

RECREATION, SCENIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

RECREATION RESOURCES

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area

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by

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RECREATION RESOURCES

Introduction

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (the Unit) is a significant local, regional, and state recreation resource. The two primary physical features of the Unit—Folsom Lake and Lake Natoma—are also its principal recreational attractions. While aquatic activities such as boating, water skiing, sailing, and swimming are the most popular activities in the Unit, land-based activities such as hiking, biking, picnicking, camping, and horseback riding also attract visitors. With more than 1.5 million visitors in 2000, the Unit is one of the most popular in the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) system.¹ Recreational activities in the Unit have changed significantly since the first facilities were opened to the public in 1958, and even since the first General Plan for the Unit was adopted in 1979. The popularity of personal watercraft (jetskis) and sailing has transformed the boating environment on Folsom Lake. Likewise, kayaking and other paddling sports have become favorite activities on Lake Natoma. The popularity of rowing on Lake Natoma is witnessed by the increase in the number of annual competitions on the Lake and by annual increases in attendance at these events. Land-based recreational activities have also changed over the years. When the Unit first opened, the trails were used primarily by equestrians and hikers. The popularity of running in the 1970s, mountain biking in the 1980s, and in-line skating in the 1990s, have greatly increased trail use. With urban development surrounding the southern half of the Unit, paved trails now play an important part in the region's growing transportation network as more people commute via bicycles. These changes affect the character and level of use in the Unit, how existing facilities are used, and what future facilities may be needed.

Characteristics and Levels of Use

Visitor Attendance

CDPR tracks visitor attendance for each unit in the parks system for the purposes comparing attendance with capacity and for identifying visitor and recreational use trends. Four categories are used to track visitor attendance at Folsom Lake, including paid day use, free day use, overnight (camping), and boats (launching). For each category, a conversion factor is used to calculate the number of visitors per entrance regardless of whether the entrance is paid or free. It is important to note that estimates of visitor attendance are used to supplement actual counts since not all entrances to a park unit offer attended or monitored checkpoints.

Use Characteristics

As noted, the Unit accommodated more than 1.5 million visitors in 2000. And although the Unit accommodates year-round recreation 75 percent of all visits occur during the warmer spring and summer months. This concentrated period of seasonal activity reflects the fact that water-dependent activities account for about 85 percent of all recreation visits to the Unit.²

¹ California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), Gold Fields District 2000 Visitor Counts.

² US Army Corps of Engineers, *Final Environmental Assessment/Initial Study: American River Watershed, California Folsom Dam Modification Project*, August 2001, pg. 58.

Water-dependent activities on Folsom Lake include boating, personal watercraft use (jetskis), windsurfing, water skiing, rafting, swimming, and fishing. On Lake Natoma, water-dependent activities include paddling (kayaking, rowing, canoeing, outriggers, etc.), swimming, and fishing. Unitwide, boating is the most popular water-dependent activity accounting for approximately 30 percent of recreation demand. The remaining 15 percent of all recreation visits to the Unit are for land-based activities such as picnicking, camping, and trail use (walking, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, etc.).³

It is interesting to note the distribution of visitors across major facilities in the Unit. In 2000, approximately 70 percent of all visitors to the Unit were accommodated by just eight major facilities, as shown in Table RR-1 below. Of these facilities, Granite Bay is by far the most heavily used in the Unit, followed by Beals Point, Folsom Point, and Negro Bar. An analysis of the distribution of visitors across facilities in the Unit over the past five years seems to vary little over time.

Table RR-1: Distribution of Visitors (2000)

| <i>Facility</i> | <i>Attendance</i> | <i>Percent of Total Attendance</i> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Granite Bay | 507,712 | 32.0 |
| Beals Point | 219,986 | 14.0 |
| Folsom Point | 112,120 | 7.1 |
| Brown's Ravine | 66,856 | 4.3 |
| Peninsula Area | 19,303 | 1.2 |
| Negro Bar | 84,481 | 5.4 |
| Nimbus Flat | 38,801 | 2.5 |
| Rattlesnake Bar | 62,001 | 3.9 |
| Total Facility Attendance | 1,111,260 | 70.7 |
| Total Park Attendance | 1,571,074 | |

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Recreation use and quality in the Unit are closely related to the function of Folsom Lake as a reservoir that serves the regional needs for flood control, irrigation, and water supply, particularly as it relates to water surface elevations of Folsom Lake. Water surface elevations directly affect the availability of boat ramps, beaches, berth sites, and other facilities that depend largely on water depth or surface area. These elevations can vary greatly (as much as 70 feet in normal years). The highest surface elevations occur during the rainy season and spring run-off in late winter and early spring; the lowest elevations in late fall or early winter before the rains. As a result, the elevations drop continuously from the start of the peak recreation season around Memorial Day through the season's end at Labor Day. Recreation use on Lake Natoma is less dramatically affected, since water surface levels vary minimally and tend to fluctuate on a daily basis.

³ Ibid., pg. 58.

Park Entrance Fees

Visitor attendance is generally affected by changes in park entrance fees. In July 2000, park entrance fees in California were essentially cut in half reducing them to early 1980s levels. In addition, several add-on fees, such as for dogs, boat launching, and extra vehicles, were eliminated. As a result, CDPR reported a subsequent increase in visitor attendance of about 30 percent system wide. According to CDPR staff, no similar increase in visitor attendance occurred at Folsom Lake. On January 1, 2003, CDPR entrance fees were increased in response to the State's budget crisis. The increased fees remain below pre-2000 levels.

Recreation Facilities and Activities in the Unit

The following provides an inventory of the existing facilities and activities within the Unit. This inventory is arranged by type of facility. Recreation facilities and activities proximate to the Unit are summarized in the section that follows.

The Lakes

Folsom Lake and Lake Natoma are the primary physical features of the Unit and its main attractions. Folsom Lake measures about 11,500 surface acres in area and is the result of the damming of the American River at Folsom in the 1950s as part of the Central Valley Project. The focus of the Project is flood control, water supply, and power generation. For CDPR, the Lake provides the focus for water-dependent recreation activities and supporting facilities in the Unit along some 75 miles of shoreline. Due to the size of the Lake, and the nature of the aquatic facilities present, it is ideal for a wide range of aquatic recreation activities, including boating, sailing, fishing, swimming, etc. The upper (easternmost) arms of the lake are designated slow zones for quiet cruising, fishing, and nature appreciation. Major facilities on the Lake include five developed boat launching areas, one marina, and two formal beach areas (these facilities are described in detail later in this chapter). The use of the Lake and its shoreline facilities are affected by fluctuating water levels due to releases at Folsom Dam to the Central Valley during the dry summer months. Lake levels in a normal year will generally fall from an elevation of 466 feet at the beginning of the peak summer season to a low of 405 feet in late autumn long after the season has ended.⁴ As a result, boat launch facilities are designed to maintain some level of service throughout the boating season as water levels fall. For further information, refer to the Aquatic Facilities section below.

Lake Natoma is the afterbay of Folsom Dam and is located about one mile below the dam at the foot of a steep river gorge. The lake measures approximately 500 surface acres in area and 4 miles in length from the foot of the gorge at Rainbow Bridge in Folsom to Nimbus Dam in Orangevale. The Lake is narrow, linear, and highly scenic with 14 miles of dense riparian shoreline and the Lake Natoma Bluffs stretching from Negro Bar to Mississippi Bar. The quiet and sheltered waters of the Lake make it an ideal location for paddling and rowing, swimming, and fishing. Major facilities on the Lake include 3 boat launching areas, formal beaches at Negro Bar and Nimbus Flat, and the California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) Aquatic Center just above Nimbus Dam (these facilities are described in detail later in this chapter).

⁴ California Department of Water Resources, *Comparative Inventory of Recreation Facilities at California's Largest Reservoirs, 2000*, pg. 27.

Aquatic Facilities

Marinas

The Folsom Lake Marina is the only marina facility in the Unit (refer to Figure RR-1). Located at Brown's Ravine, the facility includes 685 wet slips and 175 dry storage slips. Currently, there is a 5-year waiting list for one of the 72 sixteen-foot slips and 368 twenty-foot slips. A 9-year wait currently exists for one of the 245 twenty-four-foot slips. Other facilities provided at the marina are outlined in Table RR-2 below. In recent years, interest in slip rentals has increased significantly due to the difficulty in launching here on peak season weekends due to the lack of ramp and parking capacity at the main launch area. The alternative boat launch at Hobie Cove provides no relief during the peak season since it only becomes available in the fall when lake levels have dropped sufficiently to make this facility operational.

Table RR-2: Folsom Lake Marina Facilities

| <i>Boat Slips</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>16-foot Slips</i> | <i>20-foot Slips</i> | <i>24-foot Slips</i> | <i>Waiting List (years) 16 and 20-foot/24-foot</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Wet | 685 | 72 | 368 | 245 | 5/9 |
| Dry | 175 | N/A | N/A | N/A | 5/9 |
| <i>Launch Ramps</i> | <i>Lanes</i> | <i>Slope (%)</i> | <i>Length (ft.)</i> | <i>Construction</i> | <i>Minimum Lake Level (ft.)</i> |
| Main Ramp | 4 | 15 | 420 | Asphalt/ concrete | 395 |
| Hobie Cove | 3 | 15 | 323 | Concrete | 375 |
| <i>Concessions</i> | <i>Services Provided</i> | | | | |
| Snack Bar | Yes | | | | |
| Supply Sales | Yes | | | | |
| Fuel Station | Yes | | | | |
| Boat Equipment Rentals | Yes | | | | |
| <i>Parking</i> | <i>Vehicle/Trailer</i> | | | | |
| | <i>Vehicle Spaces</i> | <i>Spaces</i> | <i>Disabled Spaces</i> | <i>Construction</i> | |
| Main Ramp | | 404 | 5 | Asphalt | |
| Hobie Cove | 41 | 150 | 3 | Asphalt | |
| Day Use | | 122 | | Asphalt | |
| <i>Restrooms/Other Facilities</i> | <i>Total</i> | | | | |
| Restrooms | 2 | | | | |
| Information Kiosks | 1 | | | | |
| Picnic Tables | 38 | | | | |
| Barbeques | 16 | | | | |
| Drinking Water | Yes | | | | |

Source: C DPR; Folsom Lake Marina Concessionaire; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Figure RR-1: Marina Facilities in the Unit

Boat Launch Facilities

There are nine distinct boat launch facilities in the Unit, six on Folsom Lake and three on Lake Natoma (refer to Figures RR-2 and RR-3). The main launch facilities on Folsom Lake are located at Granite Bay, with secondary facilities at Folsom Point, Brown's Ravine, and Rattlesnake Bar. These facilities are designed for powerboat, personal watercraft (jetski), and sailboat launching. They are fully hard surfaced, have demarcated lanes and turnaround areas, as well as adjacent parking areas. Folsom Point and Rattlesnake Bar are popular launch areas for fisherman – bass fishing tournaments are often held at Folsom Point. The waters off Dike 8 also make Folsom Point an ideal location for staging sailing regattas, and California State University Sacramento (CSUS) offers waterskiing classes here. Refer to Table RR-3 for a list and description of the existing launch facilities.

