreation Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – Medium B. Resources – Low Recreation C. Administration D. Administration E. Resources – Low Recreation Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – Medium C. Administration D. Administration E. Resources – Low Recreation Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Administration D. Administration E. Resources – Low Recreation Recreation – Medium
3	<b>Confluence</b> A. Highway 49 Access B. Cool Cave Quarry C. Sector Office D. Confluence view E. Mtn Quarries Mine Remainder of Management Zone	<b>2,199</b> 239 200 17 1,021 1 721	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – Medium C. Administration D. Recreation – Medium E. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – Medium C. Administration D. Recreation – Medium E. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – Medium C. Administration D. Recreation – Medium E. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Administration D. Recreation – Medium E. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation
4	<b>Foresthill Divide</b> A. Road Corridor Remainder of Management Zone	<b>2,927</b> 615 2,313	A. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium
5	<b>Lake Clementine</b> A. Lower Lake and Lake B. Upper Lake Beach C. Lakeview Remainder of Management Zone	<b>1,363</b> 193 65 526 579	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – High C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation
6	<b>Mammoth Bar</b> A. Staging Area B. Castle Rock Remainder of Management Zone	<b>1,170</b> 47 89 1,034	A. OHV – High B. OHV – Medium OHV – Medium	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium	A. OHV – High B. OHV – Medium OHV – Medium	A. OHV – High B. OHV – High OHV – Medium
7	<b>Lower Middle Fork</b>	<b>3,066</b>	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation
8	<b>Cherokee Bar/Ruck-a-Chucky</b> A. Greenwood/Ruck-a-Chucky B. Cherokee Bar C. Canyon Creek Remainder of Management Zone	<b>3,657</b> 50 112 64 3,431	A. Recreation – High B. Resources – Low Recreation C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Resources – Low Recreation C. Resources – Low Recreation Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – Medium C. Recreation – Medium Recreation – Medium	A. Recreation – High B. Recreation – High C. Recreation – High Recreation – Medium
9	<b>Upper North Fork</b> A. Shirttail Canyon/Yankee Jims B. Ponderosa Crossing Remainder of Management Zone	<b>7,358</b> 154 94 7,110	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation	A. Recreation – Medium B. Recreation – Medium Resources – Low Recreation
10	<b>Mineral Bar</b>	<b>217</b>	Recreation - Medium	Recreation - Medium	Recreation - Medium	Recreation - Medium
11	<b>Upper Middle Fork</b>	<b>3,919</b>	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation	Resources – Low Recreation
<b>Total:</b>		<b>30,610</b>				

**Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) General Plan (GP) and Resource Management Plan (RMP)  
 Alternatives Summary Table  
 NOVEMBER 27, 2017 Public Review Draft**

California State Parks (CSP) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) have developed four draft alternatives for the ASRA GP and RMP. Each alternative represents a different feasible approach to achieve the vision and purpose of ASRA consistent with the mandates of CSP and Reclamation. Each alternative includes a different thematic approach that addresses different drivers of the GP and RMP (i.e., key issues, trends, opportunities, or impacts). The alternatives include:

- No Action Alternative (NAA);
- Resource Management Emphasis Alternative (RME);
- Increased Recreation and Resource Management Alternative (IRRM); and
- Recreation Emphasis Alternative (RE).

The graphic on the right illustrates the relative investment in recreation development and resource management under each alternative. Table 1, below, summarizes the theme of each alternative and the main drivers of the GP/RMP that are addressed by each theme. Table 2 describes actions and guidelines that are proposed under each alternative.

ASRA has been divided into 11 proposed management zones that reflect geographic areas with similar existing conditions and issues. Each management zone may include one or more activity nodes, which are smaller areas where specific actions or facilities would be located. Some actions and guidelines address park-wide issues and would occur throughout ASRA. Other actions or guidelines would occur within specific management zones or activity nodes. Where a management action or facility would occur within a specific activity node, an activity node identifier is listed next to that action in table 2, below. Where no activity node identifier is listed, the management action could occur throughout the management zone. Management zones and activity nodes are displayed on the attached alternatives maps, and more information on management zones and activity nodes is included in a separate land use intensity table. No actions are proposed on Reclamation lands outside the ASRA boundary.



Mid-Pacific Region  
Sacramento, CA



California Department  
of Parks and Recreation



Figure 1: The relative change in emphasis in recreation opportunities and resource management under each action alternative

