SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK

GENERAL PLAN

PARTNERS IN PLANNING

The first public planning workshop for the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan was a success! Thanks to all who attended and shared their ideas about the park's future. A summary of the workshop and some of the ideas generated there are presented on the back page of this newsletter. Your input has been incorporated into three alternative approaches to be considered for developing the General Plan. These will be presented at the second planning workshop to be held on Thursday, **May 22, 2003** (see below). The General Plan will define a long-term vision for the park, identify desired improvements, and provide guidelines for protecting its unique natural and cultural resources.

Once the alternatives are presented, you will be asked to help select a preferred alternative. After this workshop, the preferred alternative will be refined and presented in a Draft General Plan, as well as analyzed in a Draft Environmental Impact Report. Both documents will be available for public review. We look forward to having you participate as a partner in the planning process.

Wooded Trail

DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVES

California State Parks has developed three alternatives to be considered in developing the park's General Plan. Each presents different ways to balance the protection of natural and cultural resources and the demand for recreation with the goal of providing a satisfying visitor experience. The alternatives were developed using information and ideas gathered from public input and the existing conditions analysis conducted last fall.

The alternatives vary in terms of the number and location of new or expanded visitor facilities. Each of the three alternative concepts builds upon the previous one.

- **Alternative A:** Protect Existing Wilderness Resources and Improve Visitor Experience in Upper Adobe Canyon
- **Alternative B:** Establish Primitive Campsites in Preserved Wilderness and Concentrate New Facilities in Upper Adobe Canyon
- **Alternative C:** Develop Visitor Support Facilities at Trailheads in the Broader Areas of the Park

The proposed locations of new facilities are based on known environmental conditions, as discussed during site visits with park managers and derived from GIS data.

All three alternatives would leave large areas of the McCormick and Beltane acquisitions in a near wilderness condition. Preserving these large wilderness areas would protect important wildlife bio-corridors and help protect water quality.

All alternatives provide recommendations to better connect the broader areas of the park with the existing visitor facilities in upper Adobe Canyon. For example, all would develop a trail connection between upper Adobe Canyon, McCormick, Beltane, and Hood Mountain Regional Park.

The three alternatives are described in the center pages of this newsletter. The next planning workshop will seek public input on the alternatives to assist State Parks in selecting a preferred alternative. The preferred plan may be one of the alternatives or a combination of features from more than one alternative.