Table RR-3: Boat Launch Facilities

| <i>Folsom Lake</i> | <i>Lanes</i> | <i>Slope (%)</i> | <i>Length (ft.)</i> | <i>Width (ft.)</i> | <i>Construction</i> | <i>Minimum Lake Level (ft.)</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Granite Bay | | | | | | |
| Stage 1 | 2 | 15 | 300 | 60 | Concrete | 395 |
| Stage 2 | 10 | 10 | 250 | 700 | Asphalt/concrete | 426 |
| Stage 3 | 10 | 10 | 250 | 700 | Asphalt/concrete | 435 |
| Stage 4 | 14 | 15 | 180/250 | 330 | Asphalt/concrete | 425 |
| 5 Percent | 4 | 5 | 1,200 | 60 | Asphalt | 408 |
| Low Water | 2 | 15 | 60 | 45 | Concrete | 360 |
| Folsom Point | 4 | 11 | 900 | 80 | Asphalt | 406 |
| Brown's Ravine | | | | | | |
| Main Ramp | 4 | 15 | 420 | 60 | Asphalt/concrete | 395 |
| Hobie Cove | 3 | 15 | 323 | 60 | Concrete | 375 |
| Rattlesnake Bar | 2 | 2 | 300 | 40 | Asphalt | 425 |
| Peninsula | | | | | | |
| Day Use | 1 | 15 | 260 | 30 | Concrete | 434 |
| South Ramp | 1 | 10 | 750 | 25 | Asphalt/concrete | 410 |
| Beals Point | 1 | 5 | 400 | 40 | Gravel | 420 |
| <i>Lake Natoma</i> | <i>Lanes</i> | <i>Slope (%)</i> | <i>Length (ft.)</i> | <i>Width (ft.)</i> | <i>Construction</i> | <i>Minimum Lake Level (ft.)</i> |
| Negro Bar | 2 | 5 | 200 | 60 | Concrete | 200 |
| Nimbus Flat | | | | | | |
| Main Ramp | 2 | 1 | 60 | 30 | Concrete | 115 |
| Alternate | 1 | 1 | 30 | 30 | Gravel | 120 |
| Willow Creek | 1 | 1 | 35 | 12 | Gravel | 35 |

Source: C DPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Figure RR-2: Boat Launch Facilities at Folsom Lake

Figure RR-3: Boat Launch Facilities at Lake Natoma

An informal boat launch at Beals Point is also popular with fisherman and other small craft owners. Due to their remote location, the two ramps at the Peninsula are used more as mooring points to access this isolated area. On Lake Natoma, the 5 mph speed limit for motorized watercraft means that launch facilities on the Lake are used primarily by paddlers, rowers, and fisherman. The Negro Bar launch is popular with fisherman, as is the launch at Willow Creek, which is largely unimproved. The docks at Nimbus Flat are primarily for non-motorized boat users, such as kayakers, paddlers, and rowers.

Table RR-4: Parking Capacity of Boat Launch Facilities

| <i>Folsom Lake</i> | <i>Vehicle Spaces</i> | <i>Vehicle/Trailer Spaces</i> | <i>Disabled Spaces</i> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Granite Bay</i> | | | |
| Stage 1 ¹ | 100 | | |
| Stage 2 ¹ | 250 | | |
| Stage 3 ¹ | 300 | | |
| Stage 4 | 391 | | 9 |
| 5 Percent | 43 | 48 | |
| Low Water ¹ | 27 | | |
| Folsom Point | 25 | 100 | 4 |
| Brown's Ravine ² | 41 | 554 | 8 |
| Rattlesnake Bar | 25 | 64 | 5 |
| <i>Peninsula</i> | | | |
| Day Use ¹ | | 60 | |
| South Ramp ¹ | 50 | | |
| Beals Point ³ | 370 | 9 | 8 |
| <i>Lake Natoma</i> | <i>Vehicle Spaces</i> | <i>Trailer Spaces</i> | <i>Disabled Spaces</i> |
| Negro Bar ¹ | 300 | | |
| Nimbus Flat ³ | 101 | 122 | 8 |
| Willow Creek ³ | 19 | | 1 |

¹ Estimated capacity as vehicle spaces are not striped.

² Includes Main Ramp and Hobie Cove.

³ Separate launch area parking not provided.

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Boat launch capacity in the Unit is a concern, particularly during peak season weekends at Granite Bay, Folsom Point, and Brown's Ravine, when ramps become congested. A preliminary review of boat launch capacity using Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) guidelines found that many of the ramps are not being used to their full design capacity. The results of this review are summarized in Table RR-9. While new ramps, additional ramp lanes, and expanded turnaround areas could put more boats in the water, the difficulty is that after launching there is not adequate area to park, particularly at Brown's Ravine and Folsom Point. It should be noted that in day use facilities where boat launching is clearly a secondary activity—such as at Beals Point, Nimbus Flat, and Willow Creek—separate launch area parking is not provided and that the day use parking area must serve all users. The DBW guidelines for launch area parking is between 20 and 30 vehicle/ trailer

spaces per launch lane. Table RR-4 above summarizes the parking capacity at boat launch facilities in the Unit.

Whitewater Rafting Facilities

Commercial and private whitewater rafting are popular activities on the South Fork of the American River. The 21-mile run between Chili Bar Dam near Highway 193 and Salmon Falls Road at the upper extent of Folsom Lake is the highest use river segment in the West. The river offers a diversity of rafting experiences—with Class I through Class III rapids—along with classic scenery and narrow rocky gorges all within relatively easy reach of Sacramento. Several agencies have jurisdiction in this run of the American River: the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns 12.5 miles of river frontage; CDPR owns 1.5 miles of river frontage between Hospital Bar and Salmon Falls Road; and El Dorado County is responsible for permitting river use by commercial outfitters.

There are currently about 40 commercial rafting outfitters on the South Fork with 67 permits in existence. These outfitters must obtain river use permits from El Dorado County which specify, among other things, the number of weekday and weekend trips permitted, the number of rafts and rafters per group, and insurance requirements.⁵ Permits are not required for private boats. The current daily boater total threshold is 3,200 boaters on two days during any one season.⁶

Table RR-5: Whitewater Rafting Facilities

| <i>Skunk Hollow</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Parking</i> | <i>Vehicle Spaces</i> | <i>Disabled Spaces</i> | <i>Loading Area</i> | <i>Construction</i> |
| Day Use | 35 | 2 | Yes | Asphalt |
| <i>Restrooms/Other Facilities</i> | | <i>Total/Description</i> | | |
| Vault Toilets | | 2 | | |
| Picnic Tables | | 3 | | |
| Drinking Water | | No | | |
| Raft Drying Rails | | Yes | | |
| <i>Salmon Falls</i> | | | | |
| <i>Parking</i> | <i>Vehicle Spaces</i> | <i>Vehicle/Trailer Spaces</i> | <i>Disabled Spaces</i> | <i>Construction</i> |
| Day Use | 32 | 12 | 1 | Asphalt |
| <i>Restrooms/Other Facilities</i> | | <i>Total/Description</i> | | |
| Vault Toilets | | 2 | | |
| Picnic Tables | | No | | |
| Drinking Water | | Yes | | |
| Raft Drying Rails | | No | | |

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

⁵ County of El Dorado, *El Dorado County River Management Plan*, November 2001, pg. E-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. D-2.

Figure RR-4: Whitewater Rafting Facilities in the Unit

The Unit facilities at Salmon Falls and Skunk Hollow—located where Salmon Falls Road in El Dorado County crosses the South Fork—are specifically intended to accommodate rafting activity on the river (refer to Figure RR-4 above). According to CDPR staff, approximately 9,000 commercial boats take-out at the Salmon Falls facility (they are prohibited to do so at Skunk Hollow), or between 50,000 and 60,000 boaters. Facilities here include a large area for bus parking and queuing, informal take-out area, four vault toilets, and drinking water. It is estimated that as many as 4,000 additional private boats (roughly 24,000 boaters) take-out at the Skunk Hollow facility. Facilities here include a small paved parking area for 35 vehicles, a raft loading zone with drying rails, two vault toilets, a paved path from the river up to the parking area, and several picnic tables. Table RR-5 above summarizes the improvements at these facilities. Both the Skunk Hollow and Salmon Falls facilities receive heavy use during peak season weekends. Both facilities are often used as a parking area for the nearby Darrington and Sweetwater trails.

Terrestrial Facilities

Campgrounds

There are a total of 176 campsites in the Unit that accommodate tent, trailer, RV, and group campers (refer to Figures RR-4 and RR-5). Table RR-6 provides a summary list of the features at each facility.