Table 1 Alternative Themes and Drivers		
Alternative	Main Drivers Addressed by the Theme	Theme
No Action (NAA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The 1992 Interim Resource Management Plan and current management practices.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain current facilities and land use according to current practices and as specified in the 1992 Interim Resource Management Plan.</li> </ul>
Resource Management Emphasis (RME)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural and cultural resources have been impacted by human use.</li> <li>2. Natural and cultural resources continue to be impacted by increasing recreation use, increasing visitation and changing recreation trends. The unit has multiple entry points where visitor use cannot be limited to reduce impacts.</li> <li>3. Insufficient and degraded facilities require substantial maintenance and upgrades to enhance public safety.</li> <li>4. Current data on natural and cultural resources is insufficient to effectively protect and manage resources.</li> <li>5. Key viewsheds and scenic resources have been, and can be further, degraded by development within and outside ASRA.</li> <li>6. A changing climate increases risk of wildfire and flood events, and degradation of the natural environment.</li> <li>7. Environmental education and interpretation can enhance awareness and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This alternative represents current levels of resource protection and additional levels of resource protection/conservation responsive to needs identified through the comprehensive inventory/survey or other mechanisms (NEPA/CEQA review);</li> <li>• This alternative primarily assumes the current level of recreation use will continue, so it increases management of natural and cultural resources, and prioritizes ecosystem restoration in impacted areas.</li> <li>• Modify visitor access and recreation facilities to enhance resource protection and public safety.</li> <li>• Proactively manage natural resources to protect, enhance and restore ecological function and natural processes.</li> <li>• Comprehensively inventory, survey, evaluate and monitor natural and cultural resources to provide additional data needed for effective protection and management. Prioritize areas for survey/inventory using factors including: potential threats to resources, current level of impact, unique or special status resources, habitat diversity and resource types.</li> <li>• Manage risks associated with climate change. For example: increase water efficiency in existing facilities; plant drought tolerant vegetation, especially trees, where there are losses; construct catchment systems for irrigation; and allow natural processes (fire, flooding)—and resulting vegetation succession, to occur where life and property are not threatened.</li> <li>• Provide robust educational and interpretive messages, programs, materials, features and facilities to enhance visitor understanding and engagement in resource protection and stewardship.</li> </ul>
Increased Recreation and Resource Management (IRRM)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional population growth, recreation trends, and demographic shifts have been significantly increasing visitation.</li> <li>2. CSP's mission includes providing high quality outdoor recreation opportunities.</li> <li>3. Natural and cultural resources continue to be impacted by increasing visitation and changing recreation trends. The unit has multiple entry points where visitor use cannot be limited to reduce impacts.</li> <li>4. Insufficient and degraded facilities require substantial maintenance and upgrades to enhance public safety.</li> <li>5. CSP's Transformation process established a goal to create and maintain relevancy to the public by adapting programs and facilities to demographic shifts, recreation trends and use patterns.</li> <li>6. A changing climate increases risk of wildfire and flood events, and degradation of the natural environment.</li> <li>7. Popular sites often fill to capacity on summer weekends and cause congestion. Many recreation sites are difficult to find.</li> <li>8. CSP's Transformation process established a goal to pursue mission-relevant revenue generation strategies and facilities to fund increases in recreation opportunities, visitor experiences and education, public safety, and resources management.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This alternative anticipates and accommodates increases in regional recreation demand by enhancing existing facilities and providing additional recreational facilities and access. This alternative also increases resource protection and management.</li> <li>• Focus new recreation development primarily in existing medium or high intensity recreation use areas, or previously disturbed areas. This alternative would provide an increase in recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• This alternative will be selective in resources inventory, survey, evaluation and monitoring; and in natural resources restoration. Resource inventory and monitoring will prioritize areas of greatest threats and most significant resources, including newly developed areas.</li> <li>• Use natural resource management strategies, such as protecting wildlife/habitat corridors and habitat elevation gradients, to maintain the capacity of natural resources to adapt and respond to climate change.</li> <li>• Provide interpretation and education messages, programs, materials, features and facilities to inform the public of recreation opportunities and promote awareness of natural and cultural resources.</li> </ul>
Recreation Emphasis (RE)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional population growth, recreation trends, and demographic shifts have been significantly increasing visitation. Statewide recreation demand has also increased, and is projected to continue increasing.</li> <li>2. CSP's mission includes providing high quality outdoor recreation opportunities.</li> <li>3. Insufficient and degraded facilities require substantial maintenance and upgrades to enhance public safety, especially as recreation use increases.</li> <li>4. CSP's Transformation process established a goal to create and maintain relevancy to the public by adapting programs and facilities to demographic shifts, recreation trends and use patterns.</li> <li>5. CSP's Transformation process established a goal to pursue mission-relevant revenue generation strategies and facilities to fund increases in recreation opportunities, visitor experiences and education, public safety, and resources management.</li> <li>6. Many recreation sites are difficult to find. Popular sites often fill to capacity on summer weekends and cause congestion.</li> <li>7. Public input indicates a substantial interest in the provision of additional diverse recreation, interpretation, education and resource stewardship opportunities in this unit, and a desire for increased public safety measures.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation levels would be responsive to Regional and Statewide demand that is demographically relevant and diverse. Resource protections would be increased beyond current levels to address this correspondingly higher level of use and demand.</li> <li>• This alternative provides new, expanded and renovated facilities and programs to allow an increase in recreation access and opportunities.</li> <li>• Resource management would primarily target areas where threats are increasing, including: existing recreation use and facilities; where new facilities or use are proposed; or where other resource threats exist, in order to avoid or minimize impacts.</li> <li>• Monitor and report potential effects of climate change on natural and cultural resources.</li> <li>• Additional use and facilities may require additional resource monitoring to avoid or minimize resource impacts. Focus survey and inventory of resources in areas where threats are greatest.</li> <li>• Provide interpretation and education messages, programs, materials, features and facilities to inform the public of recreation opportunities, and to enhance awareness and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.</li> </ul>