Public Planning Workshop #2

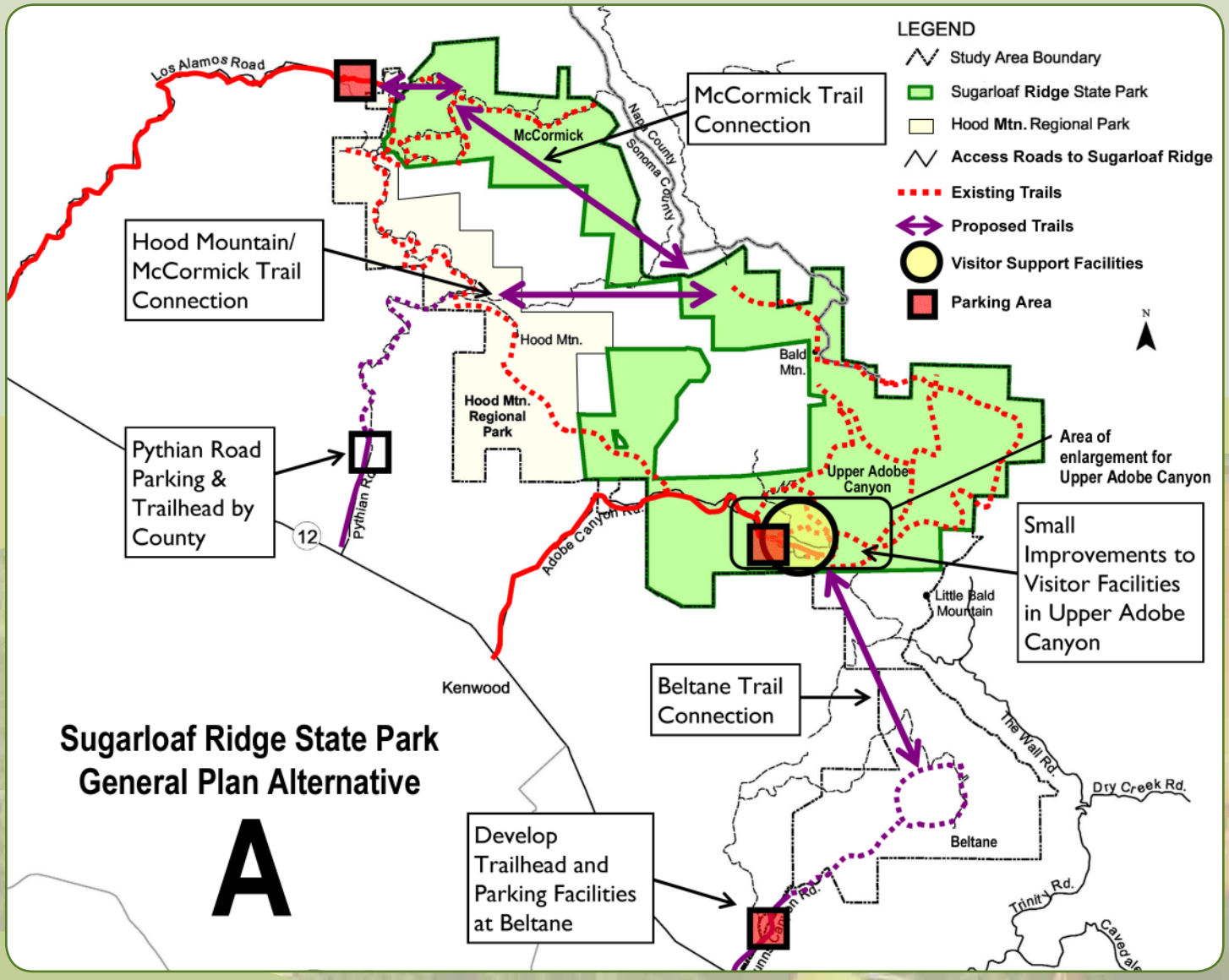
Thursday, May 22, 2003
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Kenwood Fire Protection District Station
9045 Sonoma Highway
Kenwood, California

ALTERNATIVE A:
Protect Existing Wilderness Resources and Improve Visitor Experience in Upper Adobe Canyon

Goals

- Preserve large wilderness areas.
- Resolve existing facility siting issues in upper Adobe Canyon to improve visitor experience and protect natural and cultural resources.
- Connect trails between broader areas of the park, but otherwise do not expand developed recreation opportunities or visitor facilities.
- Open as many trails as possible to multi-use.
- Retain the Observatory in its present location with improvements to the site.