Peninsula Campground

The Peninsula Campground is located at the tip of the peninsula that separates the North and South Forks of the American River. This facility is located in what is the most natural and least disturbed portion of the Unit, an area characterized by rolling hills, open grasslands, and scattered oak and pine groves. Access to the site is provided by Rattlesnake Bar Road which connects to Highway 49 at Pilot Hill about 9 miles away. The campground includes 104 sites that can accommodate a maximum trailer length of 18 feet and RV length of 24 feet. The facility also includes five restrooms (no showers), one boat ramp, and a small amphitheater suitable for group use. Located nearby is temporary seasonal housing for four Park employees, a permanent park ranger residence, and a small maintenance yard.

Beals Point Campground

The Beals Point Campground is located adjacent to the popular Beals Point day use area. The facility includes 49 single campsites, 20 RV sites, a sanitary dump station, two restrooms, and showers. The RV sites were constructed with electrical hookup, however this service is no longer provided since the costs of providing the service are not recoverable under the current fee structure. The RV sites were constructed as mitigation for the loss of the family campsites at Negro Bar that were removed for the construction of the Lake Natoma crossing. Campers have easy access to all of the day use facilities provided at Beals Point, including trails, the beach, boat launch, picnic area and snack bar.

Negro Bar Group Campground

The campground at Negro Bar is comprised of 3 reservation only group campsites designed to accommodate approximately 50 people each. A restroom is also provided. The group campground is located in the northeastern portion of Negro Bar near the boat launch just downstream from the Rainbow Bridge. A family campsite was once also located in this area

Figure RR-5: Campgrounds at Folsom Lake

Figure RR-6: Campgrounds at Lake Natoma

of Negro Bar but was removed to make way for the Lake Natoma crossing in the late 1990s. Campers here have easy access to all of the day use facilities provided at Negro Bar, including hiking, cycling, and equestrian trails, the beach, boat launch and rentals and picnic area.

Table RR-6: Campground Facilities

| <i>Peninsula Campground</i> | <i>Total/Description</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Campsites | 104 single |
| Restrooms | 5 |
| Showers | No |
| Hookups | No |
| Picnic Tables | 104 |
| Fire Pits | 104 |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Boat Ramps | 1 |
| <i>Beals Point Campground</i> | <i>Total/Description</i> |
| Campsites | 49 single/20 RV |
| Restrooms | 2 |
| Showers | Yes |
| Hookups | Sanitary for RV sites |
| Picnic Tables | 69 |
| Fire Pits | 69 |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| <i>Negro Bar Group Area</i> | <i>Total/Description</i> |
| Campsites | 3 group |
| Restrooms | 1 |
| Hookups | No |
| Picnic Tables | 17 |
| Barbeques | 15 |
| Fire Pits | 5 |
| Drinking Water | Yes |

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Day Use Facilities

Day use facilities are the primary gateways to the Unit and all it has to offer (refer to Figures RR-7 and RR-8). These facilities are also the busiest in the Unit and accommodate the majority of total visitors. Table RR-7 provides a summary list of the features at each facility.

Beals Point

Beals Point is second only to Granite Bay as the busiest day use facility in the Unit. This facility provides a 1,000-foot long guarded swim beach (summer season only) and concessions facility with a snack bar, beach equipment rentals, restrooms, and paved parking for 500 vehicles. A large grassy area along the lake includes picnic tables, barbeques, and

restroom facilities. The paved multi-use Lake Natoma Trail begins here and heads west along both lakes to Nimbus Dam and the unpaved multi-use Granite Bay Trail connects Beals Point to other facilities along Folsom Lake. The aquatic facilities at Beals Point are outlined in the Boat Launch Facilities section above. There are two primary issues with respect to this facility. The first is capacity, as the parking area generally fills by midday during peak season weekends causing traffic to backup onto Auburn-Folsom Road and surrounding neighborhood streets. This also makes it difficult for campers with reservations to enter the Unit. The second is unrestricted shoreline access to the shoreline area. When lake levels fall, the shoreline becomes exposed allowing motorized vehicles to access the shoreline. Unrestricted access along the shoreline means that day users and boaters often drive on the shoreline to the water's edge causing erosion damage, impacting cultural resource sites located below the high water line and potentially impacting water quality. A secondary issue and an ongoing is a problem with ground squirrels that are habituated to the presence of humans. According to CDPR staff, day users complain that the animals are aggressive.

Granite Bay

The most popular day use facility in the Unit is Granite Bay with a series of facilities spread over three distinct subareas. The Main Beach area includes a 1,200-foot long guarded swim beach (summer season only), snack bar and beach equipment concessions, restrooms, a grassy picnic area, tot lot, and a paved parking area for vehicles. The North Granite area is popular for fishing, horseback riding, and hiking. This area includes an informal beach area at Oak Point, equestrian staging area, Dotons Point, and Beeks Bight. An activity center located just north of the Main Beach is available by reservation for group use and includes a small picnic area. Trail facilities at Granite Bay include the equestrian and pedestrian Pioneer Express Trail running north to Auburn SRA, 8 miles of dirt multi-use trails running through the area, and a dirt pedestrian and ADA only trail in the Beeks Bight area. The boat launch area and its associated facilities are outlined in the Boat Launch and Ramp Facilities section above. As with Beals Point, capacity is a major concern at Granite Bay, particularly during peak season weekends when the day use parking area at Main Beach and the parking area and launch ramps at the launch area fill by midday. Access is another concern: there is only one entrance to Granite Bay at Douglas Boulevard and significant backups occur along the roadway and onto Auburn-Folsom Road when the parking areas fill. In addition, there is no external access to the sprawling and relatively remote North Granite area. A second access here could relieve some pressure on Douglas Boulevard and make the area easier to monitor and patrol. Unrestricted vehicle access along the shoreline at low water is also a concern in the North Granite area. Unrestricted vehicle access causes erosion, potentially impacts water quality, damages vegetation and threatens cultural resources located below the high water line.

Old Salmon Falls

Old Salmon Falls is located on Salmon Falls Road in El Dorado County between Brown's Ravine and the whitewater rafting facilities at the South Fork of the American River. The upper portion of the facility just off Salmon Falls Road—commonly referred to as Falcon Crest—includes an informal parking area used as an equestrian staging area, and access to a hiking and horseback riding trail that drops down to the site of the old Monte Vista campground about one mile to the west. From Falcon Crest a narrow road drops down to a lower area on the shore of Folsom Lake. Facilities here include a small unpaved parking area and portable toilet. This area is used for fishing, swimming, and as a trailhead for Brown's Ravine and Sweetwater trails. Issues related to the Old Salmon Falls area include unrestricted

vehicle access to the shoreline, particularly when lake levels are low, that could lead to damage and erosion, and possible erosion problems on State land and trails resulting from the country-estate residential subdivision currently under construction on the nearby hills above the lake. Finally, the old Monte Vista campground site appears to offer opportunities for enhanced visitor facilities. The area has been discussed as a possible site on which to establish an environmental camping area (no services), but nearby residential development could pose a constraint to public use of the area.

Sweetwater Creek

Sweetwater Creek is located midway between Old Salmon Falls and the Salmon Falls Bridge. A widened shoulder just off Salmon Falls Road doubles as an informal parking area where a gate marks the trailhead for the Sweetwater Trail. This dirt multi-use trail runs east about 2 miles to the Salmon Falls Bridge and the Darrington Trail. An informal trail runs west from here to Old Salmon Falls and the Brown's Ravine Trail.

Peninsula

The Peninsula day use facility is located about 1 mile north of the Peninsula Campground on the eastern shore of Folsom Lake. Due to its remote location, this facility is used primarily by boat-in users. The site consists of a small concrete boat ramp, two portable toilets, picnic tables with ramadas and barbeques, and a small informal beach area. The provision of drinking water and vault toilets at this site would make it more enjoyable for users. The extension of the Darrington Trail from the Peninsula Campground to the day use area is also a possibility.

Folsom Point

Folsom Point, located off East Natoma Street between Folsom Dam Road and Green Valley Road, is the most popular day use area on the eastern shore of Folsom Lake. Facilities here include a shaded picnic area with tables and barbeques, two vault toilets, and parking for 77 vehicles. As noted in the Boat Launch Facilities section, Folsom Point also includes the largest formal boat launch facilities on this side of the Lake, and restrooms are being built here. The popularity of Folsom Point for the staging of special aquatic events causes both the aquatic and day uses facilities reach capacity quickly during peak season weekends. Another issue here is the fact that the picnic area appears eroded and worn due to heavy foot traffic and informal parking off paved surfaces. Access to the shoreline is also informal. Possible improvements here could include additional picnic capacity, formalized parking area, and formalized water access and shoreline area, such as a beach. The suitability of the Dike 8 area of Folsom Point for a multi-use facility or an aquatic facility for various boat clubs—California State University Sacramento (CSUS) uses this area of Folsom Lake for waterskiing lessons—should be explored. Finally, there is an opportunity here for a trail linking Folsom Point to nearby neighborhoods in the City of Folsom.

