



Carmel Area State Parks General Plan

INITIAL AGENCY MEETING SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

State Parks staff welcomed attendees and gave a short presentation (available on the project website). After the presentation, staff facilitated a discussion on a series of questions. The following comments were provided by participants.

PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

- More people visiting the parks would cause more incidents and accidents. Consider access and parking needs for emergency vehicles.
- Hatton Canyon: Look at fuel reduction in this area to minimize issues with fire and neighboring structures.
- Firebreaks are necessary in backcountry areas if the backcountry is opened to the public.
- Properly engineered design of facilities and outreach to the public can reduce enforcement needs.
- Need more ocean safety warning signs at Carmel River State Beach.

CIRCULATION/PARKING/ACCESS

- Crossing the road (Hwy. 1) to Monastery Beach is a safety issue.
- A bike trail through Hatton Canyon would be great to connect to other parks, keep bicyclists off Highway 1, and would provide a firebreak through the canyon. Keep the parking at the northern end and connect all the way to the old highway.
- Deal with circulation issues in advance through engineering. Consider how the entrances to the park can be engineered to have deceleration and acceleration shoulders/lanes.
- There needs to be a good traffic study completed for this project.
- Provide more off-highway parking.
- Access and parking to the lower part of the Carmel River area may be an issue. The mouth of Carmel River is a destination for steelhead fishermen.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

- Coordinate with City of Carmel regarding their trail plans for the area.
- Work with the Coastal Conservancy to show how the California Coastal Trail could be accommodated within this plan.
- There are many different projects planned for Carmel River State Beach (cumulative projects); consider these during planning and coordinate with others.
- This area is directly adjacent to Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. There may be opportunities to coordinate with signage, impacts, interesting features, and other regulatory overlap (over flights, discharge, enforcement).



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- Need comprehensive parking solutions – work with Caltrans, CHP, Monterey County Planning, Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, State Parks to find mutual solution.
- Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District is beginning a master planning process because they have a large portion of property not currently open to the public. They are about three weeks behind this planning process.
- There is a project through a San Francisco masters program (Art Institute of S.F.) to create a plan for an interpretive/educational center at Carmel River State Beach. It may be good to have that group be involved.
- There are jurisdictional and enforcement overlaps with NOAA regarding the National Marine Sanctuary.
- There are stewardship, education and outreach opportunities.
- Consider the Carmel River Parkway Plan. It is into Regional Park with plans to connect to Hwy 1.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Many visitors do not realize they can catch and keep invasive striper fish. May need to educate visitors on invasive species.
- Impacts to sensitive species need to be minimized.
- Restore /create habitat.
- Show the Point Lobos Marine Reserve on project maps, as along with the Marine Protected Areas.
- Consider whether an increase in use would cause any issues with sensitive species.
- Try to achieve a “no take” situation if there is no federal nexus. Consider the option of entering into a “Safe Harbor” agreement. Review the “Safe Harbor” agreement for Palo Corona Regional Park as an example.
- Consider whether increased public access will have an adverse affect on marine mammals in the coastal properties.
- Improved rearing habitat in Carmel River lagoon should be a goal.
- There should be a better fish count program in the lagoon and lower reach of the Carmel River.

DRAINAGE/WATER

- If the plan calls for more impervious surfaces, it also needs to address drainage.
- Manage stream crossings.
- There are water supply issues. Consider water conservation because permits for development that require any additional potable water from CalAm Water will likely not be granted.

OUTREACH

- Keep public aware through social media.
- Visit community groups, schools, etc.



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- There needs to be more education and outreach about the marine reserve.
- Resource Conservation District of Monterey County would like to coordinate with State Parks on outreach.
- Consider using web-conferencing to reach out to stakeholders who are farther away.

FACILITIES

- Consider building an interpretive center at the lagoon. This is where Carmel River interpretive water tours would potentially end.
- Restore the Carmel River State Beach – restoring public access, rebuilding parking, and bathroom.
- Identify specific park improvements in the plan (bridges, natural improvements) to avoid issues with permits down the road. For instance, improvements at Highway 1 for Big Sur were included in their plan and helped to avoid additional coastal permits later.
- Suggestion to work on more permanent solutions for flood management in the lagoon to avoid ongoing management by the County.
- Whisler’s House could be perfect as an interpretive center.
- The “dairy house” at Point Lobos Ranch property may have potential as an interpretive center.
- Structures in the Odello area may have potential uses for visitor use and interpretation

RECREATION

- Work with Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District to coordinate recreational uses on the park properties; there may be similar uses, management and issues. Use a landscape approach to planning and maintain continuity between properties.
- When the water level in the Carmel Lagoon is higher, there is potential for more kayaking opportunities with the easy connection from parking lot.

PERMITTING

- The Coastal Commission will take jurisdiction over development plans within the coastline area; Monterey County and the Commission will coordinate. Consider early coordination/jurisdiction discussions.