GENERAL PLAN STUDY AREA



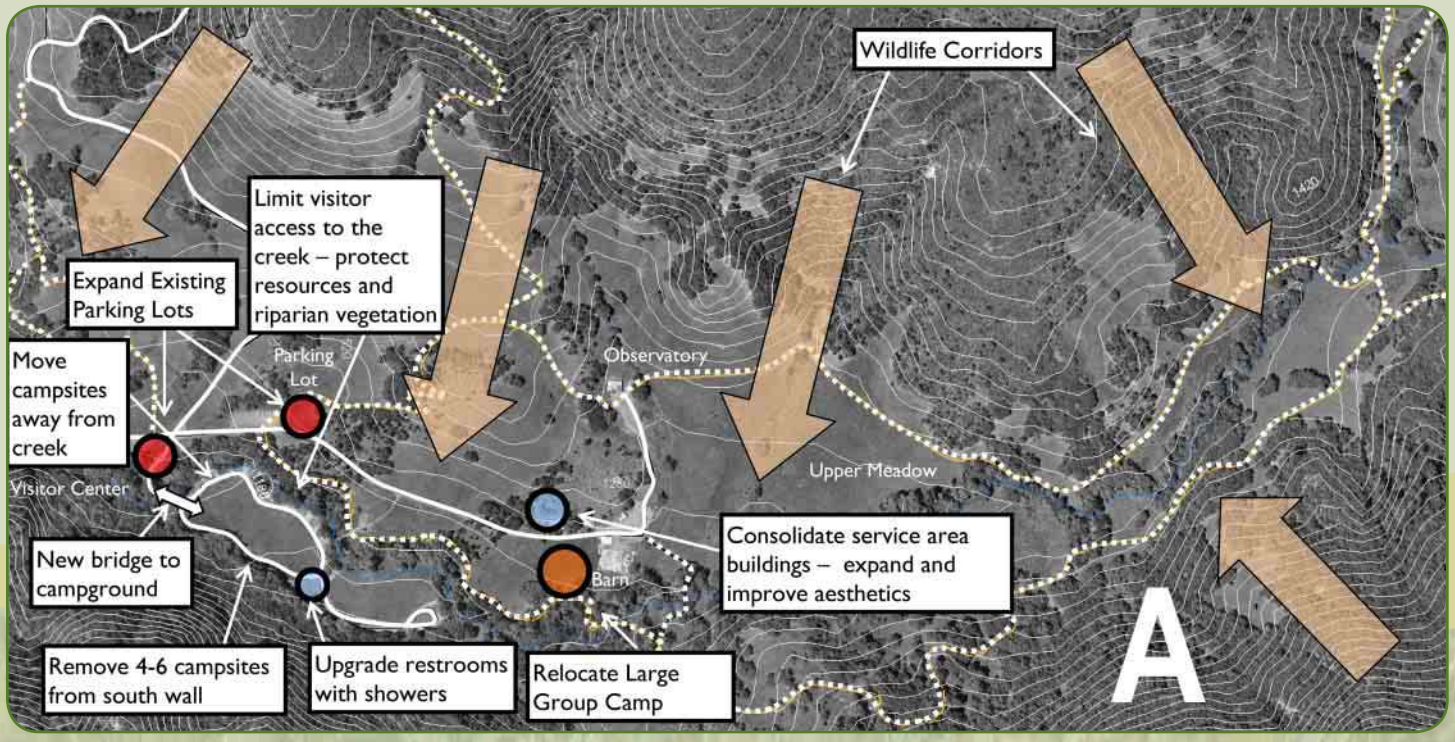
Key Recommendations and Features

- Hub of visitor activity remains in upper Adobe Canyon.
- Develop trailhead facilities and parking at the quarry area at Beltane. With this development there would be 3 points of direct access to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park: Adobe Canyon Road, Los Alamos Road, and Nunns Canyon Road. (The County is developing a new access point to Hood Mountain Regional Park via Pythian Road.)
- Develop trail connections between upper Adobe Canyon, McCormick, Beltane and Hood Mountain Regional Park.

Evaluation

Under Alternative A, visitor activities would continue to be centralized in upper Adobe Canyon. McCormick and Beltane would remain primarily wilderness areas. Alternative A proposes changes to existing visitor facilities only as necessary to resolve existing issues between facilities and sensitive resources or conflicts between uses. Alternative A does not address the anticipated increase in visitor use and demand for recreational areas expected from changing demographics in user populations.

UPPER ADOBE CANYON



Key Recommendations and Features

- Maintain wildlife corridors to Sonoma Creek, including the upper meadow.
- Relocate the large group camp.
- Adaptive and interpretive re-use of the historic barn.
- Expand and consolidate service area buildings.
- Construct a new bridge to the family campground.
- Upgrade restrooms in the family campground with showers.
- Remove some campsites from the south wall of the family campground and plant vegetation to provide screening between sites.
- Explore ways of limiting visitor access to Sonoma Creek to protect the resources and riparian vegetation.
- Expand existing parking lots in upper Adobe Canyon.
- Recommend shuttle service during special events at the Observatory.