Observation Point

Observation Point is located on Folsom Dam Road at the eastern end of the Dam and offers sweeping views of Folsom Lake. In the past, Observation Point was a popular place for meeting and fishing and swimming. When lake levels are low, Observation Point also provides a good starting place for hiking the informal trail along the eastern shoreline to Brown's Ravine. However, this facility is now closed to public access and has been since

Table RR-7: Day Use Facilities

| <i>Beals Point</i> | <i>Total/Description</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Beach | Yes (guarded) |
| Concession | Snack bar/beach equipment |
| Restrooms | 3 |
| Picnic Tables | 53 |
| Barbeques | 31 |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Trail Access | Lake Natoma/Granite Bay |
| Parking | 387(including 8 disabled) |
| <i>Granite Bay</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Beach | Yes (guarded) |
| Concession | Snack bar/beach equipment/boating equipment |
| Restrooms | 5 |
| Picnic Tables | 100 |
| Barbeques | 42 |
| Activity Center | Group use by reservation |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Equestrian Staging Area | Yes |
| Trail Access | Pioneer Express/Granite Bay/Beeks Bight-to Dotons/Beeks Bight ADA |
| Parking | 677 |
| <i>Old Salmon Falls</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Chemical Toilets | 2 |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Equestrian Staging Area | Yes |
| Trail Access | Brown's Ravine/Sweetwater Creek |
| Parking ¹ | 15 |
| <i>Peninsula</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Boat Ramp | Yes |
| Chemical Toilets | 2 |
| Picnic Tables | 6 with ramadas |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Trail Access | No |
| Parking ¹ | 60 |
| <i>Folsom Point</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Vault Toilets | 2 |
| Picnic Tables | 50 |
| Barbeques | 46 |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Trail Access | Brown's Ravine |
| Parking | 77 (including 2 disabled) |

Table RR-7: Day Use Facilities

| <i>Observation Point</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Picnic Tables | No |
| Restrooms/Toilets | No |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Trail Access | No |
| Parking | 77 (including 2 disabled) |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Folsom Powerhouse</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Main Powerhouse | Museum |
| Concessions | Gift shop |
| Restrooms | 1 |
| Picnic Tables | 10 |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Trail Access | Powerhouse Loop |
| Parking ¹ | 35 |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Willow Creek</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Concessions | Boating equipment |
| Boat Ramp | Yes |
| Vault Toilets | 2 |
| Picnic Tables | 4 |
| Barbeques | No |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Trail Access | Lake Natoma |
| Parking ¹ | 20 (including 1 disabled) |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Nimbus Flat</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Beach | Yes (unguarded) |
| Restrooms | 2 |
| Picnic Tables | 37 |
| Barbeques | 11 |
| Boat Ramp | 2 small docks |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Trail Access | Lake Natoma |
| Parking | 231 (including 8 disabled) |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Lake Overlook</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
| Restrooms/Toilets | No |
| Picnic Tables | No |
| Drinking Water | No |
| Equestrian Staging Area | Yes |
| Trail Access | Lake Natoma |
| Parking ¹ | 150 |

Table RR-7: Day Use Facilities

| <i>Negro Bar</i> | <i>Total/Notes</i> |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Beach | Yes (unguarded) |
| Concessions | Boating equipment |
| Restrooms | 2 |
| Picnic Tables | 32 |
| Barbeques | 4 |
| Boat Ramp | Yes |
| Drinking Water | Yes |
| Trail Access | Lake Natoma |
| Parking | 96 (including 4 disabled) |

¹ Estimated capacity as vehicle spaces are not striped.

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

September 11, 2001, due to security concerns associated with Folsom Dam, past illegal activity at the site (drinking and partying), and CDPR staffing levels. The near-term future of Observation Point is an issue as the area provides an ideal staging area for construction vehicles and equipment associated with the Folsom Dam Modification Project and the proposed Folsom Dam Raise Project. The site is currently being used as a staging area for the installation of a temperature control intake device. Beginning in late 2003, the site will be used as a staging area for the outlet modifications phase of the Folsom Dam Modification Project. This three-year project will enlarge eight existing river outlets to increase water releases from Folsom Lake during flood events.⁷ In order to complete this work, approximately 30,000 cubic yards of sediment that has accumulated upstream from the dam will have to be removed. Later phases of the dam raise project may also involve this area with construction expected to begin in 2006 or 2007 and last about 5 years. With the completion of construction, this area could serve several possible roles, assuming it remains accessible after the dam raise and associated security issues are resolved. Possible uses suggested include a view restaurant or a multi-use activity center, both of which would require that sewer and water services be extended to the site. A multi-use trail link to Folsom Point in the east and the bicycle trail and hiking and horseback trails in the west would improve non-vehicular access to Observation Point.

Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park

The Folsom Powerhouse is the most important historic and interpretive facility in the Unit and is located in the City of Folsom at the intersection of Riley and Scott Streets above the Lake Natoma shoreline. It is one of the oldest hydroelectric facilities in the world and was the nation's first power system to provide high-voltage alternative current over long distance transmission lines for major municipal and industrial use.⁸ The Powerhouse was operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company until 1952 when the old dam associated with the powerhouse was destroyed during the construction of the new Folsom Dam. The powerhouse, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, includes the main

⁷ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, American River Watershed, California, Folsom Dam Modification Project, August 2001, pg. 9.

⁸ California State Parks, *Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park Brochure*, 2002.

powerhouse museum, lower powerhouse, associated forebay and wooden flumes, blacksmith shop (gift shop), picnic area, a comfort station, and a small parking area. Significant improvements are already planned for this day use facility, including seismic upgrades, a larger parking area with room for buses, and a new visitor center to be located on the north side of the Powerhouse entrance. These improvements are likely to increase attendance to the Powerhouse, particularly if the American River Water Education Center moves from its current location at Park headquarters to this new visitor center. The new visitor center will address the primary concern at this facility, which to date has been the lack of appropriate facilities to accommodate attendance. However, another concern, one that will not be addressed by the visitor center, is the lack of a formal bicycle path/multi-use trail along the shoreline between the Lake Natoma Crossing and the Rainbow Bridge at Greenback Lane. Cyclists and pedestrians using the east Lake Natoma bike path must use Riley and Leidesdorff Streets along this stretch. This portion of the shoreline below the Powerhouse is accessed by a combination of informal trails. Finally, there are problems at the Powerhouse with vandalism, including graffiti, which has necessitated the installation of security fencing on all but the shoreline side of the site.

Willow Creek

This secluded day-use area is located on the Willow Creek inlet to Lake Natoma off Folsom Boulevard between Blue Ravine Road and Natoma Station Drive. The site is popular for fishing, canoeing, picnicking, bird watching, and accessing the paved Lake Natoma Trail and multi-use trail along the shoreline. Facilities here include a small picnic area, canoe and kayak concession, gravel parking and turnaround area, small boat ramp, and vault toilets. Due to the popularity of this site, the development of additional facilities may be necessary to minimize the wear and tear and erosion caused by informal parking in the picnic area. Other ideas suggested for the area include an environmental camping area and enhanced interpretive opportunities of the heron and egret rookery located just across the lake. The storage containers used by the concessionaire are unsightly and diminish the natural scenery.

Nimbus Flat

Nimbus Flat is located on a broad, flat area of shoreline just upstream from Nimbus Dam and adjacent to the CSUS Aquatic Center. A wide range of facilities are offered here, including two small unguarded beaches, observation area, grassy picnic area with tables, two small boat docks, boat ramp, two restrooms, and a large paved parking area for 231 vehicles. Access to the paved Lake Natoma Trail and dirt multi-use trail is also available. Nimbus Flat provides the ideal location for watching the various rowing competitions and events hosted by the neighboring CSUS Aquatic Center on Lake Natoma. The Aquatic Center, which hosts between eight and ten major events each year, obtains permits from CDPR to use Nimbus Flat to stage these events. These events include collegiate and intercollegiate rowing championships, regional and national masters-level rowing regattas, and other events. The use of Nimbus Flat by the Aquatic Center for major competitions and events, particularly during peak season weekends, results in capacity conditions early in the day and complaints that access to the area for non-competition related activities is difficult. . The popularity of these events and of Nimbus Flat as a day use area spurred the significant improvements to the area made in recent years, including the redesigned shoreline and parking area and the new observation area. While there is room for expansion of the area, the capacity of Lake Natoma to handle further recreational use should be carefully considered.

Lake Overlook

Lake Overlook is located above the north end of Nimbus Dam in Orangevale, just north of the Hazel Avenue Bridge. The site offers sweeping views north up Lake Natoma toward the Sierra Foothills and south across Nimbus Dam toward the Sacramento Valley and Mount Diablo. The site is comprised of a large paved parking area and an unpaved parking area—the site of an informal trailhead—with access to the unpaved area limited by a recently-installed guard rail along the entrance road. No other facilities are provided. A chain-link fence along the southern boundary of the site restricts access to a very steep hillside that slopes down toward the dam. A wooden fence along the northern boundary of the site separates State land from a neighboring residential development. At this time, the physical and aesthetic conditions of the overlook are not consistent with the high quality views available from this site. The chain-link fence interrupts views to the south and a guardrail intended to restrict off-road vehicle access has a negative impact on views to the north. Access difficulties should improve with the widening of Hazel Avenue to six lanes and realignment of the entrance road. The area offers significant potential as an interpretive resource.

Negro Bar

Negro Bar is a popular day-use area that includes a full range of facilities and easy access from Greenback Lane. Negro Bar extends along 1 mile of the Lake Natoma shoreline between the Lake Natoma Bluffs to the south and the Old Rainbow Bridge to the north. The main day use area includes an upper area with a large grassy picnic area with tables and shade ramadas, one restroom, and a paved parking area with space for 100 vehicles. An equestrian staging area is located just north of the parking area. The lower area on the Lake Natoma shoreline includes a shaded picnic area with tables and barbecues, one restroom, a small, unguarded beach with views of the lake and bluffs, and a concessionaire renting canoes and kayaks. The northeastern portion of Negro Bar along the shoreline between the Old Rainbow Bridge and the Lake Natoma Crossing is the location of the group campsites described in Campgrounds section above, and the boat launch facility described in the Boat Launch and Facilities section above. This area of Negro Bar is popular with local fishermen and paddlers and with swimmers and sunbathers who use the Rainbow Rocks just below the Old Rainbow Bridge. One chemical toilet here serves the boat ramp users. Finally, the area surrounding a one-time residence for park rangers (the “cottage”) is the site of the annual Juneteenth celebration organized by the Sacramento African American Cultural and Historical Society.

The demand for facilities at Negro Bar is great and often competing. There is interest from outside groups to develop additional recreational and cultural facilities at Negro Bar, including a boathouse and dock facility for the Masters Rowing Club in the area of the existing boat launch and a cultural center for the Sacramento African American Cultural and Historical Society in the area of the “cottage.” The “cottage” area may also be suitable for an environmental camping area (no services) and there are potential interpretive opportunities related to African American history in the area and the Lake Natoma Bluffs.

Figure RR-7: Day Use Facilities at Folsom Lake

Figure RR-8: Day Use Facilities at Lake Natoma

Other Facilities

Folsom Dam

Completed in 1956, Folsom Dam is 1,400 feet long and 340 feet high and serves the purposes of flood control, water storage, and power generation. The dam includes three generators with a combined capacity of just under 199,000 kilowatts of electrical power, or about 10 percent of the electrical needs of the City of Sacramento. Daily walking tours of Folsom Dam, once provided free of charge to the public by BOR staff, are no longer offered due to security concerns in the wake of September 11, 2001. The planned project to raise the height of Folsom Dam by seven feet to provide additional flood control capacity, is expected to begin construction in 2006 or 2007 and last about 5 years, assuming Congress approves funding.

At this time, it appears that the raised Folsom Dam will not include a public access roadway across it. Prior to the security concerns of September 11, 2001, the Bureau sought to close Folsom Dam Road to public traffic due to increasingly heavy traffic (4 million vehicles cross the road each year) that creates the potential for accidents that could damage dam facilities and endanger the public.⁹ As such, a new bridge and roadway will need to be constructed to replace the current roadway. Preliminary designs call for a new temporary two-lane highway and bridge located 1,600 feet downstream from the dam. The alignment would extend from Folsom-Auburn and Folsom Dam Roads in the west to near the eastern end of the dam on Folsom Dam Road.¹⁰ Instead of building a temporary bridge, the City of Folsom and other interests would like to see a new four-lane permanent bridge constructed downstream of the dam. Folsom Dam Road is currently closed to the public.

American River Water Education Center

Managed by the BOR and the CDPR, the American River Water Education Center provides tours, exhibits and interactive activities that explore the watershed of the American River and water conservation. Exhibits describe the physical and biological characteristics of the watershed as well as the history of human use, including the diverse interests in American River water today. Flooding and droughts, dam construction, and hydro-electric power production are illustrated in physical displays. A compelling display challenges the visitor to divide available fresh water to satisfy the needs of three main water users: farmers, cities, and wildlife. An outdoor exhibit features water-efficient irrigation systems and plants that do well in the semi-arid climate of California. The Center was also the starting point for public tours of Folsom Dam, but this program has been cancelled due to security concerns in the wake of September 11, 2001. The Center, which is located within the compound that houses the district offices for CDPR and the BOR, is visited by roughly 20,000 children annually. The Center may be moved to the visitor center planned for the Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park.

CSUS Aquatic Center

The California State University Sacramento (CSUS) Aquatic Center is located on Lake Natoma, within the unit, at the south end of Nimbus Dam. The Center is a cooperative

⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, *Folsom Dam Bridge Appraisal Report*, March 2000, pg. i.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 15.

operation of the Associated Students of California State University Sacramento, the University Union of CSUS, California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW), and CDPR. The land for the Center is leased to CSUS by CDPR and serves as one of several DBW Boating Instruction Safety Centers (BISC) in the state providing on-the-water and in-the-classroom boating safety education. The Center also serves as the base for Sac State's water ski and rowing teams and aquatic courses. Also offered are a full range of public courses in sailing, windsurfing, jet skiing, kayaking, rowing, canoeing, etc., as well as youth programs and summer camps. Public kayak and canoe rentals are also available. Facilities at the Center include an administrative building with offices and classrooms, several equipment storage buildings, three launch docks with mooring areas, a small beach area, and a large paved parking area with access off Hazel Avenue. The Center is currently undergoing an expansion project assisted by DBW that will include a new administrative building with locker rooms, classrooms, and storage, and a new boathouse and dock.

Trails

The trail system in the Unit is extensive, linking most of the Unit's facilities, and accommodating a variety of users including walkers and hikers, horseback riders, cyclists, and mountain bikers (Refer to Figures RR-9 and RR-10). Although there are over 90 miles of existing trails within the Unit, there are many areas that are not accessible by trail and there is not a continuous trail connection around the lake. Due to the narrow land base and steep topography around both Folsom Lake and Lake Natoma, the opportunities to develop new trail facilities are limited. Within this context, the demand for trail access continues to increase for all types of trail uses, including pedestrian, equestrian, mountain bikes, and hard-surface bicycling. The increased demand also results in a growing concern about conflicts between the different kinds of trail users, particularly on multi-use trails which are open to all users. The following is a description of trails in the Unit and Table RR-8 provides a summary of these facilities.

Pioneer Express Trail

The Pioneer Express Trail connects the cities of Auburn and Sacramento and passes through the Unit. This segment of the Pioneer Express Trail is also part of the American Discovery Trail, the nation's first coast-to-coast non-motorized recreation trail. The trail enters the northeastern corner of the Unit at Cardiac Hill and follows the western shoreline of the North Fork of the American River through Rattlesnake Bar and Granite Bay to Beal's Point. This 21-mile segment of dedicated dirt trail is for equestrian and pedestrian users only. From Beal's Point west, the Pioneer Express Trail follows the American River Bike Trail along the western shore of Lake Natoma to Nimbus Dam (10 miles), and continues west along the American River Parkway 23 miles to Discovery Park in Downtown Sacramento.

Los Lagos Trail

This 1.5-mile equestrian and pedestrian trail is located on a 200-foot wide strip of land that extends through the residential subdivision of Los Lagos. The trail begins at Auburn-Folsom Road and runs south into the Unit connecting with the Pioneer Express Trail just north of Granite Bay at Beeks Bight.

Doton's Point ADA Trail

This pedestrian-only trail is a scenic 1-mile spur that extends from a trailhead near the Granite Bay equestrian staging area at Beeks Bight to the end of Doton's Point on Folsom Lake.

Granite Bay Multi-Use Trails

There are 8 miles of dirt multi-use trails in the sprawling Granite Bay area of the Unit. The 2-mile Granite Bay/Beals Point Trail connects Granite Bay and the day use area at Beals Point. The Granite Bay Trail extends 5 miles from the main entrance to Granite Bay at Douglas Boulevard to Beeks Bight in the northern area of the facility. The 1-mile Center Trail is essentially a shortcut across Oak Point instead of following the Granite Bay Trail along the shoreline.

Lake Natoma Bike Paths

Paved and signed bike paths extend along both the eastern and western shorelines of Lake Natoma. The East Trail runs from Nimbus Dam to the historic truss bridge in Folsom – a distance of about 6 miles. The West Trail runs east from Nimbus Dam about 10 miles to Beals Point on Folsom Lake. The West Trail doubles as a segment of the American River Bike Trail that begins 23 miles to the south at Discovery Park in Downtown Sacramento at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. The American River Bike Trail is part of the American River Parkway which is a continuous open space greenbelt that extends from Discovery Park to Folsom Dam. Below Nimbus Dam, the American River Bike Trail is operated and maintained by Sacramento County; above Nimbus Dam it is the responsibility of CDPR. The East and West trails around Lake Natoma effectively create a loop around the Lake.

Lake Natoma Dirt Trails

In addition to the paved bike paths along Lake Natoma, dirt trails on both sides of the lake provide additional mileage as well as different experiences. Along the east side of Lake Natoma, 6 miles of multi-use trails wind through and provide access to Nimbus Flat and Willow Creek. Along the west side of the lake, an equestrian/pedestrian trail extends from an informal trailhead at Lake Overlook above Nimbus Dam north to Beals Point – a distance of about 9 miles. Portions of this trail form part of the Pioneer Express Trail.

Middle Ridge Trail

This 1-mile equestrian/pedestrian trail extends through Mississippi Bar from the Main/Sunset Avenues trailhead south to the Lake Natoma equestrian/pedestrian trail just north of Nimbus Dam. The trail provides access to Shadow Glen Stables, an equestrian concessionaire.

Snowberry Trail

Snowberry is an equestrian/pedestrian trail that extends 1.5 miles from the Main/Sunset Avenues trailhead north to the Lake Natoma equestrian/pedestrian trail between Mississippi and Negro Bars.

Folsom Point/Brown's Ravine Trail

This dirt multi-use trail extends 4 miles between Folsom Point and Brown's Ravine. The trail begins in the day use area at Folsom Point and ends at the Brown's Ravine/Old Salmon Falls trailhead at Brown's Ravine.

Brown's Ravine/Old Salmon Falls Trail

This dirt equestrian and pedestrian trail begins at the Brown's Ravine equestrian staging area and trends north along the eastern shoreline of Folsom Lake to the trailhead parking area at Old Salmon Falls about 12 miles away. In 2002, CDPR planned to implement a one-year pilot project to designate this trail as multi-use which would add mountain biking as a permitted use. The purpose of the pilot is to increase trail access for users while reducing potential conflicts between users.¹¹ The pilot would include a variety of trail improvements, public education and outreach, patrol and enforcement, and monitoring and evaluation.¹² However, since funding shortfalls delayed the pilot project, the actual designation of this trail will be determined in Trail Management Plan that will be prepared at the completion of the General Plan update for the Unit.

Sweetwater Creek Trail

A widened shoulder just off Salmon Falls Road between Old Salmon Falls and Salmon Falls Bridge doubles as an informal parking area where a gate marks the trailhead for the Sweetwater Trail. This dirt multi-use trail extends east about 2 miles to the commercial raft take-out facility at Salmon Falls Bridge and the Darrington Trail. An informal trail extends west from here to Old Salmon Falls and the Brown's Ravine Trail.