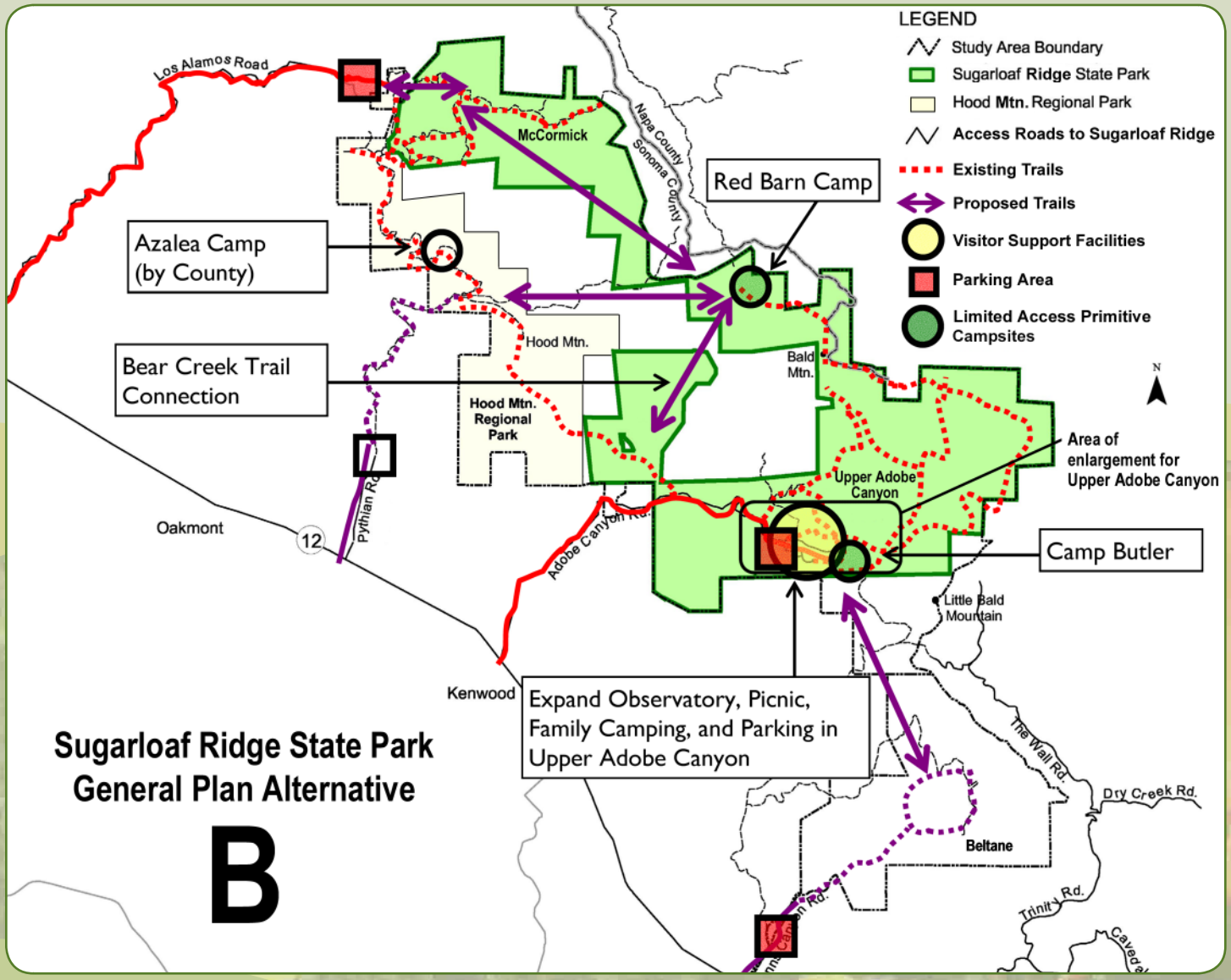
ALTERNATIVE B:
Establish Primitive Campsites in Preserved Wilderness and Concentrate New Facilities in Upper Adobe Canyon

Goals

This alternative builds upon the previous one.
Goals for Alternative B include all those for Alternative A plus the following:

- Develop limited access primitive campsites (e.g., small group or family campsites with no permanent water or restroom facilities and with limited or no car access) in areas that were previously developed.
- Expand visitor facilities in upper Adobe Canyon to accommodate some of the expected increase in visitor demand.