Darrington Trail

The trailhead for this popular trail is located at a small dirt parking area at the north end of the Salmon Fall Road bridge over the American River just above the whitewater rafting facility at Skunk Hollow. This rugged 9-mile trail for mountain bikers and pedestrians follows the western shoreline of the South Fork high above the waterline, rounds the peninsula that separates the North and South Forks, and terminates at the Peninsula Campground.

Peninsula ADA Trail

This pedestrian-only trail is located at the Peninsula Campground and extends from the south boat launch here south along the Folsom Lake shoreline about 1 mile.

Powerhouse Loop Trail

This pedestrian-only trail runs along the canal north of the Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park site.

¹¹ California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Browns Ravine Multi-Use Trail Pilot Project*, November 2001, pg. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 1.

Table RR-8: Trail Facilities

| <i>Trail</i> | <i>Start</i> | <i>Finish</i> | <i>Use</i> | <i>Length (Miles)¹</i> | <i>Surface</i> | <i>Connections</i> | <i>Facilities</i> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|--|
| Pioneer Express | Unit Boundary | Beals Point | Pedestrian Equestrian | 21 | Dirt | Los Lagos Granite Bay Multi-Use Granite Bay/Beals Point Doton's Point ADA | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Camping Equestrian staging |
| Los Lagos | Auburn-Folsom Road | Beeks Bight | Pedestrian Equestrian | 1.5 | Dirt | Pioneer Express | None |
| Granite Bay Multi-Use | | | | | | | |
| Granite Bay/Beals Point | Granite Bay Beach | Beals Point | Multi-use | 2 | Dirt | Pioneer Express Lake Natoma Paved (East) | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Camping Equestrian staging |
| Granite Bay | Granite Bay Entrance | Beeks Bight | Multi-use | 5 | Dirt | Granite Bay/Beals Point Pioneer Express Los Lagos Doton's Point ADA | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Equestrian staging |
| Center Trail | Oak Point Beach | Beeks Bight | Multi-use | 1 | Dirt | Pioneer Express Granite Bay | None |
| Lake Natoma Paved | | | | | | | |
| East Trail | Folsom Truss Bridge | Nimbus Dam | Multi-use | 6 | Paved | Lake Natoma Dirt (East) Lake Natoma West Trails American River Bike | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Equestrian staging |

Table RR-8: Trail Facilities

| <i>Trail</i> | <i>Start</i> | <i>Finish</i> | <i>Use</i> | <i>Length (Miles)¹</i> | <i>Surface</i> | <i>Connections</i> | <i>Facilities</i> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| West Trail | Beals Point | Nimbus Dam | Multi-use | 10 | Paved | Lake Natoma Dirt (West) Lake Natoma East Trails Pioneer Express Granite Bay/Beals Point American River Bike | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Equestrian staging |
| Lake Natoma Dirt | | | | | | | |
| East Trail | Folsom Truss Bridge | Nimbus Dam | Multi-use | 6 | Dirt | Lake Natoma Paved (East) Lake Natoma West Trails American River Bike | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Equestrian staging |
| West Trail | Beals Point | Lake Overlook | Pedestrian Equestrian | 9 | Dirt | Lake Natoma Paved (West) Lake Natoma East Trails Pioneer Express Granite Bay/Beals Point American River Bike | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Beach Equestrian staging |
| Middle Ridge | Sunset/Main Avenues | Nimbus Dam | Pedestrian Equestrian | 1 | Dirt | Snowberry Lake Natoma Dirt (West) | None |
| Snowberry | Sunset/Main Avenues | Snipes Pershing Ravine | Pedestrian Equestrian | 1.5 | Dirt | Middle Ridge Lake Natoma Dirt (West) | None |
| Folsom Point/Brown's Ravine | Folsom Point | Brown's Ravine | Multi-use | 4 | Dirt | Brown's Ravine/Old Salmon Falls | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Equestrian staging |
| Brown's Ravine/Old Salmon Falls | Brown's Ravine | Old Salmon Falls | Pedestrian Equestrian | 12 | Dirt | Folsom Point/Brown's Ravine | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Concession Equestrian staging |

Table RR-8: Trail Facilities

| <i>Trail</i> | <i>Start</i> | <i>Finish</i> | <i>Use</i> | <i>Length (Miles)¹</i> | <i>Surface</i> | <i>Connections</i> | <i>Facilities</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|---|
| Sweetwater Creek | Sweetwater Creek | Salmon Falls | Multi-use | 2 | Dirt | Darrington | Drinking water Toilets |
| Darrington | Salmon Falls | Peninsula Campground | Mountain bike Pedestrian | 9 | Dirt | Sweetwater Creek Peninsula Trail | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area Camping |
| Pedestrian Trails | | | | | | | |
| Doton's Point (ADA) | Beeks Bight | Doton's Point | Pedestrian | 1 | Dirt | Pioneer Express Granite Bay Multi-Use | None |
| Powerhouse Loop | Powerhouse | Powerhouse | Pedestrian | 1 | Dirt | None | Drinking water Restrooms Picnic area |
| Peninsula (ADA) | Peninsula Campground | Peninsula Point (South) | Pedestrian | 1 | Dirt | None | Drinking water |
| | | | | Total | 94 | | |

¹Within Park limits only.

Source: CDPR; Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.

Figure RR-9: Trail Facilities at Folsom Lake (This figure will be inserted upon completion of the GIS trails layer)

Figure RR-10: Trail Facilities at Lake Natoma (This figure will be inserted upon completion of the GIS trails layer)

Connections to External Trail Systems

There are several connections to the Unit's trail system from outside jurisdictions. In Placer County, a multi-use trail enters the Unit at Sterling Pointe running along Lomida Lane off Auburn-Folsom Road. In El Dorado County, the *1997 Trails Master Plan* includes a proposal to create the 10-mile Salmon Falls-Knickerbocker Trail would connect with the Sweetwater Trail at the Salmon Falls Bridge. The trail would generally follow Salmon Falls Road to Pilot Hill and then Pilot View north to the Knickerbocker Trail. In the City of Folsom, several connections to the Unit's trail systems exist. Folsom-Auburn Road provides a Class II bike lane that allows easy access to the West Lake Natoma Bike Trail and the Unit facilities along it, such as Beals Point, American River Water Education Center, Negro Bar, and Lake Overlook. Access points include Berry Creek Drive and Crestridge Lane. Class II bike lanes along Greenback Lane provides access to facilities at Negro Bar and the West Lake Natoma Bike Trail at American River Canyon Drive and at Folsom-Auburn Road. Class II bike lanes along East Natoma Street and Green Valley Road provide access to Folsom Point and Brown's Ravine. Finally, Class II bike lanes along Folsom Boulevard essentially parallel the East Lake Natoma Bike Trail with access points at the Lake Natoma Crossing, Young Wo Circle, Parkshore Drive, Natoma Station Drive, and Nimbus Flat.

It is worth noting that, according to CDPR staff, there are many locations in the Unit where private landowners have established informal connections to the existing trail network. These connections often involve the installation of a gate in fences along property lines that abut CDPR land. While these informal connections are illegal, enforcement is difficult under current CDPR staffing levels and it is unclear what priority is placed on enforcement.

Recreational Context of the Unit

This section puts the recreational aspects of the Unit into context by summarizing both proximate and more distant recreation resources and opportunities that may also vie for users.

Local Recreation Facilities

There are several important recreation facilities and activities that occur in close proximity to the Unit as summarized below. A number of these facilities have a direct relationship to the Unit in that they abut or provide connection to the Unit.

Placer County

Auburn State Recreation Area

The Auburn SRA covers more than 35,000 acres along 40 miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and is comprised lands set aside for the Auburn Dam. This natural area offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities to over 500,000 visitors a year. Major recreational activities include hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, camping, mountain biking, gold panning, and off-highway motorcycle riding. Whitewater recreation is also very popular on both forks of the American River. The Auburn SRA is contiguous with the Folsom Lake SRA along the North Fork of the American River. The boundary separating the two units is located just below the outlet of the Auburn Dam diversion tunnel.

Miners Ravine

Miners Ravine is the closest County recreation facility to the Unit. Located on Auburn-Folsom Road north of Douglas Boulevard, Miners Ravine provide passive recreation opportunities including a self-guided trail with interpretive signs.

Sacramento County

Nimbus Fish Hatchery

The Nimbus Fish Hatchery is located on the American River just below Nimbus Dam and Lake Natoma. The hatchery was built in 1955 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to compensate for the loss of spawning habitat resulting from the construction of Nimbus and Folsom dams and to maintain salmon and steelhead trout populations.¹³ A weir across the river prevents Chinook salmon from swimming further upstream and a fish ladder is used to direct salmon and steelhead for artificial spawning at the hatchery. In addition, the facility raises rainbow trout and kokanee salmon for more than 250 lakes and streams in northern and central California for recreational fishing, and produces four million Chinook salmon and 430,000 Steelhead trout annually.¹⁴ The facility includes a visitor center, a short shoreline trail, and a river overlook. The facility is owned and funded by the BOR and operated by the California Department of Fish and Game.

American River Parkway

The American River Parkway extends 23 miles west from Nimbus Dam to Discovery Park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers in Downtown Sacramento to the west. The Parkway consists of 14 interconnected parks and approximately 5,000 acres of land that includes historic Gold Rush and Maidu Indian sites and lush riverine forests and oak woodlands.¹⁵ The most popular feature is the Parkway's Jedediah Smith Memorial Trail—more commonly known as the American River Bike Trail—that extends 32 miles east from Discovery Park in Sacramento to Beals Point in the Unit. This trail offers hikers, cyclists, and horseback riders opportunities for outdoor recreation, nature viewing, and relaxation. The American River is popular with fishing enthusiasts, canoeists, kayakers, and rafters, and the Parkway offers several picnic areas, and opportunities for nearby golf, guided natural and historic tours, archery, game fields, and so on.¹⁶ More than 5 million visitors use the Parkway each year. The 1985 American River Parkway Plan, prepared by both the City and County of Sacramento, provides direction for land uses within the Parkway and includes Lake Natoma within the Unit. The County of Sacramento is responsible for the operation and maintenance of facilities within the Parkway downstream of Nimbus Dam, while CDPR is responsible for facilities upstream of it. The County is currently updating the Plan.

City Park – Folsom

Located on Stafford Street just east of Downtown and abutting CDPR lands, the 36-acre Folsom City Park provides a wide range of facilities, including the Folsom Community Center, City Park Gazebo, City Park Pavilion, Folsom City Zoo, and the Dan Russell

¹³ U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, *A Visitor's Guide to Nimbus Fish Hatchery*, pg. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

¹⁵ City-County Office of Metropolitan Water Planning, *Water Forum Proposal EIR*, 1999, pg. 4.9-3.

¹⁶ <http://www.sacparks.net/Parks/arp.htm>.

Arena.¹⁷ The zoo, which was established in 1963, occupies about 5 acres of the park and houses between 50 and 60 animals. An estimated 90,000 visitors come to the zoo each year.¹⁸ The 7,000-seat arena, which is home of the annual Memorial Day and 4th of July Rodeos, also hosts circuses, concerts, graduations, and music festivals.

Lew Howard Park – City of Folsom

Lew Howard Park, located on Oak Avenue Parkway at Baldwin Dam Road, provides spectacular views of the Sierras and includes the Hinkle Creek Nature Area, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, and the new Folsom Rotary Clubhouse.

Orangevale Park

Orangevale Park, operated by the Orangevale Recreation and Park District, is located in the unincorporated County on Hazel Avenue about 3 miles north of Nimbus Dam. The 76-acre facility include tennis courts, soccer fields, playgrounds, horse arena, individual and group picnic areas, and 22 acres of turf area.¹⁹

Regional Recreation Facilities

The recreational activities and services available at other reservoirs and lakes within easy driving distance of Folsom Lake provide context for the Unit. These activities and services are summarized below.

Reservoirs

Several reservoirs offering boating and fishing are located along the I-80 and Highway 50 corridors east of the Unit. Facilities along Highway 50 in El Dorado County include Jenkinson Lake, Ice House Reservoir, Union Valley Reservoir, and Loon Lake Reservoir. Jenkinson Lake is located in the Sly Park Recreation Area at Pollock Pines. Operated by the El Dorado Irrigation District, Jenkinson Lake has a surface area of 650 acres and offers boat launch facilities, boat rentals, and fishing for trout and bass.²⁰ Personal water craft (jetskis) are prohibited. Ice House, Union Valley, and Loon Lake Reservoirs are all part of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District's Crystal Basin Recreation Area.²¹ The area spans 85,000 acres within the El Dorado National Forest. These reservoirs include paved launch ramps and are large enough to accommodate motor boats. Trout and bass fishing are popular here, as is swimming. A total of 11 large reservoirs covering 9,000 acres are found in El Dorado National Forest.²² It should be noted, however, that access roads to most of these reservoirs are closing during the winter.

Facilities along I-80 in Placer and Nevada Counties include Lake Spaulding, Donner Lake, and Stampede Reservoir. Lake Spaulding is located in the Nevada County portion of the Tahoe National Forest just east of Emigrant Gap. The lake, which has a surface area of 700

¹⁷ <http://www.folsom.ca.us/index.asp?page=189>.

¹⁸ <http://www.folsom.ca.us/index.asp?page=72>.

¹⁹ http://www.orangevalechamber.com/orangevale_recreation_&_park_district.htm.

²⁰ http://www.eid.org/Departments/Rec/dept_rec_info_2.htm.

²¹ <http://www.smud.org/community/crystalbasin.html>.

²² <http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/eldorado/facts/description.htm>.

acres, has good fishing for trout and bass and there are no boating restrictions.²³ Donner Lake is a popular boating, fishing, and swimming area located in Truckee. The lake is 3 miles long and about ¾-mile wide. Stampede Reservoir is located in the Toiyabe National Forest north of Truckee on the California-Nevada border. The reservoir is 3,400 acres in size, includes two boat launch areas, has no boating restrictions, and is good for swimming and fishing.²⁴

There are several other large lakes and reservoirs not on the I-80 and Highway 50 corridors but offering fairly easy drives from Sacramento. To the north in between Marysville and Grass Valley on Highway 20 are Collins and Englebright Lakes and the New Bullards Bar Reservoir. Collins Lake, located 22 miles east of Marysville, is roughly 1,000 acres in size and includes a public boat launch.²⁵ Waterskiing is permitted in summer months although “fishing only” zones permit a quieter pace. Englebright Lake is located at the conjunction of the Middle and South Yuba Rivers about 15 miles west of Grass Valley. The Lake measures 815 acres, but at 9 miles in length it is a popular spot for waterskiing.²⁶ New Bullards Bar Reservoir, located on the North Yuba River 21 miles north of Nevada City off Highway 49, offers 4,700 acres of boating area and a length 16 miles.²⁷ The reservoir, which is managed by the Yuba County Water Agency, provides two launch areas and some of the best Kokanee salmon fishing in the State. Finally, located further north in Oroville is the Lake Oroville, a 15,500-acre reservoir the result of the damming of the Feather River.²⁸ The lake includes three formal boat launch areas and five informal car-top boat ramp areas. With 167 miles of shoreline, the lake has good bass fishing.

The primary lakes and reservoirs to the south of Sacramento include Lake Camanche and Pardee Reservoir in Calaveras County. Lake Camanche, located 30 minutes east of Lodi on Highway 12, is operated by the East Bay Municipal Utility District and is the result of the damming of the Mokelumne River.²⁹ The lake measures 7,700 acres with a full service marina, boat rentals, and boat launch facilities provided on both the north and south shores. Located just upstream from Lake Camanche is the Pardee Reservoir, also operated by EBMUD. The reservoir measures 2,250 acres, and while swimming, waterskiing, and other body contact activities are prohibited, boating and fishing are permitted.³⁰ The reservoir is open mid-February to mid-November.

Camping

Camping facilities are provided at all of the reservoirs summarized here. Jenkinson Lake in the Sly Park Recreation Area offers about 190 individual campsites in 10 camp areas along the shoreline; separate group and youth camping areas are also provided.³¹ The campground provides drinking water and vault toilet facilities. The Crystal Basin Recreation Area includes more than 700 developed campsites across more than 20 campgrounds, including an

²³ <http://www.seasonpass.com/adventure/TahoeLakes.asp?lid=35>.

²⁴ <http://www.recreation.gov/detail.cfm?ID=45>.

²⁵ <http://www.anglernet.com/web/maps/collins1.htm>.

²⁶ <http://www.anglernet.com/web/maps/engle1.htm>.

²⁷ <http://www.anglernet.com/web/maps/bullard1.htm>.

²⁸ http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=462.

²⁹ <http://www.ebmud.com/services/recreation/sierra/camanche/default.htm>.

³⁰ <http://www.ebmud.com/services/recreation/sierra/pardee/default.htm>.

³¹ http://www.eid.org/Departments/Rec/dept_rec_info_2.htm.

RV campground on Loon Lake and equestrian campgrounds on Loon and Wrights Lakes.³² Most campgrounds include drinking water and toilets. At Lake Spaulding in Tahoe National Forest, 25 developed campsites are available for both tents and RVs. A total of 76 family and 12 group campgrounds are found in the Tahoe National Forest, although most areas are closed in winter.³³ Camping facilities are also provided in the Toiyabe National Forest at Stampede Reservoir with 252 developed campsites.

A private campground operates at Collins Lake in the Grass Valley area with 150 developed tent and RV campsites with flush toilets and showers. At New Bullards Bar Reservoir further north, more than 160 tent, RV, and boat-in campsites are provided.³⁴ Englebright Lake includes 16 boat-in camp areas. Further north at Lake Oroville, about 210 developed campsites are available, 75 of which offer full hookups.³⁵ There are 6 group sites here and 8 boat-in campgrounds, each with between 6 and 10 developed campsites. To the south at Lake Camanche in Calaveras County, a campground, RV park, and housekeeping cottages are provided on both the north and south shores. More than 300 campsites are available here.³⁶ At the neighboring Pardee Reservoir, 100 tent and RV campsites are available with shower facilities and swimming pools.

Trails

Sly Park Recreation Area includes 9 miles of multi-use trails around Jenkinson Lake. Separate equestrian trails are provided. More than 117 miles of trails are provided at Crystal Basin Recreation Area, including a 4.5-mile paved bike path and dedicated equestrian trails. Day use areas here are located at the boat launches on several of the reservoirs. A total of 350 miles of trails are found in El Dorado National Forest, although most are not accessible during winter. Trail facilities are not as common along the I-80, although a total of more than 630 miles of trails are found in the Tahoe National Forest. In the Highway 20 area between Marysville and Grass Valley there are several trail opportunities, including a trail circling Collins Lake and a 7-mile multi-use trail at New Bullards Bar Reservoir. Only about 6 miles of trails may be found at Lake Oroville, although extensive facilities are provided, including a visitor center, swim beach, picnic area, and restrooms. Finally, to the south, there are multi-use trails at both Lake Camanche and Pardee Reservoir in Calaveras County, although the extent of the trail system is unknown. Equestrian stables and trails exist at Lake Camanche as well. Day use areas at both reservoirs include picnic tables, barbeques, and food and equipment concessions.

³² <http://www.smud.org/community/crystalbasin.html>.

³³ <http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/tahoe/viscenter/tnfrecprt.html>.

³⁴ <http://www.anglernet.com/web/lakes/bullards/bulldscr.htm>.

³⁵ http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=462.

³⁶ <http://www.smud.org/community/crystalbasin.html>.

Recreation Resource Issues

This section summarizes the current issues related to the recreation resources of the Unit. These issues are organized by facility type.

Aquatic Facilities

The following issues are related to the aquatic facilities in the Unit, including the marina, boat launch facilities, and whitewater rafting facilities.