GENERAL PLAN STUDY AREA



Key Recommendations and Features

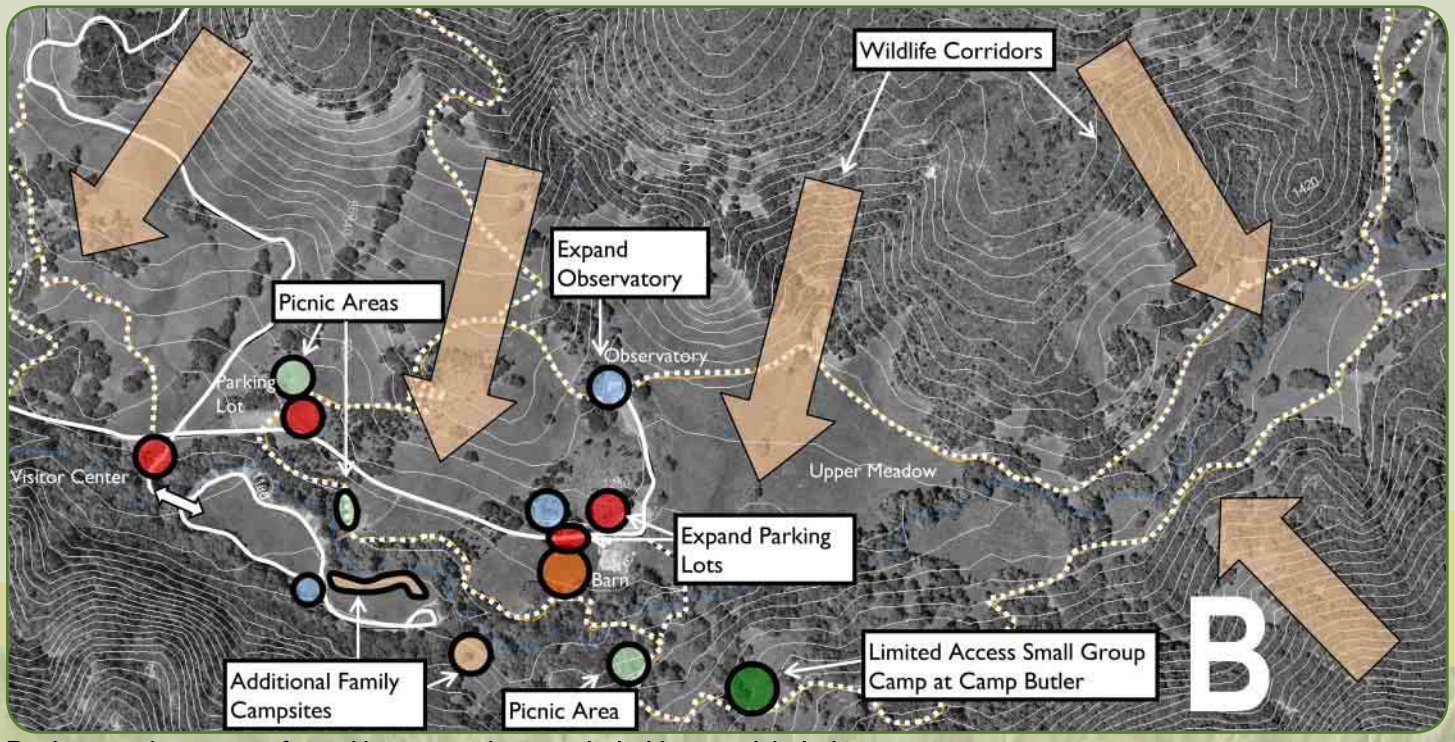
Recommendations for Alternative B include all those for Alternative A plus the following:

- Develop a trail connection from the Goodspeed Trail to the Red Barn.
- Develop limited access primitive campsites in previously developed areas (Camp Butler and Red Barn). The County is developing the Azalea campground in Hood Mountain Regional Park.