Marinas

- Long waiting lists for slip rentals makes capacity a primary concern;
- Demand for slips would appear to support further expansion of marina here or construction of a second marina elsewhere on Folsom Lake;
- Onsite traffic circulation restricts day-use capacity during peak times (vehicles waiting for main boat ramp block access to the parking area);
- Additional lanes at main boat ramp needed to reduce back-ups, but not without reconfiguring parking area to provide a designated ramp queue lane and improved turnaround area; and
- Additional parking capacity needed to allow day-users (slip holders and drive-ins) easier access to the lake.

Boat Launch Facilities

- Main launch areas (Granite Bay, Folsom Point, Brown's Ravine) fill quickly on peak season weekends with users parking informally along the shoreline or being turned away;
- Full capacity at some launch facilities is not realized with fewer lanes available than is possible based on the width of existing ramps (using California Department of Boating and Waterways design standards) (see Table RR-9);
- Increasing the number of boarding floats along ramps, or realigning them, could increase the number of useable lanes on existing ramps;
- Increased ramp capacity would be difficult without a concurrent increase in parking capacity as parking facilities at some launch areas (Folsom Point and Brown's Ravine) fill quickly on peak season weekends; and
- Full parking capacity at some launch facilities is not realized with fewer spaces available than is recommended (using California Department of Boating and Waterways design standards) (see Table RR-10).

Table RR-9: Lane Capacity of Boat Launch Facilities

| <i>Facility</i> | <i>Width (ft.)</i> | <i>Existing Lanes</i> | <i>Existing Boarding Floats</i> | <i>Possible Lanes¹</i> | <i>Possible Boarding Floats²</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Granite Bay | | | | | |
| Stage 1 | 60 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Stage 2 | 700 | 10 | 4 | 38 | 19 |
| Stage 3 | 700 | 10 | 4 | 38 | 19 |
| Stage 4 | 330 | 14 | 7 | 18 | 9 |
| 5 Percent | 60 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 ³ |
| Low Water | 45 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 ³ |
| Folsom Point | 80 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Brown's Ravine | | | | | |
| Main Ramp | 60 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Hobie Cove | 60 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Rattlesnake Bar | 40 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Peninsula | | | | | |
| Day Use | 30 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 ³ |
| South Ramp | 25 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Beals Point | 40 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

¹Possible lanes based on DBW guidelines assuming 6-foot wide boarding floats.

²Possible boarding floats assumes that two lanes are served by a single float where the width is adequate.

³Boarding floats are recommended but not required by DBW guidelines. Addition of boarding floats at these locations will reduce the number of possible lanes according to DBW width recommendations.

Source: *Concept Marine Associates, Inc., 2003.*

Table RR-10: Launch Ramp Parking Evaluation

| <i>Facility</i> | <i>Existing Lanes</i> | <i>Existing Parking</i> | <i>Suggested Parking¹</i> | <i>Possible Lanes²</i> | <i>Possible Suggested Parking³</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Granite Bay | | | | | |
| Stage 1 | 2 | 100 | 40-60 | 3 | 120-180 |
| Stage 2 | 10 | 250 | 160-240 | 38 | 760-1140 |
| Stage 3 | 10 | 300 | 160-240 | 38 | 760-1140 |
| Stage 4 | 14 | 400 | 280-420 | 18 | 360-540 |
| 5 Percent | 4 | 91 | 80-120 | 4 | 80-120 |
| Low Water | 2 | 27 | 40-60 | 3 | 60-90 |
| Folsom Point | 2 | 129 | 40-60 | 4 | 80-120 |
| Brown's Ravine | | | | | |
| Main Ramp | 4 | 409 | 40-60 | 3 | 60-90 |
| Hobie Cove | 3 | 194 | 40-60 | 3 | 60-90 |
| Rattlesnake Bar | 2 | 94 | 40-60 | 2 | 40-60 |
| Peninsula | | | | | |
| Day Use | 1 | 60 | 20-30 | 2 | 40-60 |
| South Ramp | 1 | 50 | 20-30 | 1 | 20-30 |

Table RR-10: Launch Ramp Parking Evaluation

| <i>Facility</i> | <i>Existing Lanes</i> | <i>Existing Parking</i> | <i>Suggested Parking¹</i> | <i>Possible Lanes²</i> | <i>Possible Suggested Parking³</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Beals Point | 1 | | 20-30 | 2 | 40-60 |

¹Suggested parking spaces based on DBW guidelines for the typical minimum parking per launch lane. Actual parking needed is recommended to be determined according to the expected demand during a typical peak day.

²Possible lanes based on DBW guidelines assuming 6-foot wide boarding floats.

³Possible suggested parking space based on DBW guidelines for shoreline facilities using possible number of launch ramp lanes.

Source: Concept Marine Associates, Inc., 2003.

Whitewater Rafting Facilities

- Parking areas at Salmon Falls and Skunk Hollow reach capacity by midday on peak season weekends resulting in backups onto Salmon Falls Road;
- Situation is aggravated in late afternoon when rafters arrive over a short timeframe causing backups as commercial shuttle buses and vans queue to load up rafters and equipment; and
- Overflow parking along Salmon Falls Road raises concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety.

Terrestrial Facilities

Campgrounds

- Capacity is an issue with all three campgrounds (Peninsula, Beals Point, and Negro Bar group camp) fully occupied on peak season weekends;
- Dense layout of Beals Point campground results in many small sites with little vegetation or privacy;
- Beals Point campground appears worn due to erosion from vehicles;
- Access for campers with reservations at Beals Point can be difficult during peak times when the day use parking area fills and result in traffic backups;
- The majority of the campsites in the Unit (147) are available for either online or telephone reservations through a reservation service with the remaining 29 sites held open on a first-come first-served basis.
- Campers without reservations at Peninsula campground must drive all the way to the campground from Pilot Hill to find out if sites are available;
- No shower facilities exist at Peninsula campground; and
- Only three group campsites (Negro Bar) exist within the Unit.

Day Use Facilities

- Beals Point and Granite Bay parking areas fill by midday during peak season weekends causing traffic backups onto Douglas Boulevard, Auburn-Folsom Road, and surrounding neighborhood streets;
- Unrestricted vehicle access to the lake at Beals Point, North Granite, and Old Salmon Falls during low water levels results in erosion damage that could impact cultural resource sites below the high water line as well as water quality;
- Only one access to Granite Bay results in significant backups along Douglas Boulevard and onto Auburn-Folsom Road when the parking areas fill;
- No external access to the sprawling and relatively remote North Granite area makes it a difficult area to patrol;
- Remote location of North Granite, particularly Oak Point, makes it a popular location for illegal activities, such as under-age drinking, fighting, off-highway vehicle use, vandalism, and so on;
- Ground squirrels at Beals Point are habituated to the presence of humans and are aggressive;
- Possible erosion on State land and trails resulting from nearby residential development abutting the Unit boundary;
- Monte Vista area of Old Salmon Falls has potential for establishment of an environmental campground; however, nearby residential development is a significant constraint to increased public use in the area;
- Improvements to boat-in day use area on the Peninsula, such as drinking water, vault toilets, enhanced beach area, and extension of Darrington Trail could make this facility more enjoyable;
- Popularity of Folsom Point for the staging of special aquatic events causes both the day use and aquatic facilities to reach capacity quickly on peak season weekends;
- Folsom Point picnic area appears eroded and worn due to heavy foot traffic and informal parking off paved surfaces;
- Possible improvements at Folsom Point could include additional picnic capacity, formalized parking area, and formalized water access and shoreline area (such as a beach).
- Interest by various boat clubs—including Folsom Lake Yacht Club and California State University Sacramento (CSUS) Aquatic Center—in establishing a multi-use aquatic facility at Folsom Point or Browns Ravine;
- Long term use of Observation Point once its use as a staging area for Folsom Dam-related improvement projects is complete, i.e. temperature control device installation

(current), outlet modifications project (late 2003 through 2006), and Folsom Dam raise (2006 through 2011);

- Lack of adequate visitor amenities at Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park. New visitor center and expanded parking area planned for Folsom Powerhouse State – visitor center could include American River Water Education Center;
- Vandalism and graffiti at the Folsom Powerhouse has necessitated the installation of security fencing on all but the shoreline side of the site;
- Popularity of Willow Creek site may require the development of additional facilities to minimize the wear and tear and erosion caused by informal parking in the picnic area;
- Potential to establish an environmental camping area at Willow Creek and enhance the interpretive opportunities of the heron and egret rookery located just across the Lake Natoma;
- Use of Nimbus Flat by the CSUS Aquatic Center for major competitions and events, particularly during peak season weekends, results in capacity conditions early in the day and complaints that access to the area for non-competition related activities is difficult;
- Canada geese at Nimbus Flat have become permanent residents raising concerns about health and water quality;
- Lack of visitor facilities (toilets and interpretive displays) at Lake Overlook and general disrepair of the site, including parking area and security fencing; and
- Interest from outside groups—Master’s Rowing Club and Sacramento African American Cultural and Historical Society—in developing additional recreational and cultural facilities at Negro Bar, including a paddling facility in the area of the existing boat launch and a cultural center in the area of the “cottage”.

Trails

- Significant interest and demand for expansion of the existing trail system to accommodate a wider range of users, including mountain bikers;
- Additional trail miles could be provided by extending single-track facilities or by constructing parallel existing single-track facilities, although parallel trails could be the best way to reduce conflicts between multiple trail users and to improve safety;
- Preference of some trail users (usually equestrians and pedestrians) to create new trail facilities where possible instead of changing existing use designations that would take trail mileage away from one user group and assign it to another;
- Trail education program needed to improve the safety of the trail system and enhance cooperation and respect between trail users; and

- Trail enforcement program needed in conjunction with education to improve trail system safety by establishing uniform rules for enforcement, a CDPR or volunteer patrol program, and a reporting system.

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