Evaluation

Alternative B, like Alternative A, would continue to preserve large areas of wilderness and concentrate visitor use in upper Adobe Canyon. Although Alternative B would introduce a few primitive campsites into areas outside of upper Adobe Canyon, McCormick and Beltane would remain near wilderness. The introduction of new facilities, trail connections, and use areas in upper Adobe Canyon would begin to address existing and anticipated demand for backcountry recreation.

UPPER ADOBE CANYON



Facilities and use areas from Alternative A are included but not labeled.

Key Recommendations and Features

Recommendations for Alternative B include all those for Alternative A plus the following:

- Maintain wildlife corridors to Sonoma Creek, including the upper meadow.
- Develop new family campsites in upper Adobe Canyon.
- Develop limited access primitive small group campsites at Camp Butler.
- Expand the Observatory to include additional classroom spaces, and permanent restroom as requested by VMOA.
- Expand parking lots in upper Adobe Canyon.
- Develop additional picnic areas in upper Adobe Canyon.

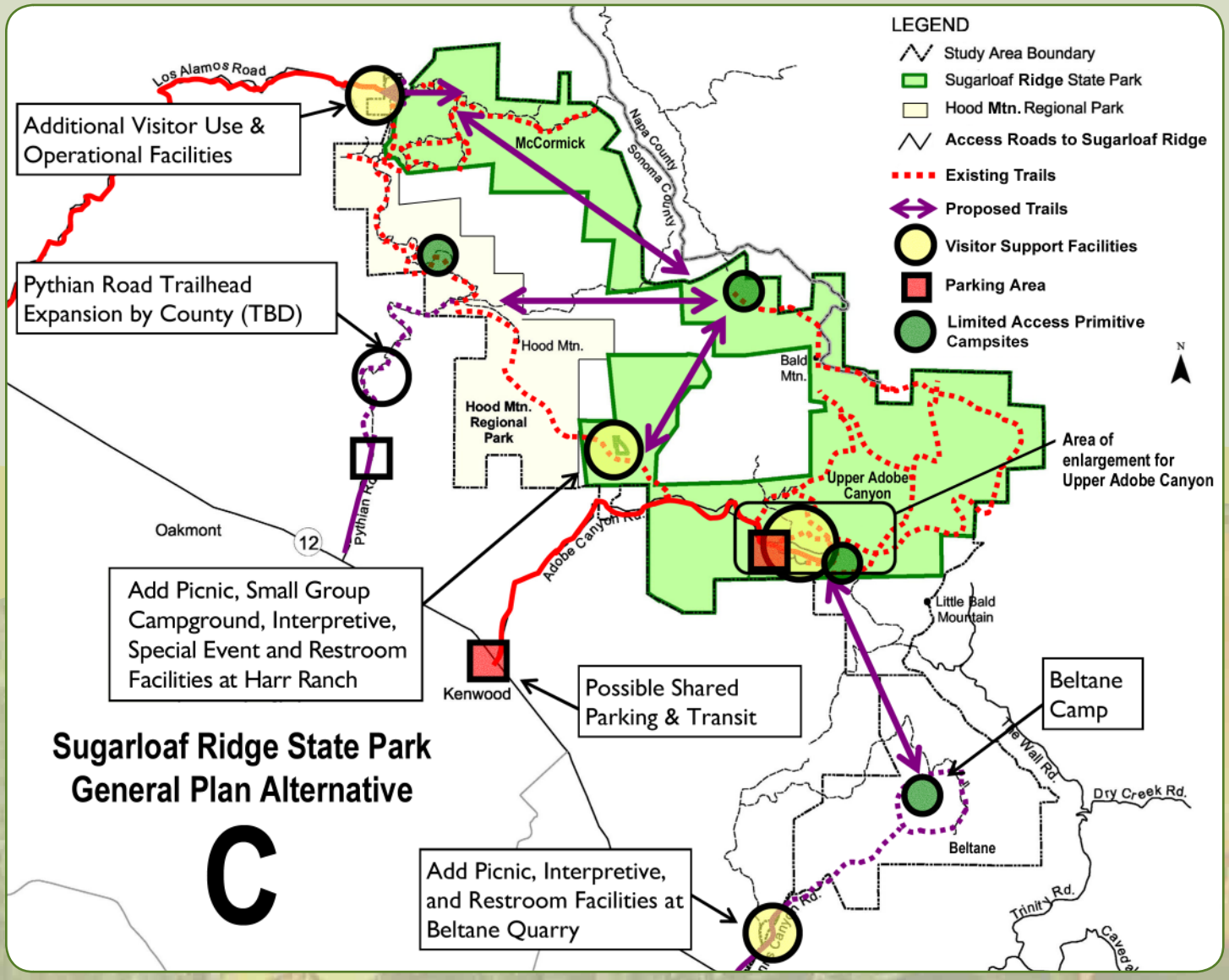
ALTERNATIVE C:
Develop Visitor Support Facilities at Trailheads in the Broader Areas of the Park

Goals

This alternative builds upon the previous two.
Goals for Alternative C include all those for Alternatives A and B plus the following:

- Develop visitor support facilities in other areas of the park.
- Develop limited access primitive campsites (e.g., small group or family campsites with no permanent water or restroom facilities and limited or no car access) in undeveloped areas of the park.

GENERAL PLAN STUDY AREA



Key Recommendations and Features

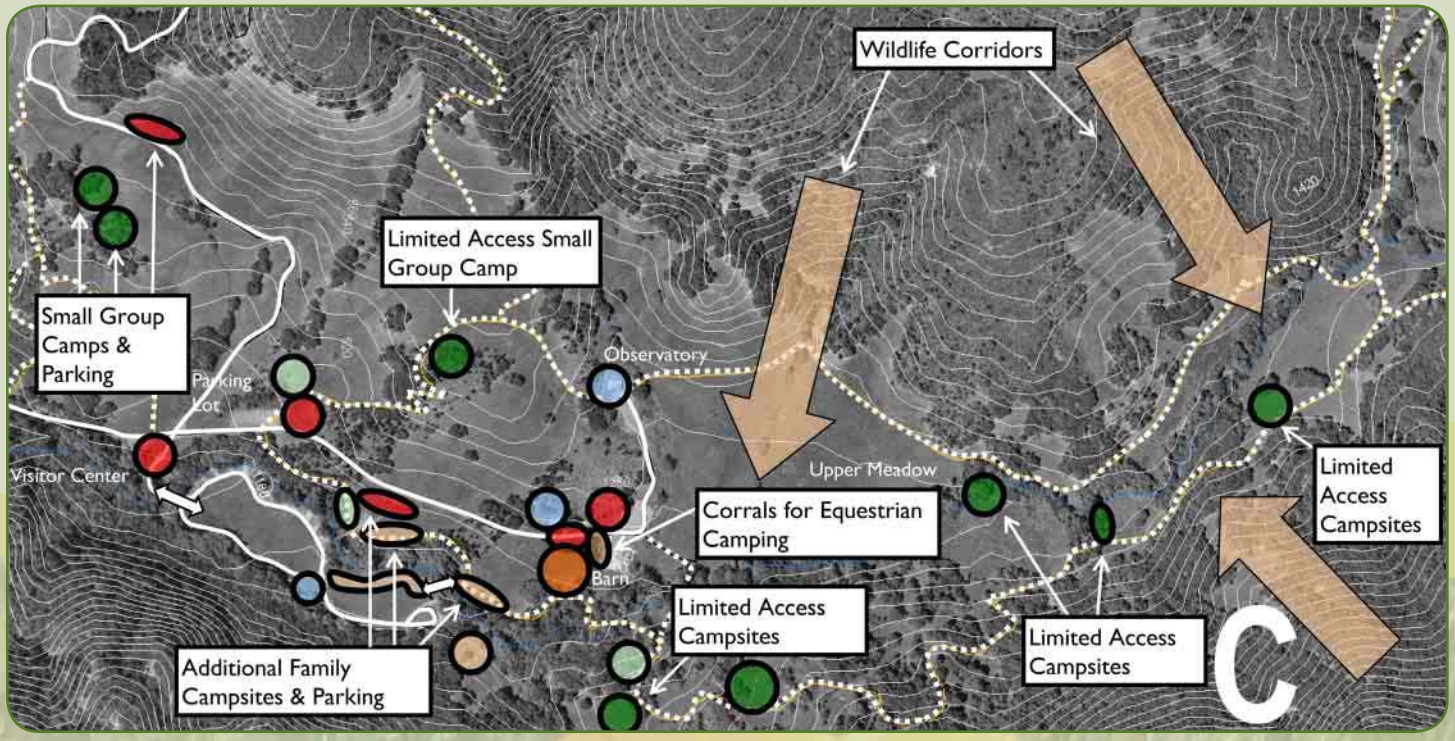
Recommendations for Alternative C include all those for Alternatives A and B plus the following:

- Develop day-use visitor facilities at the quarry area of Beltane. Facilities could include picnic sites, interpretive sites, restrooms and parking (including parking for horse trailers).
- Develop visitor facilities at Harr Ranch. Facilities could include picnic facilities, campsites, interpretive sites, restrooms and special event facilities.
- Work with the County to develop visitor use and operational facilities at the Los Alamos Road parking lot at the north end of Hood Mountain Regional Park. Facilities could include a ranger office, employee residence, interpretive sites, potable water and restrooms.

Evaluation

Alternative C would address the expected increase in recreational demand in the future. This would result in more recreational opportunities and a greater range of recreational experiences for visitors. Alternative C would introduce more human use into some of the broader areas of the park; however the areas proposed to be hubs of visitor use outside of Adobe Canyon have all been developed and used by previous property owners. Harr Ranch and the Red Barn were formerly used as residences, and the area proposed for visitor use in Beltane was a former quarry. Smaller limited access campsites could be located in more remote areas than proposed in Alternatives A and B for a more primitive non-car related camping experience.

UPPER ADOBE CANYON



Facilities and use areas from Alternatives A and B are included but not labeled.

Key Recommendations and Features

Recommendations for Alternative C include all those for Alternatives A and B plus the following:

- Maintain wildlife corridors to Sonoma Creek, including the upper meadow.
- Develop additional family campgrounds.
- Develop additional limited access primitive campgrounds.
- Provide corrals for visitor use near the large group camp to allow for equestrian camping in upper Adobe Canyon.
- Develop additional parking areas for increased camping and day use in upper Adobe Canyon.

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Sonoma, CA 95476

SUGARLOAF RIDGE STATE PARK GENERAL PLAN

FIRST PUBLIC PLANNING WORKSHOP A SUCCESS!

Over 60 people attended the first workshop for the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan. The meeting was held at the Kenwood Fire Station on the evening of February 4th and provided an opportunity for the public to provide early input on the scope, focus, and content of the Sugarloaf Ridge State Park General Plan and EIR. Participants included members from the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma Ecology Center, LandPaths, Valley of the Moon Natural History Association, Valley of the Moon Observatory Association, Backcountry Horsemen, Oakmont Hikers, Sierra Club, nearby property owners and other interested community members.

The following highlights some of the ideas and comments presented by meeting participants:

- Maintain "near wilderness" experience
- Provide trail connections
- Provide trail access from Napa Valley
- Share trails with all user groups
- Preserve the dark night sky
- Maintain the wildlife corridor
- Protect water quality / minimize erosion
- Continue resource management
- Develop in already developed areas
- Provide backcountry / hike-in camping
- Provide equestrian camping
- Manage increase in traffic and parking

These are just a few of the many ideas generated at the public meeting. In addition, State Parks received over 200 surveys, completed "on-line" via the website and by hand from interested community members, organizations and state and local agencies. Many of the ideas received have been incorporated into the plan alternatives.

Public Workshop #1

Contact Information

If you would like to get on the mailing list, please contact us at 707-938-1519 or at the address above